

Christopher Dowson.

Senior/Lead designer for hire.

myfirstraygun.studio/portfolio

hello@myfirstraygun.studio

07542 668 271

I like to make things people can use.

With a 25+ year career that began in traditional graphic design and has included a focus on web, eCommerce, and SaaS product design for the past 15 years, I consistently demonstrate a strong ability to create impactful solutions that meet user needs and drive business success.

I specialise in developing scalable design systems that deliver a cohesive user experience, ensuring every element aligns with project and business goals. I lead and inspire cross-functional teams and leverage my industry knowledge to help those I work with excel.

Known for my hands-on approach and critical thinking abilities, I have successfully guided a wide range of complex projects. From initial concept through to final execution, all aspects of a project are meticulously planned and crafted to meet the highest standards: My own.

Professional Expertise.

Advanced Visual Design Skills:

- Typography, layout, colour theory, design systems.
- Prototyping in Figma, After Effects.
- Experience in building, maintaining, and scaling design systems
- Strong grasp of branding and its application (digital and physical)

Communication & Stakeholder Management

- Presenting design decisions effectively to stakeholders and clients.
- Conveying the rationale behind designs through storytelling.
- Building trust with stakeholders, ensuring their concerns are addressed.

Project Management

- Familiar with Scrum, Kanban and other Agile frameworks
- Experience Integrating design into iterative workflows.
- Balancing user needs, business goals, and technical constraints.

Technical Proficiency

- Figma, Affinity, Adobe Creative Suite, Sketch, PenPot.
- Advanced HTML, Sass/CSS, Gulp and basic JavaScript.
- Works to WCAG guidelines. (AA minimum)
- Data analysis in Google Analytics, Hotjar, Matomo, Litmus, Sendgrid.

Leadership & Team Management

- Ability to coach and mentor junior designers, fostering growth.
- Working effectively with all departments and stakeholders.
- Navigating differing opinions and building consensus among the team.

Soft Skills

- Identifying and addressing design challenges through critical thinking.
- Deep understanding of user needs through research and collaboration.
- Staying flexible in fast-paced, evolving environments.

Work Experience.

Freelance Designer

My First Raygun

April 2005* - Current

- Delivered web/product and brand projects for clients across eCommerce, propTech, education and publishing.
- Key recent clients include Royal Mail, Nimbus Maps, and Kramp, a global agriculture supplier.
- Published work in industry journals and gave talks at industry events and meet-ups.
- Recognised for creative achievements, including logos published by Taschen.

Principal Designer

JH - The Breakthrough Agency

November 2023 - October 2024

- Led the design process for eCommerce projects, ensuring alignment with Magento best practices.
- Delivered designs for clients including Big Bus Tours, Wayland Games, and Woodie's.
- Created digital assets and event branding for Meet Magento UK, a 750+ attendee conference.
- Worked with developers and project managers to ensure consistent, high-quality outcomes.
- Used user research and iterative design processes to enhance the effectiveness of eCommerce flows, supporting increased revenue.

Head of Design

Contrast

November 2018 - March 2020

- Oversaw all creative outputs, managing internal and client-facing projects.
- Developed branding and UI/UX solutions within budget and deadlines.
- Mentored junior designer and maintained high creative standards.
- Promoted a collaborative team environment to drive innovation and successful project delivery.

Senior Designer

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October 2015 - October 2016

- Built a design system that scaled easily to streamline development workflows.
- Designed and launched the company's sales website, ensuring rapid delivery.
- Enhanced user experience through responsive UI/UX improvements.
- Delivered measurable outcomes such as improved efficiency for the engineering team and better user satisfaction metrics.
- Promoted a collaborative team environment to drive innovation and successful project delivery.

Senior Designer

Distinction

January 2014 - October 2014

- Designed and developed websites for global clients, ensuring both visual excellence and functional reliability.
- Worked directly with clients across education, publishing and retail to deliver tailored solutions.
- Built responsive, user-focused websites from concept to completion, aligning brand goals and user needs.
- Projects for international brands, including business schools, party wear suppliers, and intelligence specialists.

Senior Designer

Heart Internet

June 2013 - December 2013

- Designed and developed websites for global clients, ensuring both visual excellence and functional reliability.
- Worked directly with clients across education, publishing and retail to deliver tailored solutions.
- Built responsive, user-focused websites from concept to completion, aligning brand goals and user needs.

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Continued.

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Work Experience (continued).

Designer/Artworker

Various roles

1998 - 2010

- Began my career in 1998, creating artwork and websites for local businesses, building a strong foundation in design and digital media.
- In 2004, joined the Nottingham Post, where I created concept adverts for local newspapers, honing my artworking skills and meeting daily deadlines.
- Worked at Starprint, producing print-ready artwork for a variety of projects, further developing technical expertise in print production.
- Transitioned to freelancing with New Start Publishing, working on a long-term basis to:
 - Design recruitment sections and produce the annual Regeneration Index.
 - Overhaul their static website into a streamlined CMS-driven platform using ExpressionEngine, adding directory listings, an online job index, a blog, and enhanced news search.
- These experiences cemented my skills in design, web development, and adapting to diverse client needs.

Education.

Creative Visualisation BA (Hons).

Certificate of Higher Education

University of Teesside, 2001 - 2004

Design - BTEC National Diploma.

Completed with Merit

The Sheffield College, 1998 - 2000

Recommendation.

"Christopher is a master at turning chaos into clarity, making him an invaluable designer for eCommerce and SaaS projects. Whether working with fragmented design systems or complex UI challenges, he has an extraordinary ability to transform the disjointed into something truly exceptional. His work doesn't just solve problems; it elevates them into creative breakthroughs.

"During his time at JH, Christopher consistently delivered innovative, visually compelling designs that brought order and cohesion to even the most challenging projects. He excels at finding the potential in any system and refining it into a polished, impactful end product. His unique blend of creative vision and practical execution made him a key contributor to many successful outcomes.

"If you're looking for a designer who thrives on turning design struggles into standout solutions, Christopher is the person to call. He combines artistic talent with a can-do approach that drives meaningful results for any project."

Jamie Huskisson, CEO @ JH (The Breakthrough Agency) - wearejh.com