Elizabeth Hitchins

User Researcher

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Skills

Experienced user researcher with interaction design, digital accessibility and agile experience. I have worked in both public and private sectors, conducting evaluative research using qualitative and quantitative methods.

I have experience in Government Digital Service assessments and managing complex stakeholder environments and projects.

Experience

Government Legal Department / Lead user researcher and interaction designer

Sept 2023 to January 2024, September 2024 to March 2025

Working on the discovery and Alpha phase for a new Legal Practise Management Service as the main system used is due to be replaced Concentrating on research with litigation and advisory lawyers as well as business support services and finance.

The alpha consisted of working with 3 specialised vendors, evaluating their suitability through user research to replace the current system. I worked with various users across the business as well as those with access needs.

Office for Students / Senior user researcher

February 2025

Evaluating the digital channels with providers and students to provide future recommendations to feed into their new strategy for 2025 to 2030. New designs as well as accessibility were evaluated and recommendations were offered as part of the research report.

Highways Agency / Senior user researcher

August 2024 to September 2024

Working on an AI chatbot development project to help those who receive penalty notices to understand, query and appeal the charge. Users were those who had received a penalty notice, working through different realistic scenarios with the AI chatbot to advise on iterating the language model to improve the chat bots suitability.

Mind.org / Senior user researcher

May 2024 to August 2024

Improving the donation pathways and mental health based personas to assist in the improvement of their digital channels and fundraising. The

research consisted of evaluating new designs, looking at A/B testing data and working with users with different mental health needs to fully understand the impacts of the digital services.

Visit England / Senior user researcher

April 2024

Website renewal project for Visit England (currently live), researching and developing their new website to include a new itinerary and maps feature.

Apprilis / Bid writer

April 2024

Working on a series of public sector digital delivery bids with the Apprilis team (3 won).

Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport / Lead user researcher

January 2024 to March 2024

Working on the discovery and alpha for the data improvement programme. Focusing in the collection and ingestion of key data sets from public bodies that received funding.

Cabinet Office / Lead user researcher

July 2022 to September 2023

Working on the Discovery and Alpha phases of the Covid19 Listening Exercise. Working with SaaS vendors to provide a well-researched interim and subsequent main release. A mix of social research and digital research, working with the online and offline journeys.

Developing processes and templates for this sensitive project as well as focus groups for creative projects such as the Tapestry project for the Covid19 Inquiry hearings.

Working on several smaller projects within the Cabinet office regarding automation of processes, fast stream programme and assessment frameworks. Working extensively with users with access needs.

Department for Education / Senior user researcher

January 2022 to July 2022

Working with professionals that support children and families below the threshold for social care. Short discovery on the referral process for families from professionals in education, health and enforcement leading to an Alpha phase around a new referral form into local authorities to request help.

Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs / Social user researcher

July 2021 to February 2022

Working with farmers and farming representative groups to co-design the Sustainable Farming Incentive scheme that aims to support environmental practices and wildlife benefits.

Working with farmers around land management and implementing a series of actions on their farms that support the scheme objectives.

Homes England / Senior user researcher and interaction designer
January 2020 to July 2021

Working across digital portfolio projects essential to the digital transformation of Homes England. Involved in coaching the wider business as well as recruitment to put Homes England on a GDS path. Digital accessibility consultant and neurodiversity champion.

Education & Skills Funding Agency / Programme lead researcher and interaction designer
April 2018 to December 2019

Working with the Data collections project and across the Data Science teams to improve the quality of the research process and reputation among stakeholders. Running discovery, Alpha and Beta on a complex data driven service that deals with over 8bn of government funding. GDS assessed.

HM Revenue & Customs / Interaction designer
August 2017 to April 2018

Designing the new Income Tax section of the Business Tax Account for the Making Tax Digital project pilot. Working with fully coded and scenario based prototypes to enable research with different user data. Working closely with content design, research and the business to match policy and user needs. Collaborating with other scrum teams that touch the service.

Solicitors Regulation Authority / User researcher and interaction designer
April 2017 to August 2017

Providing user experience and research expertise for a key client in the legal sector. Translating legacy forms to a new digital platform and embedding user-centered design activities into an agile workflow to deliver timely findings. Working in an open and iterative way that puts users first to contribute to the user centric design transformation within the client agency.

Skills Funding Agency / User researcher and interaction designer
September 2015 to April 2017

Working to create user centric innovative solutions during the Discovery, Alpha and Beta stage of the Digital First Careers Service. Working with fully coded, responsive prototypes & collaborative working. Threading accessibility through from the very start.

Part of a multidisciplinary agile team working on a 2 week rapid sprint cycle.

Qualitative and quantitative user research was essential to the role,

conducted in a lab environment, guerrilla, focus groups, surveys as well as field research with our users and stakeholders.

Previous experience

Before 2015

Working on end to end projects through the full UX and design cycle through agencies in the USA and Germany. Working in the private sector with financial and ecommerce companies. I also worked as a research and development chemist in the pharmaceutical sector.

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References

Helen Cassidy / Product owner, National Careers Service

"Liz has been an absolute gift to the National Careers Service development team. Her ability to translate and respond to user needs with beautiful front end design is second to none. With her technical prowess and her empathy for the user, Liz would be an asset to any organisation and I would jump at the chance to work with her again in the future."

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Education

DeMontfort University, Leicester / BSc HONS Chemistry (Pharmaceutical) 2:1