

STEVE WADDINGTON

Technology Executive | AI Adoption & Strategy | Network Architecture

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PROFILE

Technology executive with 30+ years across telecommunications, networking, e-commerce, and management consulting — including CEO, CIO/CTO, and Director roles, and a turnaround of a national ISP from a \$400K monthly loss to a \$300K monthly profit. A rare combination of board-level leadership and current, hands-on AI practice: I initiated and funded applied AI research in 2009, and today I design, deploy, and operate LLM-based systems myself — self-hosted inference platforms, API-based agentic workflows, and multi-assistant production pipelines. I help organisations cut through AI hype with practical, commercially grounded adoption strategies.

AI EXPERIENCE

Independent AI Practitioner & Consultant | Online Networks 2023 – Present

Perth, WA — hands-on research, development, and advisory in applied AI (onet.com.au/ai-projects)

- Designed, deployed, and operate a self-hosted AI platform on Linux (Open WebUI, vector databases, agentic coding tools), integrating frontier-model APIs including the Anthropic Claude platform.
- Built and run a multi-assistant AI production workflow — persona-based specialist assistants for songwriting, visual design, writing, and promotion — delivering complete creative projects including a published AI concept album.
- Evaluate and benchmark AI models and tooling hands-on, from hosted frontier models to open-weight image-generation models, with a focus on commercial viability rather than novelty.
- Publish ongoing analysis on AI value, persona-based collaboration frameworks, and practical adoption at onet.com.au.
- Advise businesses on pragmatic AI integration: where it creates measurable productivity gains, where it doesn't, and how to implement it safely.

Founder & Sponsor, Applied AI Research Program | Exetel / Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology 2009 – 2012

A commercial AI program more than a decade before the LLM era

- Initiated and funded SLIIT's Chair of AI Studies to develop an AI chatbot for first-line customer technical support, trained on years of Exetel helpdesk resolution data.
- Started the preceding in-house development using the AIML framework (then state of the art), recruiting and mentoring intern talent to carry it forward.
- Negotiated the research partnership directly with SLIIT's Chancellor and Vice-Chancellor, building on a paid internship and scholarship program I had established.

EXECUTIVE & CONSULTING EXPERIENCE

Council Member | GLG (Gerson Lehrman Group) 2014 – Present

- Provide telecommunications, media, technology, and AI consulting to organisations and investors in Australia and internationally, supporting strategic and investment decision-making.

Founder & Director | SJW Gems 2013 – Present

- Founded and ran a global e-commerce business in gemstones and gemmology, building the web platform, digital marketing, and social media strategy while operating internationally from Bangkok.
- GIA Graduate Gemologist (2019); member, Gemmological Association of Australia.

CEO | Exetel Pty Ltd 2012 – 2013

- Led a national ISP through a critical turnaround: from a negative \$20M balance sheet and \$400K monthly loss to a positive balance sheet and \$300K monthly profit within the year.

Co-Founder & Director | Exetel Pty Ltd 2004 – 2012

Sydney, NSW

- Co-founded one of Australia's leading independent ISPs; Network Architect for the national ISP network and enterprise solutions.
- Oversaw network deployment and operations, integrated business systems, and the recruitment, development, and mentoring of the technical team.

CIO / CTO | Swiftel Ltd 2002 – 2004
• Led IT infrastructure and technology strategy as Chief Information/Technology Officer.

Earlier Career

Senior Manager — Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, Melbourne 2001 – 2002
Engineering Manager — Paradox Digital, Perth 1999 – 2001
Network Architect — One.Tel, Sydney 1996 – 1999
National Engineering Manager — TPG, Sydney 1992 – 1996

SKILLS

- **AI & Emerging Technology:** LLM deployment and integration (Anthropic Claude API, Open WebUI, agentic tools), self-hosted AI infrastructure, prompt and workflow design, model evaluation, AI adoption strategy.
- **Leadership & Strategy:** Strategic planning, P&L management and turnaround, business development, management consulting, supplier negotiation, staff recruitment, development and mentoring.
- **Network Engineering:** Network design and architecture (LAN to national/global scale), Cisco hardware and IOS, MPLS, BGP and all routing protocols, voice/data/video integration, network security and management, Linux server administration.
- **Digital Business:** E-commerce, digital marketing, digital strategy, international business operations.

AFFILIATIONS & COMMUNITY

- Gemological Institute of America — Graduate Gemologist (2019)
- Gemmological Association of Australia — Member (2020 – Present)
- Belmont Business Enterprise Centre — Volunteer SME Mentor (2020 – 2022)
- Friends of the Western Ground Parrot — Treasurer (2013 – 2015)