ERICA OLSEN FIRMENT

# PRODUCT & UX PORTFOLIO

2023

Erica Firment

OSCON 2009 Ignite Talk

ABOUT ME

MY ROLE is to work within engineering-heavy cultures and create software that delights and satisfies market needs. I drive product design from concept to launch, creating a usability culture for companies in memorable ways, including holding a User Test Film Festival and maintaining an internal "Top Problems" blog.

As a Senior product designer at Reddit, the fourth-ranked social media site in the US (with one of the oldest codebases), part of my challenge was to help establish tools and process to guide an expanding design team.

As Lead Information Architect at realtor.com, I helped inform cultural change at a leadership level. My work has helped product managers and engineers include planning for usability into a well-rounded development practice.

As Head of Product at Compaas, creating a best-in-class compensation intelligence platform from scratch was a chance to turn a complex mathematical chore into a tool to support Pay Equity, by making fair pay analysis a rewarding experience. I designed a product from start to finish, establishing a design language, conducting customer research, and maintaining the product roadmap.
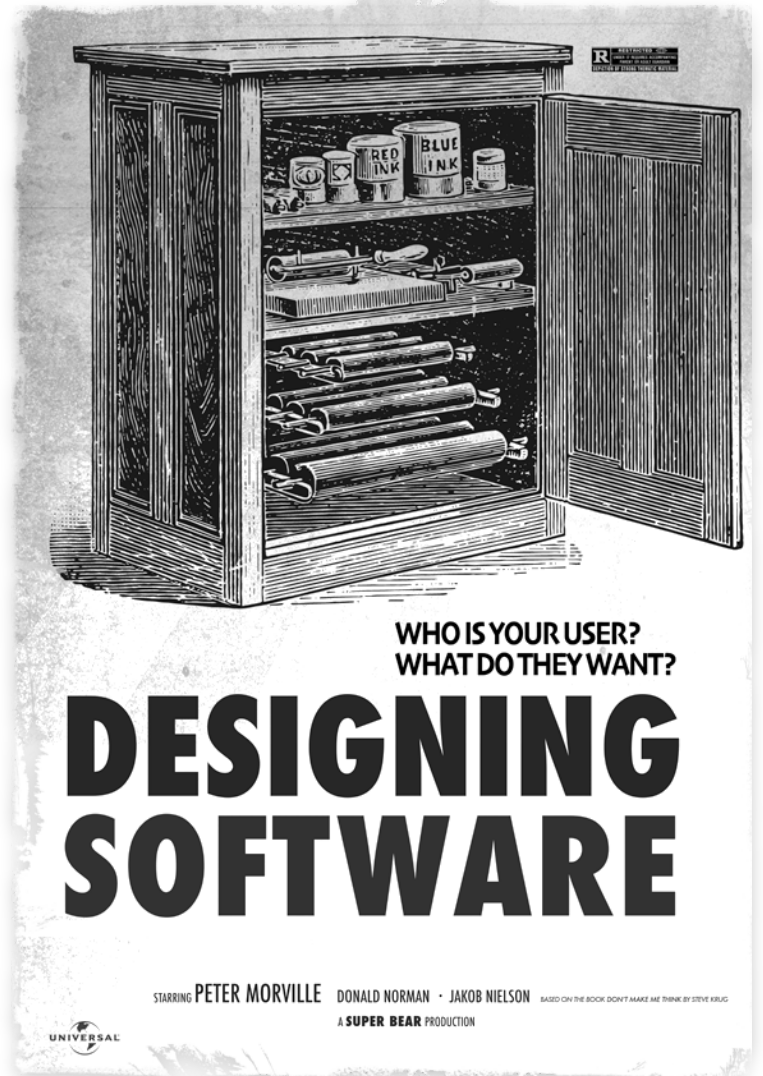
CASE STUDIES INDEX
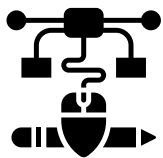
INFORMATION ANALYTICS

A new product to surface data about a neighborhood's real estate market at a glance.

REDESIGNING REDDIT

The design was gnarly, and that was just how people liked it.

