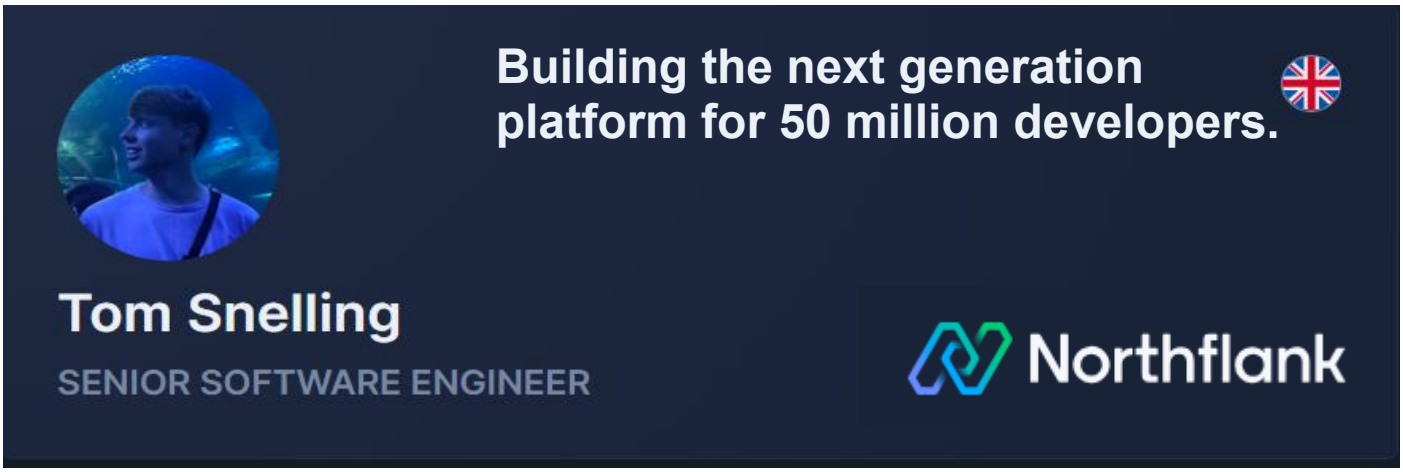


I left JM6 with maths, physics and chemistry A levels, dropping biology after completing the AS-level to continue with the other three and to make room for an extended project (EPQ) which I really enjoyed as it gave me a chance to study and work on something different to my usual subjects. I don't remember my topic of choice exactly but it was something computer science related as I already had a strong interest in that. I would definitely recommend that to others – find something that really interests you!

After sixth form I attended Loughborough University to study computer science. The main prerequisite for this was an A-level in maths, which I also really enjoyed studying at JMHS - the teaching staff did a good job of preparing me for and explaining to me the types of maths that would be part of a computer science degree. Loughborough was great and I and made some life-long friends. The course was interesting and fulfilling right the way through.

As part of my degree I also undertook a placement year (or year in industry) between my second and final year at a company named Clock. Based in Watford, they are a digital agency building apps and websites for clients. It gave me a taste of working in the real world, and taught me that I probably didn't want to be doing agency work forever!

While at Clock, one of the other placement students Will, left part way through to focus full-time on his own tech start-up, Northflank. Half-way through my final year of university Will reached out to me and asked if I would like to join him at Northflank. He and his co-founder had just started hiring others and I think I was employee number 3 or 4. Just over 4 years later I am still at Northflank and very much enjoying it, and we are now a team of 12.

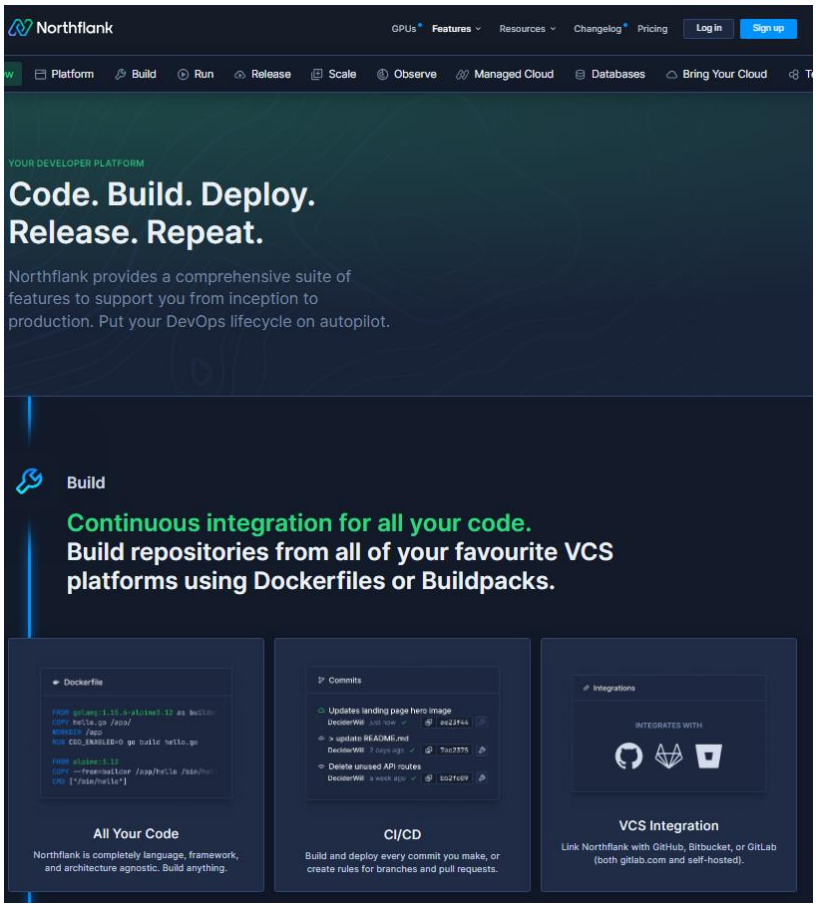
Northflank is in essence a 'hosting platform'. When software engineers build software, they need a way to 'deploy' that software (apps, websites, databases etc.) into the cloud so that it becomes accessible to the rest of the world. Northflank is a platform that simplifies that (usually quite complex) so that developers can spend more of their time being productive and building their software than worrying about awkward and complex deployment processes.

There is much more to it than that, but that's probably the simplest elevator pitch I can give!

Funnily enough, Clock is now one of our customers and they deploy most of the apps and websites they build for their clients via Northflank, including some big

companies like BBFC, The Telegraph, The Times, and a couple of premiership rugby teams. We have loads of cool start-ups as customers who are building all sorts of things in sectors like AI, aviation, finance, and more.

My current role is senior software engineer which is quite generic, but I am responsible for building the front-end of the Northflank application – the user interface that our customers interact with every day in using Northflank. As well as writing code, this gives me quite a lot of room for creativity in designing the look and feel of the application.



I hope in some way this article will encourage Sixth Form (JM6) students with an interest in computer science with their university/apprenticeship choices.

Tom