

Contact

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Top Skills

Network Security

System Administration

Network Engineering

Languages

Dutch (Native or Bilingual)

French (Elementary)

English (Professional Working)

Certifications

Luisteren, Samenvatten, Doorvragen

Christophe Sterkens

System | Software | Security | Privacy
Ghent Metropolitan Area

Summary

Network and Systems Engineer with 13+ years across enterprise networking, identity, cloud, and security in SMB, Enterprise, hospitality, gaming, maritime, and public sector environments. Hands-on with multi-vendor switching and routing (Aruba, Alcatel-Lucent, Ubiquiti), enterprise firewalls (Palo Alto, Fortinet, pfSense), routing protocols (BGP, OSPF, IS-IS), and modern automation (Ansible, Docker). Repeated track record of inheriting unstructured environments and delivering documented, consolidated, production architectures.

Experience

District09

System Network Administrator

January 2026 - April 2026 (4 months)

Ghent Metropolitan Area

Network engineering for the City of Ghent's IT services organization.

- Enterprise switching and routing across Aruba and Alcatel-Lucent fleets (including Alcatel-Lucent APs migration to Aruba). L3, ACLs, IS-IS, BGP, and fiber work.
- NAC with Active Directory integration for network access control.
- Palo Alto firewall deployment and configuration.
- Infoblox for DNS, DHCP, and IPAM.
- Automation and observability with Ansible and Elastic.
- On-site rack and cabling work as part of the broader infrastructure team.

Confident IT Consultancy

Founder & Principal Consultant

March 2017 - September 2024 (7 years 7 months)

Reyndersstraat 30 2000 Antwerpen

Independent IT consultancy serving SMBs across hospitality, retail, maritime, and adjacent sectors. Single point of contact for full-scope IT across network, security, systems, cloud, and ongoing support.

- Long-form direct IT management for client businesses, including multi-year retainers in hospitality and serviced office sectors.
- International subcontracting through specialist partners on maritime networking projects.
- Vendor management, on-site deployment, and platform/infrastructure operations across the engagement portfolio.

Hackerspace Gent

Board Member

January 2023 - February 2024 (1 year 2 months)

Ghent

Elected to the four-person board of Ghent's community hackerspace after the previous board stepped down during a planned relocation.

Shared operational responsibility through the transition: finances, administrative registration, and stock management.

Purple Puppet BV

IT Consultant || Confident IT

January 2022 - July 2022 (7 months)

Bruges

Freelance IT engagement with a Belgian animation studio working with major game and entertainment clients.

- Designed and deployed a new local network with proper security and firewall segmentation.
- Stood up a Microsoft 365 environment with cloud directory services.
- Deployed Peplink multi-WAN bonded hardware for frequently-traveling staff.
- Implemented local backup and recovery, with improved RDP-based remote work workflows.
- Consolidated software licensing and advised on hardware cost optimization.

AMPLR

Chief Technology Officer

February 2021 - January 2022 (1 year)

Ghent Metropolitan Area

Owned the technical platform at a B2B networking startup serving hospitality and retail across Belgium and the Netherlands.

- Architected and operated the connectivity stack at customer sites: a multi-vendor topology covering Ubiquiti UniFi for premium deployments, TP-Link for cost-sensitive volume, and Peplink Balance routers for high-uptime venues.
- Built and operated the cloud platform: virtualized controllers and bonding hubs, fronted by Cloudflare and Nginx, deployed through Docker.
- Established two strategic vendor partnerships: TP-Link partner status, and Peplink partnership. Both relationships included direct engineering feedback into vendor product roadmaps (API features, CLI behavior).
- Built out the physical security capability on top of the network: IP cameras, DVR, and door access integrated into the site stack.
- Initiated the move toward ISP capability with DNS hosting infrastructure and carrier partnerships (cellular, last-mile) in progress.
- Direct technical management of a Network Engineering bachelor intern, including formal evaluation reporting to the institution.
- Owned all platform and infrastructure documentation.

Larian Studios

IT Manager

October 2019 - April 2021 (1 year 7 months)

Gent Area, Belgium

Owned IT operations for an international game development studio through the development of Baldur's Gate 3.

- Administered the company-wide platform stack: identity and SSO, collaboration tools, project management, version control for game assets, build orchestration, and perimeter firewall. Owned onboarding across all systems and roles.
- Inherited a long-evolved, developer-built environment. Consolidated documentation and took ownership of the inter-office asset and build sync pipelines used by all engineering and creative teams.
- Drove the modernization from a flat local-admin Windows fleet onto a managed enterprise stack with an MSP partner: Active Directory and Azure AD identity, Intune endpoint policy, Microsoft 365, and a next-gen firewall (Palo Alto) replacing the inherited gateway. The same architecture supported the studio's pandemic-driven shift to fully remote operations and the IT buildout of the new Kuala Lumpur office.
- Stood up dedicated storage and access separation for the finance team in line with GDPR. Worked with the DPO on privacy compliance and the public-facing statement.

- Managed access controls and shared workspaces with external partners (publishers, porting studios) across multiple cloud storage platforms.
- Single point of contact for IT operations: procurement, hardware lifecycle, license management, vendor relationships, and end-user support.

European Management Solutions Ltd

International Field Service Engineer || Confident IT

July 2018 - October 2019 (1 year 4 months)

Europe

Subcontracted via Confident IT to EuroMS, a UK maritime networking specialist, for technical design and field deployment on superyacht IT infrastructure.

