

# Emil Smith

[hi@emilsmith.pro](mailto:hi@emilsmith.pro)

**LinkedIn:** [linkedin.com/in/emil-smith/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/emil-smith/)

Senior design leader passionate about technology for social good. I've spent the last fifteen years working in design, engineering, and specialist leadership, delivering projects for brands such as Google, eBay, Sony, Nokia, Virgin, and Tinder, as well as extensive experience in the publishing industry.

My approach is holistic; I focus on goals, systems, and processes to solve problems in ways that are efficient, sustainable, and scalable. I have a track record of leading both creative and technical decisions that have transformed products, with expertise ranging from design systems and user research to front-end development and team leadership.

## Experience

### Newsquest | Head of Digital Design

March 2021 - Present

*Promoted from Lead Product Designer to Head of Digital Design (2022)*

- Grew and led design team from 1 to 5 designers with 100% retention • Built and managed a family of design systems across 200+ local news brands
- Led product design for a multimillion-pound digital tribute platform integrating online memorials with print obituary booking system
- Led user research projects that informed product strategy and development priorities • Implemented new processes for communication and collaboration between design and development teams, improving productivity
- Established design operations, tooling, and workflows that enabled efficient scaling across multiple product areas

### NewsNow | Creative Tech Lead

Feb 2019 - Feb 2021

- Led the product's largest redesign in its 24-year history, reporting directly to CEO and COO
- Conducted the company's first user research initiative in 25 years, directly informing product decisions and strategy
- Built design systems and front-end implementation using Vue.js, working within the development team on tooling and infrastructure
- Led both design and engineering decisions on the core product, backed by quantitative and qualitative data, user research, and competitor analysis
- Managed design team while contributing hands-on development work

### BPL Marketing | Designer & Developer

Jul 2015 - Feb 2019

- Developed design systems for core clients, reinforcing client relationships and strengthening their digital products

- Founded BPL Web, the agency's first in-house web development team
- Defined and informed devOps, designOps, and project management processes
- Managed and mentored junior designers on web projects for clients including Three and Tinder

## Twotwentyseven | Designer & Developer

Jun 2013 - Jul 2015

- Worked in a small, fast-paced team on web design, front-end development, and bespoke Shopify eCommerce sites
- Delivered projects for clients including Ella's Kitchen, Brothers Cider, Tonkotsu Ramen, and Salt Yard
- Contributed to company coding standards and best practices

## Amobee | Digital Designer

Jul 2012 - Jul 2013

- Designed mobile display ads and rich media for global campaigns for clients including Nokia, Sony, eBay, Expedia, and Angry Birds
- Created responsive designs and custom mobile websites for international brands
- Automated repetitive design tasks using scripts, saving hundreds of work hours and improving team efficiency

## Education

### UAL, London | Digital Media Design BA(Hons)

2009 – 2012

## Skills

**Design Leadership:** Team management, design systems, user research, design operations, stakeholder management

**Design Tools:** Figma, Adobe Creative Suite, Sketch, InVision Studio, prototyping tools

**Technical Skills:** UI/UX Design, Front-End Web Development, HTML5, CSS3, SCSS, JavaScript (ES6+), Vue.js (SSR, Vuex), React, Git, Python

**Specialities:** Systems thinking, design-development collaboration, user-centered design process, scaling design across multiple products

## Interests & Values

I'm passionate about using design and technology for social good. Outside of work, I'm an electronic musician and volunteer at a youth charity where I run a community music studio weekly. I'm also an advocate for data privacy and AI ethics, bringing these considerations into my professional practice.

---

*Available for permanent roles, contracts, and consultancy work. Particularly interested in opportunities in education, sustainability, social impact, and mission-driven organizations.*