



# CURIOUS CREATIVE. LEAD UX & PRODUCT DESIGNER. HUMAN EXPERIENCE ADVOCATE.

## MY FOUNDATION

### Fueled by curiosity (and tortilla chips)

Curiosity fuels my approach to work and life. When I encounter a problem or a goal, I'm determined to solve it—even if I need to teach myself how to. It's how I've approached the majority of my career: experimenting with different tools and processes to add to my self-taught skill set.

Today, I'm continually striving to push myself to learn and do more—my pet project is experimenting with no/low-code tools to build products and prototypes.

### "I'm a punk rock kid, I came from hell with a curse" - blink-182, Justin Kalaskey

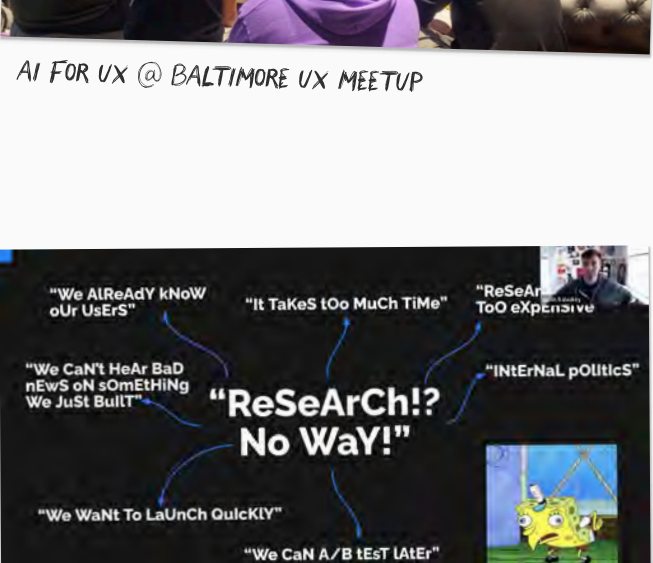
Punk rock music has invariably shaped my values in both life and work. It's important for me to stand up for others, question the status quo, and put people before profits. In the world of UX, this means I create experiences that truly serve people's needs (which happens to be really good for business).

### Undeterred by fast-paced, deadline-driven work

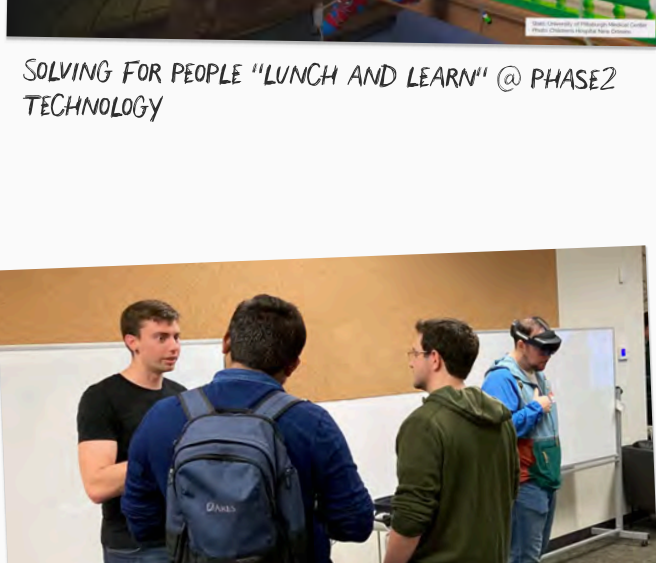
I've been living that "fast-paced" agency life for over a decade. During this time, I've learned to make decisions confidently, adapt quickly, and manage diverse challenges with yogi-like flexibility.

I've worked with clients ranging from Fortune 500 to startups still in their infancy, solved challenges for multi-hospital healthcare systems and local porta potty rentals, and gained a broad skill set from research to high-fidelity prototyping.

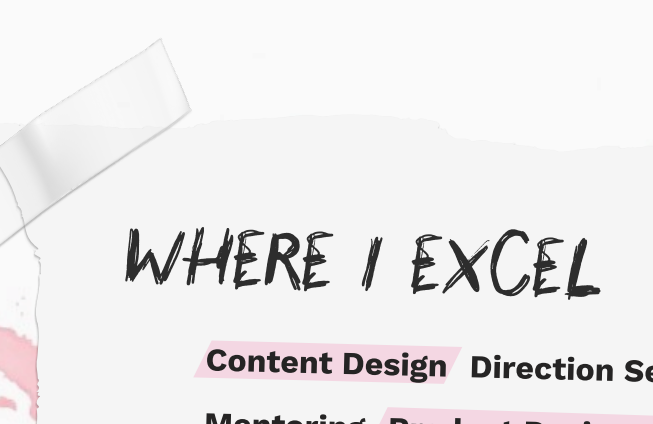
If there's one truth to agency life it's that there is no one process and being comfortable with ambiguity is a requirement.



