

Stevan Lohja

Protocol Operations | Node Infrastructure and SRE | Developer and Operator Relations

Garner, NC (Raleigh-Durham) - open to remote or hybrid

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SUMMARY

Eight years in blockchain across developer relations and protocol operations, with hard-fork coordination and network-crisis command on two chains. Founded the Midnight developer community, now roughly 50,000 members, grew its testnet validator set to roughly 200, then ran Midnight mainnet across 11 operator companies, roughly 50 nodes and three environments with zero liveness-loss events. Earlier coordinated four Ethereum Classic hard forks across 200+ ecosystem stakeholders and recovered the network from a 51% attack inside 24 hours. Four years at Input Output (IOHK) on the Cardano ecosystem, and a prior Director of Developer Relations role. Builds the automation underneath the work: agentic monitoring with deterministic detection and guardrailed model output, and an operations portfolio run as supervised AI workflows with human review gates.

EXPERIENCE

Midnight Foundation - Remote

Senior Developer Relations Engineer -> Protocol Operations | Jul 2025 - Oct 2026

Hired into Developer Relations; scope moved to protocol operations through mainnet launch and after.

- Took 13 federated node operators through Midnight mainnet go-live (March 2026) under a phased guarded launch, including a last-minute WireGuard overlay for DDoS protection. Build and operate the Foundation's own mainnet validator: zero unplanned downtime since launch.
- Founded the Midnight Discord community, now roughly 50,000 members. Created the Midnight Contributor Hub, a GitHub-based community bounty program that has published more than 50 bounties, and advised the ambassador cohort on building on the network. Restructured developer onboarding around a new Getting Started path built from developer feedback.
- Represented Midnight at 15+ industry conferences including Consensus and Blockchain Rio, judged and mentored hackathons in Argentina, and built event activations that converted attendees into active Midnight contributors.
- Run protocol operations across 11 operator companies, roughly 50 nodes, 13 mainnet validators and three environments (Preview, Preprod, Mainnet), with zero mainnet liveness-loss events.
- Executed four network-wide changes in 31 days - a Cardano hard fork, a node binary rollout against a hard deadline, a runtime upgrade through governance and an out-of-band patch release - with every operator clearing every change and no loss of block production or finality. Changes are proven on Preview and Preprod before Mainnet promotion under a change-oversight gate I authored.
- Author the mainnet incident reviews, with time-to-acknowledge under five minutes; traced one validator outage to two upstream commits that added and then renamed a database index the same day, shipping a metadata-only rename instead of a multi-hour rebuild. Designed and staffed the off-hours support tier that cut detection of a P1 mainnet incident to six minutes.
- Own the operator-facing surface: the runbook library, operator guides and the compatibility matrix the fleet versions against (code owner for both), 100+ operator communications, the validator community calls, operator onboarding, and the monthly service-level agreement (SLA) review that gates vendor payments. Served as operations input into Legal's redraft of the node operator agreement; serve on the Midnight Technical Authority and participate in governance.

Input Output (IOHK) - Remote

Developer Relations Engineer | Feb 2024 - Jul 2025

Developer Relations Specialist | May 2021 - Feb 2024

- Owned the validator ecosystem for Midnight's public testnet, transitioning it into a co-maintained network of roughly 200 validators and driving their feedback into shipped product and engineering change - the work that led directly into running the federated mainnet operator set.
- Detected several P1 network incidents, including an unplanned hard-fork event, and identified an accidental genesis-parameter mismatch that triggered a coordinated emergency release.
- Onboarded a private alpha cohort of roughly 700 developers onto Midnight Devnet-0, managing their API access programmatically and driving 100+ feedback issues into product and engineering, many of which shipped as feature enhancements. Owned documentation delivery from closed alpha through the public Devnet and Testnet milestones.
- Ran developer relations for the Cardano EVM Sidechain research project that became Midnight, a Substrate-based Cardano partner chain.

- Championed IOHK's Ethereum Classic core development team: managed improvement proposals, drove developer adoption of the core client, and coordinated hard-fork, SDK and API releases to the ecosystem.

ETC Cooperative

Director of Developer Relations | Sep 2020 - May 2021

Owned developer relations for the Ethereum Classic ecosystem: documentation, community, and coordination of network changes and client releases.

Ethereum Classic Labs

Technical Coordinator and Full-Stack Technical Writer | Dec 2018 - Aug 2020

Ecosystem coordination, network incident command and developer relations for Ethereum Classic.

- Coordinated four network hard forks across 200+ ecosystem stakeholders, including institutional exchanges, wallet providers and validators.
- Crisis-managed three P1 network attacks, recovering the network from a proof-of-work 51% attack within 24 hours through direct ecosystem coordination.
- Drove adoption of the primary core client to majority network share within a year. Maintained the Ethereum Classic Discord and documentation, and launched ETC Signal, the ecosystem newsletter carrying network changes to 200+ exchange, wallet, validator and security-operations stakeholders at a ~51% open rate.
- Ran the hackathon program, owning judging and budget. Mentored 12 startups in the accelerator program and spoke at ecosystem events across the US, Canada and Asia.

ETCDEV

Technical Writer | May 2018 - Nov 2018

Sole developer-facing function with no marketing team: owned documentation, wrote demos and articles, supported the community, and coordinated hard-fork and SDK/API releases.

PROTOCOL GOVERNANCE AND OPEN SOURCE

- **Midnight Improvement Proposal (MIP) Editor**, Midnight | Jul 2025 - present
- **Ethereum Classic Improvement Proposal (ECIP) Editor** | Jan 2017 - Sep 2021 - editor for the ECIP standards process, hard-fork coordinator, client developer and miner

SELECTED PROJECTS

- **Agentic validator alerting service** - TypeScript and Docker service reading a Substrate telemetry feed. Deterministic threshold detection, with a self-hosted model (Ollama) behind output guardrails composing the alert text; adversarially tested. Runs at roughly \$56/month in self-hosted infrastructure with no per-token API cost, automating the detection step of a vendor-staffed tier costing \$6-9k/month.
- **Validator infrastructure module (OpenTofu/Terraform)** - GCP validator module adding a host-configured WireGuard overlay, Secret Manager key delivery at boot so the private key never enters instance metadata, and a metrics firewall closed to health-check ranges.

SKILLS

Protocol and blockchain: Midnight, Cardano (cardano-node, cardano-db-sync, Mithril, Van Rossem/PV11), Ethereum Classic, Substrate, partner-chain architecture, validator and staking operations, consensus and finality (GRANDPA), web3 infrastructure

Infrastructure as code (IaC): OpenTofu/Terraform, GCP (Compute Engine, Cloud SQL, Secret Manager, Cloud KMS, Cloud Storage/CDN, IAP), Docker, Docker Compose, systemd, WireGuard, Linux, PostgreSQL

Site reliability and observability: incident command, on-call response, root-cause analysis (RCA) and post-mortems, runbooks, SLA and vendor management, change management, Grafana, Prometheus, Substrate telemetry

Developer and operator relations: technical writing, developer and operator documentation, developer advocacy, onboarding and enablement, community calls, public speaking, technical content

Languages and AI: TypeScript, Python, Bash, SQL; agentic workflow design, self-hosted LLM (Ollama), output guardrails, human-review-gated automation

EDUCATION

The Illinois Institute of Art, Schaumburg - Bachelor of Fine Arts, Web Design and Interactive Media | 2013-2016

DeVry University, Illinois - Associate's degree, Web Graphic Design | 2011-2013