Available for a new challenge

A design leader who still loves getting into the detail

Design leader | Creative | Accessibility advocate | Humanist

Led product design for Vixa, The AA's connected-car service, tested with around 22,000 customers. Helped give design a stronger voice in a technically led team, using research and customer feedback to shape product priorities. As part of the wider team, helped stabilise and improve in-app customer satisfaction to its 4/5 target after a difficult product transition.

My remit later expanded across Driving School, Vehicles and Warranty, supporting three designers. I also jointly led The AA's wider accessibility programme.

History in brief

Principal Product Designer

2024-Present

The AA / AA-X Ventures

Connected Cars | Design Leadership | Accessibility

Led design for Vixa, The AA's connected-car service, with around 22,000 customers involved in the live proposition. I helped design find a stronger voice alongside engineering and data, using research to question assumptions and influence what we built next. Following a difficult transition from an earlier app, the wider team stabilised and improved in-app customer satisfaction to its 4/5 target.

I also supported designers across Driving School, Vehicles and Warranty, and jointly led The AA's accessibility programme.

Principal Product Designer

2021-2024

GfK

Data Intelligence | AI & Analytics | Design Leadership

Led design across GfK's premium analytics products, including Forecasting, Strategic Promo Planner and Revenue Decomposition, before helping guide design for gfknewron Market and the retail proposition.

Working hands-on with designers, product colleagues and data scientists, I challenged established ways of presenting dense market data. We explored more expressive visual approaches and ways to bring useful signals forward, focusing on the decisions customers needed to make rather than the volume of information available.

paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

Principal Product Designer

2020-2021

Go.Compare / Look After My Bills

Product Discovery | Experimentation | Commercial Judgement

Led design for new household bill-switching propositions at Look After My Bills following its acquisition by Go.Compare, working in a small team across customer research, proposition testing and end-to-end delivery.

Questioned whether the cheapest broadband deal would meet customer needs. Research showed that speed, reliability and service mattered too; working with product colleagues, I used those findings to help reshape the provider offering and design a more useful switching journey. The team progressed broadband to a pilot with around 1,000 existing customers.

Principal Product Designer

2017-2020

Thomson Reuters / Refinitiv (now part of LSEG)

Visual Craft | Design Systems | Team Leadership

Led UI design across a programme bringing approximately 67 financial portals into MyRefinitiv for more than 400,000 financial professionals. Working with the Principal UX Designer and Design System Manager, I helped translate the established international design agency Huge's visual direction into practical patterns for complex B2B software.

Combined hands-on interface design with creative oversight, guiding consistency across six permanent UI designers and contractors through design principles, reviews and an evolving design system.

Art Director

2014-2017

BAE Systems Applied Intelligence

Creative Direction | Client Partnerships | Technical Innovation

Provided creative direction and hands-on design leadership across diverse enterprise, public-sector and commercial engagements. Led multidisciplinary teams scaled to each project, from small specialist partnerships to teams of eight designers alongside animation, content and strategy specialists.

Combined discovery, concept development, visual design and client presentations to explore emerging technologies, rethink complex workflows and develop new digital propositions.

Senior Mobile Product Designer

2013-2014

John Lewis

Mobile Commerce | Interaction Design | Retail Innovation

Designed mobile shopping experiences, including flexible product-detail templates that could accommodate the complexity of John Lewis's catalogue, from individual items to ranges, sets and product variations. Also explored interaction and animation ideas for the Android app.

Worked with the innovation team on early experiments in connected retail, including smart shelves, iBeacons and location-aware experiences. Explored how emerging technology might make shopping in-store more useful and intuitive.

paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

Head of Design & Development

2006-2013

Webcredible

Design Leadership | Software Development | Accessibility

Joined Webcredible as Head of Development, building its development capability before taking responsibility for design as well. Led and recruited a team of designers and developers, remaining hands-on with client projects while helping shape the agency's approach to design, usability and accessibility.

