

Cassandra J Collins

Inclusive Design & Accessibility | Complex AI-Driven Systems | Enterprise Design Leadership

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SUMMARY

Design leader who makes complex, AI-driven systems work for everyone. 25+ years leading end-to-end UX for enterprise-scale products, from AI-assisted scientific research platforms to simulation and data-rich decision tools. Grounds every design decision in accessibility, inclusive design, and user trust, translating ambiguous workflows into clear, explainable experiences. Partners with Product, Engineering, and Research to ship production-ready work informed by WCAG/EAA standards, co-creation with diverse users, and deep domain expertise.

DOMAIN STRENGTHS

- **Inclusive design & accessibility:** WCAG/EAA-informed design, co-creation, usability for diverse users
- **Complex workflows:** scientific platforms, research tools, simulation, and data-rich environments
- **AI UX:** explainability, human-in-the-loop decision support, agentic interaction patterns, user trust and comprehension
- **Design systems & UX pattern architecture:** cross-surface consistency, reuse, and scalability
- **Executive and cross-functional alignment:** narrative prototyping, design artifacts that support decision-making

CORE UX SKILLS

- End-to-end UX ownership: research, user journeys, interaction models, wireframes, prototypes, UI systems
- Information architecture and workflow design for complex, data-driven products
- High-fidelity prototyping in Figma to explore, validate, and communicate design decisions
- Multi-surface UX across desktop, responsive web, and mobile
- Close collaboration with Product, Engineering, Research, and domain experts
- UX critique, design storytelling, and artifact-driven alignment

LEADERSHIP IMPACT

- Owned end-to-end UX direction by personally designing interaction models, workflows, and high-fidelity prototypes that clarified complex AI and data-driven systems for real users.
- Embedded accessibility and inclusive design as core product quality, influencing how teams approached usability, compliance, and user trust from early design through delivery.
- Shaped product direction through hands-on UX ownership, using narrative prototypes and concrete design artifacts to align PM, engineering, research, and leadership.
- Created reusable UX patterns and system-level design guidance that supported consistency, scalability, and cross-team adoption.
- Operated at both strategic and execution levels, moving between vision and detailed design to unblock teams and accelerating progress.
- Mentored designers and cross-functional partners through design critique, modeling strong UX craft, and clear decision-making, raising overall quality without formal people management emphasis.

EXPERIENCES

Microsoft

Creative Director – Microsoft Discovery + Quantum: Nov 2024 – Dec 2025

- **Owned the end-to-end UX for AI-assisted scientific research workflows**, resulting in validated interaction patterns adopted as reference designs across the platform, by designing user journeys, interaction models, and information architecture.
- **Embedded accessibility and inclusive design principles** into core workflows, ensuring experiences were usable by diverse audiences and aligned with WCAG/EAA expectations.
- **Designed explainable and agentic interaction patterns** that balanced system autonomy with clear user control, decision checkpoints, and transparency—supporting trust and comprehension in complex AI-driven experiences.
- **Created high-fidelity prototypes and narrative UX artifacts** to align product, engineering, and research teams, shaping roadmap decisions and validating concepts prior to build.
- **Partnered closely with PM, engineering, and domain experts** to translate complex technical capabilities into coherent, usable product experiences across desktop and web surfaces.
- **Defined cross-surface consistency and UX patterns** to support scalability and reuse across adjacent tools and teams within the platform.

Creative Director – Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO): Feb 2024 – Nov 2024

- Owned definition of key UI elements and workflows for a research/retrieval platform; delivered interactive prototypes.
- Designed technical onboarding workshop experiences and deployment-guide templates.
- Prototyped unified UX/UI for mission-critical robotics, improving clarity and consistency.

Principal UX Design Director: Nov 2022 – Feb 2024

- Led UX strategy and visual design for leadership and product initiatives.
- Operationalized accessibility standards (WCAG/EAA) across design reviews and handoff.
- Championed inclusive co-creation across cross-functional teams.

Principal UX Design Director – Studio Alpha Gaming Technology: Oct 2020 – Nov 2022

- Created UX and led visual direction for Azure-based serious-gaming and simulation tools.
- Built multi-stakeholder workflows supporting training, planning, and analytical decision-making.
- Served as Accessibility Lead across disciplines.

Creative Director/Principal Design Specialist : Jan 2018 – Oct 2020

- Directed UX style guides to marketing materials for workshops for visual consistency.
- Facilitated future-leaning workshops on AI and Autonomous Vehicles for consumer user scenarios.
- Mentored junior/mid-level designers, emphasizing inclusive design and HCI fundamentals.

Creative Architect: Jul 2017 – Jan 2018

- Delivered end-to-end UX for customer-facing platforms, improving adoption and clarity.
- Embedded inclusive design and human-centered engineering practices in workflows.
- Led inclusive design programs to form Human Centered Engineering (HCE) advancing UX evangelism across engineering and product teams.

Senior UX Architect: Jan 2016 – Jul 2017

- Led multidisciplinary teams in designing UX solutions within contractual parameters.
- UX storytelling and envisioning for proposal development to strategic accounts.
- Championed inclusive design and user-first design across the company.

Senior UX Consultant: May 2012 – Jan 2016

- Designed UX for web, desktop, and mobile applications across enterprise and civic sectors.
- Served as liaison between clients, designers, and engineering for production-quality UX.
- Led and facilitated design workshops to solve business problems with UX approaches.

Early Career Experience

Held various design and game development roles at Sony Pictures, EA Sports, Jim Henson Company, and Arizona State University. Work included visual design, branding, 3D modeling, in-game UI, web development, and interactive media. Shipped major titles including *Fable II*, *Gears of War 2*, *JEOPARDY!*, *Wheel of Fortune*, and *Lord of the Rings: Battle for Middle Earth*.

EDUCATION

PhD Candidate (In Progress) – Inclusive Design & Creative Technology Innovation (conferral 2026)
University College Dublin (UCD), Ireland

Focus: Accessibility, Inclusive Design, User Experience, and Human-Centered AI

Research includes inclusive co-creation, accessible UX, and AI-assisted design frameworks for marginalized communities in healthcare.

Research: Developed and evaluated inclusive co-creation application, methods and accessible UX frameworks through Screen4Care (EU consortium), translating insights into design guidance for patient and caregiver-facing digital experiences.

MA – Communication Design (User Interface Design, Video Games, 3D Immersive Environments)
(with distinction)

Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, UK

MFA – Fine Art and Visual Design (with distinction)

City & Guilds of London Art School, UK

BA (Honors) – Fine Art, Minor in Art History

State University of New York (SUNY) at Stony Brook, NY, Dean's List, President's List

CERTIFICATION

Azure Fundamentals • Dynamics 365 Fundamentals • Prosci Change Practitioner • IDEO U Creative Collaboration

SPEAKING & AWARDS

- Screen4Care Consortium – 2024, 2025 – PhD work UX in Health for clinicians and patients
- Women Economic Forum (2020)
- Accessibility in Action Award
- IxDA Empowering Award
- Human-Centered Engineering Asia Workshop
- Inclusive AI – Microsoft Digital Transformation Summit
- Ethical AI Design – Microsoft Ready Conference
- AI & Bias White Paper Presentation – Microsoft AI Summit
- Technical Readiness Conference – Inclusive Design Practices

SOCIAL IMPACT

Global Women AI Labs – Founding Member

MOHAI Board Member

Future World Alliance – AI Launchpad Judge & Community Contributor (2025–present)

IGNITE Worldwide (STEM)

AIGA Contributor

LANGUAGES

English and French