

Information Architecture for Indexers

Presented by Fred Leise

American Society of Indexers

National Conference

Galveston, Texas

May 18, 2002

Overview

- About me
- Goals for this presentation
- What is information architecture (IA)?
- Users
- Context
- Content
- Process

About Me

- Indexing experience
 - Freelance indexer since 1995
 - Indexing instructor
 - Scholarly texts in the humanities
- IA experience
 - Argus Associates, Inc.
 - Freelance IA

Goals for This Presentation

- Introduce IA concepts and vocabulary
- Explore relationship of IA and indexing; importance of learning about IA
 - IAs as target market for indexing services
 - IA skills related to those of indexers; IA as possible area of skills expansion

What is Information Architecture?

- A relatively new craft (8–10 years old)
- Part of the field of website/intranet design
- Based in areas of expertise from librarianship:
 - Information retrieval
 - Classification: collocation and differentiation
- A solution to the problem of finding information on web sites

Related Subjects

- Usability / User experience/Interaction design
- Information design
- Graphic design
- Information technology / System Design

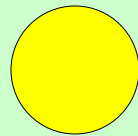
Definition of IA

- **Structure of information**
- Usable organization of information

Structure of Information

- Single data point: no relationships

Single Data Point

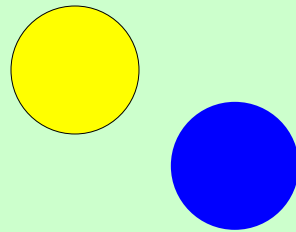


Structure of Information

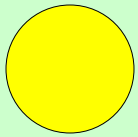
- Two data points: multiple relationships