Worked closely with the Head of UX to bring research, visual design and development together earlier in the process. Alongside delivery, helped pitch and develop client work, presenting ideas and demonstrating how thoughtful design and technical understanding could solve real business problems.

That's the two and a half page CV done. Stick with convention, or read on?

Industry experience

- **Automotive & Mobility** – Connected cars, driver services
- **Consultancy & Ventures** – Client work, new propositions
- **Data & Intelligence** – Market analytics, AI, forecasting
- **Financial Services** – Trading platforms, enterprise UX
- **Retail & Consumer Services** – Retail, insurance, energy, broadband
- **Technology & Innovation** – LiDAR, IoT, smart retail


paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com


07902 385468


in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

2024-Present

Product design
AA-X Ventures

Connected Cars | Product Strategy | Design Leadership

Helping AA-X explore the practical value of connected-car technology. Combining product thinking, customer research and hands-on design across Vixa and emerging business propositions, while supporting wider design and accessibility work across The AA.

AA-X was The AA's venture business, testing the potential of connected-car services with around 22,000 customers. As Principal Product Designer, I led design for Vixa alongside product colleagues, engineers, mechanics and data scientists.

One of my most valuable contributions was strengthening design's role in a technically led team. By understanding the underlying data and adjusting research to explore customers' real concerns, I helped make customer evidence part of decisions about what to build and when. That approach informed work on battery information, driving statistics and dashboard warnings.

The work was measured through in-app feedback, customer satisfaction and churn. Following a difficult transition from an earlier app, the wider team stabilised customer satisfaction and then improved it to the target of around four out of five. I contributed to the decisions and experience improvements behind that effort, without treating the result as mine alone.

I stayed hands-on, from complex features to rebuilding Vixa's components during a feature freeze. My remit also grew to supporting designers across Driving School, Vehicles and Warranty and jointly leading practical accessibility work across The AA.

Selected contributions

Helping shape product priorities

FROM ASSUMPTIONS TO EVIDENCE

Helped bring customer research, satisfaction, churn and technical feasibility into product discussions. This strengthened design's influence over feature priorities in a technically led team.

Making complex technology useful

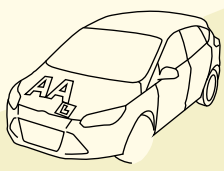
UNDERSTANDING THE DETAIL

Worked with mechanics, engineers and data scientists to explore vehicle information, translating technical capabilities into experiences for individual drivers and contributing to their adaptation for fleet customers.

Supporting better design across The AA

HANDS-ON CRAFT AND WIDER LEADERSHIP

Improved Vixa's design components, supported designers across three additional business areas and developed practical accessibility training, drawing on earlier experience at Webcredible.



paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

2021-2024

Product design

GfK

Data Intelligence | AI & Analytics | Design Leadership

Helping designers find new ways to make GfK's complex market data meaningful. Combining hands-on concepts, creative collaboration and an understanding of the underlying information across premium analytics, gfknewron Market and retail products.

I joined GfK as Principal Product Designer, initially leading design across premium analytics products including Forecasting, Strategic Promo Planner and Revenue Decomposition. The tools used sophisticated models and large volumes of retail sales data to support commercial decisions.

Working with product owners, data scientists and fellow designers, I challenged the assumption that sophisticated data inevitably needed dense interfaces. Different customers might be planning promotions or reviewing past performance, but much of the underlying information was shared. I wanted us to start with the questions people needed answered, not simply the charts we could generate.

I contributed directly to concept work as well as encouraging collaborative exploration. We experimented with alternative visual forms, including ways to show ranges, proportions and change more intuitively. Not every idea appeared in its original form, but the exploration helped influence approaches within Strategic Promo Planner and our later thinking about gfknewron Market: finding the signal in the noise and bringing meaningful information forward.

I later helped guide design for the core Market platform and led design work on the retail proposition. Throughout, my contribution combined technical curiosity, hands-on craft and helping colleagues explore possibilities beyond established patterns.

