KINYA MCDOWELL

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SUMMARY   User researcher with experience across B2C and B2B digital products, translating mixed-methods research into insights that influence product and drive meaningful change.

EXPERTISE

Research & Discovery
Competitive Research · Contextual Inquiry · Diary Studies · Ethnographic Research · Field Studies · In-Depth Interviews · Jobs To Be Done (JTBD) · Mixed Methods Research · Qualitative Research · Stakeholder Workshops · Surveys

Analysis & Synthesis
Affinity Mapping · Data Analysis · Insight Synthesis · Journey Mapping · Personas · Service Blueprinting

Evaluation & Validation
Concept & Prototype Testing · Design Critique · Heuristic Evaluation · Task Analysis · Card Sorting · Usability Testing

Design & Product Collaboration
Design Sprints · Workshops · Stakeholder Interviews · Design Systems · Interaction Design · User Flows

Prototyping & Experience Design
Low- & High-Fidelity Prototyping · Wireframing · Responsive & Multi-Platform Design · Storyboarding · User Scenarios

Accessibility & Inclusion
Accessibility Evaluation (WCAG) · Assistive Technology Testing · Inclusive Design

WORK HISTORY

Lead Researcher (Remote);
7-Eleven; 3/2022 to present | (Mobile/Hardware)

- **Role:** Lead end-to-end UX research across B2C and B2B digital services, including mobile, in-store, and enterprise platforms. Partner with product and technology leadership to set research priorities, support governance standards, and embed equitable, accessible user insights into decision-making.
- **Approach:** Design and conduct discovery and evaluative research, including ethnographic studies, interviews, benchmarking, and usability testing, to assess usability, accessibility, and service effectiveness. Built and operationalized a cost-efficient participant recruitment system using Smartsheet, strengthening tracking, equitable representation, and fiscal accountability within budget constraints. Standardized research operations through structured reporting templates and facilitated journey mapping workshops, while leveraging approved AI tools to support responsible, evidence-based recommendations.
- **Results:** Improved task success rates, accessibility compliance, and pre-release defect reduction by integrating research into roadmap decisions. Increased operational efficiency and recruitment turnaround times while strengthening cross-team alignment and user satisfaction across complex digital services.

Senior Researcher (Remote);
Ernst & Young; 2021 to 3/2022 | SAFe Agile (Web)

- **Role:** Led UX research for a B2B internal knowledge management and sharing portal, owning research strategy and serving as the primary partner aligning user insights with business and design decisions.
- **Approach:** Selected and executed appropriate research methods—including interviews, usability testing, and surveys—based on project needs; evaluated and implemented tools to streamline qualitative and quantitative analysis. Collaborated closely with cross-functional stakeholders to address key business questions.
- **Results:** Delivered actionable insights that informed product direction and design decisions. Produced personas, service blueprints, and journey maps that improved usability and efficiency across the platform.

Accessibility (A11y) Design Consultant; (Remote);
Wells Fargo; 2021 | SAFe Agile (Web)

- **Role:** Supported accessibility for Wells Fargo's Commercial Electronic Office (CEO), a B2B enterprise platform, defining accessibility requirements for core components and business tools.
- **Approach:** Partnered with design and engineering teams to identify and remediate accessibility gaps, aligning solutions with WCAG standards and assistive technology requirements.
- **Results:** Improved accessibility compliance across key B2B applications, enhancing usability for customers who rely on assistive technologies.

TOOLS

Research & Insights
Qualtrics · Alida · Alchemer · DScout · UserTesting · UserZoom · Maze · Mixpanel · Medallia · Smartsheet

Synthesis & Collaboration
Miro · Figma · FigJam

Accessibility & Inclusive Design
Axe · WAVE · ARC Toolkit · Google Lighthouse · JAWS · NVDA · VoiceOver · TalkBack

Product & Delivery
Jira · Rally · Basecamp · Slack · Microsoft Office · Microsoft Teams · GitHub · Agile / SAFe Environments

Prototyping & Design
Figma · Axure · Adobe Creative Suite · Canva

Data-Informed & AI-Assisted Research
GenAI tools (ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini, Perplexity) for survey design, synthesis acceleration, and pattern analysis

EDUCATION

Illinois Institute of Technology; Chicago, IL; (2002 - 2003);
MA; Information Architecture and Technical Design

Howard University; Washington, DC; (1989 - 1993); BA; Major: Political Science/Business Administration; Minor: Sociology

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Accessibility (A11y) Engineer – Development (Remote);
CVS; 2019 to 2021 | SAFe Agile (Web/Mobile)

- **Role:** Led accessibility initiatives across CVS's consumer-facing web and mobile experiences, ensuring compliance across critical customer touchpoints.
- **Approach:** Partnered closely with product, design, and engineering teams to identify, test, prioritize, and remediate accessibility issues using assistive technologies and automated tooling. Provided hands-on guidance on accessible patterns, component behavior, and WCAG-aligned implementation, with a focus on high-impact flows such as billing, account management, and authentication. Supported teams operating in SAFe Agile environments to integrate accessibility into ongoing development cycles.
- **Results:** Achieved WCAG compliance for core journeys including billing, account management, and authentication, improving usability for users with disabilities.

