

Information Architecture for Web Development

March 16, 2004 Guest Lecture

Scott Robinson

<http://orarian.com>

scott@orarian.com

IA Definition — Quotes

“Information is data endowed with relevance and purpose.”

—Peter Drucker, Economist

Architecture: “The art or science of building [...] a unifying or coherent form or structure.”

—Webster’s Dictionary

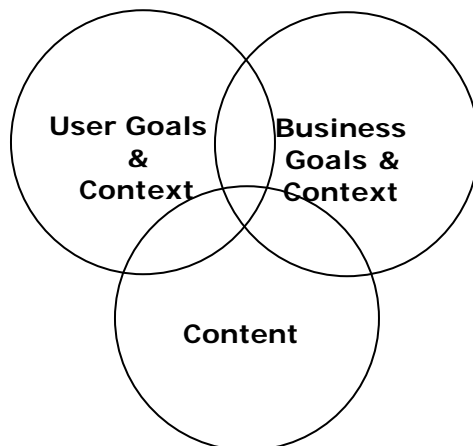
An Information Architect is “1) the individual who organizes the patterns inherent in data, making the complex clear; 2) a person who creates the structure or map of information which allows others to find their personal paths to knowledge.”

—Richard Saul Wurman, Information Designer
Information Architects

IA Job Titles

- **Interaction Designer**
- Interface Designer
- Information Scientist
- Usability Engineer
- **User Experience Designer (UX)**
- Customer Experience Designer
- Product Manager
- **Product Designer**
- Information Ecologist
- Market Researcher (and Marketing!)
- Content Manager
- **Project Manager**

IA Trinity — Argus & Associates (from Rosenfeld & Moreville)



Site Mapping — The Basics

Why:

- To see what we're building, its flow, its high-level complexity
- Helps with scoping—identifying all the pieces
- Identify groupings, organize them, find relationships

Who:

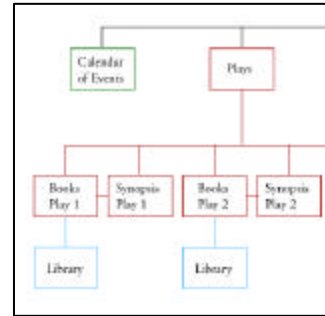
- Information Architect, Project Manager

Sponsor Considerations:

- Some people can't relate to maps ...

Samples:

- Professional sample: http://orarian.com/documents/Sample_Sitemap.pdf
- Student sample: http://orarian.com/documents/student_sitemap.pdf



Page Wire Framing — The Basics

Why:

- The page-by-page details
- The devil comes out
- Content needs—e.g. instructional copy
- User Testing, Technical feedback



Sponsor Considerations:

- No design may equal poor quality in their eyes
 - *Walk through these with your sponsor!*

Samples:

- http://orarian.com/documents/Sample_WireF_AW.pdf
- http://orarian.com/documents/Wreframes_IS.pdf

Site Prototyping — The Basics

Why:

- Think wire frames ... linked together
- The devil starts dancin'
- User Testing

Who:

- Information Architect, HTML Producer



Sponsor Considerations:

- HTML prototype can provide interactive experience
- Quality issue

Samples:

- http://orarian.com/documents/Prototype_IS/index.html

Discount User Testing — The Basics

Why:

- This is the low-budget version of user testing, so you can test multiple times without a heavy financial burden
- To put a site/application through real-world use

Who:

- Information Architect, User Testing Facilitator, Receptionist
- Testers, Facilitator and Note Taker

Sponsor Considerations:

- Leverage quotes & results to make *proactive changes*
- Sometimes you're not doing it for them
- The most powerful tool in the IA tool belt

Samples:

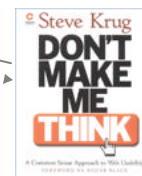
- See user testing weeks for my Fall 2002 class, Weeks 14 & 15:
 - <http://orarian.com/DM166F02/index.html>

Recommended Web sites

- **Boxes and Arrows**
Excellent compilation of current articles on IA
<http://www.boxesandarrows.com>
- **Jakob Nielsen's useit.com**
<http://www.useit.com>
- **Asilomar Institute for Information Architecture**
Group of professional IAs advancing & promoting the trade
(check out the Design tools section)
<http://aifia.org/tools/>
- **IA Summit**
Annual conference with related articles & presentations
<http://www.iasummit.org>
- **Xplane's Xblog**
Fun site - "The visual thinking weblog"
<http://xplane.com/xblog/>

Recommended Books

- *The Art & Science of Web Design*
Jeffrey Veen. New Riders. 2001.
- *Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity*
Jakob Nielsen. New Riders. 2000.
- *Don't Make Me Think!*
Steve Krug. New Rider. 2000.
- *The Elements of User Experience*
Jesse James Garrett. New Riders. 2002.
- *Information Architecture: Blueprints for the Web*
Christina Wodtke. New Riders. 2002.



Recommended Books concluded

- *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web, 2nd Ed.*
Lou Rosenfeld and Peter Morville. O'Reilly & Associates. 1998.
- *Practical Information Architecture*
Eric Reiss. Addison-Wesley. 2000.
- *Web ReDesign: Workflow that Works*
Kelly Goto and Emily Cotler. New Riders. 2002.

