

Marina DiPonio

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SUMMARY

Marina is a player experience researcher and game developer who turns how players behave into design decisions. She has shipped a title on Steam and led an award-winning, mixed-methods study on tutorial design, translating qualitative and quantitative insight into clear recommendations that cross-functional teams can act on.

EXPERIENCE

User Experience Researcher, Learn to Leap (Honors Capstone), University of Florida

January 2026 – April 2026

- Designed and built a custom Unity platformer prototype and ran a mixed-methods study of 11 participants on how players choose tutorial guidance, pairing in-game behavioral data with semi-structured interviews
- Applied Braun and Clarke thematic analysis across eight themes, surfacing a key gap between players' stated preferences and their actual in-game behavior
- Found that all 11 participants valued controlling their own guidance level, and translated results into design recommendations for adaptive, player-choice-driven tutorials

Producer and User Experience Designer, Yuumi-Chan: Rent is Due! (Steam), Krillshot Games

August 2025 – December 2025

- Led production for a 25-person team to ship a magical-girl beat-em-up on Steam (built in Unity), coordinating design, art, and engineering through launch
- Designed the game's user interface and in-game menu systems, and ran end-of-cycle playtesting that gathered 21 player responses, turning feedback into prioritized design changes
- Authored team post-mortem documentation capturing player experience and process insights

User Experience Researcher, University of Florida

June 2025 – October 2025

- Ran 2 usability testing sessions with student users for a larger team study of Anthology Engage, surfacing user pain points and accessibility gaps
- Built a Figma prototype that helped university leaders picture the adoption decision and define their requirements

Customer Experience Intern, ICE Mortgage Technology

June 2024 – August 2024

- Boosted survey response rates by 333 percent through personalized outreach and timing strategies
- Synthesized employee feedback into user experience research reports and presented findings to the customer experience team, creating a company-wide presentation delivered live to 300+ people

EDUCATION AND AWARDS

Bachelor of Arts in Digital Arts and Sciences, University of Florida, Summa Cum Laude

May 2026

Concentration: Game Production and User Experience, Digital Worlds Institute

Awards: Outstanding Achievement in Experience Design, Convergence 2026 (Learn to Leap); Best in Show, Tick Tock Trivia; Most Innovative, Cosmic Catch

SKILLS

Research and Methods: Mixed-methods research, User experience (UX) research, Usability testing, Playtesting, Thematic analysis, Survey design, Quantitative and qualitative analysis, Descriptive statistics, Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocol authoring, Digital accessibility (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, WCAG 2.1)

Tools and Technical: Figma, Unity, Adobe Creative Suite, JavaScript, HTML and CSS, p5.js, WordPress, Excel, Google Forms, Prototyping, Wireframing, Data visualization