Jeremy Zilar

Creative Direction, Design, Strategy, and Engineering

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Overview

A dynamic leader with expertise in human-centered design, strategic business consulting, and engineering. Proven ability to drive vision, create strategies, and design beautiful digital experiences while empowering teams and improving their relationship with technology. Experienced in User-Research, Design Strategies, React, TypeScript, CSS, and scalable infrastructure development.

Experience

Experiments in Art and Design / President

JANUARY 2023 - PRESENT

Human-centered design, engineering, and strategic business consulting for artists, foundations, cultural institutions, and civic entities. We work to clarify their purpose, make their content accessible and beautiful, and improve their relationship with technology.

The Brooklyn Rail / Board Member & Digital Strategy Advisor

JANUARY 2017 - PRESENT

Serving as an active board member and strategic partner for The Brooklyn Rail who is deeply immersed in their unique rhythms, business operations, and artistic process and helping them to set visions, create strategies, design compelling experiences, and empower their team to grow both as individuals and as a collective.

Key duties and responsibilities include:

- Developed and launched "The New Social Environment'', a series of daily video conversations with prominent artists, filmmakers, writers, poets, and notable members of the arts community, which helped our nonprofit to weather the economic challenges of the pandemic, and tripled our readership to 3 million people/year.
- Helped the Rail staff co-locate and work globally during their 6-month exhibition at the 2019 Venice Biennale

- Regularly assist in the hiring of new managing directors, staff members, implementing equitable hiring practices, and maintaining up-to-date onboarding/offboarding procedures
- Assists with yearly fundraising campaigns
- Helped to establish the mission, vision, and purpose of The Brooklyn Rail
- Advises staff on streamlining workflows and improving the quality and impact of their output
- Provides authoritative leadership around complex technical issues, applying and implementing IT security policies
- Helps the team to apply project management methods and concepts to streamline operations
- Conducts regular security audits of the Sass services, to ensure protection of IT assets and infrastructure

Bonsai / Senior Software Engineer
JANUARY 2021 - JUNE 2023

As a full-stack developer at a startup focused on empowering artists and musicians, I was responsible for creating high-quality, innovative experiences in our React-based web application, enabling artists to engage with fans through short audio messages.

Key duties and responsibilities include:

- Developed interactive features such as artworks that respond dynamically to Web Audio API inputs, delivering unique and engaging user experiences.
- Built and maintained a mobile web application using React and TypeScript, ensuring clarity, maintainability, and scalability across the codebase.
- Designed and maintained a robust frontend developer experience, introducing standardized tooling, linting, and testing practices to maximize code quality and developer efficiency.
- Established CI/CD pipelines to streamline deployment, testing, and integration workflows, reducing manual intervention and minimizing production errors.
- Collaborated closely with product designers and backend engineers to ensure technical implementations aligned with product goals and user needs.
- Mentored junior developers, providing code reviews, technical guidance, and fostering best practices in software development.

General Services Administration — Digital.gov / Director, Digital.gov
MARCH 2017 - MAY 2020

MISSION: To modernize digital services across the federal government by increasing digital literacy, improving collaboration, and publishing the guidance, resources, training, and tools that people in government need the most.

Responsible for directing the operation of the Digital.gov websites, which included an ongoing events program, 22 communities of practice, the U.S. Web Design System, PlainLanguage.gov, Usability.gov, Digital Analytics Program, U.S. Digital Registry, Search.gov, and others. This included coordinating with the White House, Office of Budget and Management, and the GSA's leadership, CIO shop, and the Technology Transformation Services teams around our essential mission-critical operations, marketing initiatives, communications, and legal matters related to

ensuring the protection of our Digital.gov assets and IT infrastructure, setting technical and strategic direction for the sites, implementing the requisite technical changes, and executing outreach around how agencies can leverage digital.gov to build better digital services in government.

Key duties and responsibilities included:

❖ OVERSIGHT OF THE DIGITAL.GOV ECOSYSTEM
  ➢ Designed and developed a live events and training program on Digital.gov that reached Federal Employees across the world.
  ➢ Oversaw the migration and launch of PlainLanguage.gov on GSA infrastructure, which is now supported by the Digital.gov team
  ➢ Implemented a new content strategy for Digital.gov based on user-research
  ➢ Designed and rebuilt Digital.gov using the U.S. Web Design System
  ➢ Oversaw 22 government-wide communities of practice
  ➢ Served as a the representative from the GSA on the Federal Web Council that included 24 CFO Act agencies, and other select federal agencies that provide high-impact services to the public
  ➢ Coordinated monthly conversations with Gov.UK digital teams to share best practices
  ➢ Provided strategic direction around editorial design and publishing design with skills in content strategy, communication design, plain language.
  ➢ Established procedures to ensure that critical details or approvals in our communication pipeline were met
  ➢ Often coordinated on public-facing and government-wide communications with the White House, Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Office of Budget and Management (OMB), and GSA leadership.

