

Leo Zhadanovsky

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SUMMARY

Chief Technologist for Elections, Education, and State & Local Government at Amazon Web Services with 17 years of experience at the intersection of technology, elections, and civic security. Built and operated cloud infrastructure for the Obama 2012 re-election campaign — the first cloud-native presidential campaign in U.S. history. Served as lead architect for the Hillary for America 2016 campaign, including hands-on incident response during the Russian state-sponsored cyber attack on DNC systems. Led AWS election integrity as Single Threaded Leader across three U.S. presidential cycles and three midterm cycles, coordinating cross-functional teams spanning engineering, security, legal, public policy, and communications with regular visibility to C-suite leadership. Currently leading AWS's 2026 Midterm Elections mechanism, addressing emerging Generative AI and agentic AI threats including deepfakes, automated disinformation, and AI-powered social engineering targeting election officials. Trusted advisor to government officials and election administrators at the federal, state, and international level.

EXPERIENCE

Amazon Web Services

Chief Technologist, Elections, Education & SLG, WWPS

Jun 2021 – Present

Beverly Hills, CA

Principal Solutions Architect

Oct 2015 – Jun 2021

Washington, DC

Senior Solutions Architect

Feb 2013 – Oct 2015

Herndon, VA

Elections Trust and Safety Leadership

- Serve as Single Threaded Leader for all AWS election-related customer engagements since 2013, spanning every U.S. presidential campaign cycle (2016, 2020, 2024) and midterm cycle (2018, 2022, 2026) — a program with regular visibility to AWS C-suite leadership.
- Led AWS's 2024 Presidential Election program: coordinated security and infrastructure support for 116 election customers including campaigns, state election offices, voting technology vendors, and civic organizations; handled 29 escalations with zero security incidents impacting availability or integrity; mitigated DDoS attacks peaking at 6 million+ requests per second.
- Created and led cross-functional Tiger Teams for real-time election incident response during the 2020 and 2024 presidential elections — proactively monitored traffic, onboarded 13 customers into AWS Shield Advanced in 2024, and mitigated DDoS attacks targeting 4 Secretaries of State, 1 national party committee, 7 election technology vendors, and 1 major media organization.
- Currently lead the 2026 U.S. Midterm Elections mechanism, authoring strategy documents, field guidance, and threat intelligence briefings distributed across three AWS business units addressing Generative AI and agentic AI threat vectors: deepfake content at scale, automated disinformation campaigns, AI-powered phishing targeting election officials, and real-time social media manipulation.
- Led the cross-functional team that delivered the 2020 Democratic National Convention as the first fully virtual national political convention in U.S. history, and delivered live-streaming infrastructure for the 2024 Republican and Democratic National Conventions — both with 100% uptime and under budget — and delivered all online streaming for the 2025 Presidential Inauguration via AWS Elemental Services.
- Ran Critical Impact Engagement for the 2024 Iowa Caucus — first use of AWS Countdown Premium for an election workload, publicly referenceable.
- Created and currently run the Critical Impact Engagement and Critical Workloads mechanisms at AWS — all election workloads are designated Critical Workloads, receiving proactive architecture reviews, operational readiness validation, and dedicated incident response; executed 11 CIEs across the 2024 and 2025 election cycles with zero availability incidents.
- Authored and expanded the Defending Digital Campaigns (DDC) program, providing 20+ free and discounted cybersecurity services to federal campaigns and committees regardless of party affiliation; published AWS blog post announcing the 2024 expansion.

- Currently maintain five AWS points of contact in CISA's Election Infrastructure Subsector Coordinating Council (EI-SCC); receive and distribute regular threat briefings from ODNI, FBI, and CISA to field teams.
- Engaged with international election management bodies through IFES, meeting officials from Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Bosnia, and Macedonia on election cybersecurity; AWS now participates in the Election Cybersecurity Response Network (ECRN).
- Served as Solutions Architect for civic technology organizations including Rock the Vote, DemocracyLive, and the OSET Foundation TrustTheVote Project — advancing cloud-based voter registration, ballot design, and election results reporting.
- Presented to Washington State legislators on responsible AI in collaboration with AWS Public Policy; held follow-up 1:1 meetings with a state senator on AI governance.
- Spoke at Amazon Global Communications Summit on AWS's role in elections.

