



John Sarmiento's Hot Takes on Anthropology & His Life Working in a Digital Software Agency

As an experience design researcher,



I challenge teams to look through the lens of their product's end users.



I set up and conduct generative and evaluative studies on digital experiences.



I empower teams to approach their craft with a human-centered researcher mindset.

A day in the life at **bottlerocket**

Connecting anthropology and my job has not been obvious for me. Strangely, it has been easier to do than say. When I collaborate with strategy and design teams, I see how they work and what questions they have simultaneously bubble up about someone would use their digital product.

I probe my team's thoughts and frame their questions like a social scientist - zooming into the user's hypothetical or data-informed attitudes and behaviors, then zooming out to understand the user's interpersonal and systematic environment.

I constantly unpack our curiosities then implement studies with the goal of understanding who are users are and how to satisfy them.



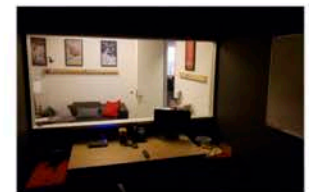
Other Highlights



During one summer in grad school, I took a UX design course to familiarize myself in user research and digital product development.



At work when planning field observations, I think of ways we might get rich contextual insights. Playing out scenarios with desk toys can help.



Bottle Rocket's design teams make prototypes to assess if their designs are usable. Typically, I facilitate interviews and usability tests in our on-site usability lab.

Thoughts from my career development



Why anthropology matters

- It values human and situational complexity.
- Before making "tough" decisions, it helps us ask "tougher" questions.
- At work, an anthro mindset keeps me focused on the people for whom we design, in hopes that the product will be useful and usable.



"Is my anthro degree useful?"

- Its methods and theoretical frameworks can be applied across various careers.
- Communicating its value clearly and meaningfully to your "audience" is more than half the battle.



Make anthro your career catalyst.

- Get to know your dream job's "culture" and be a participant observer.
- Immerse yourself: attend events, listen to people's stories and how they foster relationships, and see what tools they use.
- Practice a relevant skill. For me, it was software development and digital design.



Let's connect!

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