

KEY QUALIFICATIONS

- Experienced digital strategist certified in user experience design by the Nielsen Norman Group and emotional design by AlterSpark; trained in design thinking at Harvard Business School and was selected for intensive practicum.
- Applies human-centered design methods alongside behavior change science and marketing strategy to create innovative products, services, and experiences that empower organizations and individuals to make more informed decisions.
- Master of Public Health with substantial experience in communication strategy, research, knowledge translation, and storytelling.
- Takes initiative and thrives in a fast-paced environment while managing multiple projects, budgets, teams, and proposals for new work.

EXPERIENCE

RTI International

Senior Digital Strategist - Consults government and non-profit clients, including the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, NYC Department of Health, and Shatterproof (a non-profit focused on the opioid epidemic).

Durham, NC
2015 - current

- Currently leads a project portfolio totaling \$1.5 million, including the development of three national websites for diverse clients and end users on topics such as stigma, teen pregnancy, and sexual assault.
- Developed a Digital Product Lifecycle and Toolkit to equip RTI staff with over 35 tools to implement user-centered design and assure quality across products.
- Planned and facilitated a digital design sprint of 30 RTI staff and reported cross-cutting insights and recommendations to advance digital transformation to Executive Leadership.
- Pitched, was awarded, and leads a \$700K contract to develop a web system integrating a custom-built API and Drupal CMS that presents quality metrics and patient reviews to help people find better addiction treatment.
- To date, has led the user research, content strategy, and UX design of 8 websites and 1 mobile app, as well as award-winning digital content including a video PSA, graphics customization tool, and digital communication toolkit.
- Conducts discovery user research, usability testing, and heuristic usability evaluations through focus groups, interviews, journey mapping, persona development, card sorting, and first-click analysis, and reports insights and recommendations to internal teams and clients.
- Serves as a thought leader in knowledge translation and insights generation at RTI; for instance, served as the senior writer/editor of policy briefs for a \$14 million Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services evaluation.
- Co-leads RTI's Digital Impact Initiative, a group of 130+ harnessing digital strategy for social good.
- Develops presentations and proposals for new work and pitches to potential clients.
- Serves as a peer reviewer for the *Journal of Communication in Healthcare* and *Preventing Chronic Disease*.
- Promoted twice in two years and selected for the Key Talent program, awarded to fewer than 10% of staff.

WBUR, Boston's NPR station, CommonHealth blog

Intern and Freelance Reporter

Boston, MA
2014 - 2015

- Pitched and researched stories, conducted interviews, and wrote blog posts for CommonHealth, including a feature on the Pill that was a Google-editors' pick, shared by NPR, and viewed by over 700,000 unique users

Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health

Graduate Research Associate

Boston, MA
2013-2015

- Supported the Center for Health Communication by monitoring news, reviewing research, and convening meetings of local leaders (Congressmen, law enforcement) to design a campaign and policies to curb distracted driving.

Institute for Community Inclusion

Graduate Research Associate

Boston, MA
2013-2015

- Created animated videos in English/Spanish about obtaining health insurance for immigrant children and presented an accompanying guide to the Director of the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities at NIH.

AcademyHealth

Associate (before promotion: Research Assistant)

Washington, DC
2011-2013

- Served on the evaluation team for the CHIPRA Quality Demonstration Grant Program, a \$100 million federal program to improve health care quality for U.S. children qualifying for Medicaid/CHIP.
- Led the outreach and relationship building of dissemination partners, and designed, wrote, and edited the website and policy briefs.
- Developed an implementation guide on engaging stakeholders to improve healthcare quality for children.

EDUCATION

Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health

Master of Public Health, Social and Behavioral Sciences, GPA: 3.95
Health Communication & Maternal and Child Health concentrations

Boston, MA
2013-2015

Davidson College

Bachelor of Arts in English, magna cum laud, GPA: 3.85
Honors: Phi Beta Kappa, Order of Omega

Davidson, NC
2007-2011

SELECTED THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

- Thomas, V., Dennings, K., & Desnoyers, A. (2019). *A Fireside Chat: Exploring the similarities and differences between social marketing, design thinking and behavioral economics*. North American Social Marketing Conference, Ottawa, Canada.
- Thomas, V., Chavez, M., Browne, E., & Minnis, A. (in revision for publication in *Digital Health*). *Instagram as a tool for study engagement and community building among adolescents: A social media pilot study*.
- Thomas, V., Lynch, M., Squiers, L., Mitchell, B. Schwarz, R., & Lind, J. (in revision for journal publication). *How can you use human-centered design methods in health communication? Lessons learned from CDC's Treating for Two initiative*.
- Thomas, V., & Holloway, C. (2019). *Youth-centered design methods: Leveraging communication and behavioral science to co-create a social media campaign with youth for youth*. YTH Live!, San Francisco, CA.
- Thomas, V. (2018). *Master social media: Developing a strategy and measuring impact*. Social media workshop and training for NIEHS Children's Environmental Health Center Grantees, Durham, NC.
- Lynch, M., Thomas, V., Squiers, L., & Schwarz, R. (2018) *Co-creation of healthcare communication materials: transforming providers from audience to advisors*. International Conference for Communication in Healthcare, Porto, Portugal.
- Thomas, V., Chavez, M. (2018). *Harnessing Instagram for study retention and community building among teens in Salinas, CA: A social media experiment*. APHA, San Diego, CA.
- Thomas, V., Williams, P., McCormack, L., & James, M. (2018). *Advancing shared decision making: Current state of the science and future directions*. AcademyHealth Annual Research Meeting, Seattle, WA.
- Thomas, V., Moran, K., Kataria, I., Williams, P., & Squiers, L. (2018). *Programmes to prevent noncommunicable disease (NCDs) in India: Improving Healthy Eating for Adolescents*. RTI International. Available here: <https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/resources/rti-publication-file-7ad0836c-f51f-48c2-b6c9-fd3bc9c9e16b.pdf>
- Thomas, V. (2017). Digital Health Award for web-based tool. *The Studio: Proprietary tool for customizing and co-branding teen pregnancy prevention materials*. Accessible to Family and Youth Services Bureau Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Grantees.
- Thomas, V. & Burrus, O. (2017). *Overcoming challenges of introducing innovation into government health programs*. Agents of Change, San Diego, CA.
- Thomas, V., & McMillan, T. (2017). *Harness the power of social media to boost visibility and impact*. Family and Youth Services Bureau's Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Grantee Conference, St. Louis, MO, United States. Toolkit available here: <https://teenpregnancy.acf.hhs.gov/resources/social-media-toolkit>
- Jordan, A., Moran, K., Siddiqui, M., Thomas, V., Jain, M., et al. (2016). *Digital communication toolkit: Best practices for organizations in India*. Winner of American Public Health Association (APHA) "best public health training material" award in 2017. Also conducted workshop for organizations in Delhi using the toolkit. Available here: <https://www.rti.org/impact/digital-health-communication-toolkit>
- Lefebvre, R. C., Thomas, V., & Taylor, O. (2016). *Aligning journeys, jobs, and value for more relevant and effective social marketing programs*. The 24th Social Marketing Conference, Clearwater Beach, FL, United States.

TOOLS AND SKILLS

- Google Analytics & Google Tag Manager
- Salesforce
- Confluence
- GitHub
- JIRA
- Asana and Trello
- OptimalWorkshop and UserZoom
- Smartsheet timeline management tool
- CMNTY.com user research platform
- Drupal content management and basic HTML