

# ROBERTO FALLER, Ph.D.

## User Experience Design Researcher • Game Designer

Dynamic design researcher with 20+ 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*

- Lead core creative and business roles for a game studio founded during the permanent residency process.
- 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 | Part-time | 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 | 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 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 (Dec 2020)

### Master of Science in

### Materials Engineering

UFRGS Federal University  
Brazil (Sep 2009)

### Bachelor of Science in

### Industrial Engineering

UNISC University  
Brazil (Jul 2003)

## Languages

English (Fluent)

Portuguese (Native)

Spanish (Intermediate)

## Research Associate

Jan 2017 - May 2017

*IIT + Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer | Part-time | 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.

## Research Associate

Jan 2016 - Dec 2016

*IIT + UChicago Medicine | Part-time | 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 | Full-time | 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 | Full-time | 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), Figma, Miro

**Game Dev:** Unreal, Godot, Phaser, Blender, Screentop

**Research:** UserTesting, Qualtrics, SQL, SPSS

**Coding:** JavaScript, GDScript