

AARON NONIS

ajnonis78@gmail.com | (425) 214-6450 | linkedin.com/in/aaronnonis | US Remote (AZ / Seattle)

CONTENT INNOVATION AND INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT EXECUTIVE ZERO-TO-ONE STUDIOS, PLATFORM-NATIVE EXPERIENCES, AI-NATIVE PRODUCTION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive who builds innovation studios inside platforms and ships firsts from them. Founded HBO's interactive division as a zero-to-one incubation team inside a global entertainment platform: designed the organization, hired its six directors, and led it to an Emmy for the Westworld VR experience while shipping interactive titles to Steam and Quest and an interactive series companion with Steven Soderbergh. Two decades at the intersection of content, gaming, technology, and consumer experience: Microsoft's XNA founding team, HBO's client platform across 200+ devices, and COO of a venture-backed interactive studio through \$80M raised. Now an AI-native builder with shipped receipts: a working agentic entertainment product in 48 hours, a live-generation game loop at sub-cent session cost, and a governed multi-model production pipeline. Moves ideas from concept to launch through cross-functional influence, test-and-learn discipline, and scalable operating models. Innovation is a team sport; I build the teams.

SELECTED OUTCOMES

- Founded and ran HBO's interactive division: a cross-functional incubation studio (narrative, art, design, engineering, production) built zero to one inside a global platform, chartered by the Emmy Award won for the Westworld VR experience (2017).
- Launched platform-native experiences from concept through execution: Westworld VR (a marketing activation that became Emmy-winning content), Westworld Awakening on Steam and Quest, and Mosaic, Steven Soderbergh's interactive series companion, shipped as executive producer in parallel with the HBO series.
- Created culturally relevant experiences tied to major moments: activations timed to Game of Thrones and Westworld season launches, monthly content reviews with HBO and WarnerMedia leadership, and a \$120M AAA Game of Thrones program developed with greenlit creative and a modeled P&L.
- Led through influence rather than authority: converted HBO's most powerful skeptic organization by shipping the Amazon Fire TV app in eight weeks, enabling a major distribution deal, and won a politically entrenched New York org through education rather than replacement.
- AI-native building with receipts: an agentic entertainment product serving a live 1,500-member community shipped in 48 hours; a live-generation game loop at under one cent of inference per session; a governed multi-model production pipeline across a million-word creative corpus.
- Shaped monetization and partnerships: \$50M+ in digital goods sales, creator-economy and marketplace design, publishing across Steam, Quest, and Epic, and operator discipline drawn from \$100M budgets and a 500-person organization.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Zero-to-One Incubation and Innovation Studios; Interactive and Immersive Entertainment; Platform-Native Experience Design; Cross-Functional Leadership Through Influence; AI-Native Production and Agentic Systems; Sponsorship and Monetization Design; Talent and IP Partnerships; Test-and-Learn Operating Models; Budgeting, P&L, and Scalable Operating Models

CRAFT AND TECHNICAL

- AI and Agents: Anthropic Claude (API, agentic patterns, prompt caching), OpenAI, Gemini, Suno, image generation; verification harnesses; evaluation and cost engineering
- Immersive and Engines: VR and AR production, virtual production (maximum-tier Epic MegaGrant), Unreal pipelines, motion capture direction, console certification
- Platforms and Publishing: Steam, Quest, Epic, and console storefronts; streaming device ecosystems; creator tools and UGC marketplaces; DRM and content protection

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Principal Client Partner September 2025 to Present

Rubberband Village, Remote (independent via Uncharted Tangents through April 2026; full time from May 2026)

- Fractional transformation lead: AI strategy, solution architecture, and hands-on implementation; introduced agent-assisted program management that measurably improved delivery on troubled engagements.

Founder and Principal September 2025 to May 2026

Uncharted Tangents, Goodyear, AZ

- Led technology and organizational assessment for the Better Business Bureau's international association through a CEO-led restructuring; rebuilt the public web presence.

