

The Top 30 Software CTOs

European Edition
2023

Introduction

We are delighted to present our list of the Top 30 CTOs within the European software industry. We have included CTOs from PE backed companies, established corporates and portfolio CTOs from investors.

We have deliberately not attempted to rank the leaders in terms of influence as this is too subjective and challenging to measure. We haven't included leaders based in the US or Israel and focussed on European-based candidates.

No list is perfect, and there are undoubtedly many more leaders within the sector who deserve recognition in future editions.

The software sector is one of the most exciting and vibrant within the technology industry and we are delighted to recognize technology leaders who have played a key role in building some of the most successful and high growth software companies in Europe.

Peter Franks
Founder Neon River



About Neon River

Neon River is a headhunting firm that specializes in working with software and technology companies, helping them find and attract the best leaders in the industry.

We have deep experience of working with entrepreneurial VC and PE backed companies. If we can help you in the future – don't hesitate to reach out us

hello@neonriver.com



Marko Perisic

Chief Products and Engineering Officer
The Access Group

Backed by leading private equity firms Hg and TA Associates, The Access Group has reached a valuation of over £9bn. The company provides a suite of business management software tools across areas like finance, project management, accounting and procurement. The business was originally founded in 1991 and has over 7,500 employees.

Before becoming CPTO for The Access Group, Marko Perisic was CPTO for Zellis, a leading provider of HR and payroll software. He also spent twelve years working for Microsoft, including being GM for their SMB products. Perisic holds a BEng in Computer and Systems Engineering from Carleton University.



Daniel Becker

Chief Technology Officer
Dedalus Group

Daniel leads the technology organization for Dedalus, an Ardian PE backed provider of software to the healthcare sector. He leads a large team of 2,000+ engineers across various international locations.

Prior to Dedalus, Daniel spent five years working with the open source software provider Red Hat, where he led the Open Stack Engineering team. Previously he held other technology leadership roles including CTO for the early stage software business SourceDogg.

Daniel Becker holds a BEng in Computer Engineering from the University of Limerick, an MBA from University College Dublin and is currently pursuing a PhD in Computer Science from University College Dublin. Current focus areas include the future impacts of cloud and AI on healthcare.



Ben Jones

Group CTO
GfK

Ben Jones is CTO for GfK, who provide subscription analytics software and data services across a variety of sectors including FMCG, Retail, Technology and Retail. The company was backed by the private equity firm KKR before being acquired by NielsenIQ in 2023. Jones has been instrumental in building their new SaaS platform, Newron.

Prior to GfK, Jones was CTO for Euromoney, a leading provider of information on financial markets across the world. He has also worked with Emap and Homeserve in his early career.

He holds a BA in Classics from the University of Bristol and an MBA from Henley Business School.



Mark Spiteri

Portfolio CTO

Montagu

Mark Spiteri is the Portfolio CTO for Montagu, a leading PE firm, where he advises their portfolio of companies on product & technology strategy, engineering best practice, as well as overseeing technical due diligence on their investments.

Previously, Mark was SVP Software Engineering for Experian, and Chief Research and Development Officer for FinancialForce.com, an Advent, TCV & Salesforce backed provider of ERP software tools. He has also been SVP Engineering for Software AG, overseeing multiple acquisitions and integrations.

He holds a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Malta, and a PhD in Computer Science from Cambridge University.



Yaron Shaer

Chief Technology Officer
Klarna

Originally founded in 2005, Klarna has become one of the leading providers of payments software to e-commerce companies. Klarna is perhaps best known for its “buy now, pay later” functionality. Today, the company has over 6,000 employees.

Yaron joined the business as Senior Engineering Manager in 2014, before being promoted to VP Engineering in 2018 and CTO in 2022. In his earlier career, Yaron held engineering leadership positions at Camelot and Nokia.

He holds a BSc in Software Engineering from Tel Aviv University.



Dana Majid

Chief Technology Officer
MessageBird

Headquartered in Amsterdam, MessageBird, has reached a valuation of over \$3.8bn and is backed by leading technology investors such as Accel Partners and Atomico. The company offers a SaaS marketing platform that enables customers to engage with customers over a variety of different channels. Dana was promoted into the CTO role in 2021.

Previously he has worked with Airtime, who make mobile messaging software and the software consultancy Different.