- Designed and deployed multi-WAN bonded connectivity (VSAT + multi-cellular + WiFi WAN) for superyacht clients, coordinating with European satellite providers.
- Network architecture across multiple decks: VLAN segmentation for crew, guest, and IoT/sensor traffic, managed enterprise switching, UniFi controller, and firewall.
- Migrated a major yacht off legacy on-prem Windows Server (AD + mail) onto a consolidated 2U NAS hosting virtualized services: AD, mail, UniFi controller, internal chat, plus a Control4 hand-off for AV.
- Worked alongside specialist vendors handling motor, bridge, satellite, and AV systems; my scope was the network, switching, and firewall portions.
- International project work across Mediterranean ports.

Antwerp Business Suites

Independent IT Manager || Confident IT

March 2017 - September 2019 (2 years 7 months)

Antwerp Metropolitan Area

Full IT responsibility for a boutique hotel and serviced office in central Antwerp, freelance through Confident IT.

- Migrated the network from a legacy enterprise stack (mixed-vendor switches, APs, firewall, PBX) to a consolidated UniFi-based architecture, with VLAN re-adoption to keep the existing IP phone fleet operational.
- Decommissioned on-prem AD and the local server. Moved mail to Google Workspace, web to Squarespace, hosting to DigitalOcean, and replaced legacy RDP workflows with VPN access.

- Installed a CCTV system with on-site NAS recording and off-site cloud backup.
- Documented the topology, tech stack, and rack layout for handover and ongoing reference.
- Reduced ongoing MSP, SLA and licensing costs against a one-time hardware investment.
- Continuing IT contact through 2019, including ad-hoc support for ABS's international office tenants on Windows, Mac, VPN, and DNS issues.

Leapp

3 years 3 months

Store Manager

November 2017 - May 2018 (7 months)

Antwerp Area, Belgium

Took over the Antwerp flagship store after the regional reorganization moved service and repair operations out of Benelux.

- Day-to-day store operations: team management, sales of refurbished Apple devices, customer service.
- Helped customers and staff navigate the transition to the offshore repair workflow.

Technical Manager

March 2015 - November 2017 (2 years 9 months)

Antwerp Metropolitan Area

LEAPP is a multi-country Apple refurbisher. Joined at the Antwerp HQ launch to lead the Belgian technical operation across seven shops.

- Hands-on refurbishment alongside the team: RAM/SSD upgrades, WiFi card swaps, AZERTY keyboard conversions, and screen work across iMacs, MacBooks, iPhones, and iPads. Handled most of the harder iPhone screen jobs at HQ.
- Designed an in-store Service Agent role modeled on Apple Geniuses, trained and rolled it out across the seven Belgian shops.
- Worked cross-functionally: parts sourcing through purchasing's Shenzhen contacts, and marketing on repair branch positioning.
- Closely involved in the Symphony/MariaDB ERP design covering repairs, RMA, customer data, shipping, and logistics.
- Migrated the company off VMware-hosted spreadsheets onto Google Workspace, including macro rewrites.

- Replaced the security stack with Fortinet at HQ (VPN, VLAN, DHCP, DNS) and rolled out UniFi across the Belgian shops, with the Antwerp controller integrated to the Fortinet VPN and WAN+cellular alarm.
- Migrated phones off legacy PBX onto 3CX/VoIP, with a hybrid setup for Belgian numbers.
- Built leappOS, a stripped-down macOS USB image (10.x-13) with hardware test tooling and local DeployStudio, used across the shop network for laptop migrations and refurb prep.
- Deployed NAS solutions in every store as local backup, iCloud and Time Machine targets. Wrote an encrypted local-backup script with random keys and auto-wipe on LAN exit.
- Became domain and email admin for Leapp BE, bridging the external dev team, internal procedures, and operational tooling (APIs, Dymo label automation, GDrive tracking, MariaDB).
- Trained the team running LEAPP's new Polish refurbishment facility.

Ricall Repair Services

1 year 8 months

Store Manager

September 2013 - March 2015 (1 year 7 months)

Antwerp Metropolitan Area

Ran Ricall's Antwerp store on Volkstraat from opening.

- Lead technician on the most complex device repairs (phone, laptop).
- Daily operations: register, stock, purchasing, and accounting in Global Exact.
- Built up a local business clientele for IT support, device repairs, and PC sales.
- Marketing: flyers and Facebook ads to drive walk-in traffic
- Hired and managed staff.
- Developed the MediaMarkt Antwerp Keyserlei partnership, which included deploying a repair desk inside MediaMarkt itself.

Service Technician

August 2013 - September 2013 (2 months)

Minderhout, Belgium

First Belgian location of Ricall, opening in Minderhout.

- Phone and laptop repairs.
- Walk-in customer service, plus accessories and insurance sales.

- Spotted an expansion opportunity in Antwerp and pitched it back to ownership, which led to opening the second store.

Red Hat

Datacenter Technician

May 2013 - July 2013 (3 months)

San Antonio, Texas Metropolitan Area

Hands-on technician work at the San Antonio data center.

- Tier 1 dashboard monitoring and ticket creation for the engineering team.
- Floor work in the cold/hot aisles: fiber upgrades from multimode to single-mode, switch and breakout panel swaps, rack moves.
- Followed engineer-led runbooks to adjust LUN and DAS storage based on customer requirements.

Lionbridge

Junior Software Test Engineer

February 2012 - October 2012 (9 months)

Tampere, Finland

Multilingual QA tester for Microsoft and Nokia's mobile platform.

- Tested Dutch, German and Swedish builds of the Asha series.
- Focus on spell correction and UI testing.
- Started Lexicon Developer training before leaving Finland.

Education

Arteveldehogeschool

Bachelor's degree, Bachelor Graphic and Digital Media · (2010 - 2011)

VTST Turnhout

Specialisation Year Industrial Automation (PLC & Control Systems), Automation Engineer Technology/Technician · (2009 - 2010)

VTST Turnhout

Highschool, Electrical Engineering Technologies/Technicians · (2005 - 2009)