Holly Johnson

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hollyjohnson.design

Design Systems Lead | Senior UX Designer & Developer

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

10+ years designing and building design systems, most recently in B2B SaaS. Built Helios at Penlink from zero, a Figma component set published as an Angular library, and owned the design architecture and code standards behind it. Earlier, created NUcleus, a multi-brand university design system. Both are still in use.

Partnered with senior leadership on design system strategy and investment cases for the executive team.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Senior UX Designer | Penlink, Remote 01/2023 - 08/2026

- Built Helios from zero, introducing Figma at Penlink and writing the Angular library two web products adopted through versioned releases. Desktop teams built from its Figma specs.
- Architected 200+ tokens, 50+ Figma components and 20+ patterns in Figma and SCSS. Normalized prop contracts, WCAG-informed ARIA, internationalization and RTL shipped to the US, Canada and Israel.
- Designed CoAnalyst, Penlink's in-product AI, with the lead designer across chat, report view, agent workflow, streaming states and refusal handling. Led the saved-prompt and prompt-gallery patterns.
- Wrote the code architecture and standards behind the system, carrying roughly four designers' decisions to 150+ engineers through review practice and QA automation against documented contracts.
- Applied Claude and MCP daily for repository and adoption scans, customer insight synthesis and documentation. Designed and built Orbit, AI prototyping tooling five of six UX team members used.
- Shaped the company rebrand with the team and carried it into the products through Helios, then mentored designers and moved component critique into standing UX reviews.

Digital Design System Specialist | University of Nebraska System, Lincoln, NE 04/2022 - 01/2023

- Continued the NUcleus design system: standards, components and support for teams building across 9 university brands, through a restructure that moved the role into the Office of the President.
- Directed creative for the University of Nebraska System and created reusable templates and digital assets that let internal teams produce materials in-house rather than through outside contractors.
- Presented design system and brand work to the marketing VP and mentored designers on the team.

Lead Web Designer / Developer | University of Nebraska System, Lincoln, NE 05/2018 - 04/2022

- Proposed NUcleus and built its front-end system from the ground up: vision, roadmap, ITCSS architecture, primitive, semantic and component layers in SCSS and Handlebars reference components.
- Partnered with CMS developers to integrate NUcleus across 9 university brands, giving more than 20 teams a shared foundation while preserving each organization's identity.
- Directed the system through its roadmap, standards, documentation and hands-on review, working with product managers and engineers to prioritize enhancements and support adoption.
- Started NUcleus on the Foundation framework and progressively replaced that dependency with custom SCSS and JavaScript as the system matured, without interrupting the sites already building on it.
- Led Theorem, a high school learning platform, from observed workflows and usage data through product design and a Handlebars, HTML and SCSS reference build. Engineering rebuilt its five portals in React.

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- Held brand authority granted to no one else in the university system. Recruited, hired and led three designer-developers for four years. Reviewed their code and wrote their user stories.

Web Designer / Developer | University of Nebraska System, Lincoln, NE 08/2017 - 05/2018

- Designed websites, applications and communications platforms with product managers and engineers, from user journeys and information architecture through wireframes and front-end build.
- Built the design and front-end foundation that became NUcleus.

Independent Consultant | Freelance, Lincoln, NE 01/2014 - Present

- Designed and developed the National Strategic Research Institute's 2024 biennial-report web experience from supplied report content for the DoD-designated center.

CORE SKILLS

Design systems strategy	Governance & standards	Design system evolution
Design token architecture	Component APIs & contracts	Versioned releases
Figma variables & libraries	Design-to-code	Design system tooling
Multi-brand theming	Reusable patterns	Multi-product architecture
Product design	Product development	Technical architecture
Artificial intelligence (AI)	AI-powered experiences	Agentic workflows
Interaction design	Information architecture	Usability & visual design

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Claude & Claude Code	MCP in daily practice	AI prototyping & validation
Angular & Angular CDK	HTML, CSS, SCSS	JSON
TypeScript & JavaScript	Design-to-code	Prototyping
WCAG & ARIA	Focus management	i18n, localization & RTL
Content design & UX writing	Voice & tone standards	Documentation

EDUCATION

Associate of Applied Science [AAS], Graphic Design and Media Arts | Southeast Community College 2016
Paralegal Studies, bachelor's coursework | Doane College

EARLIER EXPERIENCE & AWARDS

Adjunct Instructor | Southeast Community College, Lincoln, NE 04/2017 - 12/2022
Communications Designer | Nebraska Department of Education, Lincoln, NE 11/2012 - 03/2017
Legal Assistant, Legal & Enforcement | Nebraska Liquor Control Commission 05/2005 - 11/2012
Prism Award, Consumer Marketing Campaigns | American Marketing Association 05/2022

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