

Justin Slack

UI designer, front-end developer, team leader

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Profile

My work lives at the intersection of design and code. I am a user interface designer, front-end developer and team leader with over twenty years' experience designing and building web and mobile applications and sites.

I have worked as a designer and front-end developer on large scale financial services web applications and award winning mobile applications. I am equally comfortable creating small scale community sites. I have a deep understanding of UI and front-end technologies and of the web as a platform, with a passion for design systems, style guides and component-based UI libraries.

Building communities is an essential part of what I do. In 2012 I co-founded the Cape Town Front-end Developer meetup. We have run seventy monthly talks and workshops with over 2500 members at our last count. In addition to organising community events I also speak at conferences and meetups and have run a number of workshops.

As a team leader I relish the opportunity to build effective teams, workflows and toolsets, and to lead and support organisations in designing simple, accessible, cohesive and impactful user experiences.

Experience

Head of Design and Front-end Development

NML, Cape Town
2014 to present

At NML I lead the design and front-end team. We are responsible for all UI design, front-end builds and design system creation. Over the last few years I have put in place design operations for a range of applications, from large financial services platforms to JAMstack based static sites.

I lead the UX, UI design and front-end build for one of the company's oldest clients Nedgroup Investments. In close collaboration with the product owner I designed an entirely new interface for both their public facing brochure site and their secure transactional platform. UI design and wire-framing were done in Sketch and a living style guide and design system built with a custom static site generator, using HTML, the latest CSS layout techniques and JavaScript.

The Nedgroup Investments' design combined two separate sites into one and allowed segmentation for four customer groups. It was launched with great success in 2019. Already visitor numbers are up, particularly on mobile as it is fully responsive, and transactions on the secure platform have seen significant growth. We will be adding even more functionality to the site in 2020.

While leading the Nedgroup design I also had an oversight role on design and front-end for other clients. We built a transaction platform and on-boarding tool for 10X complete with design system and style guide. For African Rainbow Life we created a component based library in React using Storybook. These design systems close the gap between UI design, and front and back end development.

Find me on the web

Personal site:

<https://justinslack.com>

Github:

<https://github.com/justinslack>

LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/justinslack/>

Proficiencies

UI Design
UX Design
Atomic Design
Design Systems
Typography
Accessibility
JAMStack
HTML
CSS
JavaScript
Git
Webpack
Gulp
Grunt
Parcel
Agile

Tools

Sketch
Zeplin
Figma
Adobe Creative Suite
Visual Studio Code
Bash

Education

Master of Arts - UCT

One of the first projects I undertook at NML was the design of a mobile (iOS and Android) application for Pam Golding Properties. This allowed estate agents to quickly add property details via their mobile devices and immediately upload them to the website for listing and as an entry in their property management portal. The app won a Bookmark Award for UX design in 2015.

For examples of UI and front-end work completed at NML please see:

<https://nml.co.za/work/>

Freelance UX Designer, Front-end Developer and Educator Cape Town

Prior to joining NML I worked as a freelance designer, developer and educator. International and local clients I worked for include Times Media (now Tiso Blackstar), Platform 45, Unlike Media, Greater Good, TUI Travel and Lightstone. Details of this work is available on request.

For many years I taught UI design, HTML, CSS and JavaScript on both the full- and part-time programmes at the Academy of Digital Arts (formerly Friends of Design). In addition to teaching I designed course curricula, outcomes and study material for a range of student levels.

Community

Being active in the front-end and design community in Cape Town is very important to me.

As co-founder and organiser of the Cape Town Front-end Developer meetup I have facilitated over seventy talks and workshops since 2012.

I am co-founder and a board member of FEDSA, a non-profit formed in 2020 to widen access to front-end practice and knowledge sharing.

In addition to organising community events I also speak at conferences and meetups and have run front-end workshops. These include DevConf, UX South Africa, The Developer User Group, The Scrum User Group and The Cape Town Dribbble Community.

I am a regular at the Codebridge Community Evening - a collaborative civic tech meetup - where I am part of a team of activists, designers, developers, data scientists and journalists. We are working on a website and data platform for the Budget Justice Coalition, a civil society coalition that aims to collaboratively build people's participation in and understanding of South Africa's budget and planning processes.