

## Alex Blandford

*I'm a product specialist with a background in meeting the challenges of user centred design and product management in charities, government and digital agencies. I've also started, facilitated and attended community groups bringing people together who want to improve government and society through user-led civic tech.*

### **Data Product Manager - Barnardos** May 2017 - October 2017

Working as part of the senior digital management team on the design, user needs, constraints and regulatory environment in using data in child-facing services. This has involved analysing the business model surrounding service delivery, the data needs of children, service providers and commissioners and training teams in using agile methodologies for large scale programmes. I have also completed a project implementing a process for scoping, approving and prioritising projects through a spend control gate within the organisation.

#### Responsibilities

- Create a user centred data model incorporating business needs
- Manage agile-at-scale projects with interdependencies on waterfall programmes
- Build collaborative relationships between my team and the rest of the business and other providers in the sector
- Build discovery research into projects through evangelism for discovery phases and user centred design
- Create useful management information systems to allow oversight of spend and value for money

### **Delivery Manager & User Research Lead- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy** May 2016 - April 2017

Worked on account management of projects within BEIS to meet the highest possible standards, as well as delivery managing a small policy team and working on the departmental digital strategy.

#### Responsibilities:

- Coaching teams who are new to agile ways of working
- Helping teams make product decisions
- Using value chain mapping to analyse how projects meet similar user needs to avoid duplication of systems across departments and non-departmental public bodies
- Providing ad-hoc user research for products
- Writing parts of the organisation's digital strategy, focusing on open technologies, better procurement and service design principles embedded in business practice.
- Performing supplier evaluations

### **Head of Public Sector - Wunder** April 2015 - May 2016

Lead public sector delivery and providing service design consultancy for Europe's largest

drupal agency, managing the public sector sales pipeline and working as a delivery manager and user researcher for clients.

Responsibilities:

- Growing Wunder's service design capability by training developers and delivery managers in design-thinking.
- Delivering discovery projects and broader consultancy to a range of clients in the public sector as well as English speaking clients in Berlin.
- Delivery management, product consultancy and user research for ongoing public sector projects
- Building and maintaining Wunder's presence in the public sector by speaking at events and giving quotes for the tech press.

Key projects:

- **Judicial Appointments Commission:** discovery, product management and delivery management of a new system for the recruitment and testing of judges. Focused on the principles of user centred design and saving JAC money and staff time. The project embedded the principles of service design and agile development within the organisation. Helping to turn bespoke tools into products reproducible for similar use cases across government.
- **UK Trade and Investment:** delivered workshops to create a discovery report (audience personas, user needs, epics, strategic priorities) from the results of extensive user research and service jams. Also researched UKTI's overseas business networks policy in terms of whether or how they meet users' needs.

**Freelance work** September 2014 - June 2016

Working on product consultancy and delivery management for startups including:

SpendNetwork: an open data company using government procurement data as a tool for businesses to enter new markets. Ran discovery workshops and conducted remote usability testing

Guess the price: gamification start-up exploring using games as a way of getting useful market research data from users. AgeCamp: a conference focusing on identifying the issues around aging and city infrastructure for Leeds City Council. Facilitated the day and conducted some of the sessions. Democracy Club: ran a research project looking at reasons for low voter turnout in the under 30s in London.

**User Research Manager & Account Manager - dxw** May 2013 - August 2014

Started a user research department for dxw (a ruby and wordpress agency specialising in the public sector), working with central government, local government, housing associations and the NHS to deliver agile web projects and transactional services.

Responsibilities:

- Building new research and discovery products including analytics help, information

architecture validation, user journey validation and focus groups to establish user needs.

- Forming relationships with government departments and technology companies
- Running sprint plans, retrospectives and standups
- Agile training for clients
- Setting KPIs for client sites and showing them how to use qual and quant research to assess user satisfaction.

**Digital Account Manager & Web Editor - Houses of Parliament** December 2011 - May 2013

**Publications & Information Officer - National Childbirth Trust** March 2009 - December 2011

## Education

**Birkbeck, University of London 2009-2011**

- **MA Psychosocial Studies** - Merit
- **Introductory Certificate in Group Analytic Psychotherapy**

**Goldsmiths, University of London 2005-2008**

- **BA (Hons) Anthropology** - 2.1

## Side projects, conferences and voluntary work

I've been part of projects to try to improve civic society on the internet. Some of these I've started myself (Parliamentary User Group, Tech for Berlin) and some I've become involved in to help them improve. These are a mixture of projects that I've undertaken in my personal development time as well as many that I've devoted my own time to.

- **Democracy Club** - head of research for an open data crowdsourcing campaign for information on candidates and open democracy.
- **Parliamentary User Group** - convened a review group for the progress of the Parliament Digital Service with experts from GDS, the BBC and Intranetizen.
- **Tech for Berlin/Code for Berlin** - project facilitator in civic tech meetups in Berlin focusing on trying to improve the digital capabilities of the Berlin state government.
- **Service Design in Government 14** - Presented on using user research as a necessary dependency to building an accurate project scope.
- **UKGovCamp 14** - Organised sponsorship and logistics for a 250 person unconference in central London, bringing together policy civil servants, developers, security experts, user researchers, journalists, politicians and service design experts.
- **TeaCamp** - Organised a series of afternoon talks on the benefits of user research in projects.
- **300 Seconds** - Presented a lightning talk on participatory democracy.
- **Hack days** - Parliament Hack Weekend 2013 (Winners), National Hack the Government 2014, Foreign Office Hack (judge)