

ACCELERATING INNOVATION WHILE MAINTAINING SECURITY:

HOW KEELVAR AVOIDED MIGRATION BOTTLENECKS WITH HERODEVS



HOW KEELVAR KEPT INNOVATING WITHOUT GETTING STUCK IN MIGRATION HELL

CLIENT PROFILE

Keelvar isn't your typical procurement software company. Born out of Europe's largest AI research lab, this Cork-based team of 120 combines computer science, AI, and game theory to solve some of procurement's toughest challenges. With \$42 million in funding and customers who depend on sophisticated sourcing algorithms, they can't afford to let technical debt slow them down.

Keelvar >

"Every technical decision we make must drive innovation while ensuring exceptional reliability, speed, and a seamless customer experience," explains Valentina Roques, Keelvar's CTO. "Our customers depend on us to power complex sourcing operations. Our tools need to perform flawlessly, not be held back by outdated frameworks or security gaps".

THE PROBLEM

CAUGHT BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE

Like many companies that started building serious web applications in the early 2010s, Keelvar had invested heavily in AngularJS version 1. After years of development, they had thousands of components powering a feature-rich application that their customers loved.

Then came the inevitable question: what happens when AngularJS reaches end-of-life?

The math was sobering. Kevin Dunleavy, Senior Frontend Engineer at Keelvar, laid it out: "We're talking about 20-30 major application pages, each needing 1-2 weeks of dedicated developer time to migrate properly. That's not even counting all the testing to make sure we don't break anything."

The team faced an impossible choice:

Option A: Stop new features development for their core product and spend 6-12 months rewriting their entire frontend.

Option B: Keep building on a framework that would soon have no security support.

Neither option was acceptable. A migration freeze would mean no new features for customers, no competitive improvements, and a development team focused entirely on technical debt instead of innovation.

"Imagine telling your customers you can't deliver any of the features they've been asking for because you need to spend the next year rewriting code that already works," Valentina says. "That's not a conversation any CTO wants to have."

THE BREAKTHROUGH

WHY NOT BOTH?

Instead of accepting this false dilemma, Keelvar's team asked a different question: what if they could maintain their AngularJS application and gradually migrate to Vue 3?

The idea was appealing, but it required solving the security problem. Running an unsupported framework in production isn't just risky—for a SaaS company serving enterprise customers, it's potentially business-ending.

That's where HeroDevs came in.

NEVER-ENDING SUPPORT

THE BRIDGE SOLUTION

HeroDevs' Never-Ending Support for AngularJS gave Keelvar exactly what they needed: a way to keep their existing application secure while they executed a strategic migration plan.

Here's what changed immediately:

Security became a non-issue.

Instead of scrambling to migrate before AngularJS lost support, Keelvar could stay current with security patches through HeroDevs' continued maintenance.

Development velocity stayed high.

The team kept shipping features customers wanted instead of dedicating months to rewriting working code.

Migration became strategic, not urgent.

With security handled, they could plan their Vue 3 migration thoughtfully, page by page, based on business priorities rather than security deadlines.

The implementation was refreshingly simple—a drop-in replacement that worked seamlessly with their existing CI/CD pipeline and local development environments.

THE RESULTS

NUMBERS THAT MATTER

Since partnering with HeroDevs in 2023, Keelvar has:

- ✔ **Addressed 4 CVEs immediately** through the Never-Ending Support program
- ✔ **Avoided 30-50 weeks** of dedicated migration work
- ✔ **Maintained 100% development velocity** on customer-facing features
- ✔ **Attracted new customers** with continued feature development instead of explaining why development was on hold

"The impact goes beyond just keeping our lights on," Valentina reflects. "We've been able to invest in a completely new component library, improve user experiences, and deliver features that directly contribute to new customer acquisition. That wouldn't have been possible if we'd been stuck in migration mode."

WHAT THIS REALLY MEANS

REDEFINING HOW WE THINK ABOUT TECHNICAL DEBT

Keelvar's experience challenges some common assumptions about framework lifecycle management.

The false urgency trap.

Just because a framework reaches end-of-life doesn't mean you have to drop everything and migrate. Sometimes the right answer is finding a bridge solution that gives you time to migrate strategically.

Time as a strategic asset.

The most valuable thing HeroDevs gave Keelvar wasn't just security—it was time. Time to plan, time to innovate, and time to make migration decisions based on business value rather than security panic.

Parallel development works.

Keelvar proved you can maintain an existing application while gradually building its replacement. This approach reduces risk, maintains customer satisfaction, and allows for better technical decision-making.

LESSONS FOR OTHER SAAS COMPANIES

If you're facing a similar framework dilemma, consider Keelvar's approach:

- 1 **Calculate the true cost of migration**—including opportunity cost and customer impact.
- 2 **Look for bridge solutions** that solve specific problems without requiring complete rewrites.
- 3 **Align technical decisions with business strategy** instead of letting framework lifecycles drive your roadmap.
- 4 **Keep customer value front and center**—technical decisions should enable customer success, not hinder it.

For enterprise SaaS companies, the ability to maintain security while preserving development momentum isn't just nice to have—it's often the difference between thriving and merely surviving in competitive markets.

As Valentina puts it: "We're now migrating to Vue 3 on our timeline, based on what makes sense for our business and our customers. The migration is happening, but it's strategic rather than desperate. That makes all the difference."

For SaaS companies serving demanding customers in competitive markets, the ability to maintain security while preserving development momentum isn't just a technical advantage, it's a strategic imperative that directly impacts growth and customer satisfaction.