

Information Architecture: Case Study for AV/ITVC



IA Design & Usability: Case Study

Topic: Information Architecture: Case Study for AV/ITVC

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Last updated: September 1, 2008.

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Podcasting

State of technology today:

- Used to deliver information on portable device.

For example (see below):



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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:**Case Study for AV/ITVC**

My Role and Client Deliverables

- Project management
- Information architecture
- Research and development
- Writing case study and user scenarios
- Producing wire frame mockups
- Producing flow chart
- Website design and production
- HTML coding
- Coordinating events and client presentations
- Brainstorming with group
- Developing templates and forms
- IA is not responsible for maintaining (AV/ITVC)
Audio Visual Instructional Television Center's Website

Information Architecture (IA)—What I Did

The main navigational system consists of seven main categories that are included on every Web page in the Website (see wire mockups that show Web page designs, Figures 1, 2). These main categories were placed on the top and left side (see Figure 2) to provide easy access to new end users, professors, and staff.

Main Navigational System on Top

- Cable cast
- Equipment distribution
- Media catalog
- Online forms

Main Navigational System on Left Side

- Information
- Services
- Support

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Wire Frame Mockup

(Shows Main Navigational System on Top and on Left Side)

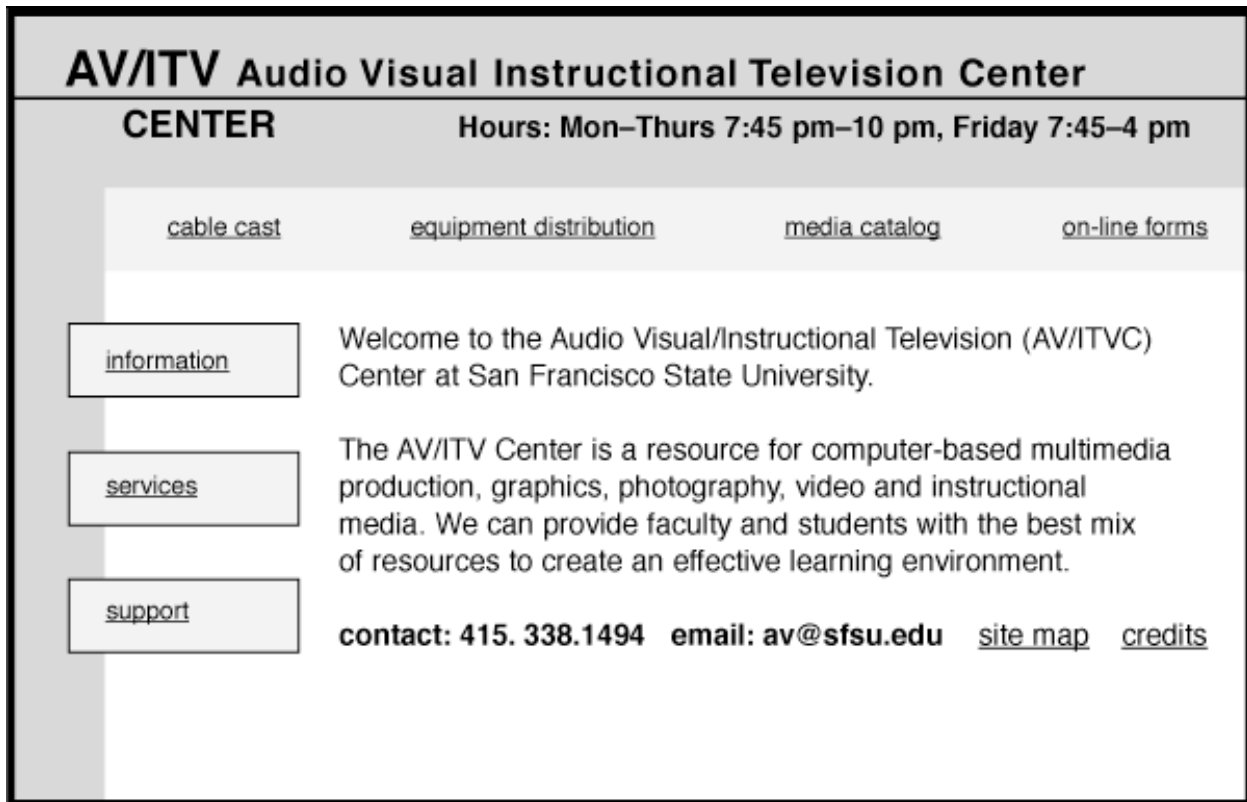


Figure 1: Wire Frame Mockup of AV/ITVC's Homepage

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Wire Frame Mockup (Shows Sub Web Page)

The wire frame mockup shows a sub-web page for the AV/ITV Center. At the top, there is a header bar with the text "AV/ITV CENTER". Below this is a main heading "Media Catalog". A navigation bar contains four links: "cable cast", "equipment distribution", "> media catalog" (which is highlighted), and "on-line forms". On the left side, there is a vertical menu with three buttons: "information", "services", and "support". The main content area features a paragraph: "The AV/ITV Center's media collection includes up to a total of 9,000 titles for the video tapes, video disks, CDs, and 16mm films." Below this is a search box with the label "Search for the keyword" and a "GO" button. Further down, there is a link for "subject & alphabetical listings (1.4.a.-2.d.1.)" and a section titled "Procedures:" with the text: "We will check out anything in our collection to anyone with a faculty or an administration card. There is no limit on the number of videos you may check out. Our check-out form has room for 14 titles."

Figure 2: Wire Frame Mockup of AV/ITVC's Sub Web Page

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Project Description

