Nicola du Toit
Researcher & UX/UI Designer

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Overview

Hello and thank you for taking the time to review my CV. My name is Nicola du Toit and I have more than a decade's experience working as a digital product and UX/UI designer, user researcher and facilitator in the edtech, e-commerce, fintech and agency spaces. I also have many years of experience leading and managing design teams.

I have deep industry experience in UX and UI design, and front-end development. Education, research and academia are close to my heart - I have worked in edtech and publishing for many years and have lectured design and business courses at the tertiary education level. I have also developed and facilitated numerous design-related workshops and courses. Additionally I have experience managing teams - I thoroughly enjoy supporting and guiding team members and line reports, in order to help them flourish in both their personal and professional capacity.

I have done user research, design and user testing work for complex cross-platform web and native applications, including for Takealot.com (customer and internal-facing systems); for Nedbank's online banking platform and banking app and for Luno's transactional and investment flows. I have also been involved in the implementation of human-centred design strategies, processes and training at companies including Pearson, Takealot.com and IQbusiness.

As a creative but scientifically-minded problem solver, I firmly believe that human-centred design thinking and tools can (and should) be used to solve wicked problems and promote positive social change. I am interested in how design thinking can enable ideation, iteration and the co-design of solutions that work for all humans involved.

Experience

June 2017 - present	**Director & Experience Lead: The Empathy Lab** The Empathy Lab began as an informal design and accessibility collective in 2017. Today we are a human-centred, social research and advisory firm, conducting bespoke research and assessments to help understand complex human challenges and drive meaningful change.

We draw on internationally recognised expertise and a diverse network of academic and industry specialists to deliver scalable research, advisory, and knowledge transfer solutions.

Partner for Technologies: AIPX Atelier

Sept 2024 - July 2025

Having freelanced for AIPX Atelier for a year (from June 2023), I joined the business full time in Sept 2024 as their Technologies practice lead and partner. My focus was on UX/UI and digital product design, web development, and digital strategy and growth for a wide variety of clients - from large corporations to NPOs and charities.

Product Design Team Lead: Luno

Apr 2021 - May 2023

In this role I managed a team of 5 Product Designers / UX Writers. I was responsible for design oversight, craft and leadership across a variety of different crypto products and customer-facing flows within a fleet. Additionally, I collaborated closely with design and product heads and directors on design, research and delivery strategies, fleet-wide OKRs, project planning, recruitment efforts etc.

Senior Product Designer: Luno

Sept 2020 - Mar 2021

In this role I was responsible for UX and UI design in a cross-functional delivery team that looked after Luno's buy and sell flows and crypto investment products. Responsibilities included user research, design, usability testing and QA testing. I collaborated closely with product management, UX writing, data science and engineering.

Manager and Senior UX Consultant: IQbusiness

Jan 2019 - Aug 2020

Senior Principal from Jan 2019 - June 2020. Promoted to **Manager** in June 2020.

I managed a team of 5 UX/UI designers, distributed across different clients. People responsibilities included fortnightly check-ins, performance reviews, mentorship and career and personal development and growth.

2019: Consulted at Nedbank. Worked on UX, UI and IA for Nedbank's Money app and Online Banking platforms. Responsible for expanding Nedbank's cross-platform accessibility strategy.

2020: Consulted at Liberty. Worked on UX for Liberty's end-to-end investments platform.

Ongoing: Developed and facilitated external UX training content, and was a member of IQbusiness's digital leadership team which was responsible for

digital/design strategy and growth within the business.

Apr 2018 - Dec 2018	## Lecturer: AFDA Part-time lecturer in design thinking and business management operations at [AFDA](#).
Apr 2018 - Dec 2018	## Freelance UX and usability consultant UX design, user research, usability testing, strategy and design thinking training on a consulting basis. Part-time lecturer in design thinking and management operations at [AFDA](#). Clients included [Takealot.com](#), [Pearson](#), the [Social Systems Lab](#) and the [Digital Opportunity Trust](#).
Apr 2017 - Mar 2018	## Senior UX designer: [Takealot.com](#) UX design, user research and usability testing for Takealot's desktop, mobile, Android and iOS platforms - both customer-facing and internal/back-end systems. Responsible for setting up and managing Takealot's on-site usability lab and for formulating their usability testing strategy.
Mar 2015 – Mar 2017	## UX designer: [Pearson](#) UX design, user research and usability testing for K-12 and post-schools digital education products. Collaboration with the efficacy manager to design a variety of research tools and facilitate user & efficacy research (with adults, students and scholars). Authoring, design and facilitation of in-house design-thinking training.
Oct 2014 – Feb 2015	## Freelance UX designer and front-end developer UX design, front-end development and product management. Clients included iKineo, Explore Sideways, Sanlam, Ernst & Young, Lottos Online and Inksaver.
Apr 2011 – Sept 2014	## UX designer, front-end developer & project manager: [Siyavula Education](#) UX design and research, project management, front-end development and QA testing, authoring, copywriting, typesetting and publishing for Siyavula's open-source STEM textbooks and online learning platform.