Generative AI Risk and Governance

- Launched the WWPS Bedrock Capacity Prioritization Mechanism, streamlining approval for Generative AI capacity requests across the public sector — facilitated 322 requests for 193 customers, reducing wait times and providing demand signals for capacity planning.
- Currently own all Education and State/Local Government Bedrock capacity escalations; run the weekly WWPS GenAI Capacity and Go-to-Market meeting.
- Collaborated with EC2 Product leadership to enable GPU credits for the National AI Research Resource (NAIRR), supporting 44 approved research projects requiring high-performance compute.
- Led Bedrock deep-dive sessions for senior technical leadership at major enterprise customers, resulting in multi-year commitments and competitive takeaways from other cloud providers.
- Advised university CTO on displacing incumbent AI vendor with Amazon Bedrock, leading to commitment to integrate Bedrock models into institution-wide GenAI platform for students and staff.
- Contributed to AWS's participation in the Tech Accord to Combat Deceptive Use of AI in Elections.

Strategic Customer Impact and Public Sector Leadership

- Led technical engagement with Harvard University resulting in adoption of AWS AI services by Harvard Business School; delivered GenAI demo to HBS professors and Dean; presented at Harvard IT Summit fireside chat (1,000+ attendees); featured in Harvard Gazette.
- Drove engagement with a top-five U.S. research university from initial CIO meeting to pursuit of a Dedicated Local Zone — first of its kind in U.S. higher education.
- Led successful launches of covidtests.gov for USPS under White House-driven timelines — architected the website to scale to every U.S. household in under two weeks to meet pandemic surge demand.
- Created the AWS Well-Architected Operational Readiness Review (ORR) Lens — open-sourced on GitHub, used across public sector for mission-critical workload readiness.
- Created the Landing Zone Accelerator for Education — industry-specific cloud security framework aligned with NIST 800-171, NIST 800-53, CMMC, and ITAR; generated 84 opportunities across education customers.
- Led a major competitive takeaway from a leading cloud competitor, securing a multi-year commitment for a large public safety technology company to migrate AI workloads to AWS.
- Produced 26 episodes of the AWS Education Podcast; co-producer and on-air contributor.
- Authored questions for AWS certification exams: DevOps Engineer Professional, Security Specialty, Solutions Architect Professional.

People Leadership and Mentorship

- Currently lead the LA County Solutions Architecture team — portfolio includes infrastructure for the 2028 Olympic Games, 2026 FIFA World Cup, and 2027 Super Bowl.
- Led AWS DC Summit conference tracks (DevOps, Compute, Serverless): 33 sessions, 2,034 attendees, 4.65 content satisfaction score.
- Currently mentor 4 Solutions Architects; shepherded 3+ promotions to senior levels.
- Managed cross-functional Tiger Teams of 8–20 volunteers across SA, TAM, CSM, and engineering organizations for election incident response.

Speaking and Thought Leadership (Selected)

- Presented at every AWS re:Invent since the inaugural event in 2012, including a 2013 talk on CI/CD best practices drawn from building the Obama campaign's cloud infrastructure.
- Re:Invent 2025: "Applying Amazon's DevOps Culture" — 4.48 satisfaction, 4.65 speaker score.
- Re:Invent 2023: Built GenAI demo selected by AWS VP for keynote presentation.
- Keynoted AWS Publishers Symposium NYC, NYC GenAI Day, PWN'R Summit (legislators), Learnovate Conference Dublin, WWPS Nordics and Amsterdam GenAI Roadshows, UIC IT Summit.
- Presented to state legislators on AI policy and responsible AI practices.
- LA Wildfire Recovery event: delivered GenAI demonstration for disaster response and served as panelist.

