

# Alison Ruge

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## Skills Overview

- Over 8 years applying user and design research methods in a wide range of industries and enterprises
- Passionate about leading, designing, and applying user research for work practice re-engineering
- Expertise in Contextual Design, Personas, Scenarios, Prototype/Usability Tests, Kano, Delphi
- Superior interpersonal skills, team coaching & facilitation for management-facing projects

## Career Synopsis

### Cisco

January 2005 +

#### Senior User Researcher, User-Centered Design, Voice Technology Group

Lead all phases of user research for communication product design. Work with product managers, marketing managers, account teams and designers to identify their needs. Deliver the results from a wide range of methods like ethnographies, Kano surveys, formative and remote usability, iterative prototype testing, and brand value testing of visual and aesthetic design mock-ups. Results are used to improve and prioritize interaction flow and interface attributes of VoIP desk phones, mobile phone applications and web conferencing.

- Reduced complexity and prioritized features in the UI of:
  - VoIP phones (call management and softkey templates)
  - Unified Communicator (communication history and presence states)
  - Mobile Communicator (remote search and consolidated call history)
- Identified unmet needs in the marketplace and the design requirements to deliver them to market like:
  - social signaling during conference and one-to-one calls
  - threaded voicemails and voicemail transcription
- Helped to establish a user-centered design (UCD) practice inside Cisco's engineering-centric culture by:
  - giving presentations about research insights
  - evangelizing user experience with video and reports
  - integrating product teams around a shared set of personas
- Presented critical findings for desk phone UI to senior management, leading them to change schedules and allocate internal resources to redesign essential aspects of the phone. Presented my vision for communication feedback and voicemail design to senior management, resulting in my current involvement with emergent technology and major profit center project teams.
- Awards: Cisco VTG "Vision for Voice Communication" Movie; Corporate Acknowledgement-Team Leadership.

### Mayo Clinic

Spring 2002 – Fall 2004

#### User Researcher/Interaction Designer

Promoted end-user focused design process in transitioning team from pure usability to human-computer interaction design and research. Developed, applied and evangelized over 20 methodologies in presentations to MDs and via the web. Wrote and executed custom proposals for all phases of interaction design from user research to use cases.

- Created new opportunities for user-centered design in Mayo's clinical and medical research communities.
- Coached over 15 different teams in user research and analysis techniques for business process applications, knowledge management environments and database interface innovation projects.
- Prototyped Mayo's intranet templates, awarded one of 2003's best by Nielsen-Norman Group. Made a content-dense system more actionable and "productive".
- Led 4 client-server, 2 vended product (RFP and collaboration) and 3 enterprise application redesign projects using Contextual Design from research through design testing. Led user research efforts, prepared personas & scenarios to drive design of 2 content-intensive external websites.
- Designed a genetics research specimen tracking software application, conducted user research through paper prototyping and testing.

**Patient2Patient.Net****Summer 2001 - Spring 2002****Qualitative Analysis/Usability Researcher (Freelance)**

Investigated competitive business models, ad placement, affiliate networking and usability of prototype features for this virtual community start-up.

**Fashion Institute of Technology, State Univ of NY****Spring 2001****Adjunct Instructor \* Advanced Multimedia Computing**

Developed curriculum, led class, graded assignments for course instruction in using MS Office and Adobe products for advertising and marketing applications.

**Organic, Inc.****Winter 1999 - Winter 2000****Senior Manager \* Customer Insights Group (1/00-12/00)**

Managed all user research at the NYC office of this international web business agency. Diversified and extended user research portfolio to create more relevant, targeted tools. Collaborated with R&D and designers in targeting Fortune 100 companies and promising start-ups. Supervised 2 analysts.

- Conducted user research and analysis on over 75 projects. Researched users' context and values for new business models through observation, interviews, and focus groups to identify unmet needs and define user requirements for new products and services.
- Researched and defined user requirements for pattern language-driven interfaces for financial customers and interactive models to increase fund-raising for non-profits.
- Designed original user scenarios and task analyses for a multi-disciplinary "leisure learning" site, a national environmental group, personalization engines and other business propositions.
- Adapted research methods to discover unmet user needs for e-commerce business ideas, interfaces to databases and leverage many business-to-business and consumer transactions.

**Qualitative Research Manager****(7/99-1/00)****Qualitative Research Analyst****(1/99-7/99)**

Managed all qualitative research NYC efforts during the web innovation era, retaining close client contact throughout the design cycle. Designed, wrote and sold proposals, produced and presented custom studies that identified unmet user needs, interaction design requirements and database designs. Managed profitability and integration with project lifecycle, keeping tight deadlines in collaboration with project teams.

**Usable Products, Inc.****Fall 1998 - Winter 1999****Consultant**

Supported production of usability tests to optimize interfaces for clients like Razorfish, Charles Schwab and the Gay Financial Network. Created discussion guides and screeners, wrote draft reports.

**Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc.****Summer 1997- Fall 1998****Qualitative Media Research Analyst**

Customized and produced qualitative studies for mass media clients such as USA Today, Parade Magazine, ABCNews, etc. Responsibilities included client management; screener, survey and discussion guide development; recruitment quality control; data analysis and report writing.

- Proposed website development project, secured funds, managed budget. Designed, coded, and wrote all initial content for www.srbi.com. Introduced web survey tools to corporate service portfolio.

**Discovery Channel****Summer 1995****Media Literacy Specialist****Education**

M.A. Persuasion Design (Political Communications)	1996	Annenberg School for Communication, UPenn
B.A. Social Sciences with High Honors <i>Phi Beta Kappa</i>	1993	New College, Hofstra University

**Professional Affiliations**

SIG-CHI, Bay-CHI, Association for Computing Machinery  
Usability Professionals Association