Jesse Raymond

Technical UX/UI Director

Seattle, WA (open to remote) · work@jesse.rocks · jesse.rocks · linkedin.com/in/jesse-raymond

SUMMARY

Technical UX/UI Director with 20+ years in design and technology, the last 13 in game development. At Epic Games, directed UX/UI across Fortnite Battle Royale, Fortnite Festival, and the core player ecosystem serving hundreds of millions of accounts. Good at navigating hard conversations, building real team culture, and growing ICs into leads. Deep hands-on UE5 technical UI background: UMG, Blueprints, C++, HLSL, systems architecture, optimization, and tooling.

SKILLS

Leadership: Team direction (50+ direct reports), hiring and interviewing, mentorship and career development, roadmap and vision, cross-discipline process, stakeholder communication

Unreal Engine 5: UMG, Blueprints, C++, Slate, Materials / HLSL, UI systems architecture, optimization, tooling and pipeline, best-practices documentation

Design: Figma, Adobe Creative Suite, UX architecture, interaction design, design systems, user research

Engineering: C++, C#, TypeScript / React, JavaScript, Python / FastAPI, Docker, Git, Perforce, Unity, JIRA, Confluence

AI: Claude Code, Cursor, LM Studio, Ollama / MLX, ComfyUI, AI workflow integration, prompt engineering

Platforms: PC, Xbox, PlayStation, Switch, iOS, Android, Web

EXPERIENCE

XLCR Studios, Independent Designer & Developer

Mar 2026 – Present · Seattle, WA

- Designed and built **jesse.rocks** end to end: UX, visual design, and front end (Astro, TypeScript, Tailwind), plus a scripted media pipeline (Python, ffmpeg, headless Chrome) for color-matched gameplay case studies.
- Built **AI-assisted design and engineering workflows** with Claude Code and Cursor, and local models (LM Studio, Ollama, MLX, ComfyUI) for agents, image generation, and dev-environment automation.
- Developed **Cheddar**, a full-stack agentic trading control center: React / TypeScript UI, FastAPI services, PostgreSQL, Redis, Docker, and a 600+ test suite.

Epic Games

Sep 2021 – Mar 2026 · Cary, NC (Remote)

Three roles, 4.5 years. The work and the people kept reaching well beyond any single team.

UX/UI Director, Fortnite Music (Harmonix)

Feb 2025 – Mar 2026

- Directed UX/UI design and development for Fortnite Music, including **Fortnite Festival**, serving **650M+ registered accounts**; led **8 direct reports and 3 contractors** across UX design, UI art, and technical UI.
- Directed UX/UI for **Dance With Sabrina** (Festival Season 8, May 30 – Jun 16, 2025), a repeatable interactive concert at Sabrina Carpenter's cultural peak, covered by Rolling Stone, Billboard, and NME.
- The team's **group dance emote** became a moment of its own: players formed spontaneous synchronized dance parties mid-match instead of fighting. GameSpot, ESPN W, India Today, and esports.gg covered it; Epic's Director of Music cited it as the inspiration for the event; Epic confirmed **~6.8M matches** by all-Sabrina-skin squads; Campaign US named it one of April 2025's top cultural moments.
- Directed **Karaoke** (real-time pitch scoring across 600+ tracks) and **Pro Drums** (cymbal gems, MIDI e-kit and Rock Band kit support), an overhaul of the **audio/video calibration system**, and updates to the Music Library and end-of-song results.
- Led UX/UI for **Festival Main Stage Mobile Portrait Mode**, rebuilt from the ground up for portrait play to recapture the mobile audience after Fortnite's return to iOS.
- Introduced **milestone-gated design reviews** and moved cross-discipline collaboration from sequential to concurrent, cutting late-stage scrambles that ate into polish.

- Developed the management skills of a lead navigating friction within their team, and prepared a senior technical UI designer for a lead role by rebuilding engineering relationships and developing soft skills.

UX/UI Director, Fortnite Battle Royale Dec 2022 – Feb 2025

- Directed UX/UI across **9 seasons** (Chapters 4–6), including Chapter 4: Season OG's all-time Fortnite records of **44.7M players in a day**, **6.1M concurrent**, and 102M hours played; led **12 direct reports and 5 contractors**.
- Launched Fortnite's first **Ranked** mode (Chapter 4 Season 2, May 2023), its first structured competitive system: 8 rank tiers (Bronze to Unreal), real-time RP gain/loss UI, the Survivor Medals HUD overlay, and the Forecast Tower map overlay; peaked at **2.17M concurrent** players, the first season Epic published an official concurrent benchmark.
- Directed UX/UI for the **mobile relaunch** (EU iOS and Android worldwide, Aug 2024), ending a four-year absence (Epic publicly targeted 100M downloads through the Epic Games Store), and **Fortnite Reload** (Jun 2024), a mobile-first fast-respawn mode with bespoke UI.
- Directed the in-match **HUD refresh** (vitals, quest and accolade notifications, pickups, squad panel, storm indicator, inventory) and new systems: weapon mods, 64 Reality Augments, medallions, playable bosses, Simple Edit and Simple Build.
- Initiated and resourced the **weapon reticle design and implementation system**, guided the technical UI designer who built it, and kept it prioritized under live-service pressure; the team shipped new UI for **70+ weapons and items**.
- After Epic's October 2023 workforce reduction (16%), covered team lead, all three discipline leads, and senior producer duties; cut net-negative contractors (**$300K+ saved**).
- Restructured the team into a **Red/Blue leapfrog cadence**: two alternating teams with longer, more focused development windows per season.

