KEEGAN ELLEY

UX researcher focused on understanding how people actually work not how systems assume they do. I bring a pragmatic, research-driven approach to designing and validating products that reduce friction, support diverse users, and deliver clear business impact.

Contact Info

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📍 Chicago, IL

WORK EXPERIENCE

UX RESEARCHER & DESIGNER | MOBILE ZEBRA DEVICES & CUSTOMER-FACING PLATFORMS
Union Pacific Railroad
2022 - Present

- Led research and validation for a real-time defect reporting feature used by train crews, grounded in on-site user interviews and workflow analysis. The solution introduced instant photo capture to support faster mechanical decision-making, reducing train downtime by 36% and generating $366K in cost savings within the first week of the pilot while measurably improving crew satisfaction.

- Designed and validated a network train map through iterative usability testing with train crews, ensuring it matched real operational mental models rather than theoretical routes. The tool exceeded expected adoption by 112%, achieved an 85% user satisfaction score, and was later recognized by Railway Age for its impact on crew efficiency.

- Partnered with product and engineering to research pain points in customer reporting workflows, then translated findings into a redesigned customer-facing report-building experience. The resulting tool reduced inbound customer service calls by 62%, indicating stronger task success and clearer user comprehension.

- Led user research and change-management strategy during the retirement of a legacy application used by 56,000 users. Conducted stakeholder interviews, analyzed usage patterns, and supported rollout decisions that eliminated customer service calls related to the transition and increased adoption of the new application by 12%.

- Championed accessibility and inclusive design by leading a year-long research initiative focused on late tech adopters in operational roles. Synthesized findings and presented recommendations to the UX Guild and business stakeholders, directly influencing prioritization of accessibility improvements for train crew tools.

- Facilitated the UX team's research book club, guiding discussions on qualitative and quantitative research methods to strengthen shared understanding of research rigor, bias, and insight synthesis across the team

BUSER EXPERIENCE DESIGNER | MAPPING USER FLOWS
Beavercreek Marketing
Contract | 2021

- Accelerated development by 82%: Expeditiously identified targeted user flows, significantly expediting content creation for clients.

- Enhanced efficiency by 67%: Meticulously crafted hi-fidelity prototypes that spotlighted critical edge cases in user flows for the development team, resulting in error mitigation and operational efficiency.

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGNER | DASHBOARD
Riff Music Entrepreneur
Contract | 2021

- Drove alignment within project teams: Executed rapid iterations on low-fidelity concepts to effectively explore and communicate design solutions.

- Validated concepts through interactive prototypes: Developed interactive prototypes to inform design approaches through moderated usability research, ensuring the validity and viability of design solutions.

- Provided actionable recommendations: Evaluated and measured the outcomes of product prototypes, delivering strategic recommendations to enhance overall product design.

EDUCATION

MIT Artificial Intelligence 2023	6-week course learning artificial intelligence and its business applications, safe usage practices, and how to transform an organization into an innovative, efficient, and sustainable company of the future
SPRINGBOARD UX Design certificate 2020-2021	6-month, 600+ hour, mentor-led, UX Design intensive course. Includes two capstone projects, a design sprint, and an industry lead project
BA IN GENERAL STUDIES University of Nebraska at Kearney 2015-2019	Courses focused in business, marketing, web design, and communication

VOLUNTEER

ROTARACT PRESIDENT
University of Nebraska at Kearney
2018-2019

Served a global grant alongside the Kearney Dawn Rotary club and John Hopkins medical team. We traveled to Kakamega, Kenya in May of 2018 to deliver incubators and educate the maternity ward on proper child-birthing procedures to raise the mortality rate for mothers and babies.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Qualitative User Research + Usability Testing & Validation + Insight Synthesis & Research Storytelling + Field Research in Complex and Operational Environments + Translating Research into Product & Design Decisions + Stakeholder Alignment & Cross-Functional Collaboration + Accessibility & Inclusive Design Research + Change Management & User Adoption Strategy

PROFESSIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Thomas Bolster · 1st
Head of User Experience Research and Corporate Strategy Innovator
August 25, 2023, Thomas was senior to Keegan but didn't manage Keegan directly

Keegan came to us early in her UX career and dove in fearlessly. She is has the initiative to take on big projects, and the humility to seek feedback and advice from her colleagues when needed. She conducts user research interviews with confidence and isn't afraid to gather and share critical feedback. She is also quick to volunteer for other efforts that promote our team within and outside of our company.

Her time here has her tackling large projects with far reaching implications for our organization, and she will be a great asset at any company with a user focused mindset.

Farid Shukurov · 1st
Growth hacker, currently bootstrapping: supabird.io - best X/Twitter growth agent, justbeepit.com - visual task manager for website changes
June 11, 2022, Farid was Keegan's mentor

Keegan has great skills when it comes to UX/UI. Combined with her marketing experience she knows how to design products that people will enjoy. I had opportunity to work with her on some of the projects and she impressed me with how well she would prepare for the project by conducting a proper UX research. And only then moving to the sketching and designing based on the information from research. Which would results in a visually beautiful but also easy to use product :)

Demi Oyebanji · 1st
Machine Learning Developer, Growth Hacker, Multimedia Specialist
June 2, 2022, Demi was senior to Keegan but didn't manage Keegan directly

Keegan led a team of designers that helped our company build out the next phase of a very complicated piece of technology. Her experience, patience, thoroughness and flexibility were invaluable

Melissa Wolowicz in · 1st

Principal Product Designer | Design Operations & Design Systems Leader | UX Strategist & Researcher | Driving Team Productivity & Growth for 20+ Years

I'm pleased to share insights into Keegan Francl's journey and growth as a Junior UX Designer for Union Pacific, where she contributed as a contractor through our Concentrix partner. During her short time on our team, Keegan's determination and potential shone through.

Keegan's enthusiasm and aspirations have always stood out. She embraces new challenges and demonstrates initiative. As she volunteers for various team tasks and participates in multiple internal initiatives, she contributes to the team's success.

Having had the privilege of guiding Keegan in her short career, I've been impressed by her receptiveness to learning and her proactive approach to seeking advice from more experienced colleagues. Her recognition of the value of mentorship and her willingness to receive constructive feedback demonstrates her commitment to continuous growth. Her proactive pursuit of skill enhancement is commendable.

My interactions with Keegan have revealed a considerable approach to taking ownership of projects, even as she navigates the learning curve. While her design skills are still evolving, her proactive mindset and drive to improve are clear indicators of her potential. Not to mention, Keegan always brings a fun and positive energy to the team.

In her capacity as a Junior UX Designer, Keegan has already showcased her ability to learn through her involvement in user interviews, usability tests, and the creation of mockups and deliverables. Her willingness to collaborate with and learn from senior team members underscores her resolve to develop professionally.

In summary, Keegan's eagerness to learn, her active contribution to team endeavors, and her resilience in the face of challenges are attributes that I believe will serve her well as she continues to develop in her career. With the right guidance and mentorship, I'm confident she will make meaningful contributions to any team.