The AV/ITVC subsite is part of San Francisco State University's Website. The center is a resource for computerized multimedia production, graphics, photography, video, and instructional design media. Staff provides faculty and students with extensive resource for an effective learning environment for college students. The team did a complete revamp of the subsite, including interface design. Steven Heitman developed information architecture and did project management, content development, technical writing, as well as HTML coding.

Target Audiences

The target audiences are:

- Professors
- Instructors
- Lecturers
- American students
- International students

Statement of Purpose

We will provide the necessary development of information architecture for AV/ITVC's Website, including new navigational systems, new interface design, and better organization of subsite.

Main Objectives

Information architecture is to be consistent and easy for end users to use while surfing online. The existing subsite had no information architecture developed and therefore lacks in structure. The main objective is to add online forms—if possible—online signup for equipment, cable cast, and evaluation form. Per our evaluation, no navigational systems were in place on subsite.

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Colors

- **Text** (almost black) #333366
- **Link** (purple) #0000FF
- **VLink** (lighter purple) #CC6666
- **ALink** (even lighter purple) #9999FF
- **Background** (white) #FFFFFF

Size of Web Pages

- Splash page 600 pixels by 350 pixels; Web pages 600 pixels by 700

Process and Timeline

- Design research
- Concept development
- Creation of user scenarios and personas
- Production of wire frame mockups
- User interface design
- Rapid prototyping
- Usability testing (see Figure 3, Matrix)
- Implementation
- System testing
- Timeline for project was 4 months with tasks assigned to team members
- Steven Heitman developed Gantt chart for timeline. Dependencies established for deliverables to client—tight deadlines were met due to my project management skills

Usability Testing

The information architect interviewed 10 students. They were observed while using new prototype. They remarked that navigational systems developed by IA were easy to use as well as providing a better IA structure for end users because it was faster and easier to find information. In addition, the new search system implemented assisted end users to complete comprehensive searches using Website. User centered design was incorporated into design process in order to create high-quality information architecture and structure for this Website.

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Information Architecture Research Questions

- Does the interface design work—why or why not?
- Is the content appropriate—why or why not?
- Do the navigational systems work—why or why not?
- Does the color scheme work—why or why not?
- Are there any usability issues—why or why not?