❖ OVERSIGHT OF THE U.S. WEB DESIGN SYSTEM:
  ➢ Hired and led a team of designers to create the U.S. Web Design System 2.0 and the USWDS Design Principles – guidance and tools that make it easier for people in government to design and build accessible, mobile-friendly government websites.
  ➢ Worked with GSA leadership on codifying the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, which was signed into law in December 2018 and requires Federal Agencies to use the USWDS when modernizing their websites.
  ➢ Oversaw the move of the U.S. Web Design System to the Office of Products and Programs (OPP) within the GSA, under appropriated funding, away from 18F where the project was on the verge of being closed down

❖ CUSTOMER SERVICE:
  ➢ Implemented tools for receiving continual feedback from readers on Digital.gov
  ➢ Promoted and developed good working relationships with other teams within TTS, GSA, and the wider Federal community

- ➤ Used modern qualitative and quantitative research methods to identify core user needs and guide team direction
- ➤ Designed methods for measuring reader engagement across multiple platforms and reporting to the community
- ➤ Implemented methods for building community and sharing expertise on implementing digital practices across government agencies

❖ ORAL COMMUNICATION:
- ➤ Represented TTS at relevant conferences and/or events, public talks, panels and interviews with the press about our work on technical or professional issues regarding Digital.gov and the GSA
- ➤ Regularly provided training and education materials to build an informed community around digital practices including how design and technology inform all of BTS's Communities of Practice
- ➤ Served on multiple committees within TTS and OPP around technical and professional issues, including the OPP Web Council, TTS Infrastructure team
- ➤ Participated in multiple, government-wide committees and communities of practice, that focus on highly complex IT security and cybersecurity matters and issues to migrating legacy IT systems to modern IT technologies
- ➤ Served on a task force within the GSA to reform our content strategy, agency-wide

❖ PROBLEM SOLVING:
- ➤ Provided mentorship, senior guidance, and created career paths for Digital.gov team members to grow, learn, and excel
- ➤ Monitored trends or current events in technology, user-experience, design systems, DevOps, automation, and security via a number of newsletters, RSS feeds, websites, and online forums and applying the lessons learned to Digital.gov
- ➤ Manages relationships with partners and clients who are helping to publish guidance around best practices for modern websites and digital experiences in government
- ➤ Independently and collaboratively works with senior managers in federal agencies to develop standards and devise and implement cost effective strategies and innovative solutions to support improved cybersecurity practices
- ➤ Reviewed and edited all communication and announcements that went Digital.gov from partner teams in the GSA to ensure that text was correct, clear, accessible, and consistent in language and tone.
- ➤ Designed, built, and managed project management dashboards that helped dozens of teams to collaborate and schedule marketing and communication announcements through Digital.gov

❖ OVERSIGHT OF IT ASSETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE:
- ➤ Responsible for implementing and updating IT security policies, federal requirements for websites, and cyber security requirements, such as BOD 18-01, HTTPS, and DMARC

- ➢ Responsible for implementing IT security policies and best practices around the management online accounts and services that Digital.gov uses to for day-to-day operations
- ➢ Contributes to open documentation for IT best practices whenever possible.
- ➢ Uses agile project management methods, tools, and concepts to coordinate, define objectives, and prioritize work within the team
- ➢ Interprets policies that apply to "federal agency public websites and digital services," providing guidance for teams around government in implementing those requirements
- ➢ Helping teams in TTS to identify the best contract vehicle to procure support and oversee the implementation of the Information Technology (IT) solution
- ➢ Manages GitHub accounts for Digital.gov, and the software we use for version control and open-source collaboration
- ➢ Manages technical implementation and documents the process as required for Digital.gov

