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Software and technology play a critical role for organizations, who often rely on technical consultants to help them navigate the challenges of an increasingly complex digital world. By providing specialized expertise in areas such as cloud migration, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and data analytics, technical consultants support organizations in the design, implementation, and management of complex technological solutions. Analysts predict that the global software consulting market will reach over $600 billion in revenue by 2030, expanding at an impressive annual growth rate of about 12% (Grand View Research, 2023). Software products that use artificial intelligence and machine learning are in especially high-demand, as they assist organizations in data-based decision making. Prominent multinational consulting firms such as Accenture, Deloitte, Cognizant, and Infosys comprise a large portion of the global IT consulting market, offering both management consulting and technical integration services for government and corporate clients.

Organizations often look to software platforms to solve their technical challenges, since these platforms offer a proven framework for building technical solutions and can be customized for their organization's unique needs. Palantir develops proprietary data analysis platforms that assist organizations in decision making, working closely with clients and partner organizations to integrate their products. While not strictly a consulting company, Palantir operates in the enterprise software market, often taking on the role of a consulting company and working with a global network of partners to extend the reach of their platforms. Collectively, IT consultants, software developers, and business leaders influence the organizations they work with by driving the adoption of emerging technologies, shaping technical strategy, and shifting organizational culture to improve efficiency and move organizations closer towards their goals.

Case Study: Palantir

Palantir Technologies Inc. is an American software company that specializes in serving large organizations with complex data analytics needs through their customizable data analysis platforms. The company is headquartered in Denver, Colorado and has around 4,000 full-time employees. Palantir serves clients in both the private sector and government, notably working with defense and intelligence agencies tasked with making critical decisions in high-stakes environments. The company has established itself as an indispensable tool for helping organizations assimilate and make sense of vast, fragmented data sets, positioning its platforms as "operating systems" for both national security and enterprise decision-making.

Brief History

Palantir was founded in 2003 by a group led by Peter Thiel, a co-founder of PayPal and an early investor in Facebook, in the wake of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks. The company is named after the "seeing stones" of J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, a long-time fascination of Thiel. Palantir secured early funding from In-Q-Tel, a venture capital firm associated with the U.S. intelligence community (Iliadis & Acker, 2022). The company's early prototype was based on PayPal's fraud-detection algorithm, evolving into a tool to assist U.S. counterterrorism efforts by unifying disparate intelligence datasets, where the U.S. military's own Distributed Common Ground System (DCGS) was falling short. To establish themselves in the defense sector, Palantir offered their product directly to military commanders on the ground in Afghanistan, allowing them to train with the software free of charge (King, 2025). From their initial work with the military and intelligence agencies, Palantir has expanded their reach into civilian government agencies, police agencies, and major corporate clients.

Major Players

Palantir's identity is closely associated with two of its founders: Peter Thiel and Alex Karp. Both Thiel and Karp studied philosophy as undergraduates, with Thiel graduating from Stanford and Karp graduating from Haverford college; the two met while attending Stanford Law School, bonding over their love of debate and their disdain for law school. While an undergraduate at Stanford, Thiel founded the *Stanford Review*, a conservative student newspaper, and he remains active in politics, contributing heavily to the campaigns of conservative candidates (Fossett, 2021). Karp has been associated with the other side of the political spectrum, describing his parents as "hippies" and himself as a "far-left Jewish kid" (Steinberger, 2020).

Thiel and Karp also share a connection to the city of Frankfurt, Germany. Thiel was born in Frankfurt and Karp attended Goethe University Frankfurt, earning a PhD in neoclassical social theory and studying briefly under Jürgen Habermas. At Goethe University Frankfurt, Karp wrote his doctoral dissertation *Aggression in the Lebenswelt* under the supervision of Karola Brede. In his dissertation, Karp explores the relationship between language, aggression, and culture, arguing that jargon can encode aggression in such a way that it becomes socially acceptable, integrating the speaker into a "circle of belonging" (Karp, 2002/2023). Karp later went on to work as a research associate at the Sigmund Freud Institute in Frankfurt before receiving an inheritance from his grandfather, which he used to make some successful investments in stocks and startups, eventually managing the assets of high-net-worth individuals and launching the Caedmon Group, a London-based investment firm (Greenberg & Mac, 2013). His business acumen and ability to translate complex problems into understandable language led Palantir's early founders to hire him as their CEO, where his unique background and approach to business have been instrumental to Palantir's success.