Matrix for Information Architecture Research Questions:	3 Excellent	2 Good	1 Poor
Ease of Use <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unity of Web page design • Predictable and clear navigation • 1-3 clicks to get to information • Aesthetically pleasing design 			
Remarks:			
User Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legibility and reading speed • Good use of the screen in all resolutions • Printer-friendliness • Browser compatibility • Respect interface standards • Icons work or do not work • Use of colors 			
Remarks:			
Practical Value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informative homepage • Contact information • Search and search results • Up to date and correct information • Language and copywriting appropriate/not appropriate 			
Remarks:			

Figure 3: Matrix for Usability Testing

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Meetings with Client

We had several meetings with the client and interview subject matter experts. The team works collectively to develop items mentioned in this case study. They have decided on their content and developed text more fully, per my recommendations, as well as working with our technical writer. I have already completed the flow chart for this project. They have no idea about what is necessary or required for the production of a Website. We have to give them step-by-step instructions about the process of Website design, developing information architecture solutions—and deliverables required for this project.

HTML Editor

We are doing the HTML code from scratch and then importing it into Dreamweaver (HTML documents), including development of templates and forms.

Flow Chart and Information Architecture

We have to meet with the client to discuss the information architecture, including the structure on the newly developed flow chart by Steven Heitman, Information Architect, (an easier to see flow chart, see Figure 4, in a larger format is included online at http://www.stevenheitman-ia.com/html/ia/av_itvc/html/av_3.html and in this PDF).

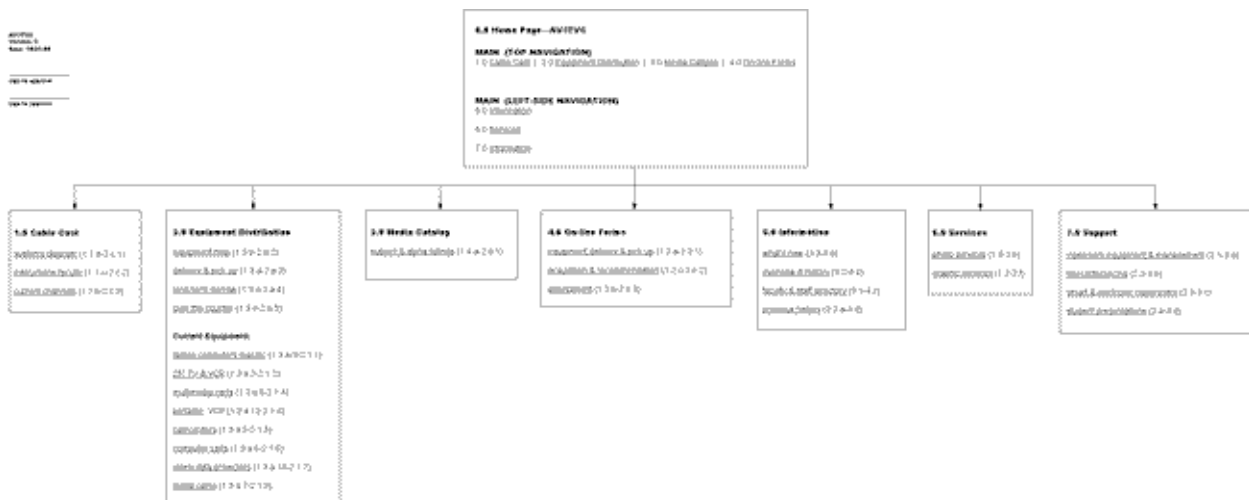


Figure 4: Flow Chart for AV/ITVC

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Main Navigational Systems

The client told me they want this main navigational system in place, which consists of 7 main categories included on every Web page: cable cast, equipment distribution, media catalog, and online forms. The main categories on the left side are: information, services, and support. The other navigational system in place will be ad hoc links per flow chart.

Interface Design

The interface design on this Website reflects school colors as well as designed with Web safe colors. The client provided their insights into what they desire to interface designer.

Content

The client has agreed to have a technical writer produce text per my direction and in an MS Word document for easy access for our team. The technical writer is working with the client to develop text and make necessary editorial changes.