He holds a BSc in Engineering from Amsterdam University.



Koen Köppen

CEO & CTO
Mollie

Mollie is a payments platform that makes it simple to take payments online or on mobile devices. Mollie has grown rapidly, and is valued at over \$7bn, having raised over \$1bn in funding from a host of PE investors including Blackstone, TCV, General Atlantic and EQT.

Koen joined the business as CTO in 2022, before being promoted to become CEO in 2023. Previously he was CTO of payments unicorn Klarna between 2017 and 2022. He joined Klarna originally back in 2011.

He holds a BSc in Econometrics from Erasmus University Rotterdam.



Jamie Hutton

Chief Technology Officer
Quantexa

Quantexa's software is used to help detect and prevent financial crime such as money laundering and is used predominantly by clients in the financial services sector. In 2023, the company completed a Series E funding round, that valued the company at over \$1.8bn. The company is backed by Warburg Pincus and Dawn Capital.

Hutton has deep experience of software used to combat financial crime, having previously been Fraud Solutions Director for SAS Institute and Head of Insurance Fraud Solutions for Detica.

He holds a MSc in Computer Engineering from the University of Southampton.



Stuart Pearce

Portfolio CTO
Hg

Hg is a leading private equity firm, specializing in buyouts of technology companies. Hg has a number of high profile investments in the software industry including Visma, Access Group and Dext. Stuart provides Hg's portfolio with advice on engineering best practice.

Prior to Hg, Stuart was Director of Application Development for Sophos, a security software company acquired by Thoma Bravo for \$3.8bn in 2019.

He holds a BEng in Software Engineering from the University of Manchester.



Phil Smith

Chief Technology Officer
Janes

Janes is a leading provider of defence intelligence – providing valuable data to clients in the military, security, aerospace and transport sectors. Backed by the PE firm Montagu, the business was carved out from IHS Markit in 2019.

Smith was appointed CTO in 2021, and was previously CIO for Vaultex, who provide cash processing services to large financial institutions. In his earlier career he held roles with The Co-op, Transactis and Yodel.

Smith holds a MEng in Microelectronics and Engineering from the University of Newcastle, and an MBA from Alliance Manchester Business School.



Jack Stockdale

Chief Technology Officer
Darktrace

Darktrace is best known for its AI security software that protects corporations from cyber attacks and threats such as ransomware. Headquartered in Cambridge, the company has over 2,500 staff and went public on the London Stock Exchange in 2021.

Stockdale was awarded an OBE in recognition of his achievements with Darktrace in 2019. He and his team were recognized for their outstanding contribution to engineering by the Royal Academy of Engineering MacRobert Innovation Award Committee in 2017 and again in 2019.

He holds a BSc in Computer Science from Lancaster University.



Martin Klenk

Co-Founder and Chief
Technology Officer
Celonis

Headquartered in Munich, Celonis specializes in process mining and execution management software. Process mining can be used to help automate manual processes. In August 2022, the company raised a further \$1bn in funding at a valuation of over \$13bn.

Investors include the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA). The business has over 20 offices around the world and is one of the largest software companies in Europe.

Klenk is a co-founder of the company, joining the business in 2010. He holds a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Munich.



Johannes Schaback

CTO
SumUp

SumUp is a payments software and hardware business, with over 3,000 employees around the world. The company is valued at over €8bn, with investors including Bain Capital and Goldman Sachs. Schaback joined the company as CTO in 2021.

Previously he was co-founder and CTO of Visual Meta, who operate a number of shopping portals across Europe.

Schaback holds a BSc in Computer Science from the University of Berlin and an MSc in Computer Science from Shanghai Jiao Tong University.



Marcus Bronstein

Chief Technology Officer
Teya

Teya provides payment and loyalty scheme software to business customers around the world. The company was previously known as SaltPay. The company has around 2,000 employees across 20 offices. The business has raised over \$1.2bn in funding.

Bronstein joined the business as CTO in 2020, having previously worked for the online fashion unicorn Farfetch as Director of Architecture. Prior to Farfetchm Bronstein was CTO Latin America for the online dating site Match.com.

He holds a BSc in Engineering for the University of Rio de Janeiro.



Patrick Chatain

CTO
Contentsquare

Contentsquare are best known for their digital experience platform that helps companies to create better online experiences for their customers. Headquartered in Paris, Contentsquare raised \$600m in funding in July 2022, at a valuation of \$5.6bn.

