

Aaron Schmidt - User Experience Designer

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Passionate designer and user advocate who loves solving design and product problems, and empowering users with clean and appealing ways to accomplish their goals. Experienced at efficiently identifying crucial user tasks, expectations, frustrations, and successes. Self motivated, resourceful, and a committed team-mate who employs a rich set of skills applied to user research, iterative design, and user testing. Comfortable working in web and app technology environments and familiar with current front-end best standards. Manages multiple priorities simultaneously with attention to detail and deadlines, a strategic eye toward product innovation opportunities, and the ability to adapt to evolving project needs. Provided leadership on ways to ensure UI consistency and usability across projects.

Experience

User Experience Designer

Liquidus/Cofactor 2014 - Present

Lead UX design of content management applications allowing users to manage massive amounts of retailer client content. Conducted user research for internal applications and client projects. Analyzed and documented findings to aid in requirements gathering and to guide initial design direction. Improved designs and existing UI by conducting user testing, observation, and applying findings to following iterations. Took initiative to create a design system for internal application projects assuring consistent, maintainable, and easily learned interface patterns. Worked closely with Product and Development teams to efficiently deliver projects, meeting tight deadlines and fluid acceptance criteria.

- Thoroughly researched existing content tools and systems by conducting interviews, co-creation session, and user observation.
- Identified top tasks, user frustrations, and common errors which could be addressed by a new user interface. Documented findings and refined them into project goals which supplemented product team requirements.
- Iteratively created wireframes, interactive prototypes, and high fidelity mockups to test and define project designs. Very proficient in Sketch, Photoshop, Illustrator, Omnigraffle. Experienced in Axure, Invision, and Atomic Prototyping
- Tested UI and layout with users directly or through remote user testing and adjusting designs based on findings.

- Devised design rules for accessibility standards applied to partner content tools.
- Researched the efficacy of existing sites by working with the analytics team to find quantifiable answers to questions about user's behavior.
- Performed competitive analysis on outside sites identifying their strengths and weaknesses.
- Supported the development team by creating pattern libraries which could translate easily into components used in front end code.
- Advised and assisted in building of CSS and JS to help assure consistent UI look and behavior.

Designer

Cofactor 2011 - 2014

Designed websites for major retailers focused on sharing product and deal information associated to local stores. Worked closely with product and client services teams to identify top client and user goals. Crafted designs which met requirements and were true to client's brand. Tested and revised designs based on feedback from clients and test users. Developed front end styles and behaviors supporting the development team to assure sites were in line with client approved designs.

- Participated in user interviews and site performance analysis to gain critical insights into effectiveness of retail client sites.
- Built wireframe designs to get early acceptance from stakeholders, iterating from pencil sketches to detailed Illustrator executions.
- Created mockups for apps and responsive sites which successfully aligned with client brand standards and usability goals using Photoshop or Illustrator.
- Applied extensive experience with HTML, CSS, and JS to assist developers build client websites after the design phase.

Freelance Web Designer

Evive Health 2010

- Worked with the Evive Health leadership team to define key business goals for their web presence.
- Lead design and reiteration of their website prior to development.
- Built the Evive website using HTML, CSS, JS, and the JQuery Library.

Interactive Art Director

Fathom Communications 2008 - 2010

- Designed websites from creating and reiterating wireframes to high fidelity mockups for clients such as Knoll and International Trucks.

- Front end development on all Fathom web projects.

Volunteer Experience

Volunteer UX Designer

Chicago Independent Radio Project - CHIRPradio.org 2011 - Present

Lead UX discovery and design for applications used by the station's large group of volunteer DJs and music curation department. Conducted extensive research into the needs and challenges of DJs preparing and performing their shows. Defined top goals for users of the DJ Database application and focused designs on addressing those goals. Tested design concepts early with a group of DJ users who represented all levels of experience achieving target making these tools more approachable and usable. Incorporated findings to make meaningful changes to the application's design. Explored and tested the feasibility of expanding the DJ Database to a mobile platform giving its users more opportunities to use it for planning their shows.

- Engaged in shadowing sessions to observe DJs during their shows to get a better grasp of the studio environment and the tasks they are responsible for while performing.
- Conducted interviews with DJs and music department directors to learn about how the music is curated, rotation responsibilities of DJs, and how their current tools help or impede them.
- Facilitated sorting and other co-creation exercises to engage participants and to gain insights into their expectations, quirks, and workflows.
- Created user flows to identify and improve processes making user actions in the UI easier to learn and more efficient.
- Built wireframes and interactive prototypes in HTML and Atomic to test design and UI concepts.

Education

Applied Interaction Design: ADMCi - American Design and Master-Craft Initiative, September 2014

Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art: The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, May 1998