

Job Responsibilities and Requirements for an Information Architect

The IA will:

Design and deliver high-level content organization and navigation structures
Support enterprise-wide thinking about organization goals and how sites support the goals
Support organization in understanding user experience
Collaborate as an integral member of the design and development teams
Strive to make complex information clear

Gather

- Compile user research on site users and what they want to achieve on a website
- Identify content that helps support user goals and business goals
- Translate user needs into functional requirements
- Perform a content inventory showing all content elements, relationships and dependencies
- Perform comparative analyses as required; provide explanation of structures and patterns
- Identify consistent elements for information presentation
- Develop taxonomies and controlled vocabularies (for searching)
- Develop measures of success – list benchmarks for before and after comparison

Evaluate

- Work closely with site manager, web editors, graphic designers, and developers
- Ensure content meets audience and organization needs
- Use user-focused “frame” to envision real users accessing and using content

Chunk

- Identify content groupings and labels
- Conduct “card sorts” in which representative users sort and discuss content relationships
- Work with taxonomists and others in understanding the language provided by system users
- Visually present “user flows” (a visual structure to articulate how people move through information space)
- Illustrate possible interface strategies and develop “early prototype” visuals of content structure
- Work with designers and others to develop “wireframe” mockups of page layouts
- Develop templates for different “document types” (consistent structures)

Know

- Incorporate testing of labels and early prototypes
- Plan and participate in usability tests of web sites and applications
- Conduct heuristic reviews of existing web sites and applications – based on rules of thumb
- Communicate with the organization in all stages of design to answer questions about the IA strategy

Organize

- Identify document types and develop templates
- Develop and maintain information architecture deliverables such as high-level site architectures, page schematics, navigation schemes, detailed site maps, wireframes, user scenarios, and prototypes.

Possible Job Requirements:

- Minimum of 3 years experience in information architecture/usability , or equivalent
 - (show equivalency via classes, volunteer projects, visual samples)
- Ability to work with internal clients and users to understand their goals
 - (be able to articulate what process you follow)
- Solid knowledge of the principles of information architecture, usability, and web-based user experience design.
 - (be able to articulate what how you have applied this knowledge to support customer benefits)
- Experience with:
 - organizing websites
 - observing user research and translating user research into design decisions
 - working with a content management system
 - working with page layout tools, typically Visio
 - managing usability tests
 - working in a database driven web environment
- Experience working in an internet consulting environment or in the e-business or Web communications area of a corporation/organization/Government
- A BA/BS degree
 - (continuing education always translates well.... New programs are emerging)
- Familiarity with best practices on the Web
 - (maintaining current understanding of web practices)
- Ability to translate usability test data into design strategy
 - (show relationships)
- Ability to communicate with partners in the organization, and manage expectations
 - (understand context)
- Strong time management, communication (verbal and written) skills, and interpersonal skills
- Strong research, analytical, and synthesis skills
- Familiarity with Web site tracking and other analytics tools