Near

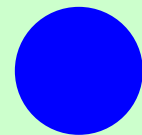
Chocolate Bar : Cocoa



Far

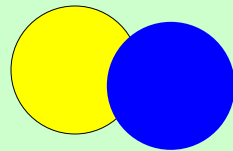


Peppermint : Steel



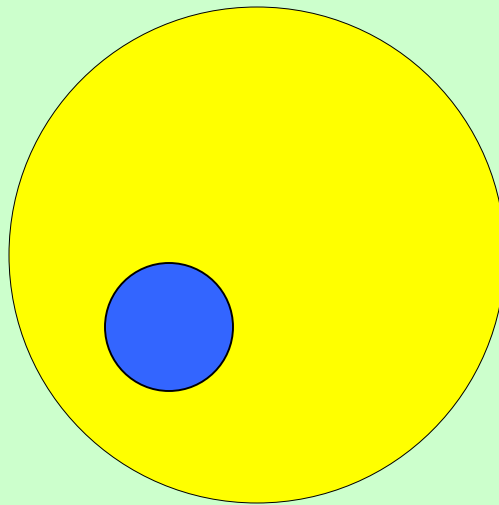
Overlapping

Tall : Freckled



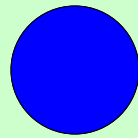
Subset

Employees : Administrative Assistants



Isomorphic

Cancer : Oncology

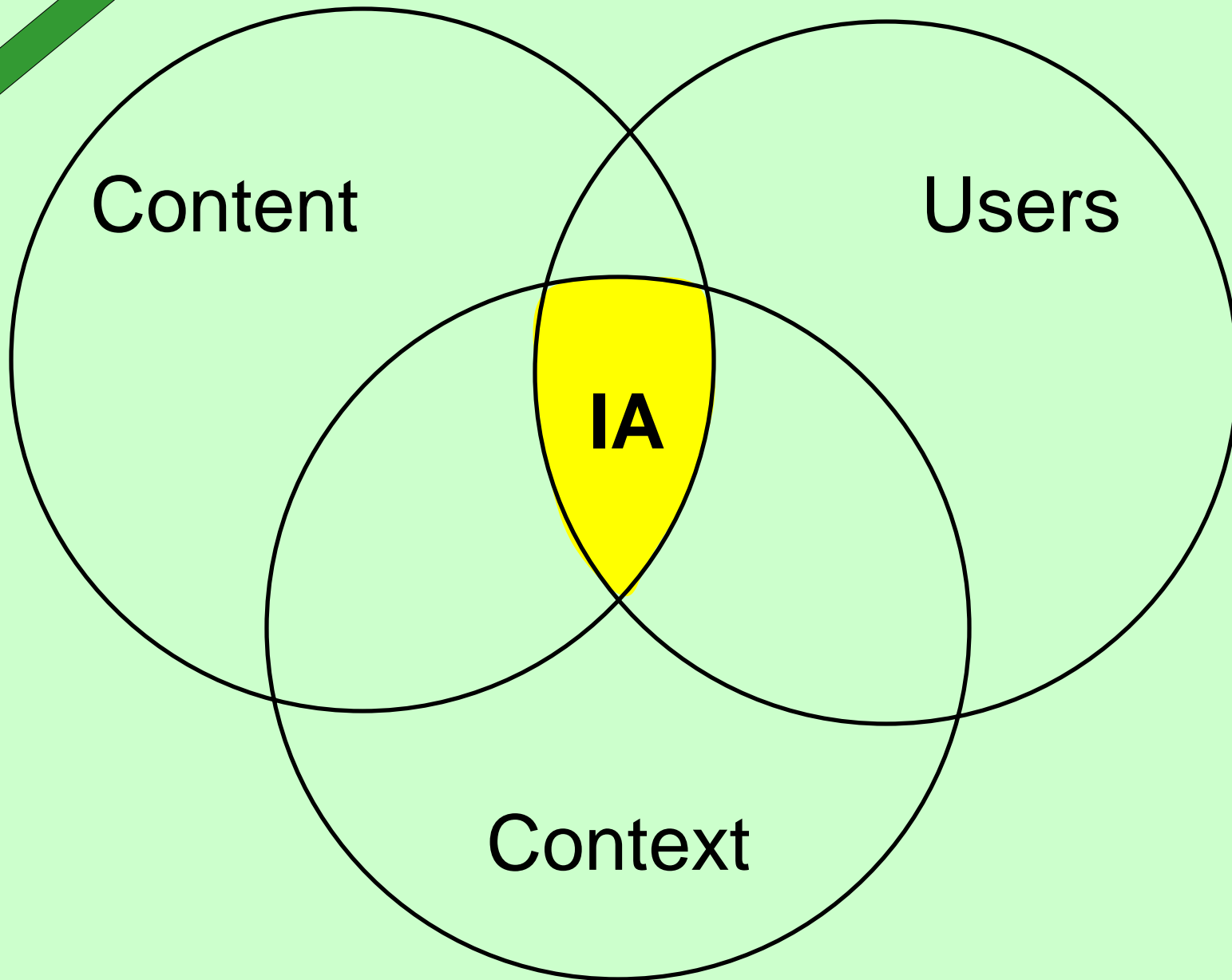


What is Information Architecture?

- Structure of information
- **Usable organization of information**

Usable Organization of Information

- Implications:
 - Users: Who is using the information?
 - Content: What is the information?
 - Context: Where is the information being used?



Users: Variables

- Age
- Experience
- Content knowledge
- Users must be able to use the site, otherwise it is a failure.

Users: Methodologies

- User interviews
 - How do they use the current system
 - What would they change to make it better?
- User testing
 - How well do users do on assigned sample tasks?
 - Do they search or browse?
 - What other information finding aids do users use? Colleagues? Bookmarks?

Users: Methodologies

- Search log analyses
 - What terms do users currently use when searching for information?
 - Are there many unique terms used or are there a number of commonly used terms?
 - Are there groups of related/alternate search terms (include common misspellings)

Context: Everyday Life

- Human beings as natural classifiers
- Organization of menus
- Organization of grocery stores
- Organization of car manuals
- Organization of catalogs

Our Menu

Sizes



Small - 10"
Large - 14"
Big Papa - 16"

Large 14" Now Available in Thin or Original Crust!

Specialty



The Works™

Cheese, Pepperoni, Italian Sausage, Ham, Black Olives, Green Peppers, Onions and Mushrooms

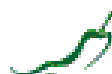
Garden Special™

Mushrooms, Onions, Green Peppers and Black Olives

All The Meats™

Pepperoni, Ham, Sausage, Ground Beef and Bacon

Toppings



- Extra Cheese
- Pepperoni
- Sausage
- Mushrooms
- Italian Sausage
- Ham
- Ground Beef
- Bacon
- Onions
- Green Pepper
- Black Olives
- Pineapple
- Banana Peppers
- Jalapeno Peppers
- Anchovies

Drinks

Coke®
 Diet Coke®
 Sprite®

Sticks

Breadsticks & Cheesesticks

Extras

Dipping Sauces*

Garlic, Pizza, Ranch**, Nacho Cheese

Sides*

Pepperoncinis,

Context: Web Sites/Intranets

- What are the business goals affecting the site? Purpose of site?
 - Vanity web sites
 - Information web sites
 - E-commerce web sites



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By Argus

acia events

[Synonyms and Taxonomies](#)

A one-day workshop on thesaurus design for information architects.

strange connections

(February 19, 2001)

[Software for Information Architects](#)

Will the "electronic brains" steal our jobs? Should we trust engineers?

white papers

(April 2001)

[Analyzing the Analysts](#)

by Chiara Fox and Keith Instone
Do the IT Analysts practice what they preach?