ANDROID MUSIC APP

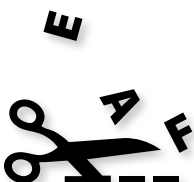Re-architecting a tangled Android app for Cricket Wireless's Muve Music.

SECOND LIFE REDESIGN

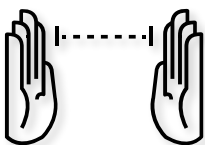Our team took on a huge redesign of the Second Life Viewer. The software is now cleaner and more effective.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

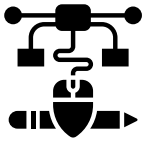I introduced IA practices to realtor.com's taxonomy and led the way to a responsive site layout.

DATA VISUALIZATION

I introduced IA practices to realtor.com's taxonomy and led the way to a responsive site layout.

INFORMATION ANALYTICS

COMPA.AS

THE GOAL Make it easy for companies to identify pay inequality even when annual compensation is incredibly complex.
Our motto is "make doing the right thing, the easy thing."

MY ROLE I was the first product/design hire, and owned the full product and design pipeline.

I built a design library, conducted customer research, represented the company to customers, and helped build out data engineering and customer experience teams. We created a best-in-class product with passionate users.
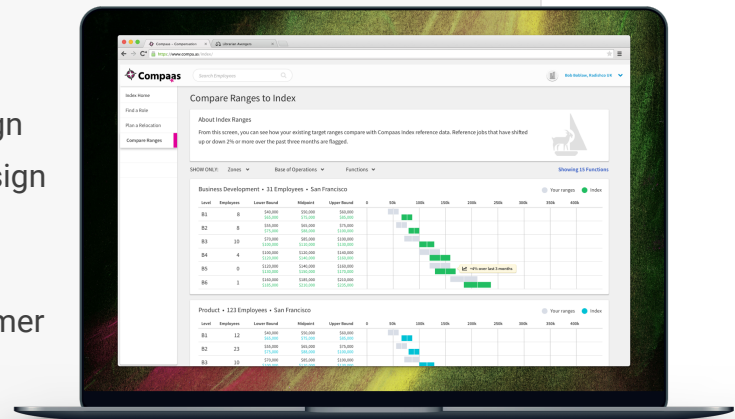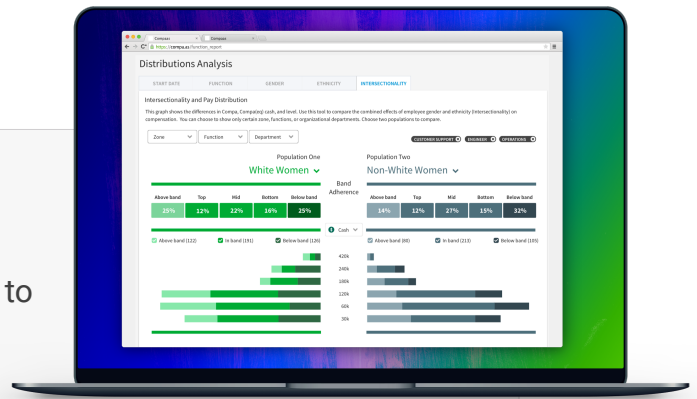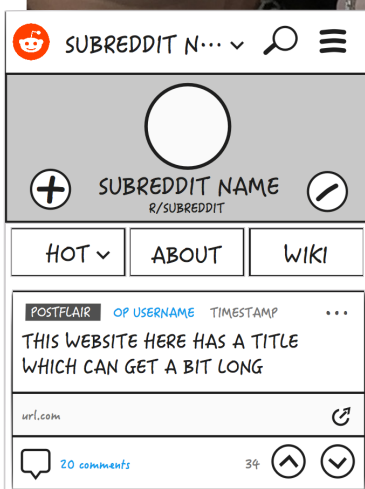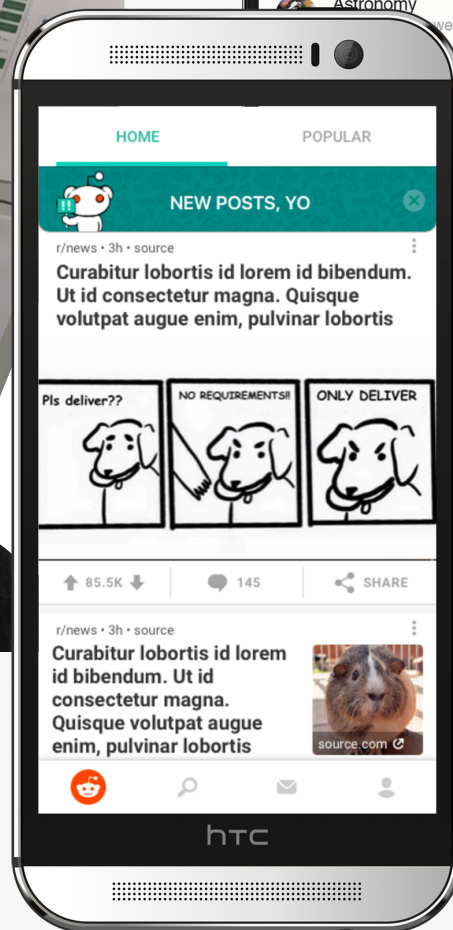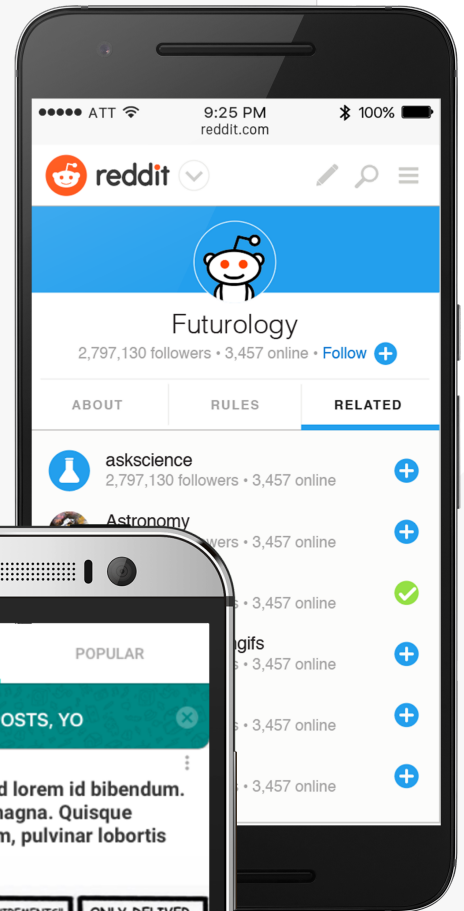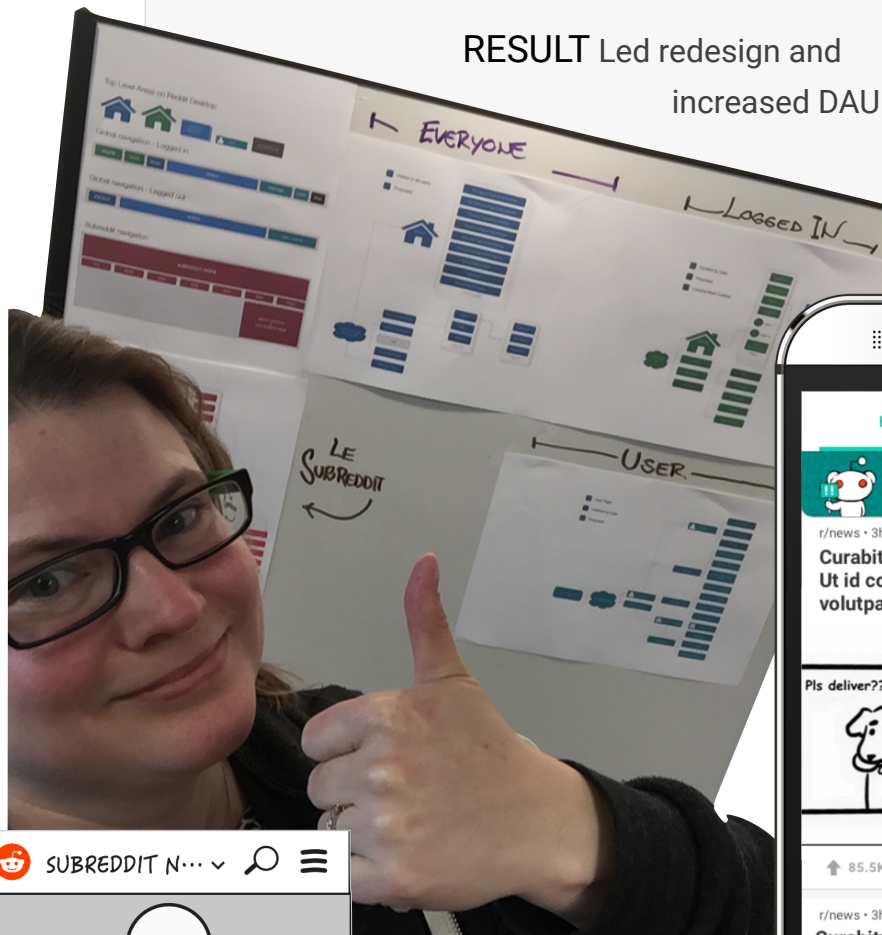
REDESIGNING REDDIT

