

Xuyang (Maren) Lian

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DESIGN RESEARCHER | Research Strategy | Mixed Methods | Complex Digital Products

EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

UX Researcher, Government of Ontario – Toronto, Canada

Sep. 2025 – Present

- **Scope, prioritize, and manage concurrent research initiatives** across teams and timelines, **collaborating with stakeholders to craft research questions** and matching method to the decision at hand — from rapid evaluative reviews to multi-cycle studies
- Ran **5 cycles of research on enterprise internal tooling** used by technical and administrative audiences (data-entry staff, policy analysts, and management), combining **scenario-based usability testing, contextual inquiry**, and a **System Usability Scale survey** — segmenting the user base into 3 personas and surfacing 3 critical barriers that reset the Q1 roadmap
- Evaluate **digital data dashboards** built for **administrator and analyst audiences** — navigation, filter design, information density, **keyboard accessibility**, and contrast against **WCAG 2.2** — translating findings into recommendations engineers and product owners can implement within platform constraints
- **Lead generative and evaluative research** for complex internal digital and data products, **defining research questions, selecting methodologies**, and **aligning study plans** with **cross-functional stakeholders**.
- **Represent research to diverse audiences** — senior leadership, developers, analysts, and program stakeholders — adjusting depth to each; built **journey maps** and **service blueprints** that shifted the backlog toward foundational usability work
- Lead branch-level **enablement for Microsoft Copilot adoption**: knowledge-sharing sessions, a shared prompt library, and onboarding support that build lasting capability in colleagues rather than one-off training

Research Assistant, COoKIE Lab, University of Toronto – Toronto, Canada

May 2025 – Present

- Lead **generative, foundational research on user trust in conversational AI** — an open problem space with no established framing — investigating how sycophantic response patterns drive **over-reliance and miscalibrated trust**, and producing **design guidance** for trustworthy human-AI interaction
- **Designed exploratory interview protocols** for 20+ participants and applied **thematic analysis** and affinity mapping to build a conceptual taxonomy of user-perceived AI behaviour from the ground up, pairing **Dovetail** AI-assisted tagging with human-in-the-loop validation
- Bridged qualitative and quantitative work by **operationalizing behavioural constructs** into computational metrics (**LIWC, Language Style Matching**) and designing a **validation study** testing them against established scales

UX Researcher / Digital Strategist, Hudson's Bay – Toronto, Canada

Aug. 2021 – Jul. 2023

- Analyzed behavioural data with **SQL and Python** to locate checkout friction, quantified revenue at risk in **Power BI dashboards** to build the case for change, and delivered recommendations supporting a **15% increase in customer engagement**
- Validated the redesign through **moderated usability testing** and formal **A/B testing**, and aligned product, marketing, and engineering partners through itaед **cross-functional workshops** and **competitive analysis** of 4 platforms

SELECTED PROJECTS

CarbonTrace Comparative Usability Evaluation — Client: Combogic Technology

Mar. 2026

- Led research design as the team's UX researcher: authored the **research plan and recruitment strategy** and ran a **within-subjects, counterbalanced evaluation** (N=6) of two design directions (think-aloud, SEQ, SUS), triangulating 174 data items into severity-rated findings whose **6/6 preference** set the final direction

ClearTerms — AI-Assisted Agreement Reader (React, Tailwind CSS, Claude API)

Jan. 2026

- Designed and shipped a tool that **annotates** legal agreements in plain language while preserving source text, with a deliberate **human-AI trust boundary**: visible AI attribution, **low-confidence handling**, and feedback mechanisms protecting user agency

EDUCATION

Master of Information, Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), University of Toronto

Jun. 2026

Bachelor of Design (Hons), Advertising, OCAD University

May. 2023

TOOLS & SKILLS

Research Methods: Generative & Foundational Research | Exploratory Interviews | Usability Studies | Contextual Inquiry | Survey Design (SUS, SEQ) | Heuristic Evaluation | A/B Testing | Within-Subjects & Comparative Design | Thematic Analysis | Affinity Mapping | Personas | Journey Mapping | Accessibility Evaluation (WCAG 2.2)

Analysis: SQL | Python | LIWC | Language Style Matching | Behavioural & Quantitative Analysis | Research Ops & Recruitment

Tools: Figma | Dovetail | Miro | Power BI | Tableau | GitHub | English (fluent) | Mandarin Chinese (native)