

# Aaron Soto

User Experience Researcher

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**20yr+ Digital Product Professional, Master's in HCI+Design (UX), and Accenture Labs research experience.**

Customer-centric UX research experience with methods learned from some of the best academic minds in HCI and some of the best industry practitioners at Accenture Labs. Solid foundations in all aspects of product development including technical architecture, product design, and business strategy. Looking to move into UX Research full time to focus on the deep human “whys” as they relate to solving real customer problems with innovative products.

## Education

- **Master of Human-Computer Interaction & Design**, UC Irvine, September 2017  
*Highlight:* [Capstone Research & Design Project](#) on Customer Loyalty in partnership with *Accenture Labs*.  
*Highlight:* [Advanced Design & Prototyping Project](#) on a novel product design that we named *KidAR*.  
*Addl Honors:* 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the UCI [New Venture Competition](#) & acceptance into UCI's *Wayfinder* tech incubator.
- **Bachelor of Science in Information & Computer Science**, UC Irvine
- **Marketing Specialization Certificate** in Marketing, Advertising, & Professional Selling, Orange Coast College

## Experience

### UX Research and Evaluation with Accenture Labs + UC Irvine

Mar 2017 – Sep 2017

**Overview:** [UX R&D project](#) with actionable design implications aimed at uncovering customer needs and behaviors around wine culture through interviews, a design sprint, and iterative design+evaluation.

**Outcomes:**

- Produced a JTBD-based research [white paper](#) received at Accenture Labs with high acclaim.
- Produced an [Invision prototype](#) based on our research, our GV Design Sprint, and many iterations.

**My Roles:**

- Helped formulate our overall research objectives and research plans that included:
  - Competitive Analysis, Online Research, Mintel+IbisWorld Market Research, and User Interviews
- Conducted user interviews and axial coded transcripts into themes using Grounded Theory.
- Built and evaluated a variety of prototypes with users as ongoing research towards a solution.

### Director of Product+UX at Assure Point (an InsurTech startup)

Oct 2017 – Present

**Overview:** I lead our core Product+UX innovation team within our InsurTech parent group tasked with iteratively discovering and solving customer problems within a range of verticals at various stages of maturity.

**Details:**

- Manage multiple concurrent products in business insurance, HOAs/COAs, and private aviation.
- Oversee all aspects of innovation including product strategy, research, development, and launch.
- Create research plans, personas, Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD) materials, and customer journey maps.
- Work with our Business+Insurance leaders on innovative acquisition strategies and techniques.
- Executive reports to our CEO on research findings, product progress, and recommended actions.

**Outcomes:**

- Launched our own unique, all-digital customer acquisition platform using various SaaS services.
- Produced high-level strategic visions and product roadmaps for each product to align our team.
- Developed a mathematical insurance quoting model and API to solve gaps in our latest product.
- Created a B2C Progressive Web Application (PWA) for our latest product based on user research.

## Co-Founder at DezTech Consulting LLC

1998 – 2017

*Developer, Solutions Architect, and UX Consultant. Key, most relevant client projects listed below...*

### Gensun Casual Living: Website & Product Configurator

**Overview:** Beautiful new [website](#) targeting retail visitors with the goal of a clean, product-focused visual design and [product configurator tool](#) that allows visitors to view products in their available colors and fabrics.

**My Role:** Led a cross-functional team consisting of Gensun and DezTech resources where I was also personally responsible for project mgmt, architecture, backend dev, systems integrations, and UX evaluation.

**Outcomes:**

- Substantially increased traffic & engagement: +18% Sessions, +35% Page Views, -6% Bounce Rate.
- Visual design consistently and enthusiastically described as “beautiful” or similar in user testing.
- Product configurator delivers an engaging experience allowing users to visualize products.
- Admin tool that updates complex website product data pasted from their internal data sheets.

### Thousand Islands Winery: Ecommerce Website + Wine Club System

**Overview:** Warm new [ecommerce website](#) and integrated Wine Club Mgmt system built using Shopify and a custom ASP .Net web application. Based on earlier, largest in California, South Coast Winery work.

**My Role:** Managed all project details overseeing design as well as architecting and developing the custom web app that serves as a member portal, auto-bills members, synchronizes data with Shopify, and more.

**Outcomes:**

- Orders of magnitude higher traffic, engagement, and sales on their ecommerce website.
- New club management system allows for nearly full automation of club-related activities.
- Brand new implementation of a Loyalty Rewards program within their club management application.

### Thales InFlyt Experience: “T3” Project Time-Tracking Application (1 of 16 apps built for Thales over 12yr span)

**Overview:** Time Tracking Tool (T3) is an internal time tracking & reporting app for customer projects.

**My Role:** To evaluate and revamp their existing T3 app created by an offshore company that was plagued by a variety of user experience issues resulting in lack of use, data entry errors, and other usability problems.

**Outcomes:**

- Built a new Web UI based on user interviews and other feedback from all app user types.
- Kept all existing tables, relationships, stored procedures, and data for integrity and consistency.
- Conducted moderated, in-person user testing that verified the new application was meeting goals.

## Skills

### User Experience (UX)

- *UX Research:* Formative & Summative, Qualitative Interviews+Ethnography, Quantitative Surveys+Analytics
- *UX Design:* Contextual/User-Centered Design, Journey Mapping, Iterative Wireframing & Prototyping
- *UX Evaluation:* Heuristic Evaluation, Cognitive Walkthrough, In-person & Remote Usability Testing

### Product/Business

- *Process Frameworks:* OKRs, Agile/Scrum/Kanban, Design Thinking, Lean Startup/UX, Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD)
- *Product Strategy:* Market/Competitive Analysis, Value Innovation, Product Roadmaps, Push/Pull Diagrams
- *Communication:* Executive Presentations, Research Reports, Product/Marketing Content, Public Speaking

### Technology Proficiencies

- *Cloud:* [AWS Certified Solutions Architect](#) + [Developer](#) (Recertified Nov 2018)
- *Software:* Computer Science, Software Engineering, and Web Development background
- *Industry:* Solid, high-level awareness of emerging trends in AI/ML, IoT, Voice UIs, and Serverless