

Jean-Michel Decombe

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- cofounder of Groxis, the visual federated search company
- 30 years of desktop, web, and mobile software engineering experience
- 4 utility patents granted, with additional patents still pending
- a number of widely recognized software products and web services
- multiple awards and substantial press coverage



Jean-Michel has thirty years of desktop, web, and later mobile software engineering experience, with an emphasis on engineering process and user experience. Over the course of his career, he has created a number of widely recognized and industry acclaimed software products and web services.

His expertise spans the fields of software engineering, product design, user interface design, team building, and intellectual property strategy. He excels at building and leading highly efficient product development teams with a hands on management style, designing and implementing software and user interface with a sharp eye for detail and simplicity, discovering and productizing the value hidden in advanced research work, as well as documenting and transferring system knowledge to other team members, and helping to market the final product.

Jean-Michel is keen on synthesizing disparate ideas, from a variety of fields, and developing software to make systems of any complexity comprehensible by anyone, with a special interest in information visualization and social networking. He loves to work with research units to make sense of their discoveries, help them hone their intellectual property strategy, find innovative applications for these discoveries, and design products that leverage, demonstrate, and validate them in the marketplace.

His fascination for hypertext and Semantic Web concepts led him to develop a knowledge mapping application, Maporium, that aims to leverage the power of the Semantic Web and visualization to foster collaborative systems thinking and help people comprehend complex systems and solve problems together.

In 1999, Jean-Michel created a visual federated search project, Grokker, with the first graphical information interface, for which he obtained patents 6,879,332, 6,888,554, 7,036,093, and 7,290,223, with additional patents still pending. Eventually, he cofounded Groxis in 2001, with Paul Hawken and R.J. Pittman, to develop a product and bring it to market. He served as the company's Chief Technology Officer until 2006. The complex, multitiered Grokker product has been licensed to content publishers like EBSCO, academic institutions like Stanford University, and organizations like Sun Microsystems, Amgen, Interface, and several others. It earned Groxis multiple industry awards, including DEMO 2003, Always On Top 100, and Wired 100.

Before Groxis, Jean-Michel was the Lead Client Software Engineer at Metacode (formerly Datafusion), where he created a revolutionary visualization tool for the company's enterprise knowledge mapping product, and cowrote a related utility patent. The company was eventually sold to Interwoven for \$150M. Earlier, while at Vicinity, he created one of the first online interactive map navigation tools, as well as an innovative 3-D map navigation widget dubbed the Geostick. Thanks to his passion and ideas on how to make map navigation web site Mapblast! more successful, he became its Product Manager and eventually received the 1996 WAAA Award for Best Site of the Year. The company was later acquired by Microsoft for \$800M.

Jean-Michel's work is informed by his study of various disciplines, such as computer theory, philosophy, astronomy, cartography, genealogy, and others. In his free time, he has designed various complex and innovative projects, such as an advanced integrated development environment, an application for the universal, synergistic management of people, places, things, and events, as well as an interactive video editing application.

He created a bestselling antivirus software in 1989, one of the first on the market. Receiving rave reviews for being both powerful and easy to use, it was the first antivirus to offer an online service, before the Web even existed, to download vaccine plugins and easily install them through drag and drop. The software was eventually acquired by security software company Intego.

Jean-Michel also created a visual hard disk management utility in 1988 for MacTel, a European hardware vendor, whose user interface featured what was possibly the first balloon dialog user interface ever. He also created Logicaa in 1986, a visual programming environment featuring a limited form of zooming space, years before that concept was formalized. Over the years, he has also created an online virtual world, a visual merchandising application, and a multimedia chat system—the first ever to let participants send animated effects over the chat.

Jean-Michel studied Decisional Mathematics and Computer Science at Université Paris IX-Dauphine in Paris, France. He is always looking for new software design challenges, in as many fields of application as possible. He loves all forms of world culture; the more authentic, the better. He also loves classic film and cooking, and he is an avid Scrabble player. He lives in Point Richmond, California, where he shares a lovely craftsman home with his beloved wife Maureen and their dog Charlotte.