John Finley

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Summary

Product designer who helps teams turn ambitious AI into products that feel simple, without dumbing them down. Former software engineer who prototypes in code, with 18 years spanning Google Geo, Meet, and generative AI in Search, Shopify's agentic commerce, and Yahoo Search.

Experience

Senior Principal Product Designer, Search

Yahoo

June 2025—Present

- Led design vision and business strategy for Yahoo's main Search verticals covering sports, entertainment, lifestyle, finance, and utilities.
- Owned and orchestrated the transition to a Search-wide design system, including front-end framework selection and aligning to a foundational token set authentic to Yahoo.
- Architected, scaled, and led a comprehensive effort to redesign the majority of Search page elements, setting the future visual and functional identity for Yahoo's core product area.
- Partnered directly with the Director of Product Design and VP of Product to craft organization strategy, plan headcount, and prioritize work.
- Developed a framework for image aesthetic assessment and AI evaluations across Search and used functional prototypes to successfully pitch the project to senior leadership, directly impacting search result quality and user satisfaction.

Staff Product Designer, Search and Discovery

Shopify

March 2024—June 2025

- Conceived of and designed a framework for implementing query understanding and novel AI search features for the Shop marketplace.
- Led product design for Agentic Storefronts, enabling merchants to syndicate their product catalogs directly to external AI chat platforms for seamless, in-conversation product discovery and checkout.
- Designed the end-to-end merchant Admin experience for conversational commerce, empowering sellers to intuitively map data schemas and brand policies for AI agents, while seamlessly surfacing external AI-generated orders natively within their existing order lists to streamline fulfillment.
- As the lead designer for the first-party Search & Discovery app, I drove solutions to product discovery workflows, leading to adoption by most of Shopify's 1.75MM merchants and an app store rating of 4.6.
- Pioneered AI-generated product design by developing nearly a dozen Figma plugins, browser extensions, prototypes, and other tools to reduce toil, speed up workflows, and enable new capabilities for designers across the company.

- Raised the bar for craft and design excellence within the 220-person UX team through weekly project critiques, tool skill-building sessions, hackathons, and individual mentoring.

UX Designer, Generative Imagery for Google Search

Google

June 2023—March 2024

- Designed and launched text to image creation within Search Generative Experience (SGE) and Image Search, resulting in significantly positive growth and a more highly engaged user base.
- Core contributor to the co-creation framework supporting queries for six verticals, including creative writing, code generation, and image generation.
- Partnered with framework teams to evolve the SGE Design System to incorporate sharing, exporting, and content management; and with motion designers to include new high-latency loading animations.
- Drove an effort with colleagues in Shopping to unify their SGE feature and ours, resulting in a cohesive and understandable experience.
- Press: New ways to get inspired with generative AI in Search, New ways generative AI can help

UX Designer, Search Generative Experience

Google

September 2022—June 2023

- Championed the Local Search experience in SGE, where I led design of categorical summaries, place Q&As, and place comparisons.
- Collaborated with MxD, VisD, and front-end engineering to redesign the Search Result Page in 14 weeks.
- Contributed to the foundations of the SGE Design System through stress testing use cases and proposing alternative design solutions that scale across 12 verticals.
- Worked with engineers to functionally prototype 20+ novel experiences, like chat interfaces, video summaries, refinements, multimodality, and more.
- Press: Supercharging Search with generative AI

UX Designer, Local Search

Google

February 2020—September 2022

- Led design efforts for users seeking health and safety information, including COVID-19 testing and vaccine locations, and merchant safety measures.
- Developed features for New Internet Users, including landmark triangulation, text-to-speech place descriptions, and India transit integration.
- Contributed to Search and Geo design systems impacting 1B+ users daily on Search and Maps.
- Created crisis response alerts for users traveling into dangerous areas.
- Press: White House says it will set up a website to distribute 500 million free COVID tests - The Verge, Google's new tools help businesses during COVID-19, Connecting people with COVID-19 information

UX Designer, Distributed Workspace

Google

February 2019—February 2020

- Responsible for design and new feature development for the world's largest enterprise video conferencing deployment of 20,000 rooms worldwide, with scope spanning hardware, web, and mobile.
- Applied machine learning to create automatic closed captions and real time translations.
- Performed user research on an enterprise trusted tester cohort of 5,000 people, leading to high customer satisfaction and feature adoption.
- Led a team of UXEs and UXRs in the creation of second screen companion experiences to test hypotheses around distributed work, collaboration, and productivity.

UX Designer, Google Meet

Google

September 2015—February 2019

- Led the redesign of the meeting room touchscreen, including its design system and human factors and accessibility considerations. The new hardware saves customers $1,400 per room.
- Founded an engineering working group applying computational video and audio with a principled approach based on user needs and academic insights.
- Designer for automatic participant framing using machine learning to perform real time camera operations that improve participant satisfaction from 74% to 89%.
- Applied research insights to user needs around remote collaboration, accessibility, and product inclusion, resulting in two patents and one defensive publication.
- Set a UX vision and strategy for a design system of humane and intelligent video conference features for a 60+ person team.

UX Designer

Barbarian

June 2011—September 2015

- Partnered cross-functionally with a team of producers, developers, content strategists, and graphic designers on multiple simultaneous client projects.
- Secured executive sponsorship by generating project ideas and developing prototypes.
- Produced creative concepts for web, mobile, and digital installation on very tight timelines.
- Successfully pitched new business to clients like GE, Pepsi, Virgin Airlines, and IBM.
- Led the team of interaction designers and art directors in project critiques, ideation sessions, and skill-building initiatives.

UX Designer & Software Engineer

Basis Technologies (formerly Centro)

October 2008—June 2011

- Built features as a full-stack developer in an agile Ruby on Rails environment.
- Created an interaction design framework for our flagship ad buying platform, Transis.
- Led design for four sales and campaign management web applications used internally and externally.
- Performed user research studies on internal and external account managers and salespeople.

Education

Master of Fine Arts in Interaction Design
School of Visual Arts, New York City, NY

Bachelor of Arts in Computer Information Science
John Carroll University, University Heights, OH