

Alex Wright, PhD
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EDUCATION	PhD, Transition Design - Carnegie Mellon University, May 2022 Dissertation: “Regenerative User Experience: Towards a Heuristics of Post-Capitalist Digital Design Practice.” Advisor: Jonathan Chapman M.S., Library and Information Science - Simmons College, March 1995 B.A., English and American Literature - Brown University, June 1988
TEACHING EXPERIENCE	Instructor - School of Visual Arts, MFA in Interaction Design, 2009-2019 Conceived, designed and taught courses in Design Futures, History of Design, Research Methods. Thesis seminar and advisor. Instructor / Workshop Leader 2014-present Developed and taught situated learning workshops on GenAI for UXers at Google, and strategic foresight methods at Google, Instagram, and Etsy. Guest Lecturer [various], 2002-present New York University Institute of Design-Chicago Stanford University Columbia Journalism School UC-Berkeley Boston University
INDUSTRY POSITIONS	Hearst Newspapers – VP, Product Design, 2026-present Leading design across Hearst’s portfolio of 70+ daily and weekly newspapers, including websites, mobile apps, e-readers, and emerging new “0-1” product initiatives. Google – UX Lead, Google Search, 2024-2026; Head of UX, Google News and Google.org Fellow, 2020-2024; Google.org Fellow, 2024. Built and led a 40-person UX team responsible for News on Search, the Google News App, new Generative AI tools for journalists and nonprofits. Led UX efforts for Google.org Generative AI accelerator for nonprofits. Instagram - Research Director, 2018-2020 Managed a team of 28 UX researchers working across Instagram’s Search, Discovery, Ads, Creator Tools, and Business product teams. Etsy - Senior Director of User Experience, 2013-2018

Led a 40-person research and design team responsible for driving user-centered processes across Etsy's product portfolio.

The New York Times - Director of User Experience and Product Research, 2007-2013

Founded and led the UX Research team; lead designer for the NYTimes iPhone app and a major site-wide redesign.

Rollyo - Co-Founder and Head of Design, 2004-2006

Conceived and built profitable custom search engine tool using the Yahoo! Search API, one of the first successful "Web 2.0" products.

Phoenix Pop - Vice President, User Experience, 1999-2001

Led a 12-person UX team working primarily with start-ups, responsible for \$2M+ annual revenue.

IBM - Senior Manager, User Experience, 1995-1999

Founded and led the UX team for IBM.com, one of the first in-house UX teams in the industry.

Harvard College Library, 1988-1994

Electronic Resources Specialist and Serials Cataloging Assistant.

PUBLICATIONS Books

- *Empire of Ink: The Printers, Rogues, and Radicals Who Invented the American Newspaper* (2026). New York: Basic Books.
- *Informatica* (2023) 2nd ed. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- *Cataloging the World: Paul Otlet and the Birth of the Information Age* (2014). New York: Oxford University Press.
- *Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages* (2007). Washington, D.C.: Joseph Henry Press.

Articles

- "What Nineteenth-Century Media Can Teach Us About the Future," *Columbia Journalism Review*, June 2026.
- "The 1835 Moon Hoax That Turned Fake News Into Big Business," *Big Think*, June 2026.
- "The Vanishing Apprentice," *Communications of the ACM*, June 2026.
- "The Generative Genome," *Communications of the ACM*, May 2026.
- "Twilight of the Velocipede," *Public Domain Review*, May 2026.

