

# Michael Trilford

## Lead Product Designer, Design Systems

I craft design systems that teams actually want to use, systems that are reusable, composable, and scalable. By working closely with designers and developers, I ensure both Figma and coded components align from the start, embedding tokenisation, accessibility, and flexibility into the foundation. A great design system isn't just documentation; it's a living, evolving product that enables teams to build faster while maintaining consistency and quality. My focus is on reducing friction, increasing adoption, and helping teams create with confidence.

### Design System Skills

- Leading and ensuring components follow the atomic design principles.
- Restructuring design systems to use scalable and modular CSS.
- Introducing and applying Responsive web design directly into the design systems using CSS.
- Applying a baseline grid to achieve vertical rhythm within a design system.
- Incorporating a typographic scale into a design system using CSS.
- Introducing design tokens to enhance design system consistency.
- Designing and building versatile layout components.
- Adding comprehensive usage guidelines to a design system.
- Creating a design system UI kit that is 1:1 with the coded source of truth.

## PROJECTS

### Andromeda Design System @ Airwallex • 2020-2023

As the Design System Lead at Airwallex, I drove the evolution and maintenance of our in-house Design System, enabling seamless collaboration between design and engineering to ensure consistency, efficiency, and scalability. My approach emphasised empowering teams to contribute effectively to the system, fostering alignment across product teams.

To maintain consistency across products during the design exploration phases, we closely integrated [UX Guidelines within Figma](#), ensuring they were always accessible as designers prototyped new experiences. This approach helped designers utilise common patterns across products and avoid introducing multiple variations of similar approaches, aligning design intent with development execution from the outset.

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### Resume

[Online CV](#)

### Project experience

[Design systems](#)

[Design sprints](#)

## Key Contributions

- **Strategic Planning:** Played a pivotal role in strategic decision-making for the Design System, prioritising tasks and aligning with quarterly product goals.
- **Onboarding:** Streamlined the onboarding process for new Product Designers, providing comprehensive guidance on contribution processes, tooling, and best practices.
- **Documentation & Guidelines:** Orchestrated collaborative efforts to enhance our UX documentation. Refocused guidelines to meet evolving product requirements.
- **Code Reviews:** Ensured high-quality contributions to the Frontend Component Library through detailed reviews of coded components, focusing on design token usage and composability.
- **Design System Council:** Provided feedback on emerging patterns and components, facilitated updates, and curated feedback for continuous improvement.
- **Maintenance of Services:** Managed Storybook and aligned Figma UI Kit with the live codebase for consistency across design and development.
- **Components:** Actively enhanced coded components with responsive updates for optimal performance across devices. Maintained the Figma component UI Library, ensuring accessible properties and easy prototyping with component variants.
- **Collaboration & Communication:** Orchestrated effective communication between designers and developers, promoting technical collaboration and efficient development processes.

Throughout my tenure at Airwallex, I've fostered a collaborative Design System environment, delivering robust, scalable, and user-friendly outcomes. I'm eager to leverage my experience to drive design excellence in future opportunities.

## Feelix Design System @ MYOB • 2018-2020

I contributed to the evolution of Feelix by shaping its documentation site, collaborating with engineers to develop key components for the MYOB product experience, crafting design tokens, and enhancing responsive design support through CSS contributions.

- [Maturing Feelix Design System](#)
- [Feelix roadmap discovery](#)

## Accessibility Experience

**Responsive Design:** Responsive design is often an overlooked aspect of accessibility. I have deep experience designing and coding device-agnostic interfaces across desktop and mobile. My passion for adaptable web experiences drives me to build composable, flexible components that help product teams create efficient, responsive and inclusive solutions.

**Colour Contrast:** At Boost (2006 to 2015), working with government clients taught me to check colour contrast for AA and AAA compliance. While visual design wasn't my main focus at MYOB or Airwallex, I regularly collaborated with visual designers and continue to consider contrast in critiques and component reviews.

**Typography:** Accessibility and legibility go hand in hand. I apply best practices in font choice and screen-friendly sizing, an approach embedded in my daily work across product and design system roles.

**Dynamic UI:** I design with user preferences in mind, including zoom and custom text sizing. Using REM units over PX ensures accessibility and responsiveness across devices and browsers.

**Screen Readers:** I ensure semantic HTML is used as a foundation for screen reader support, applying attributes like alt, aria and role where needed. Tools like TypeScript help enforce accessibility early in development, and my end-to-end understanding from design to code supports this process.

**Keyboard Accessibility:** Many of the same foundations that support screen readers also enable strong keyboard navigation. Bespoke components often use non-semantic HTML, so attributes like aria and tabindex are essential. I understand how teams apply these to create smooth keyboard interactions, and this context helps me collaborate effectively with testers and engineers.

**Overall:** As a design system specialist, I embed accessibility as a core focus. I ensure components are responsive, meet contrast standards, scale effectively and are built on semantic HTML foundations. I also support accessibility education by integrating guidance into design documentation and team workflows, helping others build more inclusive products.

## Blog Posts

- [Guidelines at Your Fingertips • Apr 2025](#)
- [Enabling Organisations to Contribute to the Design System • Feb 2025](#)
- [Crafting adaptive layouts using a responsive component • Dec 2024](#)
- [Creating high quality guidelines • Mar 2023](#)