AI FOR UX @ BALTIMORE UX MEETUP



SOLVING FOR PEOPLE "LUNCH AND LEARN" @ PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY



THE VALUE OF RESEARCH "LUNCH AND LEARN" @ PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY



GIVING ADVICE @ BALTIMORE UX MEETUP

## WHERE I EXCEL

- Content Design Direction Setting Interaction Design
- Mentoring Product Design Prototyping Strategy
- UX Design UX Research Workshop Facilitation

+ MORE I'M REALLY GOOD AT

## I HAVE OPINIONS

### GenAI and design

As much as some may not like it, generative AI is here to stay. Our roles are going to shift, and that's okay, but what's not okay is turning a blind eye.

We as designers must stay on top of the advancements being made, peek behind the curtain to understand how it works, and push to have an influence. When we wrestle control of new technologies back from deep-pocketed VCs, we can direct how it'll change our lives and our work.

We can direct it to be ethical with models trained on creator-consented content. We can ensure it follows a human-in-hand process, reducing the harm AI slop is generating. We can become the stakeholders we often fight against.

GenAI doesn't have to be scary; it can assist us in doing more than what we thought possible of ourselves. But if designers don't assert our influence over it now, someone else will.

I firmly believe Agentic AI is our future and I'm preparing by playing with open source image and text gen models on my local PC. I'm also identifying where in my process AI can extend my capabilities, such as how I used Cursor AI to develop this site.

### Innovation requires calculated risk

In order to advance, we must move beyond our comfort zone of "data" and take calculated risks. Without risk, we're living in the risk-taker's shadow; we can't innovate. All it takes is some creativity, gut feeling, and a leap of faith to be a game changer.

### Ditch the double diamond

Agency life has taught me that the only design process is the process that's right for the project—it's all about context. There will be plenty of times where steps must be skipped or their order changed. Stay nimble in the face of change to be successful.

### Craft is a differentiator

In the age of GenAI where skill gaps are narrowing, craft is becoming more and more important: paying attention to the details, spending a few extra hours (or days) ensuring the experience is smooth, and moving beyond rectangles to make something distinctly human.

By playing and exploring—especially in areas outside of Figma—we improve our craft and gain the ability to break away from trends to build something truly unique.

### Designers don't need to code, but they must understand it

"Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist." - Pablo Picasso

When designers understand the technologies they're working within, they can twist knobs and pull levers to achieve novel outputs. It also greatly improves collaboration and sense of self-confidence in our work.

### Glorify balance, not "the grind"

There is more to life than work. Purposely glorifying designers who can't rip themselves away from the computer screen lowers the value of our craft (especially when that grind only puts more money in the executives' and shareholders' pockets instead of your own).

Our time and skills are highly valuable; closely guard them from those who want to take advantage.

## EXPERIENCE

2021-NOW  
**SENIOR PRODUCT DESIGNER**  
PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY

2017-2021  
**ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, UX**  
WEBMECHANIX

2017-2017  
**UX/UI DESIGNER**  
GHOST NOTE AGENCY

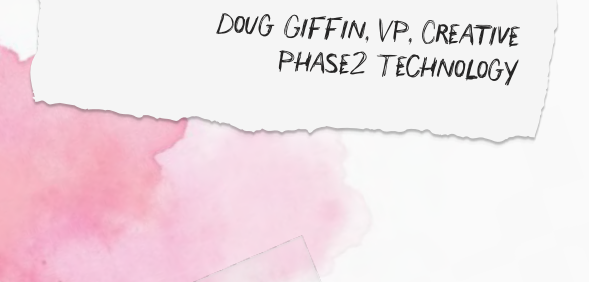
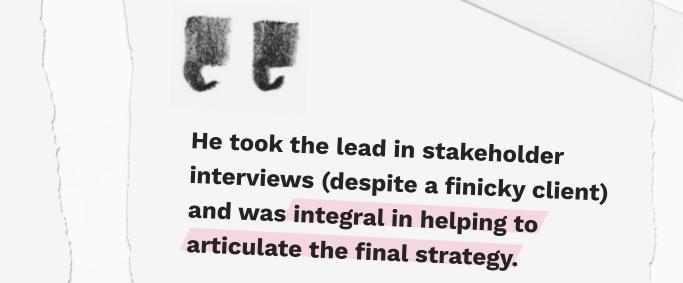
2014-2017  
**WEB DESIGNER**  
WEBMECHANIX