User Experience Consultant (Remote);
Follett Student Solutions; 2018 to 2019 | Waterfall (Web/Mobile)

- **Role:** Designed and delivered a responsive B2B lead-generation website for Follett's Aspen Student Information System (SIS), serving school administrators, teachers, and parents.
- **Approach:** Led Design Thinking workshops to align user and business needs; created user flows, wireframes, and interactive prototypes for iterative feedback. Built accessible, standards-compliant front-end designs using semantic HTML, CSS, and existing JavaScript frameworks.
- **Results:** Launched a fully responsive website that improved lead generation and user engagement across key B2B audiences.

User Experience Consultant (Chicago);
Sidley & Austin LLP; 2017 to 2018 | Agile; Waterfall (Web/Mobile)

- **Role:** Collaborated on internal B2B applications for attorneys and staff at Sidley, including leading the digitization of manual, paper-based processes and enhancing enterprise tools like the firm's Enterprise Search system.
- **Approach:** Conducted user research and implemented user analytics to uncover pain points. Facilitated prioritization workshops with stakeholders to elevate high-impact insights and ensure findings were translated into actionable design and development decisions.
- **Results:** Developed a cohesive design system for legal applications, digitized key workflows, and significantly improved time on task for legal professionals.

User Experience Architect (Chicago);
JPMorgan Chase; 2017 | Agile (Web)

- **Role**: Designed financial applications for corporate clients, focusing on the Single Use Accounts (SUA) Administrative Dashboard and credit card management tools.
- **Approach**: Collaborated with product teams to ensure accessibility and usability within financial services. Led customer journey workshops to align user needs with business goals, and developed user flows and prototypes to support design decisions.
- **Results**: Delivered a corporate credit card management design system and supported user acceptance testing (UAT) for key financial applications, enhancing usability for enterprise clients.

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VOLUNTEER
Howard University Alumni –
Chicago Chapter
2021 – Present
Secretary of Board;
Active member since 1995

Inella's Restoration Center
Volunteer Board Member
2026 Appointment

User Experience Product Lead (Bloomington, IL);
State Farm; 2013 to 2017 | SAFe Agile; Waterfall (Web/Mobile)

- **B2C**: Led the design of consumer-facing digital products for insurance claims, policy management, and marketing tools, overseeing the UI team in defining product requirements and cross-channel deliverables that met enterprise standards.
- **Approach:** Collaborated with stakeholders through journey mapping and requirements prioritization workshops to ensure alignment between user needs and business goals. Partnered with accessibility teams to ensure inclusive design practices and conducted UAT for both mobile apps and websites.
- **Results:** Successfully launched core consumer apps including *Claims*, *Find Repair Shop*, and *Homeowners Insurance*, along with the *Marketing Leads Administrative Tool*, delivering seamless and accessible user experiences.

Usability Researcher (Chicago);
GrubHub; 2011 to 2013 | Agile (Web/Mobile)

- **Role**: Owned UX research for consumer-facing products and B2B restaurant partner tools, including OrderHub and DeliveryHub, supporting cross-functional product teams with user-centered insights.
- **Approach:** Conducted 500+ hours of ethnographic and contextual research across restaurants, delivery workflows, and consumer touchpoints, alongside usability testing, guerrilla research, and stakeholder interviews. Facilitated journey mapping and training workshops to embed user-centered design practices across teams.
- **Results:** Delivered customer journeys, service blueprints, and actionable insights that informed product development across consumer and partner platforms; and helped establish research and design standards that informed design patterns used in restaurant food order management platforms world-wide today.

Usability Researcher (Chicago, Remote);
Edelman, Grainger, Manifest Digital; 2010 to 2011 | Agile (Web)

- **Role:** Led UX research for B2B and consumer-facing platforms including Grainger.com, MusiciansFriend.com, and FuelUp.org, defining research methodologies and improving usability across diverse audiences.
- **Approach:** Conducted usability studies and synthesized findings into actionable recommendations to guide product and design decisions.
- **Results:** Enhanced time on task and overall user satisfaction for both business and consumer users through targeted usability improvements.

Usability Researcher/QA Manager (Chicago);
DRAFTFCB; 2003 to 2006, 2008 to 2010 | Waterfall (Web)

- **Role**: Led UX and QA efforts across multiple B2C client projects—including Blue Cross Blue Shield of IL—spanning banner ads, games, and landing pages. Introduced usability testing to the team and established user-centered design processes alongside UAT to improve digital quality.
- **Approach:** Designed and executed usability test plans, facilitated journey workshops, and embedded usability testing into project workflows through collaboration with design, development, and account teams.
- **Results:** Improved the usability and effectiveness of consumer-facing digital products by integrating usability testing into standard delivery practices and aligning teams around user insights.