Education

2020 - 2025	**Bachelor of Arts**
	University of South Africa
	Majoring in Anthropology and Archaeology.

2011 – 2014	**M. Phil. in Information Technology, specialising in Human-computer interaction**
	University of Cape Town
	Dissertation: *"Designing an interface to provide new functionality for the post-processing of web-based annotations."*, supervised by Prof. Gary Marsden.

2004 – 2007	**Bachelor of Music**
	University of Cape Town
	Specialising in Western Classical Performance (cello).

Skills

- **People management**, mentorship, coaching, performance management, career guidance and development, conflict resolution.
- **User experience** and **user interface** design, including native app and responsive/mobile design.
- **Human-centred design** techniques including: stakeholder interviews, contextual inquiries, personas, workflows, user journeys and requirements, sitemaps, wireframes, prototyping, user research and heuristic evaluation.
- **Usability** test design, facilitation and analysis.
- **Research** study and tool design and implementation.
- Qualitative and quantitative **data analysis**, particularly for user behaviour, user journey flows/drop offs and user feedback.
- **Front-end development** experience, good knowledge and understanding of WordPress, HTML, CSS and JS.
- Knowledge and understanding of **accessibility** guidelines and best practices.
- **Facilitation** of workshops, talks, participatory design sessions and training.
- **Project management** and administration.

Software and tools

- **Design software:** Figma**,** Adobe CC, Miro, Lookback, Maze, Usertesting.com.
- **Tools:** MSOffice, GSuite, Google Analytics, WordPress, GitHub, Atom, LaTeX.

Publications

Jun 2014	**Designing an interface to provide new functionality for the post-processing of web-based annotations**
	University of Cape Town
	Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Information Technology. [download available here]

Jan 2013	**Everything Maths Literacy Grade 10**
	Siyavula Education
	Project management, textbook content coordination, authoring, editing, graphic design, proofreading.

Jan 2012	**Everything Maths Grade 10**
	Siyavula Education
	Technical editing, textbook authoring, graphic design, proofreading.

Workshop and conference highlights

Dec 2025	**UX South Africa Conference**
	Online
	Conference paper/presentation entitled "*Everything is awful. Staying sane and doing good in a world gone mad*".

Nov 2020	**UX South Africa Conference**
	Online
	Conference paper/presentation entitled "*Love in the time of Coronavirus: What a pandemic can teach us about creating a more caring, inclusive, and equitable world*". Co-presented with Stephen Barnett.

Nov 2018	**Agile Testing Days**
	Potsdam, Germany
	Co-facilitated the "*More heart and more humans with Inclusive Design*" workshop with Stephen Barnett. This workshop was rated by participants as one of the "Top 10" workshops of the conference.

Aug 2018	**Google UX Masterclass**
	Cape Town
	Co-facilitated the first Google UX Masterclass held in Cape Town, with Marli Ritter and Maureen Macharia.

Nov 2017	**UX South Africa Conference**
	Cape Town
	Co-facilitated the "*Inclusive Design: more heart, more humans*" workshop with Stephen Barnett.

Nov 2015	**UX South Africa Conference**
	Cape Town
	Conference paper/presentation entitled "*UX in the real world (or how an electric can opener changed my life)*"

Other

- Member of the ACM Special Interest Group for Computer Human Interaction ([SIGCHI](#)) and the ACM Council on Women in Computing ([ACM-W](#)).
- Member of Anthropology South Africa, the South African Archaeological Society; the Society of Africanist Archaeologists and the World Archaeological Congress.
- Freelance musician. Co-founder and manager of the [Night Light Collective](#), Goldfox duo and [Betwixt](#) music series.

Interests

Professional: human-centred design and research, anthropology, education, inclusive design, accessibility, participatory co-design and cognitive psychology. Public health, social innovation, sustainability and gender equality.

Personal: music, archaeology, history, astronomy, photography, and my cats and awesome and adorable Rough Collies - autographs and doggo introductions available on request! 😉

Portfolio and References

Product design portfolio available on request.

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