Robert Thwaites

Product Designer

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Online Portfolio   http://robthwaites.com

I am a designer with over 10 years industry experience creating and deploying digital products for media, government and not-for-profit clients. My human-centred design methodology is complemented by expertise in visual design and front-end development, making me a valuable collaborator and intermediary between business, design and engineering.

My work

Department of Employment | August 2018 - present

I have played an essential role in building the human-centred design practice at the Department as part of its first-ever dedicated User Centred Design team. This involved being seconded as a design resource and workshop facilitator to multiple teams for key exemplar projects.

Employment Systems Service (ESSWeb) Redesign

I worked in a multi-disciplinary team to redesign the department's central platform ESSWeb, used by over 25,000 employment consultants to service 1.5 million Australians to find work. These new designs led to my contribution of multiple designs for the new ESSWeb Design System, including new components, modern design patterns and fresh information architecture that better matches the needs and experience of employment consultants in the field. The project involved conducting user research and prototype testing in the field, writing content for the system CMS, and assisting project teams to prepare for its adoption.

Trades Recognition Australia (TRA) portal

I conducted co-design activities between multiple stakeholders to improve the confusing login/onboarding process for the TRA portal. I facilitated project scoping exercises to identify KPIs for success, and assisted in implementation of analytics on the platform to help measure those outcomes. My design work resulted in significant reductions in mistaken registrations, subsequent refunds and calls to their support hotline, freeing up funding and resources for other work in the program.

Access Apprenticeships portal

I planned and facilitated a Design Sprint with the Apprenticeships team involving business, project team members and users in an intensive 5-day collaborative design process to design a web portal for multiple organisations assisting apprentices with support payments. The collaboration surfaced surprising user needs for the platform, which I was then able to turn into an interactive prototype and test with users remotely, all within the space of a week. The insights generated formed the basis of a design I then helped the team deploy to production in subsequent weeks, removing a major bottleneck in inter-agency communication around the apprenticeships program.

Isobar | February 2018 - July 2018

University of Canberra Student Portal

I conducted user research for the University of Canberra 'Digital Student Journey' project, involving the creation of a new student dashboard and personalised experiences on the public website. I assessed existing market research, created Journey Maps and User Flows, conducted student interviews and guerilla testing of concepts, created research plans, completed landscape reviews to assess competitor and similar products. I also conducted co-design sessions and design sprints with the client to rapidly prototype solutions. I then created detailed wireframes, visual designs,

prototypes and a design system using Sketch, Invision and Photoshop, in consultation with clients and presented at fortnightly sprint reviews.

Playground XYZ | February 2016 – February 2018

The Playground: Campaign Analytics Dashboard

As Lead UX Designer for Reporting and Analytics on Playground's SaaS platform (a mobile advertising campaign management platform), I led a user-centred design process to prototype and test concepts for reporting screens. I involved internal SMEs and consulted with current and potential clients to determine user needs and business requirements for the new platform, mainly around campaign reporting. I created wireframes and user/system flows to help our team to empathise with our customers, then designed and built a data-driven prototype for the Campaign Management and Analytics screens, using HTML/ CSS/ JS.

Mobile Ad formats

I co-designed and product managed three of Playground's mobile ad formats (Hang Time, Store Locator, Vertical Video). These ad formats are deployed on a variety of mobile publishers in Australia and overseas, including Daily Mail, SBS, Huffington Post and Sydney Morning Herald. I designed and animated interactive mobile ads for blue chip brands such as Honda, McDonalds, Adidas and many more.

My work helped Playground XYZ to win two awards for Marketing Technology Company of the Year (2016 B&T Awards, 2017 Mumbrella Awards).

Datarati | July 2015 - December 2015

Email Marketing Campaigns

I consulted for marketing teams at Honda, Sensis, CGU Insurance and Urban Purveyor Group on development of web, email and mobile assets for their digital marketing campaigns. I conceptualised multi-channel marketing campaigns (incorporating web, email, SMS and customer service touchpoints) communicated through the design of persona-driven 'customer journey' flowcharts. I created visual designs of all assets for client campaigns and management of client approval process, then coded mobile responsive landing pages, microsites and emails using HTML, SASS/CSS and Javascript APIs. Assets were deployed through Salesforce Marketing Cloud and Marketo for data-driven marketing campaigns, with integrated user-testing and analytics to monitor success.

Landing pages and microsites

Building landing pages and microsites (using HTML, CSS/Sass and Javascript) for clients in a number of industries. Clients included Toyota, Sensis, Hyundai, University of Wollongong and Comvita.

I also trained an offshore team to take on common build tasks for the agency (responsive email development and landing pages), which became a productive and profitable addition to the business.

University of Technology, Sydney | February 2014 - July 2014

Designing, preparing and delivering workshop materials in web design and animation to Media Arts & Production students. I introduced the use of screencasts as an integral educational tool for the courses I was running. My supervisors commented that this led to a significant decrease in student enquiries, and a significant improvement in the quality of student work.

Agency, Surry Hills | November 2013 - January 2014

I completed a Digital Design internship, involving web development and graphic design assistance on website builds for clients including Getup!, C20 (part of the G20 summit) and Cathy McGowan MP.

Freelance Designer

Self-employed | September 2013 - June 2014

Branding, publication design and end-to-end web development of content-managed websites (Wordpress). Clients included GoFundraise, Motherboard Productions, MAHTHA, Crows Nest Centre and Critical Stages.

Education

2002   Bachelor of Arts (Media and Communications)
        University of New South Wales

2012   Graphic Design Masterclass
        Shillington College

2015   User Experience: The Ultimate Guide to Usability and UX
        Udemy

2018   Agile Team Training
        Isobar

Soft skills

- Holistic approach to design work, creating products that viable, feasible and desirable
- Synthesis of complex information from diverse sources to direct project scope and development
- Diverse range of communication skills, tailored to suit the audience
- Curiosity, for active listening and deep questioning
- Imagination, for divergent solution creation
- Empathy, for deep understanding of user and stakeholder needs
- Iterative, agile approach to my work, balancing decisiveness and flexibility
- Collaborative mindset, whether as a team member or project lead
- Natural people skills and a friendly manner

Hard skills

- Design workshop planning and facilitation
- Project scoping and documentation
- Proven qualitative research and synthesis
- Proven quantitative research through web analytics
- Rapid prototypes, wireframes and sketches
- High-fidelity prototypes with code and data
- User testing (moderated or unmoderated)
- Visual design & communication
- Stakeholder management
- Mentorship and training experience

Software and Tools

Prototyping

- Sketch
- Invision
- Axure RP
- HTML / ReactJS / JavaScript / JSON

Visual design

- Photoshop) (Image compositing and manipulation
- Illustrator, Indesign (layout and typography)
- Acrobat Pro
- Character animation
- Premiere (basic video editing)

Front-End Development

- HTML, CSS, SVG (expert)
- JavaScript (intermediate, ES6+)
- LESS and SASS
- Web animation
- NodeJS and ReactJS
- Git version control
- Agile collaboration (DevOps, JIRA)

Office

- Word (word processing, basic templating)
- Excel (basic formulas and data manipulation)
- Powerpoint

Presentations

| 2019 | Users, users everywhere: staying user-centred in digital project teams |
| | *Department of Employment Digital Expo* |

| 2018 | User Behaviour Analytics |
| | *Department of Employment* |

Referees

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