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Two User Scenarios

User Scenario No. 1

Ms. Nancy Noble, M.A., is a Lecturer, DAI Department. Ms. Noble is overworked and has an extremely tight teaching schedule. Many students look to her for advice—they are constantly tugging at her for advice. Ms. Noble teaches in the Design and Industry Department at San Francisco State University. Her specialty is graphic design and printing technology. She has been at DAI for 30 years. Ms. Noble is new to the Internet. She does not have that much experience when surfing (compared to her 13 year old son). She says, “That new technology scares me.”

She indicated previously she attempted to use the SFSU Website, but she was unable to access the information sought after. She stated, “I got lost and then give up.” Ms. Noble would like to be able to go online via the main SFSU Website and get quickly in to the AV/ITVC subsite. She feels it would be a great asset to her to be able to sign up while online for the “Mac carts.” She stated, “I use them all the time. I have to check out at least 5-10 carts a week.” She does not want to rely on a teacher’s assistant since they may not have time themselves to check out equipment. Ms. Noble uses the AV/ITVC Website at least 10-15 times per week. Since she is new to the Internet, she would like to find information “quickly, easily, and effortlessly.”

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User Scenario No. 2

Dr. Dierke is a Professor, DAI Department. Dr. Dierke has taught at SFSU for 35 years. In fact, he did both undergraduate and graduate work at DAI. He has extensive experience in surfing. He would also like to be able to check out equipment from AV/ITVC online. Dr. Dierke indicated that: “The current AV/ITVC site does not meet my needs.” Because “I can’t check out equipment online,” he gets tired of having to run down to AV/ITVC all the time to take care of business.

He prefers to eliminate all of the hassles. Dr. Dierke would like to be able to find the information quickly from the AV/ITVC subsite. He felt that the site was in desperate need of reorganization. He did not understand the current scheme, in terms of how the information is organized. He stated: “The current site is confusing to me.” And also: “I cannot find what I’m looking for on the AV/ITVC site; time to redo it.” Dr. Dierke suffers from a physical disability, and it pains him to walk down to AV/ITVC. He stated: “I need to be able to sign up online for equipment because of my problem.” Dr. Dierke uses the Website at least “5-7 times per week.” He also uses the AV/ITVC site to set up video casting and to check out videotapes. He uses the online Media Catalog to look up titles. He checks out Mac carts at least “4-5 times a week.”

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Conclusion: Successful Completion of Project

My client's feedback was extremely positive about my Information Architecture skills and work done on their project. A letter of recommendation was provided to me. See Figures 5, 6 below.

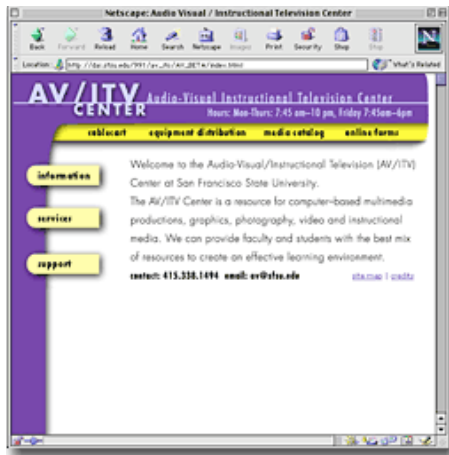


Figure 5: AV/ITVC's Homepage

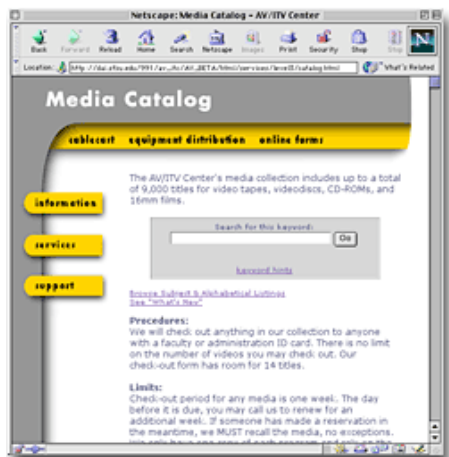


Figure 6: Media Catalog—Shows Integrated Search Feature