Selected contributions

Finding the signal in the noise

MAKING COMPLEX DATA MEANINGFUL

Worked with product and data science colleagues to understand complex models, question how information was presented and help customers identify what mattered.

Beyond default charts

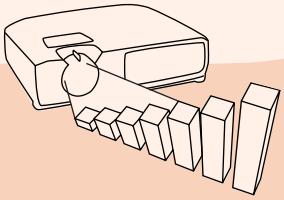
EXPLORING BETTER VISUALISATIONS

Experimented with ways of presenting forecasts, ranges and relationships between products, broadening the visual language beyond familiar stacked bar charts.

Guiding design across products

FROM PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS TO MARKET

Coordinated designers across premium analytics products before moving to help guide the core Market platform, alongside leading design work for retail customers.



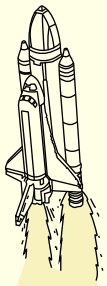
paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

2020-2021

Product design
Go.Compare



Product Discovery | Experimentation | Commercial Judgement

Exploring new opportunities beyond energy switching at Look After My Bills, combining customer research, rapid experimentation and hands-on product design to develop propositions grounded in genuine customer needs.

Look After My Bills had been acquired by Go.Compare. While the established energy-switching service continued, our small team explored opportunities in broadband, home and car insurance. Working with a product owner and developer, I covered research, illustration, interaction design and the design system, from early ideas through to working experiences.

Broadband was a useful example of why research mattered. The original proposition focused heavily on price. I questioned whether that reflected what people wanted, particularly with so many working from home. Together with the product owner, I gathered customer evidence showing how much speed, reliability and service quality mattered alongside cost.

We took those findings to business stakeholders. They informed a broader provider offer and a switching journey that recommended suitable speeds based on people's activities, rather than asking them to make technical choices unaided. That was a commercial as well as a design decision, and a good example of customer research changing the proposition before launch.

Across roughly 18 months, we explored five propositions, sometimes moving from research to a working experience in weeks. The broadband work progressed to a pilot with around 1,000 existing customers. I enjoyed the pace, but especially the chance to test an assumption before building around it.

Selected contributions

Questioning the price assumption

MORE THAN THE CHEAPEST DEAL

Used customer research to challenge a price-led broadband proposition, helping inform the provider offer and a more useful journey focused on speed, reliability and service.

From idea to customer experiment

FIVE PROPOSITIONS IN 18 MONTHS

Worked across broadband and insurance opportunities, combining discovery, proposition testing and end-to-end design within a small, agile team.

Remaining hands-on throughout

FROM RESEARCH TO FINISHED INTERFACE

Owned interaction design, illustration and design system work, helping turn early ideas into production-ready customer journeys at pace.

paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

2017-2020

Principal Product Designer
Refinitiv

Visual Craft | Design Systems | Team Leadership

Helping translate an ambitious design vision into a working enterprise platform. Combining hands-on interface design with cross-team collaboration to create consistent, usable experiences across complex financial products.

MyRefinitiv was an ambitious programme to consolidate approximately 67 customer portals into one experience for more than 400,000 financial professionals. The work began at Thomson Reuters, later Refinitiv (now part of LSEG). Its visual direction had been developed by the established international design agency Huge.

As Principal Product Designer, I worked alongside the Principal UX Designer and Design System Manager to make that vision practical across complex, data-intensive B2B applications. The challenge was to retain its creative ambition while refining typography, layouts and information hierarchy for software with very different demands.

The three of us helped guide a large, capable design team across multiple products. I remained hands-on with individual interfaces while reviewing work with the Principal UX Designer, resolving inconsistencies and supporting coherent UI and UX decisions.

With the Design System Manager, I developed guiding principles and refined components to help designers make consistent decisions at scale. Understanding how financial data was structured and delivered helped me guide practical solutions without losing the original visual direction.

Selected contributions

Making the design work in practice

FROM AGENCY CONCEPT TO ENTERPRISE PRODUCT

Adapted Huge's visual direction for complex financial interfaces, refining typography, spacing, layouts and information hierarchy to accommodate dense content.

