

James Barr

Interaction designer and web developer

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Expertise:

- Interaction design, information architecture and user interface design.
- Usability testing, including writing test scripts and insights.
- Responsive, mobile first website development using HTML, CSS, Javascript and PHP.
- Proficiency in design software, including Sketch, InVision, Whimsical, Adobe Illustrator and Adobe Photoshop. Excellence and speed in learning new software.
- Proficiency building websites using Craft CMS. Experience with Shopify, Wordpress and Drupal.
- Experience using Vue.js and exposure to React and AngularJS.
- Experience using and adapting Node based build tools – Gulp, Grunt and Webpack.
- Linux server (VPS) set up.
- Digital photography editing skills.

Reference:

Andy Howard (director at The Village of Useful):
+61 458 467 873

Education:

Bachelor of Visual Communication Design at
The University of Newcastle in 2011.

Employment History:

The Village of Useful

UX Designer and Web Developer | Nov 2016 – Nov 2019

Splitting my time between user experience design and full stack web development, I played an essential role in the delivery of projects and results for our clients. Working closely with company director Andy Howard (regular speaker at UX Australia) during my time with the company, I refined my skills in interaction design, information architecture, usability testing and strategy. I worked on some fantastic projects for our clients that I'm really proud of.

Major highlights while working at The Village of Useful include designing the user experience and leading usability testing for the Inspirations Paint ecommerce website; helping plan, design, test and build 3 websites and 2 web apps for The University of Newcastle; and designing and testing a new website concept for WesTrac.

XO Digital and Enigma

User Interface Developer | Nov 2013 – Apr 2016

XO Digital was acquired by Enigma in late 2014 and run as a semi-integrated team.

In my role as User Interface Developer I learned the foundational skills for front-end web development in a skilled team and progressed from a junior to a mid level developer. I was introduced to and became proficient in many skills during this time, including web usability, responsive web design, source control, jQuery and Javascript, cross-browser testing, PHP and CMS development using Drupal and Craft CMS.

Our team at XO Digital followed an Agile development methodology, initially trialing Scrum before using Kanban to help solve the challenge of sprint based delivery for our agency's clients. In the first 12 months of the role I worked closely with Matt Stow (UX Engineering Architect at Hireup), who taught me to carefully craft websites to be performant, accessible and usable, and to advocate for users and usability.

My major highlight in this role was leading the front end development of the Balance Collective website, which included 'designing with code' and adapting the supplied desktop and mobile designs for other screen sizes.

University of Newcastle

Communications Officer | Jul 2013 – Dec 2013

In the role of Communications Officer for the Faculty of Engineering and Built Environment, my responsibilities were to develop and deliver effective messaging to current and prospective students, primarily through web and email, with a focus on improving the student experience and engagement. In this role I learned and practiced a number of new skills such as filming, video editing using Adobe Premier Pro, animating using Adobe After Effects, and production management – scheduling individuals for interviews, organising locations and a crew.

LittleMan Pty Ltd

Web Designer and Developer | Jun 2013 – Dec 2013

Joining a team of FileMaker developers at a database development company in Newcastle, I was responsible for managing my own web projects, from client briefing to design, development and delivery. A highlight in this role was developing a site booking map application for a local Field Days organisation. My solution used Adobe Illustrator to produce an SVG, FileMaker to parse the file, and Raphaël.js to re-draw the SVG map on the website, and Javascript to handle the SVG interactivity (zoom and pan) and site booking.

Toys Wholesale

Graphic Designer and Web Administrator | Aug 2011 – Mar 2013

As the in-house graphic designer and web administrator for a children's toys wholesaler/retailer, I spent most of my time creating promotional and sales materials for print and web. This included photographing new products, designing catalogues, flyers, web banners and email campaigns. While in my position, I redesigned the two websites I was responsible for running, and implemented a number of major updates to the CMS, which resulted in a more reliable sales system and increased conversions. I initiated and ran an email marketing program and built an online following for the retail website on Facebook.



Recommendation: James Barr

To whom it may concern,

If you're considering hiring James Barr, I suggest you stop reading and hire him now before someone else does. He's a rare talent. If he's available, your time to make a decision is most likely very limited.

I was fortunate to work with James at The Village of Useful over a period of three years, from November 2016 to November 2019. James worked with my company as both a contractor and employee over this period.

James delivered exceptional work across his broad areas of expertise, these being digital strategy, user experience design, user interface design, front end development and Craft CMS development. James has one of the broadest and deepest skill sets I've seen. He can take a website or digital product from strategy all the way through to implementation, working on every stage and delivering work to a world-class standard.

When James commenced working in 2016, he was clearly a talented web developer with a desire to improve his skills in other areas. The team and I quickly realised he *already had* significant skills and ability in user experience, digital/product strategy and product management – he just needed to utilise his skills more often. Since then, he's created exceptional digital/product strategy, user experience design and user interface design for organisations including A.P. Eagers, WesTrac, Inspirations Paint, University of Newcastle, SG Fleet, and a range of other private and public entities.

His professional skills will be evident from his work and portfolio. Until you meet James, you may not appreciate that his soft skills and character are what set him apart for me. In my three years of working alongside James, I found him to be intelligent, curious, kind, loyal, trustworthy and extremely hard working. If James was working on a project, it was not only taken care of, but there was no doubt it would be done right, done in time, and would be thought about deeply.

He has a great intuition and understands when and how to question things. He also understands when to get stuck in and get it done. He excels with big, tough problems that require careful thinking. If you're faced with tricky digital product challenges across strategy, design or management, you want James on your team.

I was consistently impressed with James' work. He also brings a great energy and depth of thought to the workplace. I can't picture a scenario where he wouldn't bring significant value to the company and team he's working with. Of all the talented people I've met working across Australia, the UK and USA in my almost twenty year career, James is amongst the top few professionals I've worked with in terms of raw capability and talent.

He's produced a formidable range of world-class work at The Village of Useful. I get the feeling that James is only just getting started. Please feel welcome to call for a confidential discussion.

Andy Howard
Director, The Village of Useful
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