Steve Messina

AI Chief Architect & CTO | Agentic AI · Cloud Platforms · Banking & Capital Markets

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Chief AI Architect and CTO with 40 years across global banking, cloud platforms and AI products. Built the architecture functions for HSBC Global Banking & Markets and Bank of America Merrill Lynch, created IBM's first internal AWS practice ($15M+ new revenue) and led bank cloud migrations that cut infrastructure cost by 35–60%. Founded and coded Azara.ai, an agentic AI workflow platform acquired in 2024. Hands-on in production LLM systems: agent orchestration, retrieval, evaluation, guardrails and AI security. Multiple patent applications in container platforms, cybersecurity AI and agentic workflows. Operates from board-level strategy to production code in regulated, high-stakes environments.

CORE EXPERTISE

Agentic AI & LLM Systems · Generative AI Strategy & Governance · AI Security, Guardrails & Evaluation · Enterprise & Solution Architecture · Cloud Transformation (AWS) · Banking, Capital Markets & Trading Systems · Regulatory Compliance & Reference Data · Microservices, APIs & Platform Engineering · Data & AI Platforms · MLOps & DevOps · AI Product Go-to-Market · Team Building & Operating Models

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

- Startup to exit: wrote the core Azara.ai agentic workflow product and led the company from inception to acquisition in 15 months with a team of 15.
- New revenue: created IBM's first internal AWS consultancy practice, generating $15M+ in new revenue streams across ASEAN.
- Bank cost reduction: delivered major bank cloud migrations that reduced infrastructure costs by 35–60%.
- Global scale: led a 50-person architecture function at Bank of America Merrill Lynch and the One-HSBC programme across 60+ countries; rolled out cloud/DevOps at Standard Chartered across 15+ countries, three months early.
- Production AI: shipped LLM agents, multi-agent guardrails and LLM judges for Snyk EVO; delivered Voice AI, AI Inbox and AI Receptionist products at Graph8.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

TensorLot — Chief AI Architect | tensorlot.ai Sep 2026 – Present

- Building and scaling agentic capabilities for large-scale data quality control.

MacLeodLabs.ai — Founder & Fractional CTO | Dubai, UAE / Remote Oct 2024 – Present

- Build and ship AI-security, developer-tooling and AI workflow products: Forge (real-time quality gates for AI-generated code), Heimdall and McClawd (hardened LLM tool execution, sandboxing, SBOM reporting), CodeCheck.dev, MCP Stack, HyperCoder, McWiki.
- Provide fractional CTO and generative AI consulting to enterprise and startup clients; own architecture, core code, evaluation and production hardening.
- Stack: LangChain, LangGraph, Model Context Protocol (MCP), Adaptive RAG, Postgres BM25, Pydantic evals, Weaviate, Neo4j, Python, Rust, TypeScript, AWS, MLOps.

Newton Russell — AI Consultant (Macleod Labs engagement) | Remote Jun 2026 – Aug 2026

- Added Skills and secure execution to Brontë AI: skill authoring and execution, stored skills as live tools, a sandboxed runner with a dynamically reloaded egress allowlist, and a runs canvas with live run state; closed the security-audit findings and took UAT acceptance criteria to 25/25. First engagement Aug 2025.

Snyk — Generative AI Consultant / AI Agent Engineer | Remote Jan 2026 – Apr 2026

- Built Snyk EVO AI agent capabilities, multi-agent guardrails and LLM judges for cybersecurity workflows.
- Coded agent orchestration and evaluation logic; moved cybersecurity AI capabilities from research into go-to-market readiness.

VCyberiz — Cybersecurity AI Consultant / Full-stack AI Engineer | Kuala Lumpur Sep 2025

- Refactored the entire application stack to production-ready launch state in one month: backend, frontend, data/API integration and AI-security workflows.

Graph8 — CTO & Chief AI Engineer | Remote Dec 2024 – Jul 2025

- Joined as AI lead and moved to CTO; led a team of 10 across AI, data, applications, infrastructure and customer delivery from early product to go-to-market and production launch.
- Delivered Voice AI, AI Inbox, AI Receptionist and Campaign Sequencer products and the enterprise data architecture for customer automation.

Azara.ai — Founder & CTO — Agentic AI Workflow Platform | ASEAN / Remote | Acquired Aug 2023 – Oct 2024

- Wrote the core agentic AI workflow product and led the company from inception to acquisition in 15 months.
- Built multi-agent workflow state, distributed microservices, APIs, real-time processing and analytics; drove product-market iteration and built the 15-person ASEAN engineering team.

