

# Kurt Duran Yalcin

Design Researcher & Manager | [www.kurtyalcin.com](http://www.kurtyalcin.com) | Santa Barbara, CA

I am a senior designer with a passion for user research. I have 10 years of experience working in an array of industries including publishing and FinTech. I'm comfortable managing design teams and working cross-functionally to drive internal alignment around a shared design vision.

## Experience

### FutureFuel.io

I joined this Series A FinTech start-up to CRUSH student debt. I became instrumental in leading the pivot from B2B2C to B2C. The current hybrid business model was informed by user research. Through my advocacy for the user, FutureFuel.io boasts over 70,000+ users from under 1,000 when I joined. (25-50 employees)

#### Head of Design & Research | Aug 2020 – Present

#### Senior User Experience Researcher | Mar 2019 – Aug 2020

- Grow and manage product design team of 4 to deliver high quality designs throughout the firm (from sales and marketing collateral to high-fidelity prototypes and product design)
- Maintain Storybook design system with engineering team to develop consistent user interface patterns and standards
- Lead generative and evaluative research efforts such as user interviews and usability testing to develop new products
- Blend qualitative & quantitative data such as user recordings and surveys to uncover usability issues and increase success metrics like account creation and product activation
- Lead remote design sprints to foster design thinking across and internationally distributed team
- Layer qualitative insights from user interviews onto internal- and external-facing user personas
- Run A/B tests with Google Optimize to validate new designs
- Reduced onboarding by 90% with insights from a beta test

### DesignLab & IDF

EdTech platforms dedicated to democratizing design education

#### Design Mentor | Jan 2019 – Present

- Advise students in 1-on-1 sessions as mentor & instructor

### Advance Local

Large national media group building digital products for local newspapers (350 employees)

#### User Experience Manager | Sept 2018 – Mar 2019

#### User Experience Designer | Jan 2017 – Sept 2018

- Managed and hired for user experience design team of 3
- Increased perceived organization of site by 32% with testing
- Conducted a diary study with 5 readers during Senate election
- Increased CTR to photo gallery design by 1%
- Ran content usability tests with readers to increase clarity
- Created 30+ surveys and analyzed 5400+ open text responses

## Contact

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## Education

Pratt Institute  
M.S. Information Experience Design  
GPA 3.975 | Aug 2016 – May 2018

General Assembly  
User Experience Design Certificate  
Apr 2014 – Aug 2014

New York University  
Dual B.A. Journalism & Urban Design  
GPA 3.583 | Sept 2007 – May 2011

## Tools

Jira	Amplitude
Miro	Confluence
Mixpanel	HotJar
Figma	UserTesting
Sketch	User Interviews
Plant Plugin	Google Optimize
Invision	Google Analytics
MailChimp	Adobe Illustrator
PlaybookUX	Adobe Photoshop
	Powerpoint

## Skills

Design Sprints	Personas
Journey Maps	User Interviews
User Flows	Usability Testing
Prototypes	Surveys
A/B Testing	Wireframes

## Social

[linkedin.com/in/kurtsy](https://www.linkedin.com/in/kurtsy)  
[github.com/kurtsy](https://github.com/kurtsy)  
[instagram/@kurtsy](https://www.instagram.com/kurtsy)  
[twitter/@kurtduranyalcin](https://twitter.com/kurtduranyalcin)

## Hearst Newspapers

Leading media company (3000 employees)

### User Experience Architect | Nov 2014 — Dec 2016

- Moderated 1:1 usability testing in Albany, Houston, and SF
- Analyzed 35+ hours of recordings from prototype test
- Rearchitected reader's profile management system & SSO
- Sketched, wireframed, and designed prototypes

## General Assembly

Tech education bootcamp

### UX Design Teacher's Assistant | Nov 2014— Jan 2014

- Mentored new students in User Experience Design Course
- Graded assignments and collected student feedback

## Alice App

Mobile app start-up creating hotel management software

### Freelance User Experience Designer | Aug 2014 — Nov 2014

- Audited old screens for usability issues
- Conducted a heuristic analysis on interface
- Built wireframes and prototype for testing
- Presented proposed solution to stakeholders for feedback

## betaworks (Poncho)

Weather app part of start-up incubator and accelerator

### Freelance User Experience Designer | Aug 2014 — Nov 2014

- Conducted user interviews to identify marketing opportunity
- Created user personas to help drive product iteration
- Built a user flow to improve referral functionality

## Skillshare

EdTech platform

### Marketing Strategist | Sept 2013 — Feb 2014

## UGallery

Online art gallery

### Marketing & Community Manager | Mar 2012 — Jun 2013

## Bloomspot

Daily deals website

### Copywriter & Designer | Jun 2011 — Dec 2011

## Writing

"Not Just a Pretty Picture Part Two: Testing A Visual Literacy Program for Young Children)," Journal of Documentation

"Content Usability," Medium

"Heuristic evaluation: Goodreads," Medium

"Cognitive Walkthrough: ProPublica," Medium

"Breaking Blockchain Barriers with Design," Medium

"Designing Leadership That Works," Medium

## Features

"Mentor Spotlight: Kurt Yalcin, Senior UX Researcher at FutureFuel," DesignLab Blog

"Design mentors share 11 tips for excelling at your first job as a designer," InvisionApp Blog

