

Steve Kovo

Product Design Leader & Creative Technologist

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SUMMARY

I'm a product design leader and creative technologist who builds new experiences with emerging technology, along with the foundations that support them. At Fetch, a rewards app with 12.5M+ monthly active users, I lead interaction and animation strategy, including moving our animation system onto Rive, and set creative direction across the app. Previously, I co-founded a studio building strategy and games for GoNoodle, ran my own creative studio for nearly a decade directing motion and interactive work for dozens of clients, and led end to end UX and creative direction at Filament Games. I'm a multidisciplinary craftsperson who believes the most impactful experiences combine thoughtful design with the right technology, always in service of the people who use it.

EXPERIENCE

FETCH

Senior Creative Technologist, Product Design

Madison, WI

May 2024 – Present

- Identified scaling limitations in Fetch's legacy animation stack and led the company's evaluation and adoption of Rive, now used across most product teams for engagement, loyalty, and post-purchase experiences reaching 12.5M+ monthly active users
- Authored the documentation and design standards that let product teams build Rive experiences independently, and am consulted across teams whenever a new Rive experience is scoped
- Proposed, designed, and continue to art direct Fetch's illustration and color system, now adopted company-wide as the foundation of the product's visual language and design-token standard
- Owned creative direction for art, illustration, and animation on Fetch's Super Bowl LIX livestream, storyboarding a character-driven narrative arc across the intro sequence, a reaction-emoji system built into the broadcast and physical set decoration, and a winner-reveal animation, contributing to 3.2M app visits and 1.3M new signups during the event window
- Conceive and design experimental 0-to-1 product concepts that reach executive leadership, presenting design direction directly to leadership
- Direct creative and guide the growth of other product designers, mentoring on interaction and motion design, behavioral UX, Rive, and responsive design across the team

RUNNER

Founder & Creative Director

Madison, WI

Dec 2015 – May 2024

- Founded and ran an independent B2B creative studio, leading end-to-end brand, motion, and interactive design work for clients across education, healthcare, government, and consumer industries, including explainer video series, social media asset systems, and multi-channel campaign content
- Led creative direction end to end, from client proposals and discovery through concepting, production, and delivery, including a multilingual public health video series for the Wisconsin Department of Health Services and ongoing brand and product work for national and regional clients
- Directed and managed multidisciplinary freelance teams, including illustrators, voice talent, and animators, across dozens of projects
- Continued a decade-long design partnership with GoNoodle, building out a large share of their character and animated content library alongside campaign and social content supporting marketing pushes

NAUT GAMES

Co-Founder & Design Lead

San Francisco, CA

May 2014 – Dec 2015

- Co-founded and led design for a B2B social games studio, from in-person party experiences to a competitive PvP title with live matchmaking, shipping three original mobile games on iOS and Android
- Partnered directly with GoNoodle's product and leadership team to define strategy and design for a new category of classroom experiences, meeting quarterly to align on product direction
- Led end-to-end product and interaction design on GoNoodle's first interactive game library, including systems for classroom engagement, competition, and repeat participation, alongside marketing and social campaign content supporting each launch
- Conducted user research with the University of Minnesota to evaluate gameplay mechanics and engagement patterns

FILAMENT GAMES

Lead UX Designer

Madison, WI

Sep 2011 – May 2014

- Served as Lead UX Designer across more than ten shipped projects within a pod-based studio structure, each project staffed with a lead from every discipline, working alongside other UX designers as either their lead or their support
- Led end-to-end UX Design and Creative Direction for 10+ shipped zero-to-one educational games, tools, and apps, covering research, prototyping, playtesting, dev handoffs, and QA
- Led end to end UX across products beyond educational games, including a gamified corporate rewards platform that awarded employees points for healthy commuting habits, and a bar-exam preparation tool built for law students
- Owned design direction for each title, from mood boards and art direction through full design systems covering type, color, components, and motion
- Supported UX team growth through hiring, portfolio reviews, and mentoring

VARIOUS CLIENTS

Freelance Designer

NYC

Mar 2009 – May 2014

- Designed digital learning products for a K-12 distance learning company, translating curriculum into interactive experiences
- Led animation for Addiction Incorporated, a New York Times Critics' Pick feature documentary
- Delivered product, brand, and motion design work across education, media, and technology clients

SKILLS

Product Design, UX Design, UI Design, Interaction Design, Visual Design, Motion Design, Creative Direction, Art Direction, Rive Development, State Machine Design, Gamification Design, Mobile Gaming, Rewards Platforms, Loyalty Design, Retention Design, Engagement Design, Behavioral Design, Design Systems, Information Architecture, Wireframing, Prototyping, Rapid Prototyping, User Research, Usability Testing, User-Centered Design, Design Critique, Product Discovery, Accessibility, Design Leadership, Cross-Functional Collaboration, Mentorship, Stakeholder Management, Product Strategy, B2B Marketing & Campaign Content, Adobe Creative Suite, After Effects, Lottie, Rive, Agile, Figma, ProtoPie