

HESSAM DARAEI

Product Design Lead . Product Lead

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/in/hessam-daraei](https://www.linkedin.com/in/hessam-daraei) | Mobile: +98 919 337 2192

Portfolio Website: [Link](#) | Email: hessamdaraei@gmail.com

ABOUT ME

Product Design Lead with 12+ years of experience delivering user-centered digital products across iGaming, fintech, e-learning and social apps. Recognised for leading high-growth digital products and mentoring teams that scaled to millions of users globally.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- **Product & Strategy:** Design Thinking, Product roadmaps, stakeholder management, OKRs, growth experiments, User research, Market research, Coaching & Mentoring, Leadership, Communication
- **Design & Prototyping:** Design Systems, Accessibility, Wireframing, Prototyping, Visual Design, Interaction Design, Figma, Adobe XD, Sketch, Adobe CC (Photoshop, Illustrator, After Effects)
- **Research & Analytics:** UXCam, Smartlook, Google Analytics, A/B testing
- **Collaboration:** Jira, Miro, Trello, Confluence
- **Languages:** Persian (native); English (fluent, IELTS 7.5, PTE 82)

EXPERIENCE

Iran Currency & Gold Exchange Center – Product Design Lead

May 2024 – May 2026

- Lead product design across multiple large-scale fintech platforms under the supervision of the Central Bank of Iran, serving **1M+ users** and managing an annual turnover of over **USD 10B**.
- Designed and improved national B2G services, significantly enhancing usability and accessibility in areas traditionally suffering from poor UX; some of these improvements were highlighted in national media.
- Built and mentored a **10-person design team** within a year, collaborating closely with a **50-person technology division** to deliver user-centered, research-driven solutions.
- Oversaw the design and user experience for high-impact products in **currency exchange, gold trading, and payment services**, ensuring alignment with financial regulations and technical requirements.

[Website](#)

Panco – Product Lead / Product Design Lead

Apr 2022 – May 2024

- Directed product design and later full product strategy for **Panco**, a social media iGaming app with **3M+ downloads**.
- Implemented contextual rating flow on Google Play, increasing app rating from **4.0 to 4.4 in two months**, boosting acquisition.

- Designed gamification systems (daily rewards, passes, competitions) that improved **retention by +25% (day 1–28)**.
- Launched **10+ new social games**, establishing **in-app store with 50+ items**, driving **22× DAU growth** and **90× revenue increase**.
- Led team of 40+ members, mentored product/design teammates, several of whom advanced to roles at Digikala, Snapp, Tapsell, and Azki.

[Website](#) | [GooglePlay](#) | [CafeBazaar](#) | [Myket](#)

Gajino / Gajmarket (Gaj International Publishing) – Product Lead / Product Design Lead Sep 2020 – Mar 2022

- Spearheaded design and later product leadership at **Gajino**, the e-learning platform of Gaj International Publishing, serving **2M+ students**.
- Led development of **progressive web app (PWA)** enabling cross-device access, significantly expanding user adoption.
- Designed retention mechanics (streaks, gamified rewards, competitions) achieving **+25% retention growth**.
- Oversaw product consultancy for **Gaj Market**, integrating edtech services with digital marketplace features.
- Collaborated closely with managing director and cross-functional teams to scale Gajino into one of Iran's leading edtech platforms.

Gajino: [Website](#) | [GooglePlay](#) | [CafeBazaar](#) | [Myket](#) - Gajmarket: [Website](#)

ANYA – Senior Product Designer

Aug 2019 – Apr 2022

- UX/UI design and product strategy for multiple domestic and international projects, including the **brain-training app “Shahoosh”**, improving onboarding from 5 minutes to 30 seconds, resulting in a successful launch and 100,000+ users in the first year.
- Secured international projects from the UK, Germany, and UAE through product presentations and client engagement, and represented ANYA at **GITEX 2021** in Dubai.
- Supported business development and collaboration with cross-functional teams, combining design expertise with commercial strategy.

ThisThat (UK . Remote) – Product Designer

May 2020 – Jul 2020

- Collaborated remotely with a UK-based social media startup focused on mobile-first surveying and real-time data insights.
- Redesigned the mobile app and desktop dashboard, improving usability and aligning the product with modern design standards.
- Contributed to cross-border teamwork and gained international experience in a fast-paced, design-driven environment.

[Website](#) | [Appstore](#)

Universal Music Group – User Experience Designer

Jan 2019 – Apr 2019

- As a UX Design Intern, I contributed to the development of UMA, a platform designed for Universal Music Group’s artists and management community. UMA provides a unified, personalized view of audience data across major streaming services and social media platforms. In this role, I was actively involved in user research, gaining insights into artist and management needs, and translating them into actionable design directions. I also contributed to ideation and experience design, helping shape intuitive and data-driven user journeys for a global creative audience.

Netflix – Product Designer

Oct 2018 – Nov 2018

- As a product designer at Netflix, I worked on the post-production phase of Black Mirror: Bandersnatch, focusing on designing branching story flows and supporting editors. I also explored and optimized user interactions for TV, particularly improving the experience of making choices using remote controls.

MovieK, Artcritic – Founder / Product Designer / UI/UX Designer

Dec 2013 – Jan 2016

- MovieK: Built an online database for Iranian films like IMDb, providing structured information for audiences and critics. The project was discontinued in 2016, but laid the foundation for my early entrepreneurial journey.
- Artcritic: Created a review platform for movies, theater, and music, experimenting with user-generated content and digital community-building. It served as one of my first ventures into combining technology with culture and media.

EDUCATION

Massachusetts College of Art and Design – Boston, MA

2016-2018

MFA in Design Dynamic Media

[Thesis: No Country for Dangerous Faces](#) (institutional archive).

University of Tehran – Tehran, Iran

2011-2015

BSc in Industrial/Product Design

GPA: 17.19/20

HONORS, EXHIBITIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Ranked 7th nationwide — Iran National University Entrance Exam, [Art stream \(2010\)](#).

Member — National Elites Foundation (Iran).

Author — No Country for Dangerous Faces — [MassArt thesis \(archived\)](#). Resource ID: 640.

Co-Curator and Exhibitor — Designer/Digital Artist Exhibition - [Fresh Media 2018](#) and [2017](#)