

**Loyal, down-to-earth, pragmatic and friendly**, I'm highly motivated to succeed as a **junior user researcher** after pivoting my career, in order to be directly involved in positive change in people's lives by making interactive systems user-centric – whether it's systems for saving lives, saving time or generally making the world better.

I have **20 years of UI/digital design agency experience** giving me transferable skills such as **stakeholder management, presenting** and working **collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams**.

I've recently achieved a **distinction** for a **MSc Human-Centred Interactive Technologies** course. When coupled with a **life-long learning** attitude, my **can-do mentality** and **problem-solving skills**, I'm a strong and well-rounded user researcher.

#### User-centred design (click York Civic Trust app)

- Used the Double Diamond to explore the problem space to gain insights of user goals, behaviours and motivations with user requirements gathering, ensuring the problem in the brief was the correct one
- Used the Interaction Design Lifecycle to evaluate and iterate the app, ensuring the system resonated with users based on data-driven design
- Created user empathy by understanding all types of users from the outset. Personas and scenarios were created from the data with the aid of affinity diagrams
- Used usability heuristics by Nielsen Norman Group and WCAG guidelines
- Advocate of user-centred and inclusive design, and being the voice of users and stakeholders from the outset, ensuring goals are achieved by all types of users
- Keep up-to-date on UX by reading articles on Medium

#### Research methods (click Parental Protection Methods)

- Semi-structured interviews, online surveys, WhatsApp interviews, expert and user evaluation sessions and gorrilla, secondary and experimental research methods
- Quantitative methods with larger samples to understand what people do
- Qualitative methods with smaller samples to understand why people do it

#### Planning and delivery (click Notification Persuasiveness)

- Scoped, planned and delivered research, including participant recruitment, for multiple studies to the standards of a top 10 UK computer science research university

#### Transferable skills

- **Stakeholder management:** Worked with team members and senior external stakeholders to achieve the best outcome for various projects at The Ark. Sensitively and constructively voiced concerns or ideas in client meetings to these stakeholders
- **Collaborative working:** Worked on countless projects as part of multidisciplinary teams, across various sectors on projects such as **Welcome to Yorkshire Gardens**
- **Presenting:** Presented design visuals to clients at The Ark, taking on board opinions and justifying decisions. Distilled and presented complex findings during the MSc HCIT in a clear, engaging and informative manner

#### Areas I'm improving

- **Agile working:** The key is prioritising, welcoming change, continuous delivery, collaborative working in small, self-motivated self-organised teams and using sustainable delivery as a measure of progress. I have also read *Sprint* by Knapp et al. and completed 'Agile Foundations' LinkedIn Learning course
- **UK Government Service Standard:** I've also read *Good Services*, by Lou Downe
- **Inclusive design:** Systems should be designed for all – no matter what barriers users face



**Chris Cowl**  
user research & design

#### Skills

User-centred design  
Interviews  
Surveys  
Experimental research  
User evaluation/testing  
Personas & scenarios  
Desk research  
Quantitative & qualitative data elicitation & analysis  
Content & thematic analysis

#### Software

Excel/Google Sheets  
Google Docs / R Studio

#### Adobe Creative Cloud

XD / InDesign  
Illustrator / Photoshop

#### WordPress

#### Education

**MSc Human-Centred Interactive Technologies**

Distinction  
University of York  
2021-2022

**Higher National Diploma (HND) in Graphic Design**

Merit  
York College / 1999-2001

**National Diploma (ND) in Graphic Design**

Distinction  
York College / 1997-1999

#### Who am I?

Mountain biker / Gamer  
Cricketer / Gym goer

#### Contact

hello@chriscowl.co.uk  
07527 777426  
chriscowl.co.uk

## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

### User Researcher

GovJam 2022 / Thoughtworks / November 2022–November 2022

- **Solving a government problem:** Used guerrilla research, a survey, user testing, Crazy Eights and Yes And, and worked collaboratively in an agile team to understand the problem space and create prototypes. Presented ideas and prototypes to stakeholders ([click GovJam 2022](#))

### Senior UI/Digital Designer

The Ark Design / June 2003–September 2021

- **UI Design:** Created high-fidelity UI website visuals with Adobe XD
- **Presenting:** Presented designs to clients, the MD of The Ark and the sales team regularly
- **Production streamlining:** Investigated production issues via interviews with team members. This led to time saving solutions for the design team which saved approximately 50–80% on repetitive tasks in Adobe Photoshop and Indesign
- **Highly flexible designer:** Took part in ideation, some creative direction and designed for multichannel delivery. Worked for various clients including Leeds United, Welcome to Yorkshire, NHS, The Yorkshire Regiment, Bentley, Linley & Simpson, Express Bi-folding Doors and the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors
- **Agency stakeholder management:** Worked with team members and senior external stakeholders to achieve the best outcome for various projects. Sensitively and constructively voiced concerns or ideas in client meetings to these stakeholders. Created long-term relationships of respect to increase influence
- **Collaborative working:** Worked collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams or independently on countless projects such as the [Welcome to Yorkshire Gardens](#) project and the [Linley & Simpson website](#)
- **Loyal team player:** Flexible person with a can-do, problem solving attitude and helped The Ark through the global financial crisis and Covid-19
- **Life-long learner:** Always focused on development, learning new software or techniques, such as Adobe Creative Cloud, Wordpress, Mailchimp and Silverstripe
- **Mentor:** Mentored junior members of the design team to help them settle into working at The Ark

### Freelance Senior Graphic/Digital Designer

Various clients / January 2014–present

- **Crowdfunding creative:** Provided creative direction and design assets for the 'Join the Brew York Revolution' crowdfunding campaign for Brew York, as well as developed the concept for the 'Brew Yorkers' community, which helped the craft brewery achieve 141% of their target
- **Photoshop editing:** Helped to launch The Escapologist at Xscape Yorkshire, reaching over 160,000 people in six weeks, by creating numerous fantasy landscapes for various marketing materials
- **WordPress:** Built a highly visual website with a clear user journey in order to boost bookings for The Escapologist



Chris Cowl

user research & design

### Contact

hello@chriscowl.co.uk  
07527 777426  
chriscowl.co.uk