ROBERTO FALLER, Ph.D.

User Experience Design Researcher • Game Designer

Dynamic design researcher with over 10 years of experience turning complex challenges into actionable solutions in strategy, service, and communication design. Helped dozens of clients launch ventures and led qualitative and quantitative research in gaming, healthcare, and education. Driven to craft interactions and systems that shape product direction and deliver lasting impact.

Experience

User Experience and Game Designer
Jan 2022 - Present

Cat Island Games | Santa Rosa, CA

- Lead core creative, design, and business roles for a new game studio.
- Design multiple tabletop games, including Apocalypse Cats, scheduled for Kickstarter launch in Q3 2025.
- Manage a diverse team of 3 core developers and 60+ collaborators across disciplines (artists, developers, and playtesters).
- Direct art development for 50+ characters and 240+ assets, including narrative and worldbuilding assets.
- Create and maintain the brand identity, website, UI, and digital prototypes, supporting 100+ playtests.

User Experience Researcher
Jul 2019 - Jun 2022

CoMission Consultancy | Sebastopol, CA

- Led qualitative and quantitative research for local governments, businesses, and non-profits.
- 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 | 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 60+ developers in user research.
- Carried out field research at 4 events, engaging over 60 game developers to explore design practices.
- Achieved a 3.84 GPA in advanced training on design research, interaction, usability testing, communication, and service design.

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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

Master of Science in Materials Engineering
UFRGS Federal University
Brazil

Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering
UNISC University
Brazil

Languages

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

User Experience Researcher (project)   Jan 2017 - May 2017
IIT + Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer | New York, NY
- Formulated digital service models for cancer prevention, focusing on solutions for pre-cancer populations.
- Collaborated with the client's New York design team to deliver actionable insights that improved engagement in health programs.
- Performed 20 interviews with experts to uncover best practices in data sharing, customer engagement, and service delivery.
- Developed 20 case studies highlighting key opportunities for innovation in cancer prevention services.
- Crafted the "Helios" service arc, synthesizing ten core insights into a cohesive model for cancer prevention and ongoing management.

User Experience Researcher (project)   Jan 2016 - Dec 2016
IIT + UChicago Medicine | Chicago, IL
- Analyzed information flows and activities in the Operating Room (OR), identifying workflow and communication inefficiencies.
- Conducted 15 surgery observations and 10 expert interviews to gather insights into OR dynamics and team coordination.
- Mapped workflows, communication patterns, and team movements in four detailed diagrams that visualize systemic issues.
- Constructed four future-oriented scenarios, proposing conceptual solutions to improve efficiency and situational awareness.
- Delivered 20 actionable recommendations that guide ongoing OR system development and support improved surgical outcomes.

Product Design Program Manager   Mar 2011 - Aug 2013
UNISINOS University | Brazil
- Launched a new Product Design undergraduate program, reaching 70% enrollment in its first academic year.
- Increased applications by 25% through student outreach, design events, and interactive workshops.
- Directed academic operations, hiring six faculty and managing design curriculum, budgets, and scheduling.
- Established a prototyping lab with 40+ fabrication methods to support material and experiential learning.

Professor of Design and Games   Mar 2008 - Aug 2013
UNISINOS University | Brazil
- Produced and taught 30+ classes to 500+ students on design methods, prototyping, games, manufacturing, and systems.
- Mentored 40+ students on best research practices and design methods during year-long capstone projects.
- Implemented a project-based learning approach, increasing student participation by 20%.
- Earned 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), Microsoft Office (PowerPoint, Excel, Word), Google Workspace (Sheets, Slides, Docs), Figma, Miro
Game Dev: Unreal, Godot, Phaser, Blender, Screentop
Research: UserTesting, Qualtrics, SQL, SPSS
Coding: JavaScript, GDScript