ROBERTO FALLER, Ph.D.
User Experience Design Researcher • Game Designer

Dynamic design researcher with two years of experience turning complex challenges into actionable solutions in strategy, service, and communication design. Helped dozens of clients launch ventures, developed a product design program, and led qualitative and quantitative research in gaming, healthcare, and education. Driven to apply strategic and creative thinking to drive meaningful impact.

Experience

Founder and Game Developer   Jan 2022 - Present
Cat Island Games | Self-employed | Santa Rosa, CA

- Established an independent game studio during the permanent residency application process, leading 5 core functions.
- Designed multiple tabletop games, including Apocalypse Cats, scheduled for Kickstarter launch in Q3 2025 ($100k funding goal).
- Assembled and led a diverse team of 3 core developers and over 60 partners (artists, developers, and playtesters).
- Directed art development for 50+ characters and 240+ images, along with the game's narrative and worldbuilding.
- Created the game's brand identity, website, UI, and online prototypes across 2 platforms, supporting 100+ playtests.

User Experience Researcher   Jul 2019 - Jun 2022
CoMission Consultancy | Part-time | Sebastopol, CA

- Led qualitative and quantitative research for local governments, businesses, and non-profits for 2 years.
- Organized and led events to support local businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing engagement by nearly 20%.
- Constructed personas, wireframes, and prototypes for client ventures, achieving a 100% project launch success rate.
- Communicated insights as persuasive stories that guided product improvements and business strategies.
- Delivered user-centered digital products that addressed consumer needs, behaviors, and pain points.

Ph.D. Design Researcher   Aug 2013 - Dec 2020
Illinois Institute of Technology | Full-time | Chicago, IL

- Completed a dissertation in design, developing a framework for timing, intensity, and delivery of complex themes in games.
- Crafted and tested 3 game prototypes, analyzed 8 case studies, and engaged 150+ participants and 20+ developers in user research.

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Main Competencies

UX Research • UX Design • Game Development • Digital Product Design • Service Design • Design Strategy • Teaching & Mentoring

Education

Doctor of Philosophy in Design
Illinois Institute of Technology
Chicago IL (Dec 2020)

Master of Science in Engineering: Materials Science
UFRGS Federal University
Brazil (Sep 2009)

Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering
UNISC University
Brazil (Jul 2003)

Languages

English (Fluent)
Portuguese (Native)
Spanish (Intermediate)

- Led research and development efforts by conducting field research at 4 game events, engaging 63 industry representatives from 56 companies.
- Achieved a 3.84 GPA in advanced training on design research, systems design, interaction, usability testing, communication, and service design.
- Published findings in two international conferences and one design journal.

Product Design Program Manager   Mar 2011 - Aug 2013
UNISINOS University | Full-time | Brazil

- Launched a Product Design undergraduate program, achieving 70% enrollment in the first year and 85% by the third year.
- Managed program operations, hiring six faculty members and managing course schedules, budgets, and marketing.
- Increased applications by 25% through outreach to 300+ high school students and marketing efforts.
- Established a prototyping lab with 40+ methods, enhancing hands-on learning.

Professor of Design and Engineering   Mar 2008 - Aug 2013
UNISINOS University | Full-time | Brazil

- Produced and taught 30+ classes to 500+ students on design methods, prototyping, games, manufacturing, and mechanical systems.
- Mentored 40+ students on best research practices and design methods during year-long graduation projects.
- Implemented a project-based learning approach, boosting student participation by 20%.
- Achieved top scores (4.8/5) in student evaluations for course quality and teaching effectiveness.

Methods

User Research: Interviewing, observation, surveying, user testing, usability testing
Design: Wireframing, storyboarding, experience modeling, concept development
Prototyping: Physical prototyping, digital interactive prototyping, 3D modeling
Games: Game design, level design, worldbuilding, coding
Communication: Problem framing, storytelling, information diagramming, business strategy, design reports, presentations

Technologies

Design: Adobe Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign), Figma, Miro
Game Dev: Unreal, Godot, Phaser, Blender, Screentop
Research: UserTesting, Qualtrics, SQL, SPSS
Coding: JavaScript, GDScript