Milly Schmidt

Design, research & leadership

Melbourne
0403858811
meeli.jane@gmail.com
www.linkedin.com/in/ameliaschmidt
millyschmidt.me

Summary

I help growing product companies plan for the future using **design thinking**, **human centred design**, **systems thinking** and **Lean** methodologies. I love **research** and **validating ideas with users** to decrease risk and solve *real* problems, but I also love **seeing ideas through** and working closely with implementation teams to build robust solutions that scale.

My background is technical (I was a front-end engineer) so I'm well-versed in various **Javascript frameworks** like React, Hoplon (Clojurescript), Angular and Vue, as well as PHP, HTML/CSS, and CMS/LMS frameworks like Drupal, edX, Canvas, etc.

I am an **Agile** advocate and have many years of experience in Agile teams, mainly Scrum. I have taught Agile/Scrum courses and am an experienced facilitator of Scrum rituals.

I believe in the power of **design systems** and **design ops** and have been advocating for component-driven front-ends everywhere I work.

I've **run my own business** (both product and consulting) as an entrepreneur, and **I've managed teams** of designers, developers and other collaborators. I'm passionate about **progressive, modern leadership**, diversity, inclusion and frictionless productivity.

Also, I teach, speak and write about design and am an active member of my local design community. I'm based in Melbourne but am dreaming of moving to the Northern Hemisphere.

Work experience

Senior UX Designer
2019-01 - Current

RMIT Online

I am part of the Service Design and UX team at RMIT Online spanning the entire portfolio including both short courses and accredited courses, as well as our related assets like the marketing site.

Previously, I led the Experience Design team at RMIT Online Future Skills to champion user research, mentor junior designers, create design systems and manage, deliver and own UX for their short courses product.

I managed a team and collaborate with learning designers, service designers and strategists to create distributed degrees-a reimagined higher education that will prepare the next generation for the future instead of leaving them behind. My role was to set the bar high and leverage Agile, lean and design thinking to build a model that really accelerates careers and teaches amazing skills in exciting, innovative ways.

Research, design ops, front-end dev, LMS, HTML/CSS, Sass, management, coaching, leadership

Course Mentor
2019 - Present

RMIT Online

I am a course mentor (industry expert and facilitator) for RMIT Online's short courses in Customer Experience and User Experience Design. My role is to run weekly webinars explaining content, answering questions, increasing student engagement and sharing industry experience. I also act as a mentor to students and have 1:1 advice sessions, and am responsible for grading their projects and giving feedback on their work.

Leadership, facilitation, coaching

Director of Product & Design
June 2018 - November 2018

RateIt App

I joined RateIt "The market leader in 'on the spot' customer feedback" as their Director of Product & Design in an executive role reporting directly to the CTO. My role was to embed design thinking and human centred design in the development team, establish a practice of user research, mentor their visual designer, hire a UX designer and build out the product design capability. I was actively involved in user research and testing as well as developing the cadence and framework around peer review and cross-functional collaboration across the development and design teams.

Leadership, management, coaching, user research, usability testing, UI design.

Product/UX Designer
October 2017 - June 2018

EstimateOne

I worked with EstimateOne to establish their UX practice and human centred product development process. I also helped them move their UI design towards a design system approach, and helping shift their front-end code to a modular, component-driven paradigm, as well as building a culture of design thinking and lean experimentation across their growing team.

User research, usability testing, design ops, leadership, management, coaching, Lean experiments

UX Engineer
November 2016 - September 2017

Clover.com.au

I worked with Clover in one of the best teams I've ever had the pleasure of collaborating with doing research, prototyping, and front-end development. I refactored their React UI into a design system and improved their onboarding acquisition metrics through a human centred approach to explaining complex financial concepts. I built a tone and aesthetic that appealed to their Millenial target market, facilitated a Design Sprint (chatbots!) and developed their product dashboard. We ran many usability tests, card sorts, research sprints, workshops and codesign sessions.

User research, usability testing, UI prototyping, UI design, Lean experiments, Design Sprints, Agile, front-end dev, React, Elixir.

Owner/Principal
May 2017 - January 2018

Dim Valley

Dim Valley was my consultancy firm providing modern business services including "CTO for hire" consulting, UX design and hands-on web development. I worked with various clients, providing services as required including teaching, writing, public speaking, content strategy, copywriting, user experience design and front-end development.

Management, front-end dev, Angular, React, account management, consulting, content strategy, user research, user flow mapping, customer journey mapping, low fidelity prototyping.

Co-founder, Chief Product Officer
2015 - January 2018

Estimate Work (estimate-work.com)

Estimate Work is a project estimation tool for digital agencies and studios, consultants and contractors. Using Monte Carlo simulation other best practice techniques, we built Estimate Work to help teams plan better and deliver high quality work without the overtime. This was a product we built from scratch, and I conducted all the research, design, testing and front-end development work. We were taking subscription payments and collecting live feedback when I departed the company for personal reasons.