Chatain became CTO of Contentsquare in 2017 and was previously CTO of FullSix Group, a marketing agency that is part of the Havas Group. He spent much of his early career at the French telecoms operator Bouygues.

Chatain holds a BSc in Physics from Pierre and Marie Curie University.



Meri Williams

Chief Technology Officer
Pleo

Meri Williams is Chief Technology Officer at international fintech unicorn Pleo, a cloud-based finance management system that issues smart company cards to employees to automate expenses, pays invoices and provides real-time insights into businesses end-to-end spending.

Meri's role involves leading the technology team, spanning engineering, IT, security, data and analytics, with an especial focus on technical innovation within Pleo's product.

Meri can talk about a broad range of topics and her areas of expertise include the role of technology in changing the current business landscape, AI and how it is driving innovation within finance, building & scaling tech teams, recruiting engineers, LGBTQ+ inclusion, STEM education & career paths for CTOs.



Paolo Negri

Chief Technology Officer
and Co-founder
Contentful

Paolo Negri is CTO and co-founder of Contentful, a software company best known for their headless content management platform. In 2021, the company raised Series F funding of \$175m at a reported valuation of close to \$1bn.

Before co-founding Contentful, Paolo worked for the online games company Wooga, and the online homeware retailer Home24. An Italian by background, Negri has spent much of his career working in the UK and Germany.

He holds a BSc in Engineering Management from the University of Milan.



William Montgomery

Chief Technology Officer
Thought Machine

Thought Machine provides a SaaS based core banking and payments software platform to customers around the world. Montgomery has been CTO of the company since it was founded in 2014. In May 2022, the company raised \$160m in Series D funding, valuing the company at over \$2.7bn. Customers include Lloyds Banking Group, Standard Chartered and Curve.

Prior to Thought Machine, Montgomery worked as a Senior Software Engineer for Google.

He holds a BSc in Computer Engineering from Edinburgh University and a MPhil in Computer Science from Cambridge University.



Erik Muttersbach

Co-founder & Member of
the Board of Directors
Forto

Erik Muttersbach is a co-founder of Forto, and served as its CTO from 2015 until August 2023, where he stepped back from the CTO role and into a board capacity. Forto provides logistics and supply chain software to customers. In March 2022, the company raised \$250m in Series D funding, valuing the business at over \$2.1bn. Investors include SoftBank, Northzone and A.P. Moeller.

Mutterbach co-founded Forto after leaving university. He holds a BSc and MSc in Computer Science from the Technical University of Munich, and a degree in technology management from the Center for Digital Technology and Management (CDTM).



Richard Rosenberg

Chief Technology Officer
Spendesk

Richard Rosenberg is currently CTO for Spendesk, who specialize in developing cloud-based software for helping companies to manage their expenses and broader costs. Headquartered in Paris, Spendesk raised \$114m in Series C funding in January 2022, valuing the business at over \$1.5bn. Investors include General Atlantic, Eight Roads and Index Ventures.

Rosenberg is a highly experienced CTO, having previously been CTO for the Financial Times and leading online travel site Hotels.com.

He holds a BEng in Aeronautical Engineering from the University of Salford.



Razvan Ranca

Co-Founder and CTO
Tractable

Razvan Ranca is CTO and co-founder of Tractable, who provide AI-based software that is able to assess damage to property and vehicles. In July 2023, the company raised \$65m in Series E funding from investors such as SoftBank and Insight Partners. Tractable currently processes over \$7bn in insurance claims regarding damaged property and vehicles.

Ranca co-founded Tractable after leaving university. He holds a BSc in Computer Science and AI from Edinburgh University and a MPhil in Computer Science and Machine Learning from Cambridge University.



Luca Martinetti

Co-Founder and CTO
TrueLayer

TrueLayer is an open banking payments network – helping to power faster and more secure online payments. The company raised \$130m in 2021 which valued the company at over \$1bn. Investors include Tiger Global and Stripe.

Martinetti co-founded TrueLayer in 2017, and previously worked as an engineer for Plaid.

He is currently based in London having spent much of his early career in San Francisco.



Bernd Gross

CTO
Software AG

With revenues of over €1bn, Software AG is one of the largest European headquartered software companies. The company is best known for its Business Process Management (BPM) software and big data analytics tools.