2013-2014  
**WEB DESIGNER**  
THE BALTIMORE SUN

2012-2013  
**GRAPHIC ARTIST TEMP**  
THORLABS

GET MY RESUME

## BRANDS I'VE WORKED WITH



## KIND WORDS FROM KIND PEOPLE

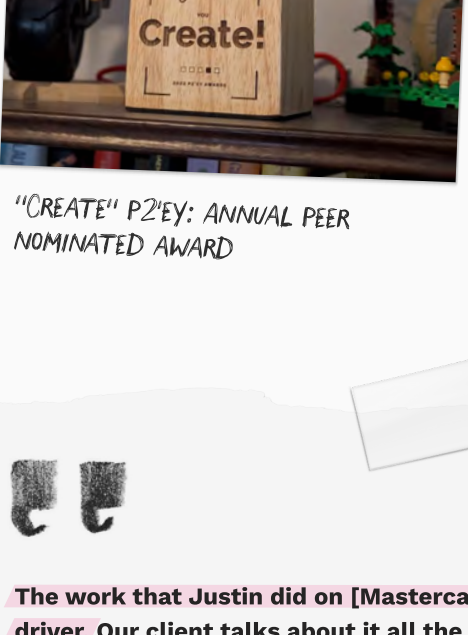
Justin is an absolutely wonderful creative collaborator... He fills our creative slack channels with resources and opportunities, always vetted with insightful comments.

He reaches out broadly to the team when he is looking for input, and he just generally provides an amazing collaborative energy to the whole creative team.

CAITLIN LOOS, VP, CREATIVE  
PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY

He took the lead in stakeholder interviews (despite a finicky client) and was integral in helping to articulate the final strategy.

DOUG GIFFIN, VP, CREATIVE  
PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY



"CREATE" PEZY: ANNUAL PEER NOMINATED AWARD

Justin has carved out a unique space for himself here at Phase2, existing comfortably in the space between Design and UX. He is a Swiss Army Knife of a collaborator—a UX designer with a technical mindset—and he brings a wonderful rigor to our expanding knowledge of design systems here at Phase2.

Finally, he not only brings big ideas, but he also quietly brings the know-how needed to help execute on those ideas. Always impressed with Mr. Kalaskey!

VINCE TARDY, VP, CREATIVE  
PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY

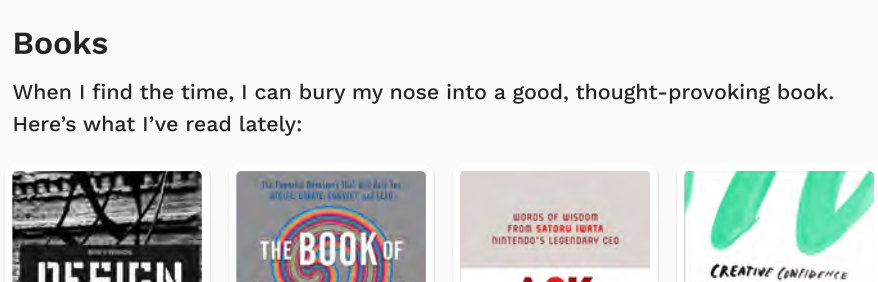
The work that Justin did on [Mastercard] is still a huge conversation driver. Our client talks about it all the time and I'm helping her position it internally. He made waves, and it's resonating.

