

# Aaron Soto

UX/Product • Cloud • Strategy

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## Summary

I am currently looking for new **product and user experience strategy** opportunities to innovate in a dynamic team environment where I can deliver amazing user experiences and create measurable business value.

I am a passionate life-long learner that believes in strong team-building and training opportunities that prepare us for meeting our business Objectives and Key Results (OKRs). I serve on the Advisory Board of my MHCID program and maintain close connections throughout UCI, including within their Applied Innovations technology incubator at *The Cove*. Both within the *Bren School of ICS* and at *The Cove*, I regularly attend innovation workshops, seminars, and mixers to stay fresh and discover new prospective partners, team members, and technologies.

## Skills

### **User Experience (UX) + Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) Skills**

- **UX Research:** Formative + Summative, Qualitative (Interviews/Ethnography), Quantitative (Surveys/Analytics)
- **UX Design:** Contextual Design, User-Centered Design, Iterative Wireframing/Prototyping/Testing
- **UX Evaluation:** Competitive Analysis, Heuristic Evaluation, Cognitive Walkthrough, Usability Testing
- **Process Frameworks:** Design Thinking, Lean UX, Agile/Kanban, Jobs-to-be-Done, Outcome-Driven Innovation

### **Cloud Architecture / Engineering / Prototyping Skills**

- **Cloud Solutions Architecture:** AWS Certified Solutions Architect + Developer (Recertified Nov 2018)
- **Serverless Dev+Prototyping:** Serverless.com Framework w/ API Gateway, Lambda, DynamoDb, S3, SNS, SQS
- **Other:** Relational & NoSQL DB Design, REST APIs, .Net Core + NodeJS Backends, HTML/CSS/JS, Vue/Nuxt

### **Interpersonal and Other Professional Skills**

- **Interpersonal:** Participatory Leadership & Design, Stakeholder Engagement, Empathy Towards Team & Users
- **Writing:** Business Requirements, Functional Specification, Technical Documentation, & Executive Writing
- **Professional:** Creative Problem Solving, Public Speaking, Personal Selling, Pitch Deck Presentations

## Education

- **Master of Human-Computer Interaction & Design**, UC Irvine, September 2017
  - Highlight:* 6-month [Capstone Research & Design Project](#) on Customer Loyalty in partnership with *Accenture*.
  - Highlight:* 3-month [Advanced Design & Prototyping Project](#) on a novel product design named *KidAR*.
  - Honors:* 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the [New Venture Competition](#) & acceptance into *The Cove's Wayfinder* tech incubator.
- **B.S. in Information & Computer Science**, UC Irvine
- **Marketing Specialization Certificate** in Marketing, Advertising, & Professional Selling, Orange Coast College

# Experience

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

Feb 2018 – Present

**Overview:** To lead our core UX R&D innovation team within our InsurTech parent group tasked with iteratively discovering and solving customer problems for subsidiary lines of business in various stages of product development.

**Outcomes:**

- Designed our internal innovation processes for researching and evaluating insurance niches.
- Designed InsurTech-specific business canvas documents for ideation and idea communication.
- Delivered UX+Product strategy plans for three InsurTech niches to our CEO.

**Details:**

- Oversee all aspects of innovation including strategy, ideation, mockups, prototypes, and MVPs.
- Responsible for the continual refinement of our innovation structure, processes, and execution.
- Oversee content strategy, content creation, and content management within our headless CMS.
- Responsible for our data acquisition and analytics tools for quantitative behavior analysis.
- Work with our Business+Insurance leaders on customer acquisition strategies and techniques.
- Creation of User Research screening and interviewing outlines and conducting interviews.
- Creation of Personas that work within a Jobs-to-be-Done (JTBD) framework of customer behavior.
- Creation of Customer Journey Maps that communicate researched business issues & opportunities.
- Executive reports to our CEO of research findings, product progress, and recommended actions.

## Chief Architect at Assure Point

Oct 2017 – Feb 2018

**Overview:** Hired for my combination Dev+UX abilities to create our desired customer acquisition platform. Worked with our CEO+CTO to strategize customer acquisition methods and requirements as well as led a small team consisting of myself, our Product Designer, and our Frontend Developer to build.

