

THIRD EDITION

# Information Architecture for the World Wide Web

*Peter Morville and Louis Rosenfeld*

**O'REILLY<sup>4</sup>**

Beijing • Cambridge • Farnham • Koln • Paris • Sebastopol • Taipei • Tokyo

# Table of Contents

**Foreword**..... **xi**

**Preface**..... **xiii**

## **Part I. Introducing Information Architecture**

<b>1. Defining Information Architecture</b> .....	<b>3</b>
A Definition	4
Tablets, Scrolls, Books, and Libraries	6
Explaining IA to Others	8
What Isn't Information Architecture?	9
Why Information Architecture Matters	11
Bringing Our Work to Life	12
<b>2. Practicing Information Architecture</b> .....	<b>16</b>
Do We Need Information Architects?	17
Who's Qualified to Practice Information Architecture?	18
Information Architecture Specialists	23
Practicing Information Architecture in the Real World	24
What Lies Ahead	28
<b>3. User Needs and Behaviors</b> .....	<b>30</b>
The "Too-Simple" Information Model	31
Information Needs	33
Information-Seeking Behaviors	35
Learning About Information Needs and Information-Seeking Behaviors	38

## Part II. Basic Principles of Information Architecture

<b>4. The Anatomy of an Information Architecture</b> .....	<b>41</b>
Visualizing Information Architecture	41
Information Architecture Components	49
<b>5. Organization Systems</b> .....	<b>53</b>
Challenges of Organizing Information	54
Organizing Web Sites and Intranets	58
Organization Schemes	59
Organization Structures	69
Social Classification	17
Creating Cohesive Organization Systems	80
<b>6. Labeling Systems</b> .....	<b>82</b>
Why You Should Care About Labeling	83
Varieties of Labels	86
Designing Labels	98
<b>7. Navigation Systems</b> .....	<b>115</b>
Types of Navigation Systems	116
Gray Matters	117
Browser Navigation Features	117
Building Context	118
Improving Flexibility	120
Embedded Navigation Systems	122
Supplemental Navigation Systems	131
Advanced Navigation Approaches	139
<b>8. Search Systems</b> .....	<b>145</b>
Does Your Site Need Search?	145
Search System Anatomy	149
Search Is Not an IT Thing	150
Choosing What to Search	151
Search Algorithms	158
Query Builders	161
Presenting Results	163
Designing the Search Interface	178
Where to Learn More	191

<b>9. Thesauri, Controlled Vocabularies, and Metadata</b> .....	<b>193</b>
Metadata	194
Controlled Vocabularies	194
Technical Lingo	204
A Thesaurus in Action	206
Types of Thesauri	209
Thesaurus Standards	213
Semantic Relationships	215
Preferred Terms	217
Polyhierarchy	219
Faceted Classification	221

### Part III. Process and Methodology

<b>10. Research</b> .....	<b>231</b>
Process Overview	232
A Research Framework	233
Context	234
Content	239
Users	246
Participant Definition and Recruiting	251
User Research Sessions	254
In Defense of Research	261
<b>11. Strategy</b> .....	<b>264</b>
What Is an Information Architecture Strategy?	265
Strategies Under Attack	266
From Research to Strategy	268
Developing the Strategy	269
Work Products and Deliverables	273
The Strategy Report	279
The Project Plan	288
Presentations	288
<b>12. Design and Documentation</b> .....	<b>291</b>
Guidelines for Diagramming an Information Architecture	292
Communicating Visually	294
Blueprints	296

Wireframes	307
Content Mapping and Inventory	313
Content Models	317
Controlled Vocabularies	324
Design Collaboration	326
Putting It All Together: Information Architecture Style Guides	329

---

## Part IV. Information Architecture in Practice

<b>13. Education</b>	<b>335</b>
Transition in Education	336
A World of Choice	336
But Do I Need a Degree?	337
The State of the Field	338
<b>14. Ethics</b>	<b>340</b>
Ethical Considerations	341
Shaping the Future	344
<b>15. Building an Information Architecture Team</b>	<b>345</b>
Destructive Acts of Creation	346
Fast and Slow Layers	347
Project Versus Program	348
Buy or Rent	349
Do We Really Need to Hire Professionals?	350
The Dream Team	352
<b>16. Tools and Software</b>	<b>354</b>
A Time of Change	354
Categories in Chaos	355
Questions to Ask	361

## Part V. Information Architecture in the Organization

<b>17. Making the Case for Information Architecture</b>	<b>365</b>
You Must Sell	365
The Two Kinds of People in the World	366
Running the Numbers	367

Talking to the Reactionaries	371
Other Case-Making Techniques	373
The Information Architecture Value Checklist	376
A Final Note	377
<b>18. Business Strategy</b> .....	<b>378</b>
The Origins of Strategy	379
Defining Business Strategy	380
Strategic Fit	382
Exposing Gaps in Business Strategy	384
One Best Way	385
Many Good Ways	385
Understanding Our Elephant	387
Competitive Advantage	389
The End of the Beginning	390
<b>19. Information Architecture for the Enterprise</b> .....	<b>392</b>
Information Architecture, Meet the Enterprise	392
What's the Goal of EIA?	394
Designing an Enterprise Information Architecture	397
EIA Strategy and Operations	411
Doing the Work and Paying the Bills	416
Timing Is Everything: A Phased Rollout	421
A Framework for Moving Forward	426
 <b>Part VI. Case Studies</b>	
<b>20. MSWeb: An Enterprise Intranet</b> .....	<b>429</b>
Challenges for the User	430
Challenges for the Information Architect	431
We Like Taxonomies, Whatever They Are	432
Benefits to Users	454
What's Next	458
MSWeb's Achievement	459