ADAM, VP, CREATIVE  
PHASE2 TECHNOLOGY

## I'M ALWAYS LEARNING

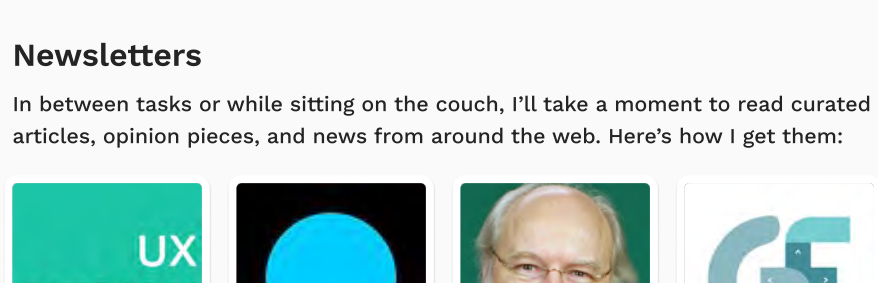
### Podcasts

Whether I'm in the car, walking the dog(s), or working out in the yard, you can find me listening to a variety of podcasts. Here are some of my favorites:



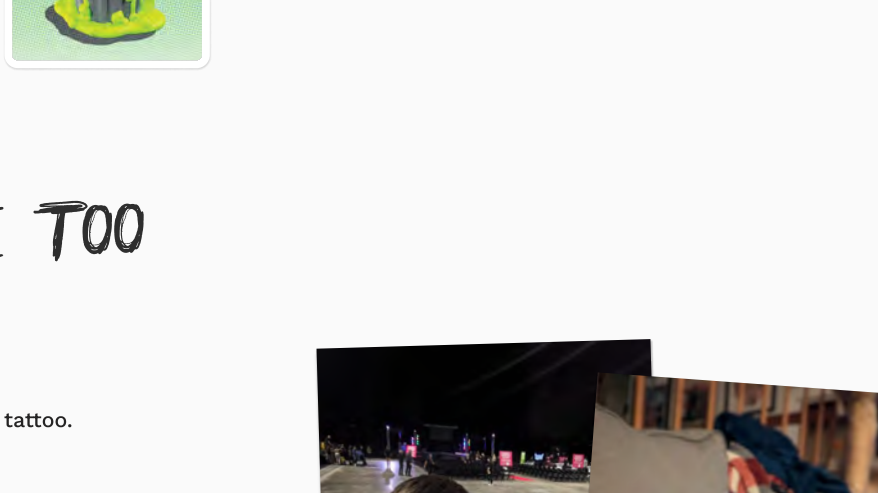
### Books

When I find the time, I can bury my nose into a good, thought-provoking book. Here's what I've read lately:



### Newsletters

In between tasks or while sitting on the couch, I'll take a moment to read curated articles, opinion pieces, and news from around the web. Here's how I get them:



## I EXIST OFFLINE TOO

### Quick facts

I'm a 90s punk rock kid; I even have a blink-182 tattoo.

My Hogwarts House is Ravenclaw.

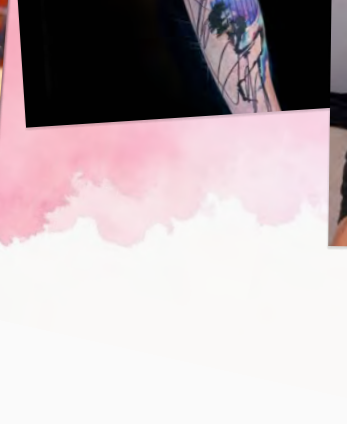
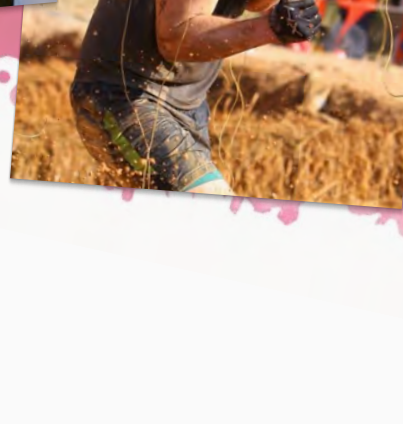
I grew up in rural northwestern New Jersey before settling in suburban Maryland.

I'm a Maryland lover—I have a dog and two cats at home. I also volunteer with BARCS Animal Shelter in Baltimore.

How to Train Your Dragon is my favorite movie; I have a tattoo of Toothless!

I have a 4-year-old small human whose appetite for learning is enviable.

I run long distances for fun, including a marathon.



## LIKE WHAT YOU SEE? LET'S GET IN TOUCH

I'm always open to meeting new people. If you're in Baltimore/DC, let's grab a tea or beer. Not local? No problem, let's do it virtually!

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<https://www.linkedin.com/in/justin-kalaskey/>

