



James Hodge

Lead User Researcher & Experience Designer

- Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
- jameshodge1234@gmail.com
- Publications
- Portfolio

INTRODUCTION

James is a Lead User Researcher & Experience Designer with a six-year track record at the intersection of empathetic product design and innovative user research. He is passionate about creating meaningful user experiences, developing co-design approaches to ensure the active inclusion of marginalised communities in technology innovation. Through these approaches, James excels in merging user-centric design principles with concrete product outcomes, navigating diverse stakeholders through public and private sector projects.

EDUCATION

- 2018**
2022 **PhD Computer Science**
Newcastle University
Experienced in Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), where focus lies in user-centric product design, addressing critical gaps in the field of VR/AR with people with dementia. The PhD showcases adaptability in participatory methods by developing collaborative design events, ethical practices, and fostering dialogue between designers and end-users.
- 2017**
2018 **MRes Digital Civics**
Newcastle University (first class)
The dissertation centered on the exploration of personalising media experiences for individuals with dementia, receiving several academic awards and publications including #1 conference for HCI - CHI'19. Throughout the master's course, a more in-depth understanding of digital civics, ubiquitous technologies, and machine learning was gained.
- 2014**
2017 **BSc Computer Science**
Newcastle University (first class)
During the undergraduate program, a diverse skill set in computing science was cultivated, encompassing HCI, software design, and web and app development. The final dissertation focused on designing personalised VR experiences for individuals living with dementia, presenting the work at CHI'18 and receiving an honourable mention.

EXPERIENCE

- Q2 2022**
Q4 2023 **Lead User Researcher & Experience Designer | Public sector projects**
Thoughtworks - Newcastle
 - Played a pivotal role in a 50-member team, contributing actionable insights that shaped design and strategy decisions
 - Facilitated the organisation in understanding user needs, behaviours, and motivations, optimising product development efforts.
 - Enhanced product and service usability by identifying and resolving usability issues through comprehensive user research.
 - Demonstrated efficiency in saving client resources and time by prioritising critical user needs and design challenges.
 - Proficient in using GDS, Azure, and Figma for streamlined project execution.
 - Established and nurtured key stakeholder relationships, unlocking new opportunities and ensuring ongoing contract engagement.
 - Managed and mentored a team of 3-4 designers, providing support and training in research and design projects.
- Q4 2020**
Q2 2022 **User Researcher & Assistant Engineer**
Samsung AI Center - Cambridge
 - Provided crucial insights to stakeholders, guiding informed decisions on the direction of AI products at Samsung AI Centre.
 - Spearheaded the collection and design of extensive AI datasets, totaling 20,000 minutes of video and audio footage.
 - Conducted and analysed user interviews and focus groups, identifying and addressing user needs and pain points.
 - Collaborated with cross-functional teams to design and develop prototypes, optimising developer workflows.
 - Led research sessions on the future of fitness and AI and synthesised findings into shareable reports.
 - Delivered presentations to key stakeholders in South Korea, securing funding for future AI research and development endeavors.
- Q4 2019** **Immersive Experience Designer**
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
 - Successfully delivered the first-ever 360 humanitarian escape room within an impressive 8-week build timeframe.
 - Developed the user journey to align with the core principles of Red Cross Strategy 2030.
 - Utilized Unity 3D to personally build the intricate 3D environments, seamlessly blending technology and design.
 - Collaborated with interdisciplinary teams to identify and address key areas of interest, shaping the elements of the escape room.
 - Demonstrated a commitment to leveraging technology for meaningful and immersive humanitarian storytelling.
- Q4 2018**
Q4 2019 **Demonstrator & Supervisor**
Newcastle University
 - Managed the supervision of two undergraduate students, offering constructive feedback and assisting in planning and organizing workshops.
 - Contributed to teaching modules for 60+ students, actively engaging in code-related challenges and refining ideas for final assessments.
 - Displayed a hands-on approach to fostering a supportive learning environment and contributing to the academic success of students.

SKILLS

- User-centred Design
- Qualitative Research
- Interaction Design
- Conducting Research
- Virtual Reality
- Adobe CC
- Adaptability
- HCI
- Adaptive
- Unity
- Project management
- Problem Solving
- Decision-making
- Time Management
- Javascript / HTML
- Machine Learning
- Data Collection
- Sketch
- Analysis

INTERESTS

- CYCLING
- GARDENING
- FITNESS
- PHOTOGRAPHY