User research, product strategy, business model development, product launch, product management, usability testing, low, mid and hi fidelity UI design, user flow mapping, customer journey mapping, front-end dev, Clojure, Clojurescript, functional programming.

UX Designer & Content Strategist
August 2016 - November 2016

Weave Web Communications

Weave is a content-first digital agency. I worked with them as a water molecule, bonding all the other bits of the business together to spark creative reactions and solve complex problems. We work with large government organisations and small to medium businesses to build online tools and design services that help

them communicate their value more effectively. I did a mix of user experience design, research and testing, content strategy and copywriting and bits of project and client management.

Content strategy, front-end dev, Drupal, PHP, Sass, UI design, copywriting, information architecture.

Front end developer → Lead UX Designer   February 2015 - July 2016

Equiem

I worked with Equiem as a front-end developer initially and in my capacity there I developed a strategy for an executed a massive front-end refactor, turning 38 individual Drupal themes into one single, parameterised theme allowing customers to white-label the product and add their own branding. As Lead UXer, I built out the company's UX capability (hired 3 designers) and worked closely with the CTO on product validation and research sprints. I was deeply involved in both research and usability testing as well as working closely with devs on implementation.

Front-end dev, Sass, PHP, Drupal, design ops, platform architecture, management, coaching, leadership, user research, design sprints, usability testing, low, mid and high fidelity UI design.

Developer → Lead Developer   August 2011 - February 2015

Godel

Godel was an agency that specialised in Drupal web application development for small businesses and government agencies. We worked closely with clients, and in my role I covered website design, Drupal development, front-end development, marketing, copywriting, client management and leading a small team of developers. This was where I learned everything technical, wore many hats and worked long hours, but it was all worth it.

Drupal, Sass, PHP, stakeholder/client management, management, coaching leadership, UI design, copywriting, site-building, product launches.

Skills

UX research

I am comfortable and very experienced at research, from research strategy to hands-on interviewing experience. My background in journalism helped me build my confidence, and my empathy and curiosity has kept the fire burning.

Co-design & facilitation

One of my strengths and one of the things I enjoy the most about my work. I love workshops, pairing, design sprints and all forms of collaboration.

Synthesis & documentation

I am a strong believer that work needs to be properly distilled and communicated for it to be effective. It doesn't have to be beautiful but it has to be easy to understand.

Information architecture

My background in writing and editing and my systems thinking approaches helps me wrangle complexity and map out dependencies. I enjoy tree testing, card sorting and other validation methods in this space.

Design systems, design ops

As an early adopter in this space I have been obsessed with component-driven design for a long time. I believe in not reinventing the wheel and efficient, scalable design systems. I am a big fan of a process-driven approach to design at scale, with my own library of templates, methods and principles that I can implement.

UI design

I am most happy doing low to mid fidelity prototypes, sketches and wireframes, and then jumping over to code or component design. I'm capable of high fidelity design with various tools like Sketch, Figma, XD etc, but it's not my core skill set or my flow zone.

Javascript frameworks

I have experience with various modern Javascript frameworks, including React, Angular and Vue and have build my own product in Clojurescript from scratch. I am senior enough to be able to understand and pick up frameworks quickly and easily.

HTML/CSS/JS

My background is strongly technical and I know how web technologies work deeply. I am quite passionate about CSS and the top layer of front-end development and enjoy the speed at which I can work here.

Management

I've managed teams for a few years. I am passionate about feedback and coaching. I have interviewed and hired many designers and devs.

Leadership

I am happy to go to war for my teams and stand up for what I believe in. I believe in authenticity and servant leadership, making sure to focus on supporting rather than dictating.

Education

UX Design
2015 - 2015
General Assembly

Part time course at General Assembly.

Bachelor of Arts (Advanced)
2006 - 2008
University of Sydney

Majoring in Art History (Film Studies) and English. HD average.

Volunteer and community experience

IxDA Melbourne - Co-organiser

Code Like a Girl - Teacher, facilitator, public speaker, event host, researcher

Girls in Tech Melbourne - Organiser, pre-launch and launch events

Girl Geek Academy - Hackathon mentor

Girl Geek Dinners - Panel participant

General Assembly - Teacher - Intro to UX, Intro to Agile with Scrum, Intro to HTML/CSS; Panel participant, various events

Academy Xi - Guest Lecturer, UX courses; Panel participant, various events

Drupal South Conference - Speaker, multiple years

CSS Conf/JS Conf - MC, 2018

Podcast guest appearances - RRR's Byte Into It, Why2, Customer Experience Leaders, True North

References

Available on request.