❖ TECHNICAL SKILLS:
- ➢ Fluent in the following software and programming languages: Federalist, Cloud.gov, Gulp, MySQL, Amazon Web Services, Route53, WordPress, Drupal, HUGO, Jekyll, GitHub, VSCode, Docker, CircleCi, Photoshop, Illustrator, Figma, Google Chrome, Google Lighthouse for accessibility and performance testing, Google Drive, MS Office Suite (Word, Excel, Power Point), and semantic HTML, CSS, SCSS, PHP, JavaScript, jQuery, NodeJS, CSV, and YAML

General Services Administration — 18F / Strategist + Innovation Specialist
MAY 2016 - MARCH 2017

MISSION: 18F develops partnerships with agencies to help them deliver exceptional digital experiences that address their strategic initiatives. 18F aims to strengthen government technology practices in ways that last beyond the formal partnerships. They effect change by practicing user-centered design and development, testing to validate hypotheses, shipping often, and deploying products in the open.

- Led cross-functional teams through a number of 6-week research and strategy engagements with clients from various federal, state, local, and tribal government agencies
- Worked with partner agencies to develop smarter and more effective methods for procuring technology (IT)
- Conducted user-research and developed recommendations for improving Digitalgov.gov and expanding its role in educating government
- Provided authoritative leadership and served as a senior expert on project teams as we worked directly with client agencies to identify their needs, developed strategies that included recommended solutions
- Helped client agency teams identify the best contract vehicle to procure the support and technology that was needed to meet their goals
- Provided authoritative advice on a plethora of highly complex IT security and cybersecurity matters and issues, which stem from migrating legacy IT systems to modern IT technologies
- Independently and collaboratively worked with senior managers in federal agencies to

develop standards and devise and implement cost effective strategies and find innovative
solutions to support improved cybersecurity practices

Time, Inc. / Director, Platform Engineering
MARCH 2015 - MAY 2016

- Led a team of creative technologists to redesign and engineer Fortune Magazine and the Fortune 500 dataset
- Coordinated between stateside designers and offshore developers on key projects
- Oversaw the design and development of a new content management system for Time Inc and its many magazine brands
- Oversaw global engineering teams, fostering collaboration across continents
- Implemented agile workflows to align editorial, product, and engineering teams
- Developed a culture of iterative releases, using data to help the team make goal-oriented decisions
- Developed new editorial tools that enabled magazine editors to package stories online
- Facilitated culture of cross-team collaboration, knowledge sharing demos, and transparent communication

The New York Times / Design Strategist
JULY 2012 - DECEMBER 2014

Worked independently and across teams on larger editorial strategy and design-related projects across The New York Times that spanned areas of branding, identity, illustration, editorial tools, and internal communication.

- Completed a full content audit of nytimes.com and mobile apps in advance of a major redesign, revealing overlaps in coverage, gaps in communication, and redundant work.
- Redesigned new creative concepts for The New York Times Magazine that worked across print, web, video, social media, and in-person events.
- Designed immersive, creative, online experiences around long-form narratives and in-depth reporting
- Developed tools that used live data to help editors visualize the impact of their work and created ways for the Times to reach new audiences.

The New York Times / Blog Specialist
APRIL 2006 - JULY 2012

Responsible for launching and leading the creative direction, design, branding, digital strategy and content management systems for over 200 blogs on NYTimes.com, including DealBook, Well, Bits, CityRoom, FiveThirtyEight, and The Lede. Championed the Times' early efforts to transform a print newsroom into a highly responsive, digital-first operation that could produce continuous and real-time news on the web.

- Developed and built a flexible design system that supported multiple sub-brands and

properties under the umbrella of The New York Times brand
- Designed and developed creative concepts for marketing and promoting special coverage of live events, both in print and online —e.g. Live coverage of Election results, Olympic Games, Super Bowl, Hurricane Sandy Emergency Response, World news events, obituaries
- Worked with a pool of illustrators, type designers, and digital artists to add art and illustration alongside our news coverage.
- Partnered with legal teams to ensure rights agreements were in place both the Times and the artists we worked with
- Developed editorial workflows across the newsroom and managed the daily digital operations across the platform for over 450 writers and editors around the world.
- Developed the newsroom strategies and platforms for covering breaking news, live coverage of new events (world events, elections, sporting events, etc…), reader comments, and distribution of news over Twitter.
- Led monthly newsroom all-hands meetings with newsroom staff to build literacy around the web, look at traffic, listen to critical feedback, and present upcoming concepts and designs.

EDUCATION

Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design
BFA, Painting, Drawing, and Digital Media
May 1998 - May 2001
Denver, CO

School of Visual Arts
Typography with Ed Benguiat
2005 - 2006
New York, NY