

MARIA GABRIELA GANDICA

Boca Raton, FL (open to relocation) | gaby@gabygandica.com
[linkedin.com/in/magabrielag](https://www.linkedin.com/in/magabrielag)

The interfaces that matter most are the ones that can't afford to fail anyone. 12+ years designing for high-stakes, mission-critical systems: from election platforms serving millions of voters across 36 countries to certified accessible voting products. Background in QA engineering and backend systems taught me how things break before users find out, and gave me fluency in the technical constraints that shape great design. Deep expertise in accessibility, inclusive design, design systems, and cross-functional collaboration across globally distributed teams.

EXPERIENCE

UX Design Manager, Smartmatic

Feb 2021 – Present | Boca Raton, FL (Global team across 5 countries)

Lead UX strategy, research, and design execution for election technology serving thousands of election workers and millions of voters across 36 countries in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. Manage a distributed design team and partner with engineering, QA, product, and compliance to translate complex regulatory and operational requirements into accessible, usable interfaces.

- **Accessibility Leadership:** Led UX for VVSG 2.0-certified accessible voting system. Designed flows that achieved 100% independent ballot casting in certification testing across all disability categories, using user research, iterative prototyping, and assistive technology testing to validate every interaction.
- **Inclusive Design at Scale:** Updated 18-language digital ballot system for LA County (5M+ registered voters, 640 vote centers). Navigated competing constraints: ballot security, multilingual typography, accessibility standards, and poll worker cognitive load. Shipped for 2022 Midterm and 2024 General elections.
- **Analytics and Information Design:** Led UX for SmartDashboard, an analytics platform serving election administrators, media teams, and deployment operators with tailored, actionable insights rather than raw charts. Deployed across LA County, Albania, Honduras, Malawi, Zambia, Uganda, and others.
- **Data-Informed Design:** Led UX for Kenya's voter registration and results transmission platform. Designed device workflows for a deployment of 40,000+ devices that generated only 32 support calls, using field observation data and usability metrics to validate design decisions at scale.
- **Design Systems:** Built cross-platform design system and component library from scratch. Standardized interaction patterns across multiple products with accessibility baked into every component, significantly reducing design-to-development handoff time and increasing team velocity.
- **Complex Systems Design:** Designed interfaces at the intersection of backend infrastructure and user experience: auditable workflows for systems processing billions of records with zero security breaches across 6.5B+ votes cast globally. Reduced operational errors through UX rather than training.

UX/UI Design Lead, Smartmatic

Oct 2018 – Feb 2021 | Panama

- Led UX for specific election projects and products across multiple countries, building the design practice, standards, and processes that later scaled company wide.

Senior IT Consultant, EY (Ernst & Young)

Jul 2016 – Sep 2018 | Central America & Caribbean

- Led technology transformation projects for financial institutions. Applied service design and user-centric methods to banking workflows, improving end-to-end customer experience for a Panama City bank branch.

QA Engineer to Senior QA Engineer, Smartmatic

Aug 2012 – Jun 2016 | Panama

Promoted from Junior to Senior within the Electoral Solutions unit. Tested systems across 20 countries, building deep understanding of how interfaces fail under real-world conditions: edge cases, operator errors, environmental constraints, and infrastructure limitations. This foundational knowledge directly shaped a transition to UX design and a focus on resilient, accessible interfaces.

- Identified and resolved a critical UX issue that would have blocked 80 election operators during a national election, preventing deployment delays through QA-informed design thinking.
- Integrated UX principles into QA processes, simplifying system usability to reduce on-site training requirements and increase operator independence.

EDUCATION

UX Certification, Nielsen Norman Group (2018, updated 2022)

Human Centered Service Design, IDEO U (2022)

Innovation of Products and Services, MIT Sloan School of Management (2019)

B.S. Computer Engineering, UNET, Venezuela (Graduated Top of Class, 2009)

TOOLS & SKILLS

Design: Figma, Sketch, Prototyping, Wireframing, Interaction Design, Visual Design, Information Architecture, Data Visualization, Analytics Design.

Research: User Research, Usability Testing, A/B Testing, Survey Design, Field Studies, Accessibility Auditing.

Accessibility: WCAG 2.1, VPAT/ACR Reporting, Assistive Technology Testing (VoiceOver, JAWS, NVDA, Switch Access).

Systems: Design Systems, Component Libraries, Cross-Platform Design, Backend Systems, Databases, Large-Scale Deployments.

Methods: Design Thinking, Inclusive Design, Cross-Functional Collaboration, Agile/Scrum, Stakeholder Management, Executive Presentations.