

# S BRIAN ZAVALA

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## EDUCATION

The University of Utah, Salt Lake City (SLC), UT (May 2021, GPA: 3.9, cum laude)

- **Honors B.S., Games (Entertainment Arts & Engineering).** *Game design and user research.*
- **B.S., Strategic Communications.** *Advertising, marketing, and communications research.*
- **Minor, Arts & Technology.** *Graphic design, digital painting, photo editing, and video production.*

## EXPERIENCE

### Xbox Research (XR) @ Microsoft (via Experis),

User Research Associate | Redmond, WA (PRESENT - June 2022)

- *Demonstrates proficiency in analyzing complex quantitative and qualitative datasets through the development of custom coding categories and data visualizations.*
- *Collaborates on hardware usability testing by identifying key themes and quotes from interviews, compiling and publishing findings into actionable detailed reports.*
- *Routinely cleans 500,000+ unique data observations—across multiple internal programs—to ensure the accuracy of both monthly survey recruitment campaigns and XR survey findings.*
- *Provides Alchemer survey-building support via the programming of survey logic and the editing of survey questions essential to guarantee the accuracy of data findings and analysis.*

User Research Coordinator (June 2022 - Aug 2021)

- *Facilitates usability and playtest studies, for both researchers and participants, by preparing research labs, configuring game builds, and serving as a solution hub for sudden technical issues.*
- *Coordinated with XR Operations and Hardware teams to both screen and schedule participants for in-person and remote user research studies.*

## PROJECTS

### Ongoing Game Development, Hangover Sunshine | Remote (PRESENT - Feb 2024)

*A collaborative development studio focused on creating game entries for game jam competitions.*

Site: [www.hangoversunshine.itch.io](http://www.hangoversunshine.itch.io) Games: [Defcon Junior](#), [Katamari Meatball](#), [Head Honcho](#)

- *Designs gameplay mechanics and creates art assets for game jam entries, delivering engaging and visually appealing games under tight deadlines.*
- *Conducts post-release feedback analysis to identify design issues and game-breaking bugs, facilitating quality-of-life updates and enhancements for published games.*

### Undergraduate Thesis, Game Dev. Work Habit Study | SLC, UT (May 2021 - Jan 2019)

*A quant. and qual. research project that surveyed the work habits of senior game dev. undergraduates.*

- *Compiled survey findings into digestible statistical reports and analyses used to communicate study findings to both University Honors and Entertainment Arts & Engineering (EAE) faculty.*
- *Performed study recruitment outreach presentations to 100+ student-filled game dev. courses.*

## SKILLS

**Methods:** *A/B Testing, Focus Groups, Heuristic Evaluation, Observations, Think-Alouds, and Surveys*

**Certificates:** [Google Data Analytics](#), [Google Project Management](#)

**Software:**

- **Adobe CC:** *Acrobat, Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, Premiere, XD*
- **Agile Project Management:** *Azure DevOps, HackNPlan, JIRA, Microsoft Project, Trello*
- **Survey Creation/Data Visualization:** *Alchemer, Excel/Sheets, UserInterviews, RStudio*