- “When Seeing Isn’t Believing,” *Communications of the ACM*, February 2026.
- “Mapping the Internet of Things,” *Communications of the ACM*, January 2017.
- “Algorithmic Authors,” *Communications of the ACM*, November 2015.
- “Molecular Moonshots” *Communications of the ACM*, April 2015.
- “The Future of the Web is 100 Years Old,” *Nautilus*, February 2015.
- “The Lost Promise of the Internet,” *Salon.com*, June 2014.
- “Big Data Meets Big Science,” *Communications of the ACM*, July 2014.
- “The Secret History of Hypertext,” *The Atlantic*, May 2014
- “Proving Grounds,” *Communications of the ACM*, May 2013.
- “Robot and Human Actors Take Bows Together,” *The New York Times*, July 5, 2012.
- “The Social Life of Robots,” *Communications of the ACM*, February 2012
- “Web Science Meets Network Science,” *Communications of the ACM*, May 2011.
- “Managing Scientific Inquiry in a Laboratory the Size of the Web,” *The New York Times*, December 27, 2010.
- “Online, It’s the Mouse that Runs the Museum,” *The New York Times*, January 17, 2010.
- “The Touchy Subject of Haptics,” *Communications of the ACM*, January 2011.
- “Linear Logic,” *Communications of the ACM*, October 2010.
- “Data Streaming 2.0,” *Communications of the ACM*, April 2010.
- “Of Memories and Memorials,” with Jake Barlow, *Interactions*, February 2010.
- “Type Theory Comes of Age,” *Communications of the ACM*, January 2010.
- “From Interface to Experience,” with Marc Rettig, *Interactions*, December 2009.
- “The Battle of the Books,” *Wilson Quarterly*, October 2009.
- “Old School, New School: Teaching Interaction Design in Manhattan,” *Interactions*, October 2009.
- “Mining the Web for Feelings, not Facts,” *The New York Times*, August 24, 2009.
- “Exploring a Deep Web That Google Can’t Grasp,” *The New York Times*, February 23, 2009.
- “Searching the Deep Web,” *Communications of the ACM*, October 2008.

- “The Web Time Forgot,” *The New York Times*, June 17, 2008.
- “Primal Interactions,” *Interactions*, Jan/Feb 2008.
- “Friending: Ancient or Otherwise,” *The New York Times*, Dec. 2, 2007.
- “The Theater of Memory,” *The Believer*, Nov. 2006.
- Op-Ed, *The Christian Science Monitor*, December 2005
- “From Ivory Tower to Academic Sweatshop,” *Salon.com*, January 2005
- “In Search of the Deep Web,” *Salon.com*, March 2004.
- “Designing for the Bottom Line,” *WebTechniques*, December 2001
- “Crossing Wires: Designing Beyond the Browser,” *New Architect*, April 2001

Reviews

- Nicholas Carr, “The Shallows,” *Interactions*, September/October 2010.
- Marty Neumeier, “The Designful Company,” *Interactions*, March/April 2009.
- Robert Brunner and Stewart Emery, “Do You Matter?” *Interactions*, March/April 2009.
- Adaptive Path, “Subject to Change,” *Interactions*, March/April 2009.
- Tom Kelley, “The Art of Innovation,” *New Architect*, April 2002

Other writing

- “Eudaimonia,” *Medium*, May 28, 2023.
- “Regenerative UX,” *Medium*, May 6, 2023.
- “Moving Fast, Thinking Slow,” *Medium*, January 22, 2022.
- “Sprinting Towards the Long Term: Teaching Design Futures at SVA,” *Medium*, August 19, 2019.
- “In the Shadow of Schumacher,” *Medium*, July 12, 2018.
- “Practical Futuring,” *Medium*, December 16, 2017.
- “Samurai, Ninjas, and Disabling Design,” *Medium*, June 2, 2017.
- “Purposeful Work,” *Medium*, March 19, 2017.
- “Post-Capitalist Design,” *Medium*, December 30, 2016.
- “Posture and Mindset,” *Medium*, November 14, 2016.

SPEAKING

- “New Perspectives on AI and History,” *KiKK Festival*, Namur, Belgium, October 2024.
- “The Web That Time Forgot,” *Mundaneum*, Brussels, Belgium, October 2024.

