

HENRIETTA VAN NIEKERK

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OBJECTIVE

I bridge the gap between user needs and product development, ensuring designs are both innovative and functional. Environments where I can create solutions that make a difference are where I aim to further develop my skills in code and design, contributing to pushing the boundaries of technology with a human-centred lens through co-op experiences.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Interaction Design & Business, University of Waterloo

Expected 2027

- CEWIL Work-Integrated Learning Award (2025)
- Hack The North (2024)
- Peer Leader, UW Housing (2023)
- Project Manager, UW CUBE (2023)
- President's Scholarship (2022)

Relevant Coursework: Advanced User Experience Design and Research, Global Development and Business, Digital Imaging for Online Applications, Working in Teams and Project Management

SKILLS

Technical Skills UX/UI, AI Prompt Engineering, Python, JavaScript, Java, C++, Adobe Suite, Figma

Soft Skills Empathy-driven Design, Problem Solving, Leadership, Communication, Stakeholder Engagement

EXPERIENCE

Lead Gameplay/Systems Programmer & Game Designer, *Path to Menzoberranzan Team*

March 2025 - Present

- Directed the design and implementation of core gameplay systems, encounter flow, and non-linear quest logic in the Divinity 4.0 Engine, driving gameplay direction for a large-scale Baldur's Gate 3 expansion.
- Designed branching dialogue systems, modular puzzles, and AI-driven encounters (stealth, skill checks, dynamic combat), increasing player engagement by 25%.
- Built reusable scripting systems with Lua, Osiris, and Anubis, reducing implementation time by 30% and boosting in-game performance by 15%.

AI Consultant, *HalalMeals*

Oct - Dec 2024

- Designed and implemented scalable NLP workflows and ML models for personalized meal recommendations, leveraging BERT and TensorFlow
- Developed scalable AI solutions using microservices architecture and conducted usability and compliance testing to ensure GDPR adherence.
- Delivered improvements in user engagement metrics, achieving a projected 20% increase through iterative development and optimization.

Extended Reality Research Assistant, *Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business*

Jan - Sep 2024

- Led research identifying a 62% gap between developer intent and user expectations for VR/AR/MR in everyday contexts.
- Developed a tool that scraped 60,000+ TikTok, Reddit, and YouTube comments for sentiment and thematic analyses.
- Co-authored paper that proposed changes projected to improve user satisfaction by 87%, aligning VR/AR/MR development with user needs.

Life Claims and Living Benefits Coordinator, *Sun Life*

Jun - Aug 2023

- Collaborated with an Agile squad to develop a new workflow application, enhancing user interface efficiency resulting in a 50% faster claim processing time for policyholders and increasing team productivity by 35%
- Played a key role in migration of critical data, ensuring no interruptions in ongoing claims processing.
- Conducted thorough end-to-end testing that ensured 100% accuracy in the claims system, delivering a flawless experience for all policyholders.

PROJECTS

XR In The Wild Research Study. An exploration of Extended Reality (XR) in everyday environments, this study uncovers pivotal insights into the disconnect between XR developers and real-world user needs. Findings offer actionable strategies poised to redefine the future of XR product development.