

Johanna Allen

Design Team Leader & Creative Information Designer



Deputy Head of Global Visual Design
British Council, Department of Digital
and Technology

2020–Today

Lead Visual Designer
British Council, Department of Digital,
Partnerships and Innovation

2014–2020

Senior Visual Designer
British Council, Department of Digital
and E-Commerce

2012–2014

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I'm a visual storyteller, a designer of systems, brand and product identities.
I follow human-centred design principles focusing on empathy, creativity and
continuous improvement.

Experience

My current role supports the British Council's aspiration to adopt a digital-first
operating model. I raise awareness and understanding of the value of data-driven
design decisions and how user research can inform transformation.

Digital's 40-person team is responsible for unifying the organisation's inconsistent
design identity. We promote best practice, set standards of compliance and conduct
expert reviews to benchmark refinements to our products and services.

As part of the investment in Digital my team has been tasked with developing a
bespoke component-based design system for a new "headless" content publisher.
This innovative React framework will replace our heavily templated Drupal 8
CMS in November 2022.

In July, we launched the third site on the new platform, in partnership with the
UK Government's GREAT campaign, for students studying in the UK from abroad.

As Deputy to the Head of User-Experience and Visual Design I am responsible for
the planning, prioritisation and sign-off of all design-related sprint activities, which
includes the allocation of internal and agency resource.

Previously, I was the design lead for a large portfolio of CMS themes serving
the British Council's 140 multi-lingual websites and a diverse range of programme
and partnership sites. The latter included the Aardman Animations/BBC 'Learning
Time with Timmy' and the BFI's annual LGBTQIA+ film festival 'Flare'.

In response to a brand refresh in 2018 I redesigned the visual language of our sites.
I managed the updates to our UI library, circulated release notes and communicated,
through a series of global webinars, the rationale behind the changes.

As part of the User-Experience Team I helped to gather business requirements,
validate them and translate them into user needs. This evidence led to the integration
of Campaign Monitor, Salesforce, Shorthand, Bookeo and Stripe Payments, for which
I was responsible for the seamlessness of the front-end implementation.

I line-managed a small team of designers, together seeking opportunities to share
knowledge of emerging technology and design trends.

I was also, on secondment, the Lead Visual Designer on the high-profile off-platform
Government pilot for the booking and payment of SELTs - Secure English Language
Tests - for UK Visas and Immigration.

I began my career at the British Council responsible for developing the front-end
responsive theme of a Drupal CMS, the largest of its kind in the world, for the British
Council globally.

I helped design 30 content-types for English learners in Korea. Which, following
extensive user-testing were adopted Asia-wide.

We ran concurrent eight-week engagements with Country teams to refine the 80:20 global-local offer. The collaboration, which began face-to-face, also included planning customer-led design features and functional platform enhancements.

We successfully met an aggressive two-year roll-out to launch 90 websites, in more than 40 languages with 700 global editors, and migrate 30,000 pages of content from Obtree and Wordpress.

I liaised with engineers and technical experts, business analysts, stakeholders and suppliers. We followed agile methodologies, agreeing an MVP and iterating to deliver at scale and pace.

Designer

Other Creative Ltd

2009–2012

At this small integrated communications agency, with a ten-person design team, my responsibilities included designing websites, social media pages and API's. I produced creative content for digital campaigns and visualised concepts for pitches.

My clients included Expedia, Turner Broadcasting, Network Rail, Smart Technologies, Jones Lang LaSalle, RBS, NatWest and Unilever. As well as charities Refugee Council, Freedom from Torture and the League Against Cruel Sports.

Designer

Hamiltons Architects

2007–2009

In my first design role I worked in the marketing team of a large architecture practice creating advertising for press, events, awards ceremonies and exhibitions.

I collated pre-qualification questionnaires, tenders and planning submissions, standardised design documentation and conducted Adobe training. I also updated the company website, Asset Management System and intranet.

Competencies

Design tools

Figma, Sketch, Adobe Creative Cloud, Zeplin, FigJam, Miro, Mural

Designing compelling, usable and accessible cross-platform digital experiences. Developing design strategies, defining patterns, conducting research, writing design guidelines and acceptance criteria.

Management tools

Jira, Confluence, Notion, Dropbox, Basecamp, Trello, Asana, Slack

Managing large-scale projects, problem solving and effective decision making. Building trust, establishing credibility and influencing. Conflict resolution, facilitation and expectation setting.

Motivating high-performing multi-discipline teams. Quality assuring design solutions, prioritising delivery and outcomes over process. Embedding an open, inclusive and supportive working environment.

Qualifications

Online

2022

Certificate

Advanced Design Thinking

IDEO U

London College of Communication

2003–2006

BA (Hons)

Information Design

University of the Arts London

Camberwell College of Art

2002–2003

Foundation Diploma

Art, Communication and Design

University of the Arts London