



Director of Research—Usability Firm

SALARY RANGE (2018): \$64,000–\$95,000

I enjoy getting to the bottom of things and being able to discover new things through vigorous hours of in-depth research. I am in charge of researching user experience features in computer software and other applications. I investigate ways to improve the end-user interaction with computer programs to increase satisfaction, brand loyalty, and overall use. I also create reports based on market trends and user surveys, analyzing the information and reporting observations to the Director of User Experience.

The Tip: Be different and do one thing every year that causes people to ask, “So, why did you do that?”

PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Management Skills

- Manage the design process
- Manage multiple workflows
- Act in a responsible manner with regard to the needs of people, their communities, and society as a whole

Research & Insights Skills

- Formulate focused and practical research questions
- Develop and execute qualitative research including observation, interviews and text analysis
- Develop and execute quantitative research including large data-set statistical analysis
- Apply a deep knowledge of human behaviour to understand usability
- Systems mapping and knowledge transfer

Communication Skills

- Translate content into meaningful information
- Write clearly, including technical, descriptive and narrative language, to suit a wide variety of audiences
- Use specialized software to prepare, edit and distribute content across multiple platforms

Design Skills

- Build prototypes out of a variety of materials
- Critique and improve design artifacts.

Core Transferable Skills

Be an expert at all core transferable skills:

- Thinking skills
- Communications skills
- Organizational skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Technical literacy

BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

<p>Education & Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor of Communications (information design) with a minor in social innovation● Completed Master of Data Analytics at Western University	<p>I took a minor in social innovation. At graduation, I committed to pursuing graduate school to dig into data science. This credential was critical in the exploding world of data science.</p>
<p>Employment Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Worked in retail for three years while in university● I worked in a UX firm for my first work term. At graduation, I transitioned into a research role at this firm for two years.● Following graduate school, I was recruited to work for a usability designer. After four years, I was promoted to director and now lead the team.	<p>Frontline experience interacting with real customers while in school offered me a lens into human behaviour and triggered my love for research. I love research and evidence, which led me into a research role and graduate school. This combination of theory and practice gave me expertise in using data to drive design decisions.</p>
<p>Community Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Sunday school coordinator	<p>I led my church's Sunday school program for six years. Sunday's are one of my favourite days of the week. Working with children gives me energy.</p>
<p>Contextual Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I took a year off from university to become a teacher's assistant in an elementary school in the U.K.● I have traveled to 14 countries	<p>My parents thought I was crazy to take a year off school and move to the U.K. for work. I worked for basically minimum wage and lived in a dorm room, but the experience was invaluable. My goal was to test drive if I wanted to become a teacher. Though I loved it, it confirmed my desire to pursue a career as a researcher.</p>
<p>Relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● I foster relationships on social media. The opportunity to connect with these people from around the world challenges my world view.	<p>Relationships aren't limited to people you see every week or even every year. Digital allows you to maintain and cultivate relationships over a lifetime.</p>