Gross joined Software AG in 2017, initially to manage their IoT and Cloud business, before being promoted into the CTO role in 2019.

He was previously CEO of Cumulocity, a machine-to-machine technology spinoff from Nokia Siemens Networks.

He holds an MSc in Technology from Dusseldorf University of Applied Sciences and an MBA from London Business School.



Sigurður Ingvar Ámundason

CTO
Rapyd

Payments software company Rapyd has grown rapidly to a valuation of over \$15bn, and is backed by a host of leading investors including BlackRock, Fidelity and Target Global. Amundason has deep experience of working in the payments industry having spent much of his career working in the sector.

Amundason was acquired into the company following Rapyd's acquisition of the Icelandic payments company Valitor in 2020. Amundason was COO of Valitor prior to the acquisition.

He holds a BSc in Computer Science from Reykjavik University.



Gordon Pretorius

CTO
Typeform

Typeform specializes in developing software that enables companies to provide high quality online forms and surveys.

Headquartered in Barcelona, the company was originally founded in 2012, and in 2022 raised \$135m in Series C funding from Sofina, General Atlantic and Index Ventures amongst others.

Gordon was promoted from VP Engineering to CTO in 2022. Previously he was VP Engineering for Moonpig, and was Head of Engineering for online food delivery service Just Eat.

Gordon holds a BSc in Software Engineering from the University of Pretoria, and an MBA from the University of Liverpool.



Steve Tait

Chief Technology Officer
Snow Software

Snow Software helps companies to achieve greater visibility and management over their technology investments. The company is valued at over \$1bn and backed by Sumeru Equity Partners and Vitruvian Partners amongst others.

Tait was appointed CTO in 2022, and previously was VP Engineering for Calyx, who specialize in software used for clinical research purposes. He was also VP Engineering for BAE Systems Applied Intelligence who develop software products in the areas of threat intelligence, cyber defense and preventing financial crime.

He holds a BSc in Geography and an MSc In Geographical Information Systems from the University of Leicester.



Ville Hämäläinen

Chief Technology Officer
RELEX Solutions

Headquartered in Helsinki, RELEX Solutions provides supply chain and retail planning software that helps companies to drive greater efficiencies across their business. In 2022, the company raised a €500m funding round led by Blackstone Growth. The company has over 1,300 employees.

Hamalainen has been CTO of RELEX since 2019. He was previously Senior Director of Network Security Engineering for Forcepoint, a leading provider of data security software.

Hamalainen holds an MSc in Information Technology from Helsinki University of Technology.



Jürgen Müller

Chief Technology Officer and
Executive Board Member
SAP

With revenues of over \$32bn, SAP is one of the largest and most high profile software companies in the world. Best known for its ERP software, the company has built out an incredibly broad set of software applications, both organically and via acquisition.

Müller has been with SAP for over ten years, and was promoted into the CTO role in 2019. He was previously their Chief Innovation Officer and also MD of SAP Labs in Berlin.

He holds an MSc in Information Systems from the University of Göttingen and a PhD in Engineering from Hasso Plattner Institute.



Marijus Briedis

CTO NordVPN
Nord Security

Nord Security provides a suite of security software products, but is best known for its NordVPN virtual private network. In 2023, the company raised a further \$100m in funding, led by private equity firm Warburg Pincus. The deal values the business at over \$3bn.

NordVPN reportedly has over 10m users, and was won numerous awards include Time Magazine's Best Inventions award. Prior to NordVPN, Briedis worked as a freelance web developer.

He holds a BSc in Computer Systems Networking and Telecommunications from Kaunas College.



Alexander Lystad

CTO
Visma

Visma is one of the largest PE backed software companies in Europe with over 14,500 employees. The company is best known for its ERP software which is used by SME, enterprise and public sector customers. The business has revenues of over €2bn.

Visma is majority owned by PE firm Hg Capital, with minority stakes being held by Warburg Pincus and TPG. It is reported the company is valued at over €20bn.

Lystad was appointed CTO in 2023 having previously been Director of Cloud and Engineering for the company. He holds a BSc in Computer Science from NTNU and a MSc in Embedded Systems from the University of South-East Norway.



Next Generation Executive Search

hello@neonriver.com