Lead Technical UI Designer, Player Journey & Ecosystem Sep 2021 – Dec 2022

- Owned UX/UI technical architecture for the team while shipping features in UE5 as an IC.
- Shipped the **Social Sidebar** (v21.10, Chapter 3 Season 3), a modular navigation panel with the Looking For Party section; internal data showed playing with friends correlated with ~2 more daily Battle Royale sessions.
- Led **Player Tags** (up to three interest, playstyle, or event tags per profile), Fortnite's first native interest-based social matching.
- Built the **Mid-Season Mini-Pass**, a reusable modular UMG system that made collab passes viable within budget; launched with Dragon Ball Z and reused for **9+ collab events**, including Star Wars, Jujutsu Kaisen, TMNT, South Park, Avatar: The Last Airbender, and Pirates of the Caribbean.
- Established the foundations of Epic's **Technical UI Design** discipline, which grew from 3 to 25 members.
- Took a recent graduate from zero to production-shipped features: the Mini-Pass system, Item Shop UI, and special event affordances.

Across Epic

- Managed **50+ direct reports** across three roles (peak 14 at once); interviewed ~50 candidates as the Fortnite UX/UI organization grew from ~50 to 100+.
- Ran a biweekly **Fortnite-wide AI show-and-tell** for UX/UI, demoing integrations and giving skeptics and junior ICs a real on-ramp.
- Became the cultural anchor for a 100+ person UX/UI department: team events, showing up for personal milestones, and keeping morale grounded through hard stretches. Promoted direct reports in all three roles.

Studio Wildcard, Senior UX/UI Designer / Developer Oct 2019 – Sep 2021 · Redmond, WA

- Sole UI developer for **ARK: Survival Evolved** and the **Genesis Part 1 and 2** expansions in a custom Unreal Engine 4 build (UMG, Blueprints, C++).
- Genesis Part 1: the HLN-A companion UI, the Hexagon Exchange shop, and six mission categories, each with its own real-time HUD.
- Genesis Part 2: egg incubator and breeding UI, the Tek Stryder hacking minigame, the Hoversail HUD, Noglin possession UI, and the Tek surveillance console.

XLCR Studios, Independent Designer & Developer — Oct 2018 – Oct 2019 · Seattle, WA

- Deepened Unreal Engine skills through playable prototypes of **Danger**, an original action-adventure puzzle IP, in Unreal Engine 4 and Unity.
- Designed and prototyped **Miner Profits**, a gold-rush mobile game with an original cascading slot-matching mechanic and microtransaction system.

Microsoft (via Aquent) — Apr 2017 – Oct 2018 · Redmond, WA

Software Design Engineer, Xbox Avatars — Jul 2018 – Oct 2018

- Scripted 100+ UI animations and transitions, built resolution-adaptive layouts, and delivered app-wide polish for the **Xbox Avatars Editor** (Unity, UWP XAML, C#).

Prototyper & Design Developer, Microsoft Edge — Apr 2017 – Jul 2018

- Among the earliest engineers on **Surface Neo and Surface Duo** prototype hardware: dual-screen UX, novel gestures, and an adapted Edge build used in executive design-vision presentations.
- Prototyped the **gamepad control scheme** (XY focus plus free cursor) that shipped as the foundation of Edge on Xbox.

Wizards of the Coast, Senior Technical Artist — Jul 2013 – Apr 2017 · Renton, WA

- Led a **4-person team** delivering WPF XAML, C#, and UX/visual design for 6–8 **Magic: The Gathering** expansions a year on Magic Online.
- Created the **Magic 2015 card frame templates**, the highest-fidelity print-to-digital card representation in the product's history.
- UX designer for the Magic Online Leagues overhaul; UI designer for Prestige Avatars and animated Storm and Commander Damage indicators.
- Prototyped card display systems in Unity and designed initial concepts for **MTG Arena** before the core team was assembled.

Anchor QEA, Web Designer / Developer — 2011 – 2013

- Sole in-house designer, developer, and webmaster; won an industry award for overhauling the Western Dredging Association website and membership database.

Microsoft (via MAQ), UX Design Developer — 2010 – 2011

- WPF XAML controls, styling libraries, and design specs for System Center Service Manager.

SearchMarketMe, Senior Web Designer / Developer — 2010

- Primary designer and developer for the firm's most complex client projects, from brand strategy to interactive apps.

Microsoft (via Aquent), UX Design Developer — 2009 – 2010

- Silverlight XAML styling libraries, mobile controls, and themes for Microsoft Kin One and Two and the Kin Studio web service.

EDUCATION

BA, New Media / Interactive Design, Western Washington University — 2003 – 2008

AS Publicity Center, Graphic Design Coordinator (2005 – 2008): led 6 student designers; ACUI design award.

NOTABLE SHIPPED PRODUCTS

- Epic Games: Fortnite Battle Royale (incl. Mobile), Fortnite Festival, Fortnite Chapters 4–6
- Studio Wildcard: ARK: Survival Evolved, ARK: Genesis Part 1 and 2
- Microsoft: Xbox Avatars Editor, Microsoft Edge, Edge on Xbox, Microsoft Kin One and Two, System Center Service Manager
- Wizards of the Coast: Magic: The Gathering Online, MTG Arena, MTG Duels, Wizards Account System, 20+ MTG expansions