

# CAROL BALES

## UX RESEARCH LEADER

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### PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Results-driven, UX researcher with a proven track record. Expert in leading research and design initiatives from planning to analysis then translating findings into actionable product solutions. Strategic leader hyper-focused on product strategies with a collaborative, people-focused management style. Thrives in dynamic environments where innovation, experimentation, and continuous learning drive exceptional user experiences.

### CORE COMPETENCIES

User researcher, effective at multiple research methodologies  
Strategic thinker, innovative problem-solver and UX designer  
Leader, practice builder, people-manager, and user-centered design advocate

### WORK EXPERIENCE

**Georgia State University, GA**

**Jan 2018 – present**

**Adjunct Instructor, Dept of Computer Science**

Teaching Intro to Human-Computer Interaction: Teams use human-centered design and research practices to prototype a solution to a real human problem. Mentoring and preparing students for lifelong problem-solving and design-thinking.

**The Weather Company (TWC), IBM, GA**

**Oct 2018 – Aug 2023**

**Sr. User Researcher, Sr. Manager, Consumer Insights**

- **Led a high-volume, remote research team** that expedited research to inform critical product decisions for a massive 400 million monthly active user base. Our team empowered cross-functional B2C Product, Design, Advertising, and Editorial teams with actionable primary research in a fast-paced, dynamic environment.
- **Supported acquisition of new audiences** through research into weather and well-being. Led quantitative research that directly informed the TWC app redesign, enhancing its relevance in users' daily lives. Conducted usability testing and documented recommendations. Cross-functional team member supporting designers' creation of new design system in Figma.
- **Broadened user engagement** through research that justified the launch of a highly successful weather newsletter, generating significant brand loyalty and revenue, and solidifying the role of an editorial-led POV.
- **Reduced subscriber purchase friction** by identifying and eliminating unforeseen blockers in the purchase process for bundled subscriptions using RITE method for rapid prototyping, concept evaluation, and iterative usability testing. Performed Heuristic Evaluation and documented recommendations for UI and UX consistency and improved user experience in web account setup for TWC.
- **Fostered collaboration and user advocacy** while collaborating with stakeholders during planning and design-thinking sessions. Wrote a customer journey map based upon user behaviors, created a workspace for writing user stories, and hosted a monthly research showcase.
- **Strengthened the research practice** by experimenting with new research methodologies, evangelizing research from multiple listening channels to new business areas and stakeholders, creating a research repository, hosting a monthly research showcase, and introducing a quarterly UX benchmark for success metrics.
- **People manager advocating for team members** through coaching, mentoring, career guidance, standardization of methods, training and cross-training opportunities, and a flexible framework for young parents during Covid.

**Silver Spring Interactive, GA**

**Feb 2011 – Sep 2018**

**UX Strategy and Research Consultant**

In a consulting role for multiple large businesses in transportation, government, and CPG, I performed UX design to solve complex business and user problems. My wireframes served as canonical design requirements and focal points for stakeholder approval.

- **Reduced call-wait and call-processing times** for Delta Airlines' legacy call-center application. Prototyping and style recommendations.
- **Improved user experience and business strategy** for Y-combinator startup Exception-ALLY.
- **Increased satisfaction and reduced attrition** during the community selection and move-in process for Brookdale Senior Living.

## **Fiserv**

**May 2009 – Jan 2011**

### **Sr. UX Architect (& Researcher)**

Working closely with product management, business analysts and development, I designed new features for bill-pay users and internal call-center representatives accounting for Fiserv's complex financial system. I then prototyped and tested enhancements with our target audiences.

- **Improved findability of key information by 70%** in Fiserv's bill-pay call center application.
- **Increased search efficiency** in Fiserv's biller search API for Walmart Money Centers.

## **Cartoon Network**

**July 2008 – Jan 2009**

### **UX Architect, Consultant**

As part of the Fusion Fall team, I worked closely with product management and game designers to prototype and document UX design features both online and in-game. I worked with Cartoon Network while gaining a master's degree in HCI at Ga Tech.

- **Created efficient Web account sign-up** and account management
- **Improved usability for in-game heads-up-display** for MMOG Fusion Fall

## **Intercontinental Hotels Group**

**Mar 2004 – Sep 2005**

### **UX Architect**

Extensive wireframing and prototyping refinement of hotel reservation process. I also worked with external vendors to conduct usability testing, and internal development conducting complex A/B split-testing to refine reservation completion rates. The content management system included multiple brands, languages and country sites.

- **Improved efficiency on hotel search results**, hotel reservation process, and hotel detail pages resulting in significant revenue increases across international sites.

## **Cingular Wireless**

**Aug 2003 – Mar 2004**

### **Sr. Information Architect (& Researcher)**

As part of a small design and research squad, I conducted usability testing and UX design to improve the customer experience.

- **UXR for in-store experience.** In this study, our team observed in-store interactions between customers and personnel, product displays, and check-out resulting in recommendations for improved efficiency

## **IBM Interactive Design Studios**

**Mar 1999 – July 2003**

### **Sr. Information Architect**

As part of this extensive consultancy, I worked with multiple proposal and fulfillment teams, quickly assessing customer proposals, and conducting high level and then detailed design documentation for enterprise systems at a time when Fortune 500 companies were transitioning more and more of their business online. We performed extensive strategic business consulting to address shifts in business process, technological frameworks, as well as novel solutions for customer-users.

- Information Architecture for Hospitality, Finance, Transportation, Publishing, Entertainment, Consulting, and Government Apps
- Heuristic Evaluations for increased user engagement and brand consistency, Process Assessment
- Content Strategy / Information Visualization

## **EDUCATION**

### **Georgia Institute of Technology, GA**

Master of Computer Science, Human-Computer Interaction

### **University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting

## **SKILLS & TOOLS**

**Skills:** User Research, Heuristic Evaluation, Usability, Qualitative/Quantitative, Research Design, Remote-moderated or unmoderated, Mixed methods, Formative & Summative, Research-based Requirements-writing, Moderation, SUS, NPS, CSAT, RITE Method, Surveys, Third-party data, Usage metrics, UX Strategy, UX Design, UI Design, Design Thinking, Interaction Design, Prototyping, Journey Mapping, People Manager, Practice Building, Team Leader, Mentoring & Coaching, Innovation, Budget & Planning, Teaching, Vendor Management, Stakeholder Relations, Excellent Communications & Storytelling

**Industries:** Financial, Transportation, Hospitality, Government, Entertainment, Gaming, eCommerce, Telecomm, SaaS, InfoTech, Privacy Compliance

**Tools:** Alchemer, UserZoom, SPSS, Mural, UserTesting, Qualtrics, Morai, OvoStudios, Figma, Mural, InDesign, Adobe XD, Adobe Photoshop, ChatGPT, Gemini, Midjourney, Trello, Slack, Jira, Salesforce, OneTrust, Discourse