IBM — AWS CTO, Tech Leader & Associate Partner (Cloud Transformation) | Singapore / ASEAN Mar 2020 – Jul 2023

- Created IBM's first internal AWS consultancy practice; generated $15M+ in new revenue streams.
- Led cloud, AI and digital transformation for 50+ enterprise clients in banking, fintech and multinationals; delivered major bank cloud migrations that reduced infrastructure costs by 35–60%.
- Set executive architecture, operating models and stakeholder alignment; fast-tracked for the IBM Distinguished Engineer programme.

ICompaz (Temasek / Infosys JV) — Head of Cloud & AI | Singapore Mar 2019 – Feb 2020

- Built the cloud and AI Centre of Excellence for Temasek portfolio companies; implemented low-touch operations that reduced daily workload by 80%.

Amazon Web Services — Principal Architect / Consultant, Professional Services | APAC Sep 2015 – May 2018

- Led the DevOps and microservices specialties; architected the 7-Eleven ticketing system handling millions of transactions per minute and led the DevOps, microservices and big-data programme for Astro, Malaysia's largest media company.

10xLabs — Founder — Container PaaS | Hong Kong Jun 2011 – 2015

- Invented and built one of the first container platform-as-a-service and service-mesh platforms, before containers became mainstream; led a team of 25.
- Ran Startup Weekend and accelerator programmes that helped bootstrap the Hong Kong startup ecosystem.

UCanPay — Interim CTO | Hong Kong 2014 – Sep 2015

- Created multiple products, including a Bitcoin EPOS system, restaurant management software and a B2B marketplace.

Standard Chartered Bank — Consultant, Cloud & DevOps Lead | Tianjin, China Jul 2013 – May 2014

- Established the China engineering Centre of Excellence in Tianjin with a team of 8; created the first Cloud Lab and rolled out cloud/DevOps practices across 15+ countries, three months ahead of schedule.

UBS — Consultant CTO, Cloud Strategy | Hong Kong Jun 2012 – Dec 2012

- Created the innovation centre of excellence, startup accelerator programmes, enterprise cloud operating model and transformation strategy; implemented innovation labs across global UBS operations.

Bank of America Merrill Lynch — Global Banking Chief Architect | APAC Apr 2010 – Dec 2011

- Built and led the 50-person architecture function for Global Markets and Operations; created an award-winning in-house settlement system; established APAC as the primary global technology centre; introduced the global private cloud and DevOps practices.

HSBC Global Banking & Markets — Global Banking Chief Architect | APAC Dec 2007 – Mar 2010

- Implemented the Global Methods Architecture; led the reference data programme and unified global data warehouse, including NLP tooling for regulatory compliance; led architecture of the One-HSBC programme unifying 60+ countries.

Morgan Stanley Private Wealth — Vice President / Technical Architect | London Mar 2006 – Nov 2007

- Authored the operations automation vision document that pre-dated the DevOps movement; led the operations restructuring across Private Wealth technology.

UBS — Architect & Lead, Portfolio Trading | London 2000 – 2005

- Architected and led development of portfolio trading systems for UBS Investment Bank.

Apollo AI Hedge Fund — Architect & Lead Developer, Automated Trading | London 1995 – 2000

- Architected and coded an automated commodity trading platform using neural networks and genetic algorithms.

TECHNICAL SKILLS

AI / GenAI: Large Language Models (LLM), agentic AI, LangChain, LangGraph, Model Context Protocol (MCP), agent orchestration, Retrieval-Augmented Generation (Adaptive RAG), Postgres BM25, Pydantic evals, LLM judges, guardrails, fine-tuning, MLOps, coding harnesses, OpenAI and Anthropic Claude APIs, neural networks and genetic algorithms.

Banking & Trading: global markets, settlement, reference data, regulatory compliance, quantitative and automated trading systems, fintech and crypto payments.

Cloud, Data & Engineering: AWS, Kubernetes, Terraform, Docker, microservices, APIs, DevOps, Python, FastAPI, Flask, Rust, TypeScript, React, PostgreSQL, ClickHouse, AWS Glue, PySpark, Weaviate, Neo4j, Twilio, LiveKit.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

Open University / Birkbeck — MMath programme, Mathematics (mathematical modelling, pure mathematics, probability, physics, astronomy; degree not completed).

AWS (2016): Certified Solutions Architect – Professional; Certified Developer – Associate; Certified Solutions Architect – Associate. **Financial (2007):** Certificate in Quantitative Finance (CQF); Securities II.