

HEATHER CROMBIE

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Profile

I created the UXResearch program driving UX improvements from research insights, introducing efficiencies & timeliness into product development cycle. Designed user interfaces for **AOL, AOL Commerce Channels, Marriott**, some of the most valuable pages on the Internet since 1995.

EXPERIENCE

UX Research Manager, Stride Learning, Remote — 2016-2023

- **Coordinate across multiple research & cross-functional teams** to ensure alignment with larger program goals.
- **Design and conduct UX research** to discover user needs and opportunities for UX improvement & additional business opportunities.
- **Direct, train and collaborate** with Product & UX designers on research goals and protocols.
- **Synthesize and consolidate findings** across multiple studies and projects to show opportunities for improvement in the UX of our services.
- **Promote insights & track performance** of changes to designs.
- **Design & manage AHA workflow for research intake**, scheduling, monitoring, prioritization and resource planning
- Create **budgets, goals & SOWs**. Hire permanent & contract researchers.
- Develop onboarding documentation, **training** and shadowing.
- Assess gaps in our capabilities and **implement strategies to compensate**.
- Introduce **new research methods**
- Directed training of **machine learning algorithm** from feedback comments.
- Assess and integrate new research platforms, ie. **Qualtrics, XM Directory, Smart Waiver, UserZoom, Rewards Genius, Prolific, etc.**
- Design & **moderate** remote usability research and focus groups for five different user types.
- **Design & build samples** for online surveys, card sorts, automated remote usability research/tests.
- **Ensure research samples are representative** of our target users and we're not oversampling. Direct the creation of a student and parent panel.

- Design, direct its creation & manage **UXResearch repository**.
- **Present at division level** and team level results and work with designers in the creation of solutions.
- **Coordinate across multiple research (Qual & Quant teams)** and make opportunities for the business to listen to our customers.

Sr. UX Lead, Stride Learning, Remote 2012-2016

- **Lead user research efforts** across multiple scrum teams.
- Use remote usability testing, surveys, online card sorting, lead focus groups and 1:1 research interviews.
- **Teach guerrilla testing** techniques and integration of findings into the agile backlog and story development process.
- Integrated **regular usability testing** into an Agile development process across **8 scrum teams**.
- Create **wire frames, sitemaps, journey maps, story boards, interaction models, functional specs, workflows, and use cases** -- documenting the user experience for business and development audiences.
- Work with multiple teams and product owners to **influence user-requirements, design** and simplify IA and the UX of the K12.com teacher and student experience.
- **Run** brainstorming meetings, critiques and process development meetings to improve team's designs & consistency.

Director Interaction Design, Bethesda MD — 2009-2012

- **Managed and grew** interaction design team from 7-18 people. The site earned revenues of **\$6.5 billion in 2010**
- Responsible for **hiring, budgeting**, resourcing talent for teams off & on site.
- Directed the teams responsible for the creation & communication of interaction design standards for Marriott.com. The process **moved from a paper based process to a wiki-based** process.
- Taught team to incorporate usage data, user research & business models when proposing & evaluating designs.
- **Formalized** the technical design positions & brought more training in for the CMS and a **greater appreciation of our development partners & tasks**.

- During tenure, **teams launched the redesign of the look/feel of** Marriott.com, the navigation, homepage, SEO landing pages, reservations path, confirmation path, virtual concierge, Vacations by Marriott, CRM e-mails, Blackberry, iPhone apps, Facebook pages and online marketing campaigns & the Autograph brand launch

Experience Director AOL Commerce Channels, Dulles VA — 2007-2009

AOL Commerce Channels - Dulles, VA

- **Lead redesigns** for Careers, Personals, Autos, Shopping, Real Estate, News and the Personal Finance channels. These channels garner over \$300 million in revenues.
- **Introduced qualitative and quantitative methods** for evaluating the potential performance of a design.
- **Used CTR analysis** of online experiences and ad campaigns to improve the user and business performance.

Principal UI Designer, AOL Studio, Dulles VA — 1998-2008

- Retrieved information about at-home computing hardware, software and access speeds to **guide design and business decisions**.
- **Used** focus groups, usability tests, primary field research, competitive analysis and secondary research to design processes.
- **Evaluated outside technologies** and companies for integration into the Marketplace experience.
- **Designed UI that brought local information to users** in context to their experience.
- Redesigned the AOL Welcome Screen for versions 7 & 8 of the service. **These designs supported more daily page views, 34 million, and media revenue, than any other media or search property on the internet.**

Managing Online Editor ZDNet Products — 1995-1998

- **Oversaw daily operations** of a five-million-pvs a month site.
- **Oversaw production** of three redesigns.
- Worked with an off-site development team to improve **database-generated content and searches**.

- Created and integrated content originating from **eight** Ziff-Davis magazines.
- Developed new programming techniques for editorial packages.
- **Developed Palm Pilot** user area and wrote online columns about hand-held computing.
- Webmaster for **Interactive Week** news

EDUCATION

University of Cincinnati — Masters in Computational Design 1995

University of Wisconsin — BA in Communications 1984

SKILLS

- Remote Usability testing with UserZoom & User Testing.com
- RITE Usability testing in Agile Process
- Quant & Qual Surveys with Qualtrics & XM Directory
- Lab & field studies
- Discovery user interviews & Co-design sessions
- A/B Testing
- Design Thinking Training
- UX Analytics Workshop leadership
- Survey coding for analysis and machine training
- Team process development, budget creation and cross-department management.
- SOW initiation and contract completion and management
- Panel development & management
- Sample Design and integration with XM Directory
- Legal clearance for FERPA and COPPA regulations
- Leadership for implicit bias training

AWARDS

K-12 Peer Recognition Awards 2016

AOL Commerce Channel Recognition 200