

ANNA V. KNUTSON, PH.D.

Olympia, WA | [linkedin.com/in/annavknutson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/annavknutson) | [Portfolio](#)

SENIOR UX RESEARCHER SPECIALIZING IN DIGITAL COMMUNICATION AND CONNECTION

I bring methodological rigor, product sense, and deep domain expertise in digital communication. For the last 4 years, I've been embedded in product teams at Google, Microsoft, Meta, and Workday, where I've translated user insights into design and strategy for Gboard—The Google Keyboard, Facebook, and Microsoft Teams. Prior to that, I worked for 3 years as a tenure-track professor publishing research on digital communication. Due to my multi-industry background, I offer a unique blend of methodological expertise and product fluency, designing rigorous studies that yield actionable insights quickly.

Competencies, Methods, & Tools

- Qualitative UX Research Methodologies | Product Development & Strategy | Storytelling | Workshops
- Interviews | Concept Testing | Usability Testing | Surveys | Diary Studies | Vibe Coding | Contextual Inquiry | Competitive Analysis | Journey Mapping | Jobs-to-be-Done | Research Repositories | Literature Review
- dscout | UserTesting | Qualtrics | Google AI Studio | SurveyMonkey | Figma | FigJam | Notion | NVivo | Dedoose

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

UX Researcher, Gboard—The Google Keyboard

Jun. 2025 – Mar. 2026

Google | Contract | Seattle, WA

Owned a research program that fueled design decisions and product strategy about expressive content (e.g., emoji, GIFs, stickers) in Gboard, the Google Pixel keyboard that is also available for Samsung and iPhone.

- Ran research in late 2025 for an information architecture redesign to make Gboard, the most popular keyboard app in the world, approachable to new users while still retaining its unique flavor; my recommended changes shipped in early 2026 and have been met with positive user feedback
- Guided team prioritization efforts by testing early concepts with target segments
- Vibe coded early prototypes in Google AI Studio in collaboration with PM to expedite concept testing
- Moved Writing Tools team toward strategic investments by socializing insights about AI sentiment and comfort

UX Researcher, Facebook Events & Facebook Dating

Feb. 2024 – Jan. 2025

Meta | Contract | Seattle, WA

Ran rapid concept testing of proposed features to shape strategy and design for two products situated in shifting competitive landscapes: Facebook Events and Facebook Dating.

- Drove foundational research for Events and Dating to better understand current user behaviors and needs
- Designed and ran month-long concept testing studies exploring proposed features dealing with artificial intelligence, discovery, trust and safety, information architecture, terminology, iconography, and product/market fit
- Guided prioritization and informed current features for Events (e.g., Local tab, Event RSVP privacy settings) and Dating (e.g., AI Dating Assistant, Vibe Check, Spotlight, preferences and filters, save profile upon deletion)

UX Researcher, Microsoft Teams (Consumer)

Nov. 2022 – Jan. 2024

Microsoft | Contract | Redmond, WA

Owned research on the newly launched Communities feature in the consumer version of Teams, a multifaceted community tool (similar to Discord, Facebook Groups, etc.) built using enterprise infrastructure.

- Shaped team-wide roadmap and product management team resourcing by socializing insights from deep, foundational user research illuminating the strategic importance of delight when building consumer tech
- Ran internal usability workshops to improve interoperability between consumer and enterprise Teams
- Conducted foundational research on Community Channels and ran internal usability testing on an early iteration
- Designed and led research on AI chatbots in the enterprise version of Microsoft Teams
- Drove impact for products such as GroupMe and enterprise Teams by socializing insights across product teams

Senior UX Researcher, Workday

Feb. 2022 – Oct. 2022

Workday | FTE | Seattle, WA

Owned research on employee experience mobile features related to career growth in a SaaS B2B human capital management company.

■ Collaborated with product teams and customer administrators to evaluate research problems, design and execute research, socialize insights, and inform design decisions and strategic roadmaps

■ Shifted product team’s and customer administrators’ perceptions of users’ experiences through storytelling and workshops, advocating for design changes and improved customer implementation for Workday Learning

■ Helped build a rigorous research culture by developing a formal peer review process for Workday researchers

Professor, Researcher, and Program Director

Jul. 2019 – May 2021

Duquesne University | FTE, Tenure-Track | Pittsburgh, PA

Drove impact in the field of Writing Studies by publishing peer-reviewed research on digital communication and social media while directing a writing program serving ~1,000 students per semester staffed by a faculty of 65.

■ Presented insights about digital communication in 4 peer-reviewed publications and 8 conference presentations

■ Leveraged insights while collaborating with a range of stakeholders to revise the general education curriculum experienced by every undergraduate student

■ Coordinated a review of the efficacy of the revised curriculum in my program using quantitative assessment data

■ Designed and taught a doctoral-level graduate class entitled Social Media Literacies and Rhetorics

Professor, Researcher, and Program Director

Aug. 2018 – Jul. 2019

East Tennessee State University | FTE, Tenure-Track | Johnson City, TN

Contributed to the knowledge base of Writing Studies researchers, writing faculty, and writing program administrators by publishing peer-reviewed, qualitative research on digital communication and social media while directing a writing program serving ~2,000 students per semester staffed by a faculty of 45.

■ Presented insights about digital communication in 4 peer-reviewed publications and 2 conference presentations

■ Collaborated with a range of stakeholders in a curriculum revision, ensuring that the revision of my writing program alongside the general education curriculum was informed by relevant data

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Writing Studies (English and Education)	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI
M.A., English (Rhetoric and Writing)	University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
B.A., English	University of Washington, Seattle, WA

COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTIONS

Industry and Academic Advisory Team, Technical and Professional Communication Program		
	University of New Mexico	Mar. 2023 – present
Band Coach, Adult Rock Camp	Rain City Rock Camp	Feb. 2024 – present
Member, Board of Directors	The Vera Project	Oct. 2022 – Oct. 2023