Democratic National Committee / Obama for America

Director of Systems Engineering — Obama for America HQ

Jun 2012 – Feb 2013

Chicago, IL

- Led DevOps for the first cloud-native presidential campaign in U.S. history, building over 200 applications on AWS to support voter outreach, fundraising, and analytics.
- Architected and deployed large-scale Big Data analytics system supporting 220+ users and 27TB of data for OFA and DNC.
- Launched voter registration websites (gottaregister.com) using AWS services at scale.
- Built highly available, scalable VMware infrastructure to meet election season demand.
- Webby Award: Breakout of the Year (2013) — Obama for America 2012.

Senior Systems Administrator & Systems Team Lead

Dec 2010 – Jun 2012

Washington, DC

- Created the Obama campaign's first Amazon Web Services account.
- Served as tech lead for re-launch of barackobama.com; architected on AWS EC2 and RDS to scale for launch-day traffic.
- Managed systems team providing 24/7/365 incident response.
- Redesigned DNC network infrastructure to high availability, eliminating all single points of failure.

Systems Administrator

Nov 2009 – Dec 2010

Washington, DC

- Operated and maintained mission-critical DNC IT systems: voter registration, polling place locators, online fundraising, and mass email infrastructure processing millions of messages daily.
- Redesigned AWS architecture for on-demand scaling with cross-AZ and cross-region fault tolerance.
- Migrated 90+ physical servers to virtual machines, reducing costs and improving reliability.

2016 Presidential Election — Hillary for America (via AWS)

- Served as lead Solutions Architect for the Hillary for America presidential campaign — architected secure, scalable cloud infrastructure supporting 100+ backend services and 150 serverless frontends.
- Embedded on-site at campaign headquarters for the final month before the 2016 election, providing hands-on architecture, scaling, and security support.
- Volunteered for the DNC in September 2016 and worked on response and mitigation of the Russian state-sponsored cyber attack on DNC systems — performed hands-on incident response and established a clean operating environment.
- This experience directly informed the election security programs, Tiger Team models, and proactive threat mitigation mechanisms subsequently built at AWS.

University of Chicago

Systems Administrator — Astronomy & Astrophysics / Kavli Institute

Jun 2007 – Oct 2009

Chicago, IL

- Administered multi-platform computing environment (Linux, Solaris, macOS, Windows) for academic research.
- Maintained high-traffic web and email servers; created automated provisioning systems.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts, Information Technology and Informatics

CERTIFICATIONS

AWS Certified Solutions Architect – Professional (Active through 2029)
AWS Certified DevOps Engineer – Professional (Active through 2029)
AWS Certified Cloud Practitioner (Active through 2029)
GenAI Security Maven (2024)

BOARD MEMBERSHIPS

Internet2 NET+ AWS Advisory Board — Co-chair

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

1. "[AWS expands program offering low-to-no cost security services for federal political campaigns and committees](#)" — AWS Public Sector Blog, June 2024
2. "[Announcing the Landing Zone Accelerator for Education](#)" — AWS Public Sector Blog, July 2023
3. "[Announcing the AWS Well-Architected Operational Readiness Review lens](#)" — AWS Public Sector Blog, March 2023
4. "[McGraw Hill delivers dynamic learning experiences with SHARPEN, powered by AWS](#)" — AWS Public Sector Blog, January 2023
5. "[AWS Well-Architected ORR Lens](#)" — Open source, AWS Labs GitHub

LANGUAGES

English (native) • Russian (native)

SKILLS

Elections Infrastructure and Security • Trust and Safety • Generative AI Risk Mitigation • Deepfake and Disinformation Threat Assessment • Crisis Incident Response • Cross-Functional Program Leadership • Government and Public Policy Engagement • Cybersecurity (DDoS Mitigation, Shield Advanced, WAF) • Cloud Architecture at Scale • Stakeholder Management (C-Suite to Engineering) • Public Speaking and Thought Leadership • People Management and Mentorship