- “Coordinating Transitions Towards More Equitable UX Design,” with Matthew Wizinsky and Dimeji Onafuwa, *DRS 2024*, Design Research Society, Boston MA, June 2024.
- Keynote, *Gateways 2023*, Science Gateways Community Institute, Pittsburgh PA, October 2023.
- “Regenerative User Experience: Reimagining Design for a Post-Capitalist World,” *Interactions 2023*, Zurich.
- “Reimagining Design Education,” *IxDA Education Summit*, Lyon, France, September 2018.
- “The Secret History of Hypertext,” *Google SPAN conference*, Pittsburgh PA, September 2017.
- “Humanizing Data,” *UX Strat*, Athens GA, September 2015.
- “The Secret History of Hypertext,” *SxSW*, Austin TX, March 2015.
- “Cities of the Mind: Paul Otlet, Hendrik Christian Andersen and the World City” [Invited lecture], *Boston University*, June 2016.
- Lecture, *New York Public Library*, June 2015.
- Keynote, *Defrag*, November 2010.
- Invited presentation, U.S. Department of Education, February 2010
- Keynote, Instituto Chileno-Americano, November 2009
- Keynote, *UX Australia*, August 2010
- Invited presentation, American Association for Computers in Education, June 2008
- “Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages,” Institute of General Semantics, November 2008
- Keynote, Indiana State Library Association, Indianapolis, IN, November 2008.
- “The Relationship Between Technology and Social Change,” Foreign Policy Research Institute, Kansas City, MO, October 2008.
- “In Search of the Next Web,” Ticer Institute, Tilburg University, The Netherlands, August 2008.
- “Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages,” New York State Higher Education CIOs Summit, Rochester, New York, July 2008.
- Keynote, *Topic Maps 2008*, Oslo, Norway, April 2008.
- “The Web That Wasn’t,” Gartner Group Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, March 2008.
- “The Web That Wasn’t,” *SxSW*, Austin, TX, March 2008.
- Keynote, Rhode Island State Library Association, Warwick, RI, January 2008.
- Keynote, International Privacy Institute, San Francisco, September 2007.
- “Glut: Mastering Information Through the Ages,” The Long Now Foundation, San Francisco, August 2007.

- “The Web That Wasn’t,” *ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit*, Las Vegas, NV, March 2007.
- “The Sociobiology of Information Architecture,” *ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit*, Portland, OR, 2003.

AWARDS & HONORS

- Google.org Fellow 2024
- National Design Award, 2015
- New York Times Publisher’s Award, 2008 and 2011
- Webby award, 2004 and 2008
- IBM Chairman’s Letter, 1998
- American Graphic Design Award, 1996
- PRSA Silver Anvil, 1996

OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

- External Examiner, Journalism + Design Program, Lang College, The New School, 2023-2024
- Transition Design Seminar, Schumacher College, Summer 2017
- Reviews Editor, *Interactions*, 2008-2011
- Usability Engineering coursework, UC-Berkeley, 1999.
- Associate editor, *Design Times*, 1991-1994
- Book reviewer, *Library Journal*, 1991-1994
- Rare Books coursework, Harvard Extension School, 1994

RESEARCH GRANTS

84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha - Khyentse Foundation, 2009-present. Total grant: \$8.5 million. PI: Huang Jing Rui.

Worked as a design consultant to develop the web presence for an international project funding over 100 translators working to translate the entire Tibetan Buddhist canon into English.

Documenting the American West - Hewlett Foundation and U.S. Department of Education, 2004-2007. PI: Bill Landis.

Provided user research services and consulting support for a three-year project to create a digital collection of primary source material about the history of the American West.

The Rosetta Project - The Long Now Foundation, National Science Foundation, 2001-2004. Total grant: \$865,000. PI: Jim Mason.

Working with an international team of linguists under the auspices of The Long Now Foundation, developed the information architecture for the Rosetta Project, a repository of language lists for the world’s languages.

PROFESSIONAL
ASSOCIATIONS

Member, AIGA - NYC Chapter
Member, ACM - SIGCHI
Past member, IxDA
Past member, ASIS&T