



Grace Shih

SENIOR STAFF UI/UX DESIGNER

Experienced and strategic UI/UX Design Leader with over 20 years of driving impactful digital experiences across diverse industries. Proven expertise in leading end-to-end design initiatives – from user research and design systems to accessibility compliance and cross-functional collaboration. Adept at aligning design vision with business goals, mentoring creative teams, and delivering scalable, user-centered solutions that enhance usability, engagement, and performance. Strong track record of managing complex projects, guiding creative direction, and building high-performing design teams in fast-paced, agile environments.

[LinkedIn Profile](#)

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Rockville, MD



EXPERIENCE

Senior Staff UX/UI Designer, UXC, CUA, CPACC, DHS Trusted Tester for Web

Essex Management,
Contractor to National Cancer
Institute, Rockville, MD
July 2019 – Present

- Led the planning, creation, and implementation of a centralized Design System and Guidelines for all Precision Medicine Analysis and Coordination Center (PMACC) applications, standardizing UI/UX across multiple platforms.
- Directed the UI/UX team in identifying and resolving usability and accessibility issues across existing PMACC apps, driving consistent UX enhancements.
- Defined design strategy for new high-impact applications, including the COVID-19 Seroprevalence Study Hub and Clinical Sample Management System.
- Collaborated on business requirements, conducted information architecture planning, and delivered fully interactive prototypes for stakeholder alignment and approval.
- Led UX research and design workshops, facilitating user requirement gathering, ideation, and consensus across multi-disciplinary teams.
- Produced critical UX deliverables such as user journey maps, user stories, personas, and site maps to inform and guide design decisions.
- Actively participated in Agile sprints, providing detailed design mockups and interactive prototypes to support efficient development.
- Championed accessibility best practices, delivering ongoing training to developers, conducting audits, and creating VPATs with actionable remediation plans.

Creative Director, CUA

American Institutes for
Research, Washington, D.C.
February 2012 – July 2019

- Led and mentored a design team of 15+ designers, accessibility specialists, and technical writers to support over 30 projects annually and foster a significant increase in cross-functional collaboration efficiency.
- Established and implemented department-wide design systems, including style guides and pattern/icon libraries, resulting in a major reduction in design-to-development handoff time.

**Senior Web UI
Designer/Application
Developer**

Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw
Pittman LLP, Washington, D.C.
June 2000 – February 2012

- Authored comprehensive accessibility guidelines and developed an accessible widget library, adopted across 100% of engineering teams, ensuring all new products met WCAG 2.0 AA compliance.
- Architected and standardized creative workflows, reducing project onboarding time and improving process transparency across the Assessment program.
- Directed UI/UX strategy for mission-critical assessment tools, enhancing usability for over one million students and users.
- Led WCAG 2.0 compliance and VPAT documentation efforts, securing third-party certifications that enabled continued partnership with major government and education clients.
- Redesigned AIR's Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE), improving task efficiency and reducing user error rates through a re-architected interface based on real user stories.
- Designed and developed client extranets for secure document sharing, real-time status tracking.
- Collaborated with clients across diverse industries, including energy, financial services, real estate, and technology, to define software requirements and design intuitive user interfaces.
- Contributed to the marketing team's efforts in redesigning the company's award-winning website and developing its first SharePoint-powered intranet.

EDUCATION & CERTIFICATIONS

UX Certified

Nielson Norman Group (UXC)

Certified Usability Analyst

Human Factors International (CUA)

Accessibility Core Competencies (CPACC)

IAAP - International Association of
Accessibility Professionals

DHS Trusted Tester for Web

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Master of Science, Computer Science

University of North Virginia

**Bachelor of Fine Arts in Electronic Imaging,
Magna Cum Laude**

Washington State University

KEY SKILLS

Design & UX Expertise

- Universal design
- Prototyping
- UX research & usability testing
- Web accessibility (WCAG compliance)

Tools & Technology

- Adobe Creative Cloud, Figma
- Design System (creation, scaling, governance)
- HTML/CSS/jQuery (working knowledge)
- Front-end frameworks (collaboration understanding)

Collaboration & Impact

- Leading design reviews
- Stakeholder communication
- Working in Agile/Scrum environment

Strategy & Leadership

- Design strategy & vision setting
- Mentoring & coaching designers
- Crossing-functioning collaboration
- DesignOps & process improvement