Steve Parrish

Automation Software Engineer

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Innovative engineering leader with a proven track record of building end-to-end platforms that bridge Quick Service Restaurant (QSR) operations with next-generation autonomous and unattended retail experiences. I architect scalable IoT-driven ecosystems that power smart lockers, self-service kiosks, commercial kitchen integrations, and industrial automation—enabling frictionless, always-on customer interactions. With decades of hands-on experience spanning cloud, mobile, embedded, and firmware development, I specialize in transforming complex hardware-software systems into cohesive, production-ready solutions with real-time telemetry, device orchestration, and intuitive user experiences. With multi-patent applications, I excel at taking products from concept through global deployment and have delivered mission-critical systems for leading brands including Yum Brands, Taco Bell, KFC.

Technical Proficiencies

Languages:	Kotlin, C, Java, JS, GraphQL, SQL
Development Tools:	UNIX/LINUX Development Tools, VS Code, JetBrains, Android Studio, Android NDK, Git, Atlassian products, GitHub Copilot, docker.
Databases, Cloud Services & Frameworks:	Couchbase, PostgreSQL, Datadog, Cloud Firestore, Amazon IoT, DynamoDB, API Gateway, Lambda, EC2, S3 Services, MQTT brokers, Kafka, NATS.io

Career Experience

Vendistax, Barrington, IL (vendistax.com) **2025 - Current** Principal Engineer (Full Stack and Embedded Systems)

Principal engineer leading Vendistax product development and also enterprise client delivery, architecting distributed edge and IoT systems for real-time operations across QSR and autonomous retail environments.

Autonomous Retail & IoT Platform (Vendistax Product Line):

- Architected and delivered a scalable IoT platform for smart lockers and commercial kitchen equipment, enabling remote provisioning, configuration, telemetry, and transaction tracking.
- Designed data models, indexing strategies, and APIs to support high-volume device management and telemetry workloads.
- Built backend services (Node.js/Express, Redis, MQTT), a React-based provisioning and management UI, and Android middleware/SDK for device orchestration.
- Established hardware-agnostic abstraction layers (HAL) supporting Modbus, MQTT, TCP, and USB integrations, enabling interoperability across diverse unattended retail hardware.

YUM! Brands & KFC for QSR Operations:

- Implemented and helped integrate a next generation kitchen solution for YUM brands and KFC. A distributed architecture enabling real-time synchronization between cloud systems and in-store servers and hardware (POS, kiosks, kitchen display systems, drive-thru timers, and food make-line systems).
- Evangelized and implemented a Go-based GraphQL API (gqlgen/go-chi) supporting queries, mutations, and subscriptions across ordering, kitchen workflows, kiosk interactions, and menu streaming, leveraging NATS JetStream/KV for low-latency event distribution.
- Developed a type-safe TypeScript SDK with auto-reconnect, buffered subscriptions, flow control, and end-to-end schema-driven code generation to standardize client integrations across platform domains.

BlueSparq, a Middleby Company, Cape Coral, FL 2024 – 2025 Principal Engineer

Inherited and supported two products: An Android application for a food delivery cabinet used QSR restaurants and an Android application for an automatic drink dispensing machine.

- Led redesign of the food cabinet application, addressing technical debt and performance issues to improve reliability and scalability.
- Provided ongoing software support and enhancements for an innovative automatic soda dispensing machine deployed for YUM Brands/Taco Bell.
- Represented the company at industry trade shows, providing live demonstrations and engaging with prospective customers.
- Authored sales and technical documentation, while advising customers on integration strategies.

Yum Brands, Chicago, IL 2019 – 2024 Principal Engineer

Principal Engineer on greenfield “restaurant in a box” platform; a Front and Back of House software solution integrated with above restaurant cloud systems. Now called the Byte By Yum!™

- Developed a brand-new POS system that has been deployed to all Taco Bell U.S. based restaurants (7K+ stores), including integrations with all in-store peripherals e.g. in-store servers, kiosks, payment devices, Kitchen Display Screens, Order Confirmation Boards, etc.
- Principal in a small team that integrated the new POS system with YUM’s first Voice AI powered drive-thru assistant. Currently deployed & active in over 300+ Stores.
- The Go-to engineer for all things Couchbase database related, from in-store POS architecture & implementation to synchronization with the Couchbase server cluster.
- Developed and productionized software for an automated drink dispensing machine (Yum “Red Innovation Lab”), evolving a PoC into a scalable, observable system with enhanced UX; patent pending.
- Provided technical leadership across architecture, API design, production operations, and engineering mentorship.

GPShopper, a Synchrony Financial Company, Chicago, IL 2018 - 2019 VP Android Mobile Development

Oversaw mobile platform development for eCommerce applications serving national retail and fashion chains. Supported digital transformation for custom mobile app development across several retailers.

- Supervised team of nine programmers; evaluated and coached individual developers in 1-on-1 meetings. Continuously contributed to hands-on development to integrate apps to upgraded backend services.

- Directed the work for five eCommerce app solutions to incorporate online sales, order updates, gamification including Foot Locker, Tillys, Shoe Carnival, Ardene, and Boohoo.

Parrish Systems LLC, Barrington, IL 2018 Android Platform Development | Consultant

Architected Android software solutions for customers on a contract basis. Gathered requirements for projects in different industries.

- Improved existing Android app for BMW; helped alleviate electric car driver’s “range anxiety”. Added feature improvements to assist drivers in locating points of interest. Solution factored in vehicle location, battery level, and traffic conditions to match destination points with drivers’ capacity.
- Led development of new features for a native Android ecomm mobile app for REXEL the world’s largest online seller of electrical supplies.

Parts Town LLC, Addison, IL 2016 – 2018 Mobile App Lead

Built out backend cloud technology and a mobile app to deliver best-in-class solutions for commercial kitchen operators and service technicians. Employed the use of AWS including IoT Core, Lambda, Incognito and DynamoDB, to innovative network of IoT widgets.

CNH Industrial, Burr Ridge, IL 2015 – 2016 Android Consultant

Developed precision agriculture technology to optimize farming processes and decrease production costs. Delivered Java daemons using Java Spring framework on embedded LINUX devices that monitored and controlled Tractor equipment, and Android applications used to discover and configure the tractor equipment.

ContextMedia Health LLC, Chicago, IL 2014 – 2015 Senior Android Software Developer

Developed and led Android and LINUX-based software components for media players and interactive kiosks. Integrated Ruby on Rails application to remotely manage all devices on the network. Introduced software feature additions using Java, C, Ruby, and Javascript.

D2 Technologies, Barrington, IL 2006 – 2014 Principal Android and LINUX Software Engineer

Developed communication software for mobile devices, leveraging early exposure to Rich Communication Services telecom technology to extend Google Android SDK. Designed Java packages and native C (NDK) modules to provide VoLTE, RCSe and RCS capabilities.

Education: Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Computer Science, Principia College, Elsah, IL

Patent & Applications

- **Application# (29/958027)** *Display Screen or Portion Thereof With Graphical User Interface for Automated Drink Dispensing Machine*
- **Patent# 9107049** *Methods and Systems of Advanced Real-time IP Communication in a Mobile Terminal*
- **Application# 20140079023** *Method of Internet Protocol (IP) to IP handover*
- **Application# 20090113460** *Systems and methods for providing a generic interface in a communications environment*