

180 - Information Architecture & Writing for the Web

Part 1: Introduction to Information Architecture

What is Information Architecture?

- An Introduction to our Case Study
- Definition of Information Architecture
- Goals of Information Architecture

The Web as a Medium

- Discussion: What do you like about good Web sites?
- Discussion: What characteristics do bad Web sites have?
- How Do People Process Information?

The Practice of Information Architecture

- Site Structure

User-Focused Design

Part 2: A Process for Building Good Information Architecture

Analyze the Scope of your Project

- How Does the Web Site Fit in with the Goals of the Organization?
- What Are the Goals of the Site?
- Who Are the Site's Users?
- What Are the Available Resources for the Project?
- How Will the Site Change and Grow Over Time?
- Who is Involved in Creating/Changing the Site?
- Are There Other Potential Challenges?

Gather Information

Organize Your Information

- Grouping
- Deciding Between Different Grouping Systems
- Sorting Your Groups
- Techniques for Grouping
- Labeling

Design Successful Navigation

- Navigational Options
- Qualities of Successful Navigation
- Include a Site Map and a Search Interface
- Navigation Focus: Search Systems
- Discussion: Searching Systems

- Navigation Focus: Potential Problems

Build Prototypes

- Flowcharts
- Storyboards

Conduct User Testing

- Goals for Usability Tests
- Types of User Tests

Prepare for Launch, Maintenance & Growth

- Maintenance

Part 3: Writing for the Web

Why Writing for the Web is Different than Writing for Print

- Discussion: Why do people read on the web?

Adapting to a Different Reading Environment

- Remove Unnecessary “Marketese” or “Happy Content”
- Be Concise
- Make Text Scannable
- Remove Excessive Instructions

Keeping it Simple

- Good Writing
- Avoid Jargon
- Simplify Wording

Writing Is Visual

- Microcontent
- Writing Structure
- Reading Out of Order
- Page Layout

Particular audiences

- Accessibility
- Elderly, Young, and Low-Literacy Audiences

Search-engine optimization

- Linking
- Wording
- HTML Structure

Part 4: Special Considerations

Restructuring An Existing Web Site

- 1) Build a Content Inventory Sheet for Your Current Site
- 2) Use the “Wish List” to Identify Unmet Needs
- 3) Determine the Appropriate Groups and Labels for Content
- 4) Build Good Navigation
- 5) Test the Product with Users at Every Stage
- 6) After Launch Provide Support
- Resources on Site Redesign

The Costs of Poor Information Architecture

- Build a Cost Table
- Think About the Future

Appendix A: Glossary

Appendix B: Documents and Worksheets

Appendix C: Types of Sites and their Purposes

- Shopping
- Identity
- Learning
- Information
- Community
- Entertainment/Games

Appendix D: Recommended Resources

- Books to Read
- Web Sites to Visit