

# Samuel V. Kortchmar

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## EXPERIENCE



### Climatebase Fellowship - Cohort 4

September 2023 - December 2023

- The fellowship is a community-focused climate education program and career accelerator.
- I facilitated study groups on technology and research, emphasizing climate modeling, battery technology, and building decarbonization

### SpaceX, Los Angeles — *Lead Software Engineer*

July 2016 - July 2023

*I worked on the Falcon, Dragon, and Starship programs.*



### Starship Displays — *Lead Software Engineer*

April 2022 - July 2023

- On-console operator for Starship Orbital Test Flight 1 - the largest and most powerful rocket ever flown - my displays can be seen on the screens in this [video](#) and this [tweet](#).
- Designed Starship Crew Displays onboard architecture and presented it to NASA as part of a \$57M payment milestone..
- Built an app for evaluating different tablets performance under radiation & vacuum conditions.
- Created an IDE-like visualizer for ControlCode, an in-house programming language, using Monaco.
- Using Three.js, I wrote a new WebGL-based rendering engine for our time-series plotting tool.
- Using kubernetes, created a read-only version of the displays to scale to 10k internal viewers.



### Starship - Stage 0 Software — *Lead Software Engineer*

March 2021- April 2022

- Stepped up to lead the team responsible for “All the mission-critical software on the ground”.
- Made multiple hires & internal transfers to build up team size to 10 engineers.
- Began development of orbital launch tower, using Siemens PLCs for kinematics integrated with traditional pad software.
- Developed integration of orbital pad infrastructure with worldwide ground station network.
- Using kubernetes and playwright, created a performance testing framework to preemptively find and prevent problems when under heavy load.



### Starship - Stage 0 Software — *Software Engineer II*

January 2020 - March 2021

- Key members of the hardware backend team departed, so I needed to diversify my skills: I learned C++ to contribute features to the rocket runtime, including a new batch commanding mode.

## EDUCATION

### Brown University

Graduated May 2016

B.A. Computer Science

## SKILLS

- Expert knowledge of web technologies.
- Product management and leadership, with a strong customer focus.
- People management and mentoring.
- Unique eye for ergonomics and simplicity.
- Quick, cross-disciplinary learning.

## KEYWORDS

Javascript, Typescript, Python, C++, Node.js, React, Lit, Three.js, Cesium, Real-time, Websockets, WebGL, Redux, Reselect, Monaco, Docker, Postgres, Supervisor, Alembic, Flask, Embedded Systems, Playwright, Puppeteer, Visual Snapshot Testing, Kubernetes, TensorFlow, Git, Java, Ansible, Web Test Runner, Jasmine, PWA

- Built Linux-based tooling for managing software on NI DAQ chassis, allowing us to cut Windows out of the loop.
- Worked with 3rd-party vendors, network administrators, and electrical engineers to investigate numerous issues with field-deployed hardware.
- Using Docker, created a white-label version of the user interface which could be used by other vehicle programs at SpaceX.
- Created framework to monitor and fix JS memory leaks.

## ✂ **Starship - Stage 0 Software — Software Engineer II**

December 2018 - December 2019

- Created a new ground software system for Starship. I led the development of a browser-based user interface for realtime visualization and control of Starship and the launch pad.
- Built a web-based live plotting tool for visualization of high-rate time-series data coming off the pad and rocket.
- Created alerting system for notifying operators of urgent issues.
- Led frontend squad through shipping initial MVP – one of two engineers sent to Boca Chica, TX for initial activation of the system.
- Supported Hopper campaign in Boca Chica.

## ✂ **Dragon Crew Displays**

October 2018 - November 2019

- Developed error handling and reporting subsystems (FDIR) to catch bugs prior to and during flight.
- Built tooling for recurring audits of 3rd-party software.
- Developed [custom visualizations](#) based on the Crew Displays for our [Emmy Award](#)-winning broadcast of the Demo-1 flight.

## ✂ **Launch App — Software Engineer**

February 2018 - October 2018

- Led a small strike team assigned to build a futuristic launch overview under the personal direction of Elon Musk. I carved out an identity and roadmap for the product, created our operational processes, and recruited stakeholders across the company.
- While Elon was the initial user of this app, we scaled it to the entire company – it is now used on the [public webcast](#), as a deliverable to the FAA, and in the contract of SpaceX launch customers as part of their launch-day experience.
- I implemented live video with picture-in-picture and 3D visualizations of the rocket's flight with Cesium.js

## ✂ **Autotest — Software Engineer**

July 2016 - Feb 2018

- Founding member of the Autotest project, the universal python ecosystem for testing & production at SpaceX.
- I embedded on customer teams to develop features for testing fully assembled vehicles, HITL subassemblies, and avionics
- I created web-based mobile and desktop interfaces for test execution and monitoring, the central test results database, and core python libraries for recording test results.

## OPEN SOURCE PROJECTS

### [Flexion Friend](#)

2023

Mobile-first PWA which uses computer vision (TensorFlow) to measure and track knee flexion recovery.

### [Reselect Tools](#)

2018

Developer tools for working with the Reselect library. (Chrome Extension)

## SPACEX SIDE PROJECTS

### **Fairing Recovery UI**

Sept 2018 - Nov 2019

I created an app for visualizing fairing recovery – catching fairings falling from space on a boat with a net. This proved useful and eventually we legitimized it and began using it to control the boats.

### **Hipster Prism**

May 2017

Created the first web-based real-time telemetry visualizer at SpaceX – still in use today!

### **Debris DB**

September 2016

After the AMOS-6 explosion, worked with 2 other engineers to build DebrisDB – an app to catalog and track rocket debris. Initial version went live less than 48 hours after the explosion.