**Outcomes:**

- Designed and developed our MVP customer acquisition platform in a matter of months.
- Can quickly define new websites, pages, and input forms for efficient product/market fit testing.
- Support content personalization and form pre-filling based on known visitor data and/or personas.

**Details:**

- Set up Prismic.io for our headless CMS serving A/B testable content via a NodeJS backend.
- Forms can be defined quickly with pre-filling, logic jumps, direct S3 multi-part file uploads, and other personalizations via an augmented SurveyJS open-source implementation.
- Activity of link+button clicks, form submissions, and page views are routed through a serverless data processing pipeline that integrates with other systems like Slack, Salesforce, and Elasticsearch.
- Project services were built using the Serverless.com Framework using NodeJS 8.x and deployed to AWS services like API Gateway, Lambda, DynamoDb, S3, CloudFront, and SNS.

## UX Research and Evaluation with UCI + Accenture Labs

Mar 2017 – Sep 2017

**Overview:** MHCID Graduate Capstone Project aimed at uncovering customer needs and behaviors around wine culture through research interviews, a design sprint, and iterative UX design and evaluation activities.

**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.

**Details:**

- Created research test plans, conducted user interviews, & open+axial coding of data into themes.
- Participated in a GV Design Sprint with my team and our PhD UX Research advisor from Accenture.
- Created and tested a variety of prototypes that addressed the various user needs from our research.

## Experience (continued)

DezTech Consulting LLC

1998 – 2017

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

### Gensun Casual Living (high-end outdoor furniture & kitchens)

2015 – 2017

**Overview:** New website targeting retail visitors with a goal of a clean, product-focused visual design and product configurator tool that allows visitors to view key products in their available colors and fabrics.

**My Role:** Led a team consisting of Gensun product specialists, our frontend developer, and our visual designer where I was also responsible for 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.
- New product configurator delivers an engaging experience allowing users to visualize products.
- New tool that can update complex product data copied+pasted from their internal data sheets.

**Details:**

- Responsive Web App built with ASP.NET MVC (C#), HTML/CSS/Bootstrap3, & JavaScript.
- Real-time product configurator capable of two-tone frame coloring & 3D fabric draping.
- Created *LiquidPixels* dynamic image APIs, image processing chains (scripts), and 3D product models.
- Scalable serverless product image caching at AWS & fetching from custom *LiquidPixels* image APIs. (AWS Services Used: Route53, CloudFront, API Gateway, Lambda, S3, & SNS)
- *BVCommerce* integration to serve as their custom catalog base and future e-commerce platform.
- SQL Server 2016 Database via Amazon RDS w/ automatic redundancy and push-button scaling.

### Thales InFlyt Experience

2006 - 2017

**Overview:** Highlighted Project > Thales Timetracking Tool (T3) – Internal project time tracking & reporting app.

**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 similar problems.

**Outcomes:**

- Built a new Web UI based on feedback from project managers and their direct reports.
- Kept all existing tables, relationships, stored procedures, etc, for data integrity and consistency.
- Conducted moderated, in-person user testing that verified the new application was meeting goals.

**Details:**

- Re-used the data layer as-is to not affect their existing enormous data set of project time records.
- Re-designed the user flows to align the timesheet mental model with our app's conceptual model.
- Re-designed the timesheet entry screen to operate very similarly to a spreadsheet.
- Provided keyboard shortcuts to allow power users to enter an entire timesheet without a mouse.
- Expanded the ways users could edit timesheets allowing better error correction and accuracy.
- Improved all admin reporting UI designs and features for better reporting functionality.
- This was one of roughly sixteen applications we built or improved for Thales over a 12yr span.  
*Key App Areas:* Parts Manufacturing, Repairs Tracking, Investigation Workflows, Program+Project Management, Demand Forecasting, Procurement, Bid Risk Assessments, & Customer Extranets.

## Interests/Misc

- *Anything Outdoors:* Camping (mostly in CA and UT), Hiking (locally and in the Sierras), Cycling (casually).
- *Anything a Bit Fancy:* Independent Craft Beer, Wine Culture, Stinky Cheeses, European Cars, Europe, etc.
- *Fav UX Books:* *Don't Make Me Think* (Krug), *100 Things...About People* (Weinschenk), *Zero to One* (Thiel)

*References available upon request.  
Thank you for your time considering my qualifications.*