

Let's Talk Business

For Ted Rogers School Students

These reports describe industry sectors and career paths of interest to Ted Rogers School students and alumni. Each report leverages BCH employment data and the expertise of our staff. This collaborative effort engages staff, students, alumni and the University Business Librarian.

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A Day in the Life of a User Experience (UX) Designer

We recently had a conversation with Jason Kothary, who graduated from the Marketing Management program at the Ted Rogers School of Management in 2022.

He currently works as a *User Experience Designer* at Ontario Digital Service.

Ontario Digital Service, is a multifaceted government organization that works with Ministry partners to deliver simpler, more efficient products and services to the public.

In this report, Jason shares what type of work he does, the software platforms he uses, and he also shares some words of wisdom for those students interested in learning more.



Q: What do you do on a 'day-to-day' basis in your current role as a User Experience (UX) Designer at Ontario Digital Service?

A: The Ontario Digital Service is an incredibly agile, digitally mature organization. As a member of the Ontario Experience Design Lab, I provide user research leadership and design support for the Ontario Public Service to develop government services that improve the lives of the people who live here.

Here is what my typical day entails:

- facilitate a variety of design-thinking workshops and innovation sessions to understand the problem a digital product needs to solve.
- spearhead generative research initiatives to uncover users' pain points and make corresponding design decisions to augment the user experience.
- synthesize user research insights to develop a holistic understanding of the needs, challenges, and drivers associated with a given product or service.
- create and iteratively improve upon prototypes and wireframes to test and validate ideas before sharing the final designs with broader teams for development.
- develop user personas, journey maps, service design blueprints, information architecture diagrams, and other design artifacts in alignment with the needs of project or product team.

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- collaborate with and advise several project and product teams on experience design, including serving as an assessor for Ministry-wide digital initiatives such as the *Digital First Assessment*.
- complete retrospectives on project work to identify successes and potential areas of improvement.
- uphold Agile practices such as conducting daily stand-ups, sprint planning, and backlog prioritization.

Q: What technology platforms do you use in your role?

A: As a UX Designer, I primarily use tools that facilitate various stages of research and design projects. Here is an overview of the platforms I use:

- **Miro:** A digital whiteboard that is undeniably the most versatile tool I have come across. I have used this service to collaborate with stakeholders during workshops, develop affinity maps, create slide decks, and much more.
- **Trello:** Our teams at the ODS use this to create Kanban boards that effectively organize projects and corresponding tasks.
- **Figma:** The collaborative application for user interface design. The Ontario Design System is embedded into the Figma library to allow for rapid prototyping.
- **Slack:** Our primary communication tool. The ODS prides itself on organization-wide transparency, and the unrestricted access to other departments' channels provide insight on what they are working on.



Q: How does your industry impact the world?

A: UX design plays a pivotal role in defining and analyzing people's problems and solving their needs in order to improve their overall experience using a product or service. This predicates the massive impact this practice has on an eclectic range of industries.

In the context of the provincial government, we stringently adhere to the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA)* to develop inclusive services across healthcare, transportation, environmental affairs, and several other sectors. In essence, the work done by UX designers is transforming the way people around the world interact with technology, whether that be to locate a long-term care home or book a flight to another country.

Q: Which industry trends should TRSM students be aware of?

A: These are some emerging trends that students should pay close attention to:

- The curtailment of job opportunities, caused by the recession, will increase the demand for generalist designers (i.e., those who are well-versed in both user research and design) and hands-on leaders.
- The proliferation of artificial intelligence and how it can be applied to assist with UX writing, research, and design.
- Design tools such as *Figma* transcend interfaces and components—they are becoming powerful platforms for synchronous collaboration.

Q: What advice would you provide a Ted Rogers student who aspires to work in your industry?

A: **Place an enduring emphasis on skills development:** Leverage resources such as LinkedIn Learning, Google Career Certificates (specifically the UX Design certification), Coursera, and the Business Career Hub to expand upon your UX skills. This is something I continue to dedicate time toward in my current role as UX design is an increasingly dynamic field that calls for an unflinching commitment to learning and development.

Develop a robust portfolio: This can comprise freelance or professional UX work. If you don't have industry experience, complete courses on the aforementioned platforms and showcase those projects in your portfolio. Keep in mind that the most critical aspect of your portfolio is your process, not necessarily its visual appeal and moxie.

Network: Develop meaningful connections with UX professionals in your desired industry. Begin by seeking out those within your immediate network and asking them if they have any relevant contacts for you to reach out to. Also, don't be afraid to contact people in UX-adjacent roles, such as product management and content design—they will offer great insight too!



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Sarah is a Career Consultant with 5+ years of experience in the human resource, recruitment, and career services industry. She is passionate about helping clients communicate their value using a strengths-based approach to land meaningful work.



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Eman is a student in the Marketing Management program. She is currently building and further refining critical skills through leadership positions and exclusive programs.