REDDIT.COM

THE GOAL Grow the Reddit Daily Active Users by providing a friendlier stickier mobile web experience.

MY ROLE changed over several years from being the sole UX designer on a tiny team, to a senior member of a large design team.

RESULT Led redesign and
increased DAU 15%

ANDROID MUSIC APP

## CLIENT: CRICKET WIRELESS

Cricket requested a redesign for Muve, their legacy on-demand Android music service. At the time our firm was contracted, the service was in the process of becoming an international giant, but was saddled with an outdated mobile app.
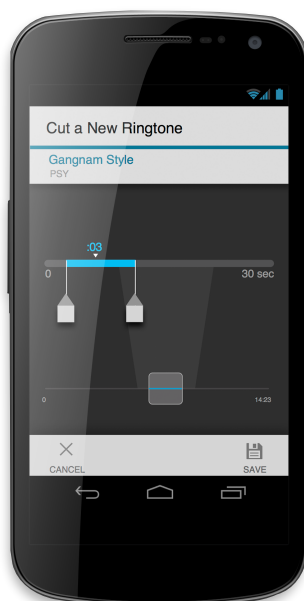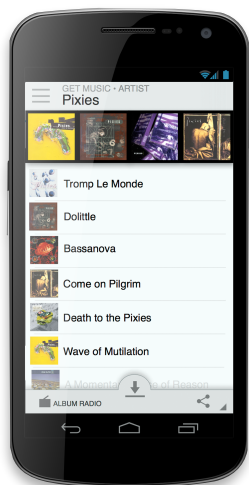
MY ROLE   As a Senior UX designer at OSB Music, I created and led IA initiatives, produced wires, user flows, design documents, interface design, and facilitated client meetings.

RESULT   The redesigned app was sold along with the company in 2014.
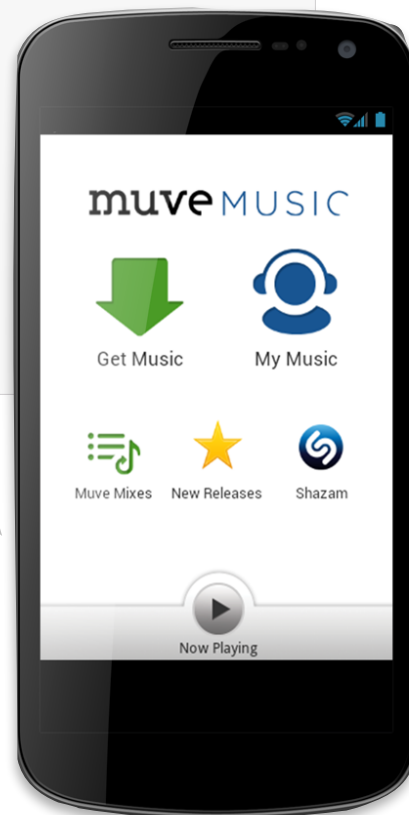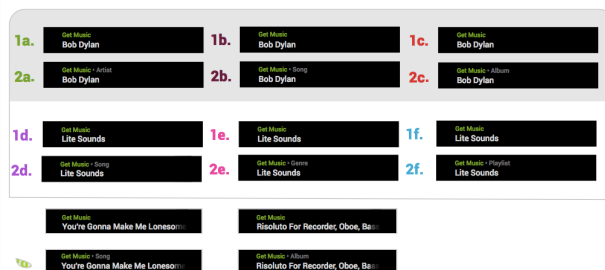
FLOWS & USER STORIES

