

Meet the Adelaide Creative Technologist Living the Dream at YouTube HQ

While art isn't a word that comes to mind when we think of technology, for Devin Mancuso, Design Lead at Google, it actually is. As he's designing products that impact billions of people around the globe, Devin (subconsciously) draws on his early exposure to the hybrid artistic technology projects he was exposed to in Adelaide.

He was part of a creative circle who put on art shows around the city and built installations for the Fringe Festival. During these years, Devin fostered his unique perception of technology... contributing to the industry, creating "*experiences for people to enjoy*".

From Tea Tree Gully, and growing up in a smaller city like Adelaide, afforded Devin a lot (if not more), of the same opportunities as those in his field. Straight out of university, Devin accepted a role with Deloitte Digital. Unaware at the time, this position would be the bridge to land his interview at Google.

Devin dived straight into design and digital strategy – at a time when the term 'UX Design' was yet to mature in the Australian market as a service offering.

"It was a pretty exciting time to be working in the space as a Designer. Everyone was trying to figure this stuff out," Devin said.

"Figuring this stuff out" meant exploring the best way to bring UX design thinking into organisations, along with which techniques worked best, and when.

While based out of Adelaide at the time, Devin spent 95% of his time flying interstate, working with clients across the tech spectrum.

"Think simple apps, all the way up to organisation-wide digital enablement service design projects. I was pretty fortunate."

But it wasn't just clients that made these trips stimulating.

"I kept meeting more talented Australians who were considering moving to the U.S. to pursue roles in the tech industry."

Although away from Adelaide, he felt at home in the company of creative technologists, seeking to, or already working abroad. Through many-a-conversation, Devin learned how to navigate companies like Google.

Ultimately, this led Devin to securing an interview.

In 2015, Devin moved to California to join Google. He worked on Intelligent Reporting projects within AdWords, then transitioned into the Android team the following year, working as an Interaction Designer on the Pixel 2 phone.

Last year, Devin made the jump over to YouTube, a subsidiary of Google, and recently began leading the design team for Virtual Reality (VR), focusing on immersive computing and spatial media.

Devin's days are just as cool as you'd imagine, in YouTube headquarters at San Bruno.

His mornings are immersive, working closely with his team of Product Managers, Designers and Engineers, on a range of projects. If he gets the chance, Devin loves to meet with his colleagues for lunch, to hear about other kinds of problems "Googlers" are solving.

The afternoons are dedicated for design time. Head down, headset on... working on VR sketching, 2D UI design, 3D modelling or prototyping interfaces inside of his VR headset.

Fascinating is an understatement.

Even after nearly 4 years immersed in a company anyone would love to work at, Devin is full of gratitude for his roots.

"I'll always have a soft spot for Adelaide. There are some absolutely amazing restaurants, small bars, and some of the best live music going around at the moment. You can hang out in the hills and get down on the beach in no time whatsoever. For a relaxed lifestyle you can't beat it."

But it's not just the usual lifestyle feats that Devin touches on.

"Adelaide is home to so many brilliant people who fly under the radar," he noted.

"Some of the best technologists I know are from Adelaide. I've watched many of them return in recent years, basing themselves in South Australia and freelancing for companies around the world."

Devin predicts we're going to see more of it, with global tech companies becoming more accommodating to the idea of remote work – and cities like Adelaide are going to be highly desirable.

While there's a lot of the world left for Devin to explore, he'd love to arrange a situation where he can work remotely out of Adelaide for February and March each year... right in time for the Fringe Festival.

No, this isn't a coincidence.