

# Curriculum Vitae

## Merje Shaw

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Nationality: Estonian

Date of Birth: 8 December 1982

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## Professional experience

For the past four years I have worked for Skype in a number of different roles and in three different countries, but all of these roles have combined my enthusiasm for working with people with my genuine passion for new technologies. During this time I have responded to tens of thousands of customer enquiries and conducted nearly 500 user interviews, all of which has given me a unique perspective on customer/user needs and an aptitude for passing on these findings to the wider company in a coherent and instructive manner.

## Key achievements

- 2009/10** Successfully ran several large-scale international qualitative research studies covering the major European markets and countries such as Brazil, USA, Japan and South Korea
- 2008** Being selected for the eBay corporation-wide Ambassador Programme as an expert within my group to exchange working knowledge

- 2007** Setting up the Escalated Customer Support Query Management Unit and laying the groundwork processes. Identifying key information sources across Skype
- 2005** Setting up and managing the Customer Service functionality for Osta.ee

### July 2008 to present Usability Expert at Skype, London

My first year in the User Experience Research Team was as a User Experience Analyst, during which time I gained the practical knowledge of running usability sessions.

I was subsequently promoted to my current position where the majority of my job is taken up with two main areas: running weekly in-house usability studies and organising large international studies as and when the need arises.

The weekly usability studies tend to feature a different product each time which has allowed me to use various methods from paper prototyping and card sorting to testing fully interactive prototypes.

I have been fully responsible for all aspects of these sessions from organising recruitment through external agencies to preparing collateral and moderating the sessions as well as analysing the results.

During the course of my work, I have become accustomed to using a variety of different methods of driving the users' message through to the target audience – whether as interactive workshops, highlight videos or simple PowerPoint presentations.

In running international studies, I have been responsible for creating the initial RFPs and selecting the agency we would eventually collaborate with on any given project.

I pride myself on being diligent in working with agencies and keeping a good handle on the whole process, from initial recruitment through to the final analysis and presentation.

As well as using external agencies for international studies, I have also planned and completed several on my own, the latest of which focuses on Skype's Business product. During the course of this study, I ran contextual usability tests in three countries (USA, UK and Estonia) speaking to employees in nearly 20 companies – from SMEs to global microchip manufacturers employing thousands – whilst at their offices.

I also assist the rest of my team with arranging larger innovation research studies as well as completing the occasional competitor research study.

During my two years in this position at Skype, I have learnt a wide selection of research methodologies including the logic behind selecting the appropriate method for each study.

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January to April 2008

**Member of an Ambassador Programme at eBay, Berlin**

The aim of this four-month programme was to share best-practice ideas and develop process improvements between Skype and eBay. As a Customer Support Specialist, my role was specifically looking at how to improve complaint management at Skype Tallinn through analysis of the incoming, registering and processing of complaints across all participating countries, then making recommendations

April 2007 to July 2008

**Customer Support Specialist at Skype, Tallinn**

In this position, I was solely responsible for responding to escalated customer support cases which would come in from sources such as the Better Business Bureau in the US, the press, direct letters from lawyers as well as being escalated up from the regular Customer Support queues.

This taught me how to communicate with extremely annoyed customers in order to appease them as well as allowing me to develop the skills necessary for troubleshooting customer issues in a large internationally-dispersed company.

In the course of various short-term projects, which included handling the complete support for Skype's hardware store legacy cases during transition from one partner to another, as well as managing cases arisen from the removal of certain active numbers from Skype's number pool. Both of these tasks required me to run a small team to work on responding to the users, dealing with the topical escalated cases.

September 2006 to April 2007

**Customer Support Senior Agent at Skype, Tallinn**

In this position, I provided customer support regarding billing issues to Skype's global user network, reported on system errors, trained new Customer Support agents and consulted project managers regarding new projects. I also compiled many of the predefined email answers that were sent out to customers by the Customer Support Team.

May to September 2006

**Customer Support Agent at Skype, Tallinn**

I provided support for billing issues to Skype users globally in English, Estonian, French and occasionally in Italian and also reported on current system faults and provided suggestions for improvement to the product teams that any particular issue involved.

## Education

2005–Present **Open University**

**Bachelor of Science Honours Degree**  
– **Technology, Innovation and Design**

1998–2001 **Tallinn's 21st School**

## Computer Skills

I have excellent IT skills and am completely proficient to an advanced level in *Microsoft PowerPoint, Word, Excel* and *Outlook*. I have a good working knowledge of *Adobe Acrobat* and *Photoshop* and am proficient in other software packages including *Morae, Silverback, iMovie, Basecamp* and *Guapo*.

## Professional Associations

I am a member of the following associations:

- The American Association of Computing Machinery (ACM)
- The Usability Professionals Association (UPA)

## Languages

A keen linguist with Estonian as my native tongue, I have been fluent in English since childhood, speaking, reading and writing. I speak good Italian, French and Finnish and have basic German and Russian. I am currently learning Mandarin and relish the challenge of studying further languages and cultures.

## Profile

Vivacious, amiable and enthusiastic, I am happy to work independently, but love to work within a team, motivating and helping build their knowledge in line with my own. I have excellent communication skills and am a great liaison; I love working with people and facilitating conversation and debate. I also like the occasional pub argument over obscure trivia, but find the sometimes extreme localisation of questions in English pub quizzes a little tedious. That said, my quiz team is a frequent winner of first and second prizes.

I am a keen traveller, gardener, bon viveur and an aspirant cook. I love sci-fi and am quite the geek but NOT a nerd. There's a distinct difference which I shan't go into here.

I relax by fishing, knitting or reading, depending on the weather and am trying to get better at climbing trees.