# Kevin Nicholas

**Principal UX Designer** · *AI product design, AI-ready design systems, and AI-assisted design workflows*

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## SUMMARY

From Percipio's first concepts in 2017 to the AI-native skills platform it is today, I've spent 12 years designing for Skillsoft, touching nearly every part of a learning experience used by tens of millions of employees. Most recently I helped shape the strategy and design behind CAISY, Skillsoft's AI conversation simulator, along with a platform-wide AI assistant and the new skills intelligence platform, three of the company's top priorities.

Lately my focus has been making AI work for the team that builds the product. Product owners brought me vibe-coded ideas, and I built the coded design system, prototype kit, and spec workflow that turned those ideas into something engineering could build on.

## EXPERIENCE

### Skillsoft

**Principal UX Designer** May 2021 – Nov 2026
**Senior UX Designer** Apr 2018 – May 2021

*I was the go-to designer for product owners and engineers across six to eight squads at a time, from early ideas to mid-sprint problems, and I kept learners at the center of the decisions we made. I led junior and mid-level designers on project teams and mentored others across the group. As AI changed how products get built, I helped lead the design team's shift to AI-first work, and that work was recognized across product, engineering, and leadership.*

#### AI PRODUCTS

- Led the learner experience for CAISY, Skillsoft's AI conversation simulator, taking it from an engineering proof of concept to a full product. Usage grew 146% year over year and simulation launches 341%, and Accenture's program built on CAISY won a 2026 Brandon Hall Silver Award for Best Use of AI for Learning.
- Designed CAISY's voice mode end to end, video avatars, and a Salesforce version, treating the AI's behavior, from speed to guardrails, as part of the design. Ran a customer beta on video avatars before the company invested further, which showed customers wouldn't pay for video.
- Led design of Percipio's AI Assistant from its 2024 launch through early 2026. When teams pushed for separately named versions, I pitched one assistant to every stakeholder and won them over. It now spans five areas, from learning to the course player, tells people when its focus shifts, and acts instead of just recommending.

#### AI-ASSISTED DESIGN WORKFLOW

- Product owners were building concept prototypes with AI, so I gave them a head start with a DESIGN.md of our tokens and UX rules, and coached them on early UX thinking and exporting their work as code. I carried those concepts through two more stages: a near-production experience prototype, then a handoff version rebuilt on production components for engineering to pick up and finish. Every designer in the 20-person UX group used parts of the workflow.
- Helped the Gamut team build an AI-ready prototyping repo, loaded with Claude Code skills and wired into Gamut's coded components, so designers could branch it and build prototypes as close to production code as we could get. My own projects there needed little front-end work, and engineering picked up stories straight from my pull request previews.
- Was the primary UX voice in Skillsoft's shift to spec-driven development, meeting weekly as a core stakeholder through a six-month trial with 12 squads. Shaped PRDs with product owners, then built a Claude Code skill that turns single features from my coded prototype into HTML specs and PNG references for QA, so work could ship in sprint-sized pieces.
- Conceived UX Lab Portal, a company-hosted home for prototypes that replaced scattered outside hosting, and partnered with DevOps to build it on AWS Amplify before designing v2. Design, product, and engineering all use it, it hosts daily customer demos, and the VP of Content named it a high-priority project for 2026.
- Brought the rest of the design team along, setting up their local Claude Code environments and working out how we could design with Figma MCP and work in GitHub.

#### SKILLS INTELLIGENCE PLATFORM

- Created Skill Benchmarks from scratch, working with our UX researchers to shape everything from the question model and scoring rubric to a results page that turns skill gaps into targeted learning. Completions grew 161% year over year, with an average skill gain of 20%.
- Named and designed Role Advisor, which uses AI to surface the skills that matter most for any role. It now covers 700+ roles, and in early access, learners who set a role were 14% more likely to make learning a habit.
- Designed Career Center, the learner side of the skills intelligence platform, with a zoomable sunburst of possible career moves and AI guidance that responds as people progress. Built the production-fidelity prototype behind it that leadership presented at town halls, engineering built from, and sales demoed to customers.
- Designed the admin side too. Every organization structures skills differently, so admins can build and govern their own ontology, from the roles and skills dictionary to proficiency levels, on top of Skillsoft's standard taxonomy.

#### LEARNING EXPERIENCE AND DESIGN SYSTEMS

- Designed two generations of Percipio's homepage as the platform grew. The 2022 refresh organized content and added My Learning, and customers responded well. Two years of new features later, the experience had outgrown it, so I led design of the New Learner Experience, a full redesign of the homepage, content cards, left navigation, library, profile, and course player. In testing with 24 learners and admins, 18 of 22 sessions rated it less overwhelming than the design it replaced, and it launched to all learners in August 2024.
- Created Percipio's original visual themes, later carried into Codecademy's Gamut design system, and worked with the Gamut team as it became Percipio's primary system, with my designs shaping its components and Percipio theme.
- Owned the visual system for Skillsoft's digital badges, generated with Accredible's engineers across the full catalog. Learners earned 19.4M badges in 2023 alone, and Skillsoft reports badges lifted logins 28% and completions 10%.
- Advised product leaders and engineers on WCAG AA tradeoffs and worked through VPAT decisions with the accessibility lead. Percipio's partially supported WCAG criteria fell from about 20 to 10 between 2020 and 2026 as its scope grew.

### York & Chapel

**Senior UX Designer** · agency role dedicated to Skillsoft — May 2015 – Apr 2018

- Designed the original Percipio concepts, shown at Skillsoft Perspectives 2017 as the company's new learning platform, and much of its first release.
- Designed for Skillsoft's SumTotal and Skillport platforms across HCM, talent management, and LMS workflows.
- Led a design group of 12+, setting day-to-day priorities and maintaining the design patterns and style guides the team built from.

## EARLIER EXPERIENCE

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| **Creative Director**<br>BrandShop Digital Commerce | Built and led a team across UX, visual design, front-end development, copywriting, SEO, and photography for premium branded e-commerce. |
| **Lead Web Designer**<br>SureSource | Designed and coded webstores and evolved the front-end framework, then quickly moved into leading the creative group. |

## SKILLS AND EDUCATION

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| **Leadership** | Design direction, mentorship, stakeholder alignment, workshop facilitation, DesignOps |
| **AI experience design** | Agentic and assistant experiences, human-AI interaction, conversational and voice UI, guardrails and error states, AI transparency and user control |
| **AI workflow** | Prompt and context design, AI output evaluation, AI-assisted prototyping, spec-driven development |
| **UX and product** | UX strategy, interaction design, information architecture, responsive and mobile design, user research, contextual inquiry, usability testing, usage analytics, UX writing, accessibility |
| **Visual and systems** | Visual design, design systems, design tokens, coded component libraries |
| **Design in code** | Working fluency in React, Tailwind, HTML, and CSS for prototyping, design QA, and handoff |
| **Tools** | Claude Code, Cursor, VS Code, GitHub, Figma, Storybook, Pendo, Power BI, Adobe Creative Suite |
| **Domain** | Enterprise SaaS, enterprise learning (LXP, LMS), skills intelligence, career mobility, HCM integration |
| **Education** | University of the Arts, BFA in Graphic Design |