

## *Introducing Information Architecture*

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## *The Information Landscape*

- Dawn of the Age of Information
  - Recognizing knowledge assets
  - The emergence of information-on-demand
  - Knowledge management applications and skills

## *The Role of the Tech Communicator*

- Designing information
  - What? Where? Why? How? For whom?
- Developing information
  - Content management, alphabet soup
- Delivering information
  - Information delivery systems, medium dependencies, and platform dependencies
- Maintaining information

## *What Is Information Architecture?*

- Low maintenance, high re-use (write once, use many single-sourcing strategies)
- Data-driven (modular)
- Cognitive models (schema theory)
- User-driven (navigation and design)
- Visual metaphors
- Linguistic models (controlled vocabulary)
- Organization: LATCH, Context Navigation, Learn-Browse-Discover schemes

## *What Is an Information Architect?*

- 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.
- 3) the emerging 21st century professional occupation addressing the needs of the age focused upon clarity, human understanding and the science of the organization of information.

—Richard Saul Wurman

## *Who are Information Architects?*

- Librarians and Information Scientists (Cybrarians)
- Graphic Designers
- Journalists
- Usability Engineers (UI, interaction designers)
- Marketing Specialists
- Computer Scientists
- Technical Communicators

### *IA Platforms and Media*

- Data warehouses/CBR systems
- Knowledge Systems
- Book design (doc-in-a-box)
- Web sites
- Interactive multimedia
- Help systems

### *The Human Factor*

- Market analysis
- Audience analysis
- User-centered design (requirements)
- Prototyping
- User interface design
- User testing (as opposed to system testing)
- Ongoing evaluation

### *Balancing the Needs of Many...*

- Marketing and Sales goals (revenue and buzz)
- Customer Support goals (low cost and high revenue)
- Engineering goals (high product acceptance)
- Technical Communication goals (on time delivery of user assistance)
- Information Systems goals (low risk, easy to set up and maintain)

### *...With the Needs of Many More*

- Production/Operations goals (simple process oriented)
- Personal goals (looking smart and productive)
- Your boss's goals (getting a promotion)
- The organization's goals (growth in all dimensions)
- Your staff's goals (learn marketable skills)  
... and most important ...
- The user's goals

### *Common IA Issues*

- Media independence vs. media optimization
- Is the Web the only information channel?
- Least common denominator vs. the “Wow Factor” (Shockwave, Java, RealAudio)
- Browser incompatibilities

### *Technical Communication Sites*

- Sun Product Documentation  
– [docs.sun.com](http://docs.sun.com)
- Sybase Support  
– [support.sybase.com](http://support.sybase.com)
- Apple Support  
– [www.apple.com/support](http://www.apple.com/support)
- Microsoft Support  
– [www.microsoft.com/support](http://www.microsoft.com/support)
- Informix Answers OnLine  
– [www.informix.com/answers](http://www.informix.com/answers)

toptenlinks.com

### *Top 10 Web Design Firms*

- Studio Archetype ([www.studioarchetype.com](http://www.studioarchetype.com))
- Agency.com ([www.agency.com](http://www.agency.com))
- Novo/Ironlight Interactive ([www.novoironlight.com](http://www.novoironlight.com))
- ikonic ([www.ikonic.com](http://www.ikonic.com))
- razorfish ([www.razorfish.com](http://www.razorfish.com))
- T3 Media ([www.t3media.com](http://www.t3media.com))
- Blue Marble ACG ([www.bluemarble.com](http://www.bluemarble.com))
- K2 Design ([www.k2design.com](http://www.k2design.com))
- fine.com ([www.fine.com](http://www.fine.com))
- Rare Medium ([www.raremedium.com](http://www.raremedium.com))

### *IA Innovation*

- Smithsonian Without Walls
  - [www.si.edu/organiza/museums/ripley/eap/rt/loader.html](http://www.si.edu/organiza/museums/ripley/eap/rt/loader.html)
- Time-Warner Pathfinder
  - check out the Fly-Thru Tour on [www.pathfinder.com/fortune/fortune500](http://www.pathfinder.com/fortune/fortune500)
- Plumb Design
  - check out [www.plumbdesign.com/thesaurus](http://www.plumbdesign.com/thesaurus)
- Perspecta
  - [www.perspecta.com](http://www.perspecta.com)

### *Web Communities*

- **The Well (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link)**  
[www.well.com](http://www.well.com)
- **Ebay** [www.ebay.com](http://www.ebay.com)
- **America Online** [www.aol.com](http://www.aol.com)
- **Netscape Netcenter** [www.netcenter.com](http://www.netcenter.com)
- **Silicon Investor** [www.techstocks.com](http://www.techstocks.com)
- **Amazon.com** [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)
- **Edmunds Automotive** [www.edmunds.com](http://www.edmunds.com)
- **JavaSoft** [www.javasoft.com/nav/developer/](http://www.javasoft.com/nav/developer/)
- **iVillage** [www.ivillage.com](http://www.ivillage.com)

### *Freda, Rich, and This Class*

- Freda's Extensive Web Presence
  - [www.dnai.com/~freda](http://www.dnai.com/~freda)
- Rich's Boring Minimalist Site
  - [www.well.com/user/rjulius](http://www.well.com/user/rjulius)
- Class Group Project Web Site
  - [www.dnai.com/~rjulius/](http://www.dnai.com/~rjulius/)
- Class Administration Site
  - [www.dnai.com/~freda/pia](http://www.dnai.com/~freda/pia)