Balancing design and oversight

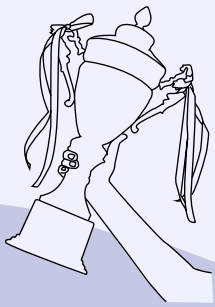
HANDS-ON DESIGN ACROSS MULTIPLE WORKSTREAMS

Combined individual interface design with cross-team reviews, working alongside UX colleagues to maintain consistency and resolve design challenges.

Evolving the design system

CREATING CONSISTENCY AT SCALE

Collaborated with the design system owner to refine existing components, introduce new patterns and help teams deliver consistent, production-ready interfaces.



paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

2014-2017

Art Director BAE Systems

Creative Direction | Client Partnerships | Technical Innovation

Combining creative leadership with hands-on design across major client accounts and internal innovation projects. Working from early concepts and competitive pitches through to detailed production, balancing ambitious creative thinking with practical delivery.

At BAE Systems Applied Intelligence, formerly Detica, I worked as Art Director across an unusually varied mix of client programmes, pitches and internal innovation. My role combined creative direction with hands-on design, moving between strategic discovery, concept development, presentations and detailed delivery.

Teams were assembled around each engagement. I might lead eight designers with animation, content and UX specialists on a major programme, or work directly with a strategist or designer to shape a new idea. That flexibility helped me remain close to the creative work while guiding others.

The challenges were equally varied: helping Nationwide explore digital strategy; rethinking mapping workflows for Network Rail; translating traditional planning into interactive experiences; and exploring LiDAR-enabled remote inspection with a colleague for Lloyd's Register. I also co-presented a data-led customer experience pitch for Now TV.

Across these projects I sought to make complex information understandable, connect emerging technology to real needs, and turn early ideas into coherent proposals and interfaces.

Key Achievements & Impact

Shaping and presenting creative direction

FROM CONCEPT TO CLIENT PITCH

Led project-sized multidisciplinary teams and contributed hands-on concepts, interface design and client presentations across commercial, public-sector and emerging-technology engagements.

Leading design without leaving the craft

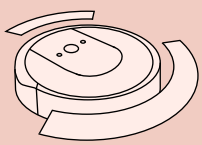
ART DIRECTION AND HANDS-ON DELIVERY

Directed designers through production while contributing personally to interface design, layouts and visualisations, maintaining consistency between the original creative direction and finished work.

Working across different challenges

CLIENT DELIVERY TO INTERNAL INNOVATION

Contributed to major client programmes and exploratory technology projects, applying visual design and creative problem-solving across diverse industries and technical environments.



paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9

If you've made it this far, a bit more about the human behind the words

Over the years, I've been fortunate enough to teach, speak and run workshops on subjects ranging from design leadership and accessibility to the art of code. Sharing what I've learned, and learning from the people in the room, has always been one of the most enjoyable parts of my career.

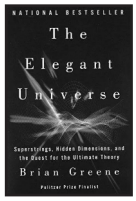
A little personality, for a change

I come from a slightly unusual mixture of artistic and technical backgrounds. I was a natural draftsman growing up, surrounded by a family of accountants and engineers. It probably explains why I'm equally happy thinking about how something looks and understanding how it works.

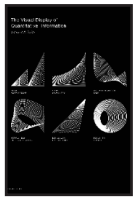
I tend to approach work with curiosity, a sense of humour and the belief that people do their best work when they're treated well. I like thoughtful colleagues, honest conversations and teams where nobody feels they have to pretend to know everything.

As for weaknesses, I'm not particularly fond of confined spaces, lazy buzzwords or business speak that manages to use a lot of words without saying very much.

Reading list



The Elegant Universe
by Brian Greene



The Visual Display of Quantitative Information
by Edward R. Tufte

paulsmccarthy@yahoo.com

07902 385468

in/paul-mccarthy-7913691b9