

# Maria Dahman

## UX/UI Researcher and Designer

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I am a user experience researcher and designer with over 15 years of interviewing experience. I focused my Master's of Science in Human-Computer Interaction on "Diverse Users," specifically people with different physical and mental abilities, as well as cultural influences. I have a background in stage performance and bring those skills-- particularly analysis, empathy, and presentation ability-- to my work.

**"Maria is amazing. She brings a positive, upbeat attitude to a context that at times can be frenetic, and she's as brilliant as she is positive."** -Josh Evnin, Director of User Experience, GrubHub Inc.

### User Experience Researcher

#### GrubHub Inc., Chicago IL

February 2012– April 2014

- When I joined GrubHub, it was still a start-up, and many of my projects were broad and undefined. This was a great environment to do exploratory research, since there was not yet a large body of research, as well as to create and test mockups iteratively, based on research. My work was often self-directed.
- I used many types of user research methods. While interviews and usability tests were often most appropriate, I also performed contextual inquiries, diary studies, card sorting sessions, and master/apprentice observations.
- As we grew and merged with a competitor, I was very focused on creatively communicating research results: based on time and geographic constraints, I presented research in a variety of formats to diverse groups of stakeholders in different time zones (executives, product managers, engineers, fellow user experience professionals).
- I realized I had a unique position in the company since I had done interviews with both "brands" of our customers after our merger. As a side project, I began integrating research from diverse projects in order to compare and contrast the user views in these two major markets. This became especially important as we sought to integrate our two product teams.
- I created interaction designs and prototypes informed by research, using several tools: Adobe Illustrator, Fireworks, Photoshop, Omnigraffle, HTML, CSS.

### Researcher/Co-Author

#### Making Diverse Users Visible: Best Practices for Bringing Accessibility Topics into the College Classroom

April 2014– Present

Academic paper currently seeking publication. We interviewed professors in Computer Science and HCI who integrate accessibility topics into their curriculum from 18 of the top US Universities, uncovering creative and successful approaches to include people with disabilities in the design process. Work done in collaboration with Cynthia Putnam, PhD (DePaul University, Chicago) and Emma Rose, PhD (University of Washington).

### Graduate Student

#### DePaul University, Chicago, IL

September 2010– March 2015

Relevant Coursework:

- Global User Research: A deep look at how culture influences user experience and user experience research methods. Using the lens of Hofstede's cultural dimensions (from the book *Cultures and Organizations*), I looked at design and web site preferences in Germany, Switzerland and the United States.
- Accessibility Design: The course focused on types of disability, etiquette when around people with disabilities, and best practices in design, particularly Design for All. My project explored ways to encourage the elderly (people over 70 years) to use Chicago parks.
- Teaching Accessibility: As an independent study project, our team researched ways university professors integrate accessibility topics into their courses and how they include people with disabilities in the design process.
- Practicum: *Helping New Orleans Musicians Thrive: Networking and Career Management Tools* (through UX for Good) While there are plenty of existing small-business tools, after interviews with musicians and recording professionals, our team realized that a large obstacle to using these tools is many artists' ingrained beliefs that they are not good at dealing with money-- that their brains "don't work like that." We sought to incorporate Cognitive Behavioral Therapy into a prototype application to help the musicians network and organize their finances.

**Actor/Teacher****Chicago, IL and Zurich, Switzerland**

September 2001– Present

- I perform on stage; I am a former member of Griffin Theatre Company, Chicago and a current member of the Zurich Comedy Club, Zurich; I studied and taught acting as an independent contractor from 2001-2010.
- I trained at the ActOne Conservatory in Chicago, 2005-2007, and wrote an acting text with one of my teachers from the conservatory.

**Research Associate****The Corporate Executive Board, Washington, D.C.**

August 2000– August 2001

- I wrote briefs and gave recommendations for best practices based on research data.
- I wrote and administered surveys and questionnaires to high-level financial executives.
- I interviewed executives about financial operations and best practices for their company.

**Research Assistant****The News Hour with Jim Lehrer, Washington, D.C.**

Summer 2000

- I summarized presidential candidates' information and convention history for news correspondents.
- I found and researched contacts/interviewees at the Republican and Democratic National Conventions for the news correspondents for on-air interviews.

**Researcher/Announcer****WSAL/WLHM Radio, Logansport, Indiana**

Summers 1998, 1999

- As a beat reporter, I summarized local police and fire department reports; I also covered city council, county council and education board meetings.
- I recorded and edited my interviews with local politicians, and read my news summaries live on-air.

**Education**

Master of Science, Human-Computer Interaction (with Distinction, GPA 3.98)

DePaul University, Chicago IL, March 2015

Bachelor of Arts, Philosophy (Magna Cum Laude, Phi Beta Kappa, GPA 3.7)

DePauw University, Greencastle IN, May 2000

**Volunteer Activities**

Youth Group Leader, Oak Park, IL ("Coming of Age" Course for 14 year-olds, UTUUC) (2011-2012)

Instructor, The Community Co-op, Oak Park, IL (Science, Drama, and Art Instructor) (2009-2011)

Choral Singer, UTUUC, Oak Park, IL (2005-2011)

ESL Instructor, Language ETC, Washington, D.C. (2000-2001)

**Interests**

Acting (Member of Zurich Comedy Club), Singing, Piano, Guitar, Hiking

**Languages**

Native English speaker, Basic Spanish, Basic German (Level B1)

**References available upon request.**