Products and Services

Palantir offers three main products: Palantir Gotham, a data analytics platform for defense, intelligence, and police agencies; Palantir Foundry, a data analytics platform for civilian business operations; and Palantir Apollo, a DevOps platform that organizations use to deploy Palantir software to their own infrastructure. Palantir Gotham is the original data analytics platform that Palantir developed to assist in U.S. counterterrorism efforts, which is now used by military and police agencies across the world. Palantir advertises Gotham as the "operating system for global decision-making," and it is rumored to have been used in the operation that located and killed Osama bin Laden in 2011, which the company does not deny (Nora, 2023). Foundry is Palantir's business offering, which models an organization's data into what it calls an "Ontology," representing the fundamental objects of an organization's operations, their properties, and how they relate to one another. Palantir's Artificial Intelligence Platform (AIP) integrates an organization's data with large language models (LLMs) to support AI-assisted workflows. Apollo is a continuous delivery platform that deploys Palantir's software to secure infrastructure managed by client organizations; based on widely-used open source tools like Git and Kubernetes, Apollo includes robust security, auditability, and change management features to ensure compliance and accountability. Palantir reported over a billion dollars of revenue in the second quarter of 2025, with much of its revenue coming from long-term government contracts.

Reputation

Palantir's reputation is controversial and complex. With the company's roots in the intelligence community and its expansion into the civilian sector, many are concerned about mass surveillance and the erosion of civil liberties. Palantir's software is used by police and defense agencies for controversial and ethically problematic purposes, for example, selecting

military targets in Gaza, which has resulted in the "mistaken" killing of nearly 200 aid workers (Bamford, 2024). Palantir has also recently deepened its ties with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to build an "ImmigrationOS" that aims to assist in accelerating the deportation of illegal immigrants (Immigration Policy Tracking Project, 2025). Despite the politically sensitive issues the company deals with, Karp remains outspoken, frequently engaging with the media and promoting the company's agenda. Palantir's reputation with its customers is generally good, but with some detractors. Many online reviewers agree that Palantir delivers on its promises, but some complain that the initial setup of the platform can be difficult and Palantir's pricing can be expensive. As an employer, Palantir has also received mixed reviews, with some finding their mission-driven culture inspiring, and others complaining about long work hours and poor work/life balance.

Trends

Although it was founded over twenty years ago, Palantir is now receiving much more attention. The company's stock is up more than 200% since the beginning of the second Trump administration, and they recently secured a billion dollar contract with the Navy (Allyn, 2025). Karp was named one of Time Magazine's 100 most influential people in 2025 and also released *The Technological Republic,* which argues for increased collaboration between the tech industry and government in the support of a "national project" (Karp & Zamiska, 2025). Palantir is positioned as a market-leader in the enterprise data analytics sector, which is expected to show continued growth, and is currently hiring technical writers, product designers, and software engineers, among other positions, for roles based in its offices in Denver, New York, London, Seattle, Palo Alto, and Washington, D.C., as well as other metropolitan areas in nations politically aligned with the United States.

Target Jobs

Palantir makes a distinction between two types of software engineers: forward-deployed software engineers (FDSEs) and traditional software engineers, or "devs" (Palantir, 2019). FDSEs work directly with client organizations to integrate Palantir's platforms, often doing extensive custom development work to meet their client's unique needs. Palantir's devs, on the other hand, work directly on Palantir's platforms to develop features that are used by all of its customers. This distinction is helpful for understanding emerging roles in the industry, as other companies like OpenAI and Salesforce have adopted similar terminology for their engineering roles. As more organizations rely on complex technical platforms like Palantir, there is a growing need for technical professionals who specialize in these platforms and can effectively leverage them to create value for their clients.

My Approach

To secure a job in the field, I've spent several years developing my technical skillset, which has included attending a coding bootcamp, working in entry-level technical roles, and earning industry certifications. I graduated from CSULB with a Philosophy B.A. and am currently pursuing a Computer Science B.S. with CSUMB, which should help me to establish more credibility with hiring managers in order to reach the next step in my career path. The courses I'll be taking with CSUMB will also help me to develop skills that are directly applicable to software engineering roles, for example, the Software Engineering and Capstone courses will involve working with a team on software projects, which should provide some relevant experiences I can discuss with potential employers.

Continuous learning is necessary to succeed in any field, especially software engineering, where new technologies are constantly emerging. Many of the technical skills I've developed

have been self-taught, and I plan on continuing to learn technologies that interest me. For example, Palantir, OpenAI, and similar companies have learning platforms where anyone can learn how to use their products. Additionally, organizations like CompTIA offer vendor-neutral technical certifications, and I'm currently studying for the Linux+ and Server+ exams, after having earned the A+, Network+, and Security+ certifications as part of the Cybersecurity A.S. program at Coastline College. Cloud technologies are also in high demand; I have the AWS Solutions Architect certification and will likely earn more cloud certifications in the future. By learning relevant technologies that are widely used in the industry, along with the computer science fundamentals and teamwork skills I'll learn at CSUMB, I should be able to secure a job in the software development field.

Skills are necessary but not sufficient for career success, however, since applying skills requires access to opportunities. Networking can open many doors, and as a student there are several resources available to me. The CSUMB Career Center offers some helpful resources, for example, information on internship programs and access to student job boards. In the past, I've found school to be very helpful in my job search, as I was able to find my last job, working as an IT Support Technician for a public research agency, through my local community college. As *The Technological Republic* argues, there will likely be more collaboration between the tech industry and government in the future, so there is a need for civic-minded technologists who can bridge the divide between innovation and public service. I look forward to continuing to contribute to the public good as my career develops.

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