[More by Argus](#)

The Argus Center for Information Architecture is

On Our Radar

events

[ASIS&T 2002 Information Architecture Summit](#)

Baltimore, MD (3/16-17)

[CHI 2002](#)

Minneapolis, MN (4/20-25)

[Full Calendar of Events](#)

(Updated 11/17/01)

people

[Bonnie Nardi](#)

Co-author of *Information Ecologies*, Bonnie comments on ethnography, user-centered design, and activity-centered design.

survey

[Formal Educational Credentials for Information Architects](#)

A repeat of the 11/00 survey; predictions of more certification

content

[Don't Make Me Think!](#)

by Steve Krug

Chris Farnum explains why you should buy this Web Usability book for your boss.

ia guide

A selective online bibliography of information architecture resources.

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community

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**add
your
text**



**magnetic
signs**

Transform your vehicle
from mini-van to delivery

Context: Methodologies

- Opinion leader/project team interviews
 - What are their goals for new/revised site?
 - What resources are available for site creation/revision?
 - What challenges do they see to completing the project?
 - What would they do to make the current site better?

Content

- Organization of information
- Navigation
- Labeling

Content: Methodologies

- Content analysis
 - Sampling of content currently on site or to be put on site
 - Heterogeneous or homogeneous?
 - 500 documents or 5 million documents?
 - What types of documents?
 - Applications, reports, white papers
 - Document format? PDFs? DOCs?

Organization of Information

- Top-down organization
 - Looks at totality of content
 - Enumerative classifications
(hierarchies / taxonomies / ontologies)

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Organization of Information

- Bottom-up organization
 - Looks at content objects
 - Faceted classifications
 - Indexing using authority files / thesauri
 - Metadata

more search options

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Organization of Information: Methodologies

- User testing
 - Open card sorting
 - Closed card sorting
 - Task completion

Navigation

- Types of navigation
 - Global: applies to entire site
 - Local: applies to parts of site
 - Supplemental: additional finding aids
 - Site maps
 - Site indexes
 - Contextual: within paragraphs

Home

Customers + Partners

[Enterprise Strategies](#)

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[Support](#)

[Training](#)

Global Navigation

Training

Maximize your PeopleSoft investment with training from the experts at PeopleSoft University.

Local Navigation

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[User Training](#)

[Delivery Options](#)

PeopleSoft University gives you more than just training. You get more confident employees, faster and smoother IT projects, and information you won't get from anyone else—insights from the PeopleSoft experts.

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[Course Catalog](#)

Supplemental Navigation

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OnDemand

CD-ROM

Contextual Navigation

Use these simple tools to find the right training for you.

[Assess Your Training Needs](#) [Training by Role](#) [Locations](#)

Project Team Training

Promotions

- » **Guaranteed Classes**
Worried about class cancellations? Enroll in a guaranteed class.
- » **Sign up for training and get a PSU baseball cap**

More Information

- » **Pre-Class Tutorials**
- » **Certification for Partners**

New Courses

- » Accelerated Course
- » **PT1/PT2 Accelerated (course 481)**
- » **EPM Technical Bootcamp**

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Navigation

- Clarity: understandable, unambiguous
- Consistency: word form (verbs, nouns)
- Information scent: differentiation, i.e., where is the information I want likely to be?
- Depth vs. breadth

Labeling

- Labels for navigation
- Labels as headings
- Labels as contextual links
- Labels for index terms

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Navigation labels

Training

Heading label

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Browse or Register for PeopleSoft Training:

[Course Catalog](#) — Our training registration system (EdWeb).

[Live WebCast eLearning Courses](#) — Just like a classroom, without leaving your desk.

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Index term labels

A

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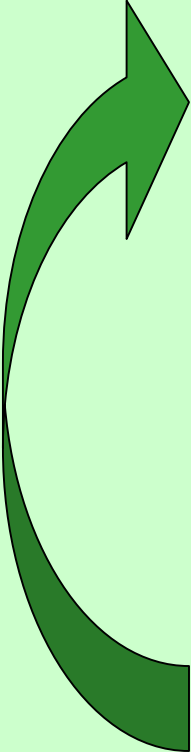
[Ask the Experts, enterprise strategies](#)

. For information about customer- or partner-

Labeling

- Clarity
- Consistency
- Label granularity matches content granularity

IA Process

- 
- Research
 - Design
 - Testing
 - Implementation
 - Maintenance
 - Revision: Research, etc.

Contact Information

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