I used weekly design reviews with the client as a chance to update requirements & iterate end-to-end flows.

DASHBOARD

INFO ARCHITECTURE

By analyzing the structure of the app, I significantly reduced the number of steps needed for a user to find & play music.

RAPID ITERATION

I mocked up layout and data display options for user testing.

SECOND LIFE REDESIGN

MY ROLE   As Senior UX designer for the 3D virtual world of Second Life, I gathered requirements, designed product specifications, contributed to visual design, guided contractors, and lead a team to implement the UI using the software's internal GUI language. The challenge was to design a welcoming frame for a bewildering variety of user-generated content. I was involved in redesigning every aspect of the software's front end.

RESULT   The redesign helped Second Life reach their goal of increasing active users by 40% to 1 million. New user attrition dramatically decreased, and led to the largest growth month in nearly 4 years.
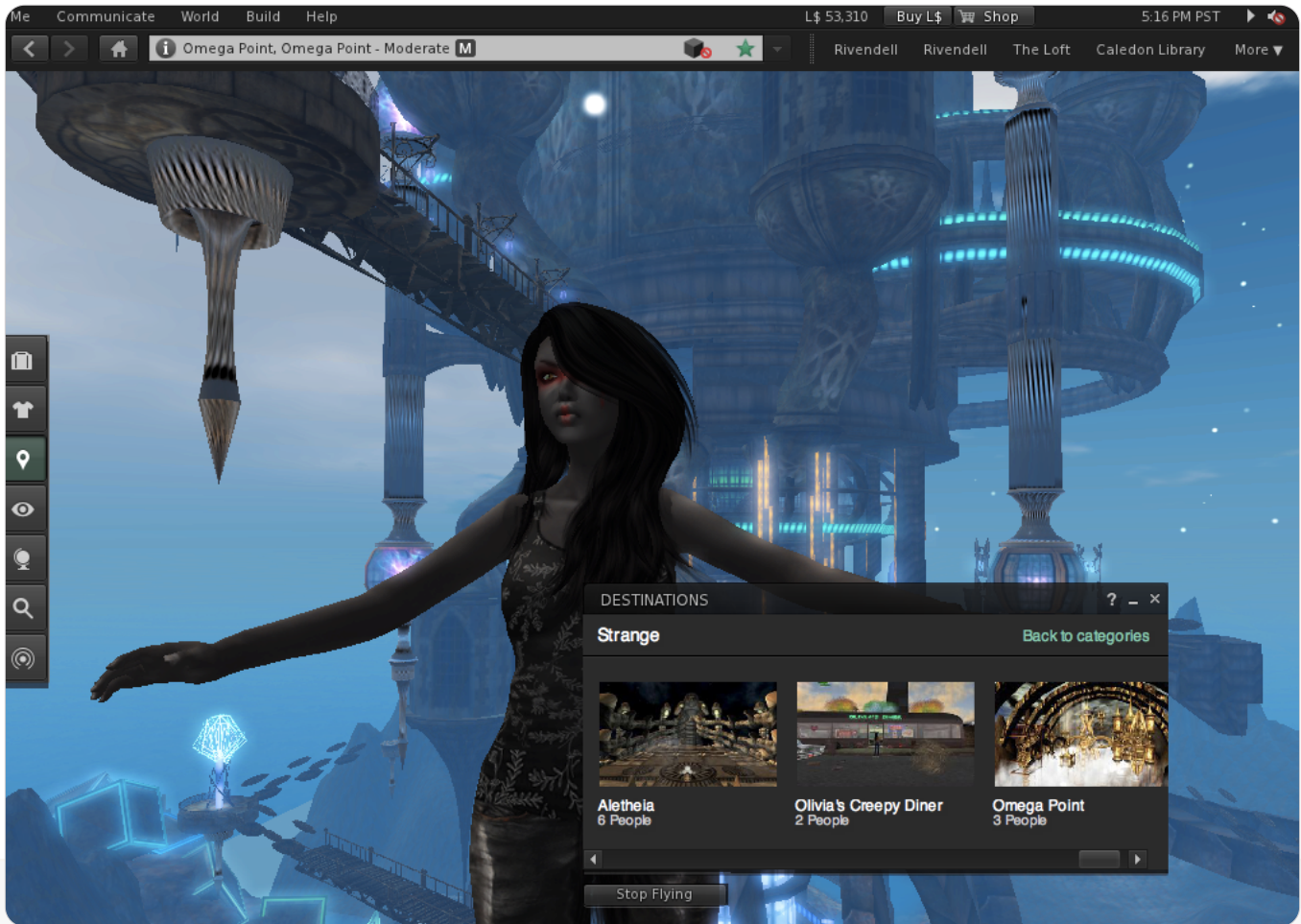
BEFORE
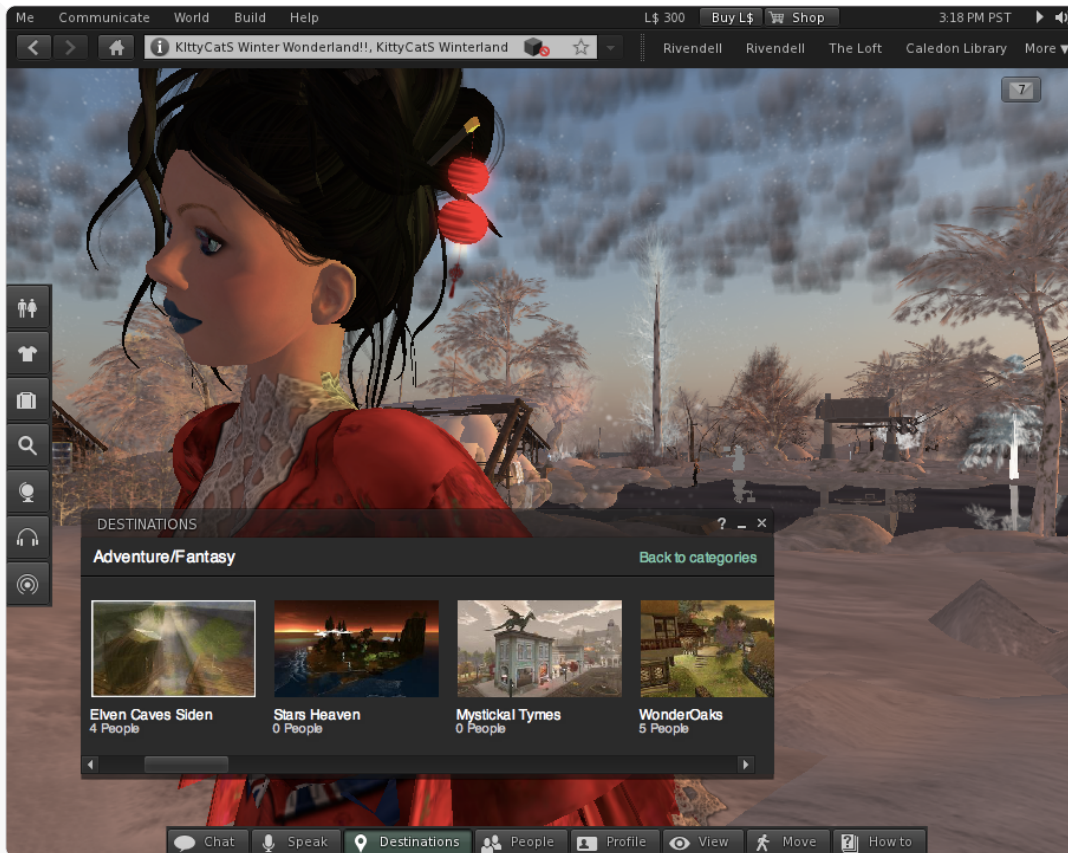
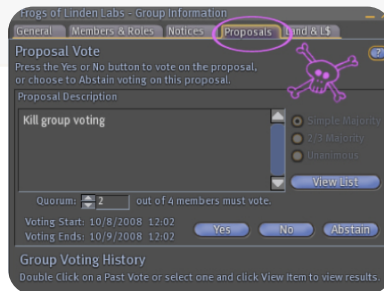

