Leelan Farhan

UX Researcher & Strategist

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EDUCATION

Concordia University — Doctorate of Education - *left ABD*

SEPTEMBER 2018 - SEPTEMBER 2024

Completed 5 years of work on participatory design sexual violence project before leaving for industry.

University of Toronto — *Master of Information*

SEPTEMBER 2016 - APRIL 2028

Culture & Technology and User Experience Design

University of Toronto — *Hon. B.Sc.*

SEPTEMBER 2012 - APRIL 2016

Psychology Specialist and English Minor

EXPERIENCE

Aylo, Remote — *Lead UX Researcher*

MAY 2024 - PRESENT

- Scaled UX research into a **research-as-a-service model** across five product verticals.
- **Built research operations from scratch**, including Dovetail repository and JIRA intake.
- Advised VP-level stakeholders and **led cross-functional strategy workshops.**
- Instituted pre-build user testing, **saving ~$180K in development** costs.
- **Hired and mentored UX Researchers**; advised designers on research best practices..
- Led creator research that **improved retention by 6%** through monetization updates.
- Presented at company summits and informed public messaging and internal policies

Aylo, Remote — *Senior UX Researcher*

MAY 2023 - MAY 2024

- Established the company's first UX research practice across paysites and video-sharing platforms.

SKILLS

Research & Strategy: User Testing · Surveys · In-depth interviews · Persona & Journey Mapping · Data Analysis

Leadership & Ops: Research Practice Building · Dovetail Repository & JIRA Management · Hiring & Mentorship · Cross-Functional Stakeholder Workshops · Executive Advisory

Design & Tools: Forsta · UserTesting.com · Qualtrics · Market research platforms · Wireframing & Prototyping (Figma, Sketch) · Competitive Analysis · UX Audits

LANGUAGES

English (native), Arabic (native), Spanish (Intermediate)

- Conducted foundational consumer research with 100K+ survey responses and user interviews.
- Informed product roadmap and contributed to a 7M increase in logged-in users.
- Led creator discovery research to identify pain points and improve monetization strategy.
- Embedded with PM and design teams to shift product decisions toward user-driven strategy.

Brainstation, Toronto, ON — Educator

AUGUST 2022 - APRIL 2023

- Taught **four consecutive 12-week UX Design bootcamps**, covering user research, IA, wireframing, prototyping, colour theory, portfolio creation, and accessible design.
- Designed and implemented **curriculum enhancements** focused on inclusive and accessible design practices.
- Mentored students through **hands-on projects**, providing actionable feedback to develop professional UX portfolios.
- Facilitated interactive learning experiences to **bridge theory with practical application** in real-world design scenarios.

CIBC Digital, Toronto, ON — *Junior UI Designer*

SEPTEMBER 2017 - DECEMBER 2017

- Supported the UX Strategy team on the redesign of **Simplii Financial's ideal and future state digital experience**.
- Assisted in **wireframing, prototyping, and UI design** to visualize future-state concepts.
- Contributed to **user flows and interaction design** for improved banking experiences.
- Collaborated with UX Strategists, Designers, and Product Owners in an **Agile environment**.
- Conducted **competitive analysis and heuristic evaluations** to inform design recommendations.

Freshbooks, Toronto, ON — *UX Designer (Intern)*

MAY 2017 - SEPTEMBER 2017

- Design intern that replaced a team member on an Agile sprint team, taking on the role of a full designer.
- Owned design responsibilities for **two new product features** from concept to implementation.
- Delivered **wireframes, prototypes, and interaction flows** to guide development.
- Actively participated in **design critiques, sprint planning, and daily standups**.