

Melissa Denby

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Professional summary

Senior UX Designer with nearly nine years of experience simplifying complex AI, observability, and remediation workflows at IBM. Proven track record of leading design across multiple concurrent projects, elevating design from a support function to a strategic driver, and providing design mentorship. Rare talent for designing AI-powered experiences — translating complex machine-driven workflows into intuitive, human-centered interactions. Known for high-fidelity designs that help teams think through problems, while fostering a positive, collaborative environment that enables fast, agile delivery.

Experience

IBM

Research Triangle Park, Durham, NC 27703

UX design lead (Instana)

May 2022 – December 2025

Led UX design for a track that included six teams across multiple timezones, focusing on helping enterprise users understand, investigate, and resolve application incidents. Recognized by two direct managers for exceptional ability to simplify complex enterprise workflows and translate highly technical requirements into elegant, human-centered designs.

Entrepreneur Award, March 2024 | Designer Spotlight Award, November 2022

- Led design strategy, alignment, and delivery across six teams within Instana's observability platform
- Built cross-functional alignment across design, engineering, content, and product teams — bringing diverse stakeholders to shared decisions on complex enterprise workflows
- Coordinated with designers across all Instana tracks to ensure consistent patterns and interactions for the end user — regardless of which team built them
- Designed AI-powered patterns for incident resolution, proactive remediation, automated actions, service level objectives, and root cause analysis including topology visualization
- Gathered user feedback through usability studies and interviews, partnering with user researchers to plan and execute sessions
- Regularly presented designs to leadership and participated in formal design reviews — both giving and receiving critique as part of a rigorous, collaborative design culture
- Mentored designers and interns across timezones, including India, to support team development
- Broke designs into agile-friendly pieces enabling a smoother delivery process that benefited both users and developers

UX design lead (Watson AIOps)

May 2018 – May 2022

- Created the Watson AIOps Play Experience — a zero-install demo environment that expanded customer reach by removing setup friction entirely
- Created wireframes, prototypes, and mid-fidelity designs using the IBM Carbon Design System
- Participated in design critiques, leadership presentations, and internal UX reviews
- Conducted and participated in user research and interviews
- Facilitated workshops within and across teams — bringing groups to alignment on complex design problems and new practices
- Volunteered to help plan and support IBM's inaugural Spark Design Festival — connecting the IBM design community globally to share knowledge and skills

UX designer (Cloud DevOps)

March 2017 – May 2022

Manager's Choice Award, April 2018

- Designed data-driven visualizations, and hi-fidelity experiences using the IBM Carbon Design System with engineering and data scientists — helping users understand complex, predictive data for applications
- Created research plans, surveys, and task flows — conducting user research that directly informed product decisions for the team
- Completed IBM's internal design thinking bootcamp — earning a Design Thinking Practitioner badge, and a Co-Creator badge, along with participating in IBM's Jumpstart program for new hires

Freelance UX Designer

May 2015 – March 2017

Led UX design for small business, and marketing websites during a deliberate transition from graphic design to user experience.

- Gathered requirements through user interviews and competitor research
- Created personas, information architecture, and feature prioritization
- Created wireframes, process flow diagrams, and mockups to communicate complex interactions and concepts
- Conducted usability and accessibility testing

Business Impact, Inc.

May 2016 – February 2017

Supported client data systems to improve accuracy and reporting — building data literacy that directly informs UX design for complex, data-driven enterprise products.

Earlier Career

Graphic Designer – Rivers Agency, 3 Birds Marketing, Strategic Guru, Liberty Hardware, Ampersand
2007 – 2015

Delivered print and digital design solutions for marketing, branding, and web projects. Known for creative versatility, precision, and collaboration.

Skills and certifications

Methods and practices

Whiteboarding, Facilitation, Team leadership, Usability testing

Certifications and badges

IBM Enterprise Design Thinking Practitioner, Co-Creator, Trustworthy AI and AI Ethics from Credly, AI Fundamentals for Design, Anthropic Claude 101

Tools

Figma, Mural, Notion, Jira, IBM Carbon Design System, Actively expanding AI knowledge and tooling

Education

2016 MSIS Information Science, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill

2006 BFA Graphic Design University of Georgia, Athens, Ga.