AFTER

SECOND LIFE REDESIGN

- Entirely new visual style
- 1-click actions
- Onboarding and training

- 50% fewer menu options
- More configurable
- New search UI

- Multiple rounds of user tests
- Active users increased by 40%

WHAT IS THAT THING?

I designed interactive popovers to give users a consistent way to access data about objects in the 3D world.

TO KILL A FEATURE

By identifying new ways to research usage data, I proved that a feature should be removed. This saved support and maintenance costs.

SIMPLER MENUS

I led teams to architect and relabel all menu items.

BEFORE **140** items, **8** sections
AFTER   **49** items, **5** sections

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SECOND LIFE REDESIGN

USER STUDIES REVEALED AN UNHAPPY TRUTH...

The Second Life Avatar Editor was making avatars ugly. There were so many controls that users gave up, or accepted an avatar they didn't like.

MY ROLE   I was tasked with overhauling the Avatar Editor. I turned to the open source community for input. We maintained an open conversation about the feature, and I posted daily screenshots as it evolved.

RESULT   The new tool had a 50% smaller footprint, 1-click actions, and a simplified architecture. I designed new UI elements that had not been previously available to the software due to its age, such as draggable resize bars, and loading indicators. These quickly propagated throughout the application.
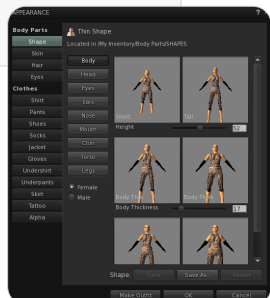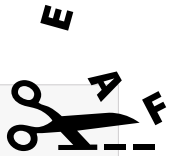
AFTER

BEFORE

Our biggest success wasn't the new features, but the process of openly building a tool that reflected the needs of the user community.

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

REALTOR.COM

As the company's first Information Architect, I needed to forge paths across product silos in a historically divided company.

MY ROLE Working on a legacy codebase allowed me to pursue my natural talent for rooting out troubled user experiences. I used a variety of methods to push improvement, including executive demos, endless wiki pages, infiltrating JIRA, creating straw UI to drive requirements, and ominously looming near Product Managers.

RESULT   During my tenure, the company was acquired by News Corp. We were told that this decision was informed by recent improvements made by our UX team. UUs were up 35% this quarter.

"Erica was a critical element in our successes this year – including the delivery of some of the biggest efforts."

BOSS

NAVIGATION

I redesigned navigation taxonomy, reduced the number of links, and normalized labels.
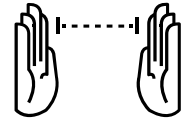
RESPONSIVE

I wrote a successful internal manifesto in favor of re-coding Realtor.com as a responsive site. The site launched in early May.

CROSS-SILO

I worked at a leadership level, forging alliances to ensure cohesive user experiences.

DATA VISUALIZATION

REALTOR.COM

Understanding the demographics and feel of an area is an important part of finding a new home.

MY ROLE I was engaged to design a new set of pages for realtor.com showcasing information about geographic areas in an easy to consume way.

RESULT Though never fully implemented, the new section became one of the site's largest sources of organic traffic, and boosted SEO efforts to create embeddable content.