Co-Founder (pre-seed) November 2024 to March 2025

AI-native interactive storytelling venture (stealth), Remote

- Designed and shipped a working agentic game-master prototype in 48 hours for a live 1,500-member community; modeled a fully agentic content engine and presented at DICE, generating four investor conversations.

Chief Operating Officer, Platform Director, and Registered CISO April 2021 to November 2024

Shrapnel | Neon Machine, Inc., Seattle, WA (AAA extraction shooter with a creator economy)

- Built and operated a AAA interactive entertainment studio: 7 founders to 250 people, \$30M in venture funding, \$50M+ in digital goods sales, and back-to-back Web3 Game of the Year awards.
- As Platform Director, owned the creator platform: UGC map tools, cosmetic creator pipeline, and a marketplace economy designed so community content carries the long tail of a AAA experience.
- Ran a 3-billion-unit digital economy across 200+ investors with zero security incidents; designed the revenue architecture that sustained the studio through a contested-governance period.

Vice President, Interactive and Immersive Experiences April 2017 to April 2020

HBO / WarnerMedia, Seattle and Los Angeles

- Founded HBO's interactive division: designed the matrix organization (two product paths crossed with narrative, art, design, and engineering), wrote its job architecture, and hired its six directors.
- Won the Emmy for Outstanding Creative Achievement in Interactive Media for the Westworld VR experience, built with the series' creators as a 12-person, \$4M production.
- Executive produced Mosaic with Steven Soderbergh, shipping the interactive app and the series in parallel; launched Westworld Awakening on Steam and Quest, driving quality through vertical-slice gates and a mocap investment.
- Ran the division as an incubation studio: SmartGlass and second-screen prototyping, Vive-era VR experimentation with Valve, dark-ride experiments, and a \$120M AAA program advanced through creative, distribution, and finance leadership.

Vice President, Interactive Application Engineering July 2012 to April 2017

HBO, Seattle, WA

- Built a 500-person engineering and product organization (300+ engineers hired) delivering HBO GO, HBO Now, and the client platforms that became HBO Max, across 3 to 20+ platforms and 200+ devices.
- Shipped the Amazon Fire TV app in eight weeks, enabling the distribution partnership; built the cross-platform pipeline enabling 100+ releases per month; proposed and staffed the strangler-pattern migration that ended \$10M+ per month in vendor costs.

Earlier Career: Blade Games World and Microsoft 2001 to 2012

Engineering Manager, Blade Games World (2009 to 2012);

XNA founding team and Development Lead, Microsoft (2004 to 2009);

Small Business Server, Microsoft (2001 to 2004)

- Led engineering for Jumala, a consumer game of making games: creation tools, custom UI engine, and a publish flow under 10 minutes from build to live.
- Third member of the XNA founding team; development lead for XNA Game Studio (4,000+ developers, 3,000+ certified Xbox 360 titles); personally built XNA Game Studio Connect, the certified bridge for consumer code on a closed console; the Connect work produced two patents in closed-system security.

EDUCATION, AWARDS, AND ORIGINAL IP

Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering, Minors in Mathematics and Music, University of Washington

- Emmy Award, Interactive Media, Westworld VR (2017);
- Webby Award, Best Streaming Video App, HBO Now (2016, 2017);
- Web3 Game of the Year, Shrapnel (2022, 2023);
- Two original AI-native entertainment properties in active development: an agentic ghost-story experience with sub-cent session economics, and a dual-format rock opera and series IP produced through a governed multi-model pipeline.

PATENTS

- US7676675B2 · Architecture for Connecting a Remote Client to a Local Client Desktop (Microsoft, Small Business Server): the remote-administration architecture from my first Microsoft ship.
- US20080140958A1, granted as US8875271 · Executing Unsigned Content and Securing Access in a Closed System (Microsoft, XNA): the access layer that let consumer code run safely on a locked-down Xbox 360.
- EP2115609B1 · Transfer of Content to a Closed System (Microsoft, XNA): the authenticated, encrypted channel that carried that code from PC to console.
- US10228828B2 · Coordinating User Interface Elements Across Screen Spaces (HBO, granted 2019): the screen-navigation architecture underneath HBO's client applications.