Abstract

The value of publishing information on the Internet is in the combination of access and connections. While many institutions began with the concept of a single web site – a home page linked to pages organized into sections – this model is obsolete. Most major cultural institutions have created an Enterprise Web Space, a combination of many web sites, databases, publications, special exhibitions, membership information, and related digital resources. To create effective Enterprise Web Space, we must apply information architecture principles, organizing the information we want to share in relation to the needs of our audience. The role of Information Architecture is a combination of information analysis and design, to identify and visualize structures that help users find and follow connections. This workshop will focus on examples of Enterprise Web Space from selected cultural institutions including museums, libraries, and international organizations.

Information Architecture is

- discovering the kinds of information the site contains
- matching this information to the needs of the users
- determining the appropriate metadata structure

Information is

- a difference that makes a difference
- a pattern that provides a structure for understanding

The IA must understand

the data
- text coding systems: SGML/XML
- database storage
- information retrieval

the interaction models
- principals of user interface design
- user-based design methodology
- the limits of current web browser technology
The IA must mediate

— the requirements of a **client**, who wants to present information
— the needs of the **user**, who needs to find and consume that information
— balance between the **desirable** and the **possible**

**Analysis**

— What is the goal of the web site?
— What are the client’s needs?
— What are the user’s needs?
— What is the nature of the content?

**Catalog:** What is the current web space?
Enterprise Web Space: Definition

- The Enterprise Web Space consists of all digital assets accessible through the Internet: public and private.
- For the internal intranet audience and for the public audience, the Enterprise Web Space already exists.
- Each part of the Enterprise Web Space is often managed by separate groups, under separate budgets and administration.

Enterprise Web Space: The Problem

- An inability to see and manage this large space results in
  - absent or shallow user interface design guidelines
  - poor user experience
  - inefficient use of resources across the Enterprise.
- Users are aware of a small fraction (10%) of the available resources.
- Users cannot find related information distributed among many web sites.

The EWS can be understood as made of four types of collections:

- Web Sites: a group of related web sites, divided among public, intranet, and extranet spaces
- Content Collections: content collections being a set of related documents or content aggregations, accessed by or contained within web sites
- Applications: web accessible applications including both data repositories and database published web pages
- User Identity: collections of user identity information related to access rights for some or all of the EWS

Information about all collections are contained in two indexes:

- Search indices: search engines and associated indices containing information on collections of web pages or other database repositories.
- Link indices: collections of internal and external links that provide the navigational connections among the collections

Plus

- Web logs: logs recording HTTP server transactions
The role of visualization / mapping

- Visualization follows analysis
- Visualization unites the members of the team
- Visualization comes before wireframes
- Visualization comes before design

Some historical inspirations

- Peutinger Table
- Erhard Etzlaub Romweb maps (1490s)
- Some modern Link-Node Diagrams
- Turgot map of Paris engraved by Bretez and Lucas (1734-39)
- French satirical map of Europe (1870)
- Harry Beck London Underground map (1930s)

Why map web sites

- Visualize
  - Help the client “see” what already exists
  - Visualize the structural implications of a set of requirements
  - Visualize the Information Architecture of a web space
  - Create an overview that communicates more than the details it contains
  - Electronic documents are “invisible”
Applications of isometric projection for visualizing web sites

- Card
  - skewed at 30° to surface of XY grid
- Box or Carpet
  - color fill of surface plane
  - metaphor of “slide tray”