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# HARSHA VARDHAN

*"...it is better to tackle ten fundamental problems and succeed in only one, than to tackle ten trivial ones and solve them all"*  
- Francis Crick

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## Profile

Interaction / Experience designer & author, practising over 12 years. My work aims to humanise technology and create meaningful experiences for people. All while affecting the world in an inclusive, sustainable manner.

My experience ranges from the fields of mobility, mobile technologies to healthcare - with a keen eye on **balancing innovation & business needs with an understanding of people's needs, desires and motivations.**

A practitioner at heart, over the years my role has expanded to that of a leader - focussing not only on craft - but **bringing multidisciplinary teams together to work around a shared, clear purpose.** I believe in building a supportive culture in teams - where skill, empathy and wellbeing can co-exist.

## Experience

### Interaction designer (Android), Google, London — 2023-Present

I work in the Android team, leading work in the intersection of hardware and software interfaces, within new form factors Google is developing. My aim is to make Android multimodal interactions best in class and inclusive for use by all.

Current work that can be seen is within the Google Pixel fold. For example - its dual screen translate features released during IO 2023.

### Design consultant, Toyota Connected Europe, London — 2022-2023

Contractual work with the wonderful design team in London exploring future mobility services. My focus was on Electric vehicle service/UX design & strategies, for EU markets.

### Product Experience Lead, Arrival Ltd, London — 2020-2022

Arrival aims to build next generation commercial vehicles/services & I lead the design of our van's end-to-end user experience.

My team's work influenced nearly all the physical & digital touch points on and off the van. In parallel, I worked on future facing projects looking into autonomy, charging etc.

My goal is to make sure our technology and services are human centric & inclusive. All through deep research to understand patterns of use, concept development and constant prototyping/validation with users of our vehicles.

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In my 3 years there, my team & I helped take the van all the way from mere concepts, to beta and gamma trials with UPS. Our aim was to make commercial drivers' lives a little bit better & stress free, during their vehicle use.

**Design Lead (Auto & Mobility focus), ustwo ltd, London – 2013-2020**

Previously, I lead Ustwo Auto in London - part of a team within ustwo studio specialising in user experiences within the automotive and mobility space.

My team and I worked on technology and service projects with major automotive clients such as Ford, VW and Toyota (eg. parking services, connected vehicles and usage of autonomous vehicles). Aside from mobility projects, I had the opportunity to work on meaty healthcare design challenges, such as in Migraine mitigation with companies such as Eli Lilly co.

Parallel to client work, we looked into design research projects, both within the studio and in collaboration with students from universities such as University College London and the University of Washington, Seattle. This led to writing thought pieces and books such as 'Humanising autonomy' - written and released during 2017-18.

**Interaction and Service designer, Service Innovation labs, Berlin – 2012-2013**

Worked as a consultant for a couple of large German automakers - helping set up car sharing and parking services in Hannover and San Francisco. My first full time interaction design position and very formative.

**Freelance interaction designer, CIID & Frugal Digital, Copenhagen – 2011-2012**

Post graduation, I worked with CIID's consultancy wing on projects ranging from interactive concepts for Toyota, to healthcare research projects working with hearing impaired communities in India.

**Design Manager - ID, Godrej & Boyce Ltd, Mumbai – 2008-2010**

Industrial design, research and development of furniture systems in schools, offices and large campuses. These have been successful mass market systems, selling in the tens of thousands, built on design & born of deep research.

**Education**

**Masters in Interaction design, 2011**

Copenhagen Institute of Interaction design, Denmark

**Masters in Industrial design, 2006-08**

Indian Institute of Technology - Delhi, India

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## **Bachelors in Mechanical engineering, 2002-06**

PES Institute of technology (VTU) - Bangalore, India

### **Skills**

- Interaction design
- Service design
- Qualitative design research
- Physical-Digital prototyping, working closely with technologists
- Team management - Bringing skilled people of multiple disciplines together, around a clear & shared purpose.
- E2E project management - Working with constraints and limitations of technology/budgets/time to take concepts taking right to production.
- Software tools: Adobe suite, Sketch, Figma, Miro, Protopie, Rhino 3D

### **Books authored / Thought pieces**

- 'Humanising autonomy' - A book on UX for autonomous vehicles, 2017-18
- 'Motorcycle clusters - for riders, by riders', 2018-19
- 'Reimagining the digital cluster', 2015-16
- 'Near future of in-car HMI', 2014-15

### **My work has been featured in**

- <https://www.wired.com/2015/03/ingenious-car-uis/>
  - <https://www.forbes.com/sites/kittyknowles/2017/11/30/ustwo-auto-smart-car-ux-driverless-autonomous-vehicles-humanising-autonomy/?sh=f57c36d250b8>
  - <https://www.wired.com/2016/03/ford-thinks-simple-app-can-cure-headache-parking/>
  - <https://www.fastcompany.com/3049891/the-2015-innovation-by-design-awards-winners-experimental>
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