

**Current Trends—Information Architecture & Usability Testing  
The Creative Information Architecture Model (The IA Model)**

*An Online Tutorial for Instructional Designers to Learn about Information Architecture*

**AN ONLINE TUTORIAL FOR INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNERS  
TO LEARN ABOUT INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE**



1. Design Research	2. Concept Generation	3. User Scenarios	4. Wire Frame Mockups
5. Prototyping	6. Usability Testing	7. Implementation	8. System Testing
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By  
**STEVEN HEITMAN**

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A Creative Work Thesis Report

Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for:

**MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN EDUCATION**

**With a Concentration in Instructional Technologies**

By

**STEVEN HEITMAN**

San Francisco, California

May 2008

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**CERTIFICATION OF APPROVAL**

I certify that I have supervised and read the Creative Work Thesis Report: *An Online Tutorial for Instructional Designers to Learn about Information Architecture* by Steven Heitman. In my opinion, it meets the criteria for approving a culminating study submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Education (MAEd) at San Francisco State University.

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Approved by COE Graduate Committee  
San Francisco State University  
College of Education

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**SR INFORMATION ARCHITECT SPECIALIST**

**CORPORATE TRAINING SPECIALIST**

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- The NS Model
- The IA Model
- The ADDIE Model

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**Steven Heitman  
San Francisco State University  
May 2008**

**ABSTRACT**

This Instructional Design Plan and Thesis Report are comprised of eight sections that detail pertinent instructional design theories and solid instructional design pedagogical approaches for creating an excellent online learning environment and resource about Information Architecture. The purpose and significance of this Instructional Design Plan is to create a viable Instructional Design Plan based upon The ADDIE Model, and also developing an online tutorial for Corporate Trainers to learn about The Creative Information Architecture Model (The IA Model)—current trends in Information Architecture. The online IA tutorial about Information Architecture can provide or supplement a learner’s knowledge base about the professional practice of Information Architecture, usability testing, and Website design. Since Information Architecture and user-centered design adds value, structure, and integrity to Websites, this online tutorial provides meaningful online learning experiences for learners that desire to learn about The IA Model. Instructional Designers may find this tutorial especially useful because they can easily relate to a new Model—understanding why a systematic approach increases the level of usability on Websites and user-centered design for digital design products—that makes: sense-making, findability, and wayfinding easier for learners. The Thesis Report and Online IA Tutorial were reviewed by Senior Information Architects, Director of User Experience, Technical Writer, Writer and Editor, and a Chief Executive Officer, and a one-on-one pilot test was done—all of these items were deemed appropriate, effective tools for learning, and content was assessed as accurate with regard to Information Architecture and Usability Testing.

I certify that the Abstract is a true and correct representation of the content for this Creative Work Thesis Report.

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**TRADEMARKS**

Trademarked names appear throughout this Creative Work project and Thesis Report. Rather than list all of the names and organizations that own the trademarked names, the researcher, Steven Heitman, states that he is using the names only for editorial purposes and to the benefit of the trademark owners, with no intention of infringing upon that trademark.

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**EPIGRAPH**

I am a great believer in having professional information architects design the structure of professional information projects such as corporate Website and Intranets. But I also think there will be an increasing role for personal information architecture in the future. It will soon be time to teach a simplified version of the discipline to high school students, and possibly even to bring it into elementary schools.

**—Jakob Nielsen**  
**Usability Expert**

After all, usability really just means making sure that something works well: that a person of average (or even below average) ability and experience can use the thing—whether it's a Website, a fighter jet, or a revolving door—for its intended purpose without getting hopelessly frustrated.

**—Steve Krug**  
**Usability Expert**

Information Architecture, navigational systems, user-centered design, and usability testing improves an end user's performance—if incorporated into Websites or digital design products prior to implementation—using The Creative Information Architecture Model (The IA Model). It provides a systematic approach for producing high-quality Websites or digital design products for any person.

**—Steven Heitman**  
**Senior Information Architect**

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**REVIEWS**

It does a good job of introducing Information Architecture concepts to a student, and offers numerous modes of communication, including illustrations, links, diagrams, and citations from authoritative sources....  
...an excellent courseware module and a solid introduction to the topic of Information Architecture.

**—Christian Crumlish  
Senior Information Architect**

Great stuff!

**—Natalie Buda  
Director of User Experience  
Senior Information Architect**

His work in his Thesis Report and detailed analysis, instructional design goals and objectives, and online IA tutorial are on target. The tutorial works well for delivery of instructional materials....

**—Megan Descalso  
Writer, Editor**

I'm really impressed with the site. It's got a very professional look and feel to it. I'm impressed by the strong visual/graphic contrast. It helps to differentiate areas of the tutorial. I also liked that you employed an engaging and reassuring writing style. It fits with the intended audience. It's a smart move, because the subject matter and the scope of the tutorial could be perceived as a little intimidating to a beginner. For someone like me, who has little to no experience with this subject matter, the writing style was comforting. I felt at ease embarking on the tutorial. Nice work. Really well done!

**—Raymond Angelo  
Technical Writer**

Through analysis of the researcher's work, it is congruent with my experiences in regard to using Websites. The researcher's knowledge base of Information Architecture, usability testing, and navigational systems speaks to the importance, significance, of user-centered design. Steven's research is extremely coherent, valid, and valuable regarding Information Architecture concepts and inventions on navigational systems.

**—Deborah A. Jacobs  
Chief Executive Officer  
Product Designer**

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**Steven Heitman  
Senior Information Architect  
San Francisco, CA USA**