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SUPPLEMENTAL TO RÉSUMÉ

INFORMATION ARCHITECT, USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN & PROJECT MANAGEMENT SKILLS

What Can I Do for Your Organization?

Let me tell you a little about my background and special skills in Information Architecture, User Experience Design, and Project Management. I am looking for an appropriate match—full-time, permanent employment situation as an Information Architect, User Experience Designer, and Project Manager—or in a related field.

Because I accomplished my undergraduate work in Information Architecture and Design, I did additional work at the graduate level. My graduate degree was in **Information Architecture, Navigational Systems, Project Management, and Design** (my education also extends in to Product Design). Previously, my other undergraduate work included a degree in metaphysical counseling, which is an asset for any person working in Project Management—as this gives me additional interpersonal-relating skills and excellent negotiation skills—when working with team members or stakeholders.

In addition, I completed additional degree work in **Technical & Professional Writing** as well as another extensive graduate-level degree in **Information Architecture, User Experience Design, Project Management, Usability Testing, E-Learning, and Corporate Training**. Both Theses Reports were specialized in Information Architecture—my last thesis report on Information Architecture—The IA Model—it was 759 pages. I completed an extensive program at The Multimedia Studies Program at The University, earning an **IA Certification in Internet Design & Technology**. I also have **IA Certifications** through the **IA MAIA** and **IA MAEd** programs. Every program I participated in provided extensive vocational training and skills, doing Information Architecture and Project Management. While I have been at The University and doing internships for a number of years, this equates out to more than the minimal requirement for work experience, including prior work experience at corporations in a related field.

Information Architect and Project Management Work Experiences

I completed internships at The University relevant to my career goals. Internships were successfully completed for The Youth Law Center as well as at The University—other relevant projects. Because of my unique experiences and credentials, I am qualified to work in my chosen field—as an Information Architect, User Experience Designer, and Project Manager, including doing Corporate Training and Technical Writing. I was also reviewed by well-known Professionals and Professors in the industry and found to be competent.



Information Architecture Online Portfolio Website and Contact

If you desire to review my online Information Architect portfolio Website, please see <http://www.stevenheitman-ia.com>. If you need to contact me, I can be contacted via email at mailto@stevenheitman-ia.com or by telephone. I prefer to be contacted via email with a job order and/or description about the Information Architect, User Experience Design, and Project Management position—or a position in a related field. I prefer to take telephone interviews by appointment. Thank you for your time and consideration.

What is Information Architecture?

Since Information Architecture is such a young profession, it is difficult to know exactly how to define what Information Architecture is or is not. The other problem with defining the professional practice of Information Architecture is that many universities or colleges do not offer any specialized degrees in Information Architecture, though. During the last decade, because Information Architecture is an emerging profession, a few universities currently offer Information Architecture or interaction design in graduate-level programs.

Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_architecture) gives this definition for Information Architecture.

The Information Architecture Institute (<http://iainstitute.org/en>) gives this definition for **Information Architecture** as:

1. The structural design of shared information environments.
2. The art and science of organizing and labeling Websites, Intranets, online communities and software—to support usability and findability.
3. An emerging community of practice focused on bringing principles of design and architecture to the digital landscape.

The term **Information Architecture** describes a specialized skill set, which relates to the interpretation of information and expression of distinctions between signs and systems of signs. It has some degree of origin in the library sciences. Many library schools [and graphic design schools] teach **Information Architecture**.

Navigational Systems and User-Centered Design

A few years ago, the author did extensive, specific research on Navigational Systems and how, when, or why Navigational Systems are designed for specific Websites. Navigational Systems should be included in wire frame mockups for a Website. Per Heitman (2000), the researcher and author found these basic Navigational Systems comprise most integrated Navigational Systems:

Seven Navigational Systems, in myriad combinations, are used in Websites for navigating by end users. Navigational Systems are naturally integrated together in Information Architecture design concepts.

For effective navigation within a Website, Navigational Systems are integrated together—research revealed that these seven commonly used navigational systems are:

1. Hierarchical Navigational Systems,
2. Global Navigational Systems,
3. Local Navigational Systems,
4. Integrated Navigational Systems,
5. Remote Navigational Systems,
6. Ad Hoc Navigational Systems, and
7. Search Engines in Websites.

Research and Development of Information Architecture for Websites

Information Architects do research, usually accomplished by first doing a needs assessment or competitive analysis, using methods-of-design research and procedures. These documents should include: specific research and a design plan, a competitive analysis, wire frame mockups, flow chart, schematics, and supporting documentation.

Information Architects consult closely with a client or corporation to determine what their needs will be prior to designing and implementing a Website. Who has to use all of these online products? The answer to that question is clear that human beings use Websites. Information Architects meet with clients or stakeholders and interviews subject matter experts—to get at what the real need is for a client's business requirements and for end users. This means developing a viable design plan report and solution prior to implementation of digital design products.

Understanding requirements for design plans are helpful to others that desire to produce high-quality Websites. In the long run, end users do benefit from user-centered design. Since information is then appropriately structured and Navigational Systems developed, end users can more effectively use a Website and then concentrate on using it. Information Architects use a variety of software programs to produce required documentation.

Information Architects create flow charts or schematics using Visio, OmniGraffle, and Inspiration. Then draws wire frame mockups, using Adobe Creative Suite or other software programs. One might develop a few working prototypes using Photoshop, Illustrator, ImageReady, Dreamweaver (wire frame mockups or online working prototypes). Then experienced computer programmers make code refinements. Information Architects are primarily concerned with the conceptual design part-of-the-project, incorporating user-centered design into every digital design product.

The Adobe Creative Suite (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adobe_Creative_Suite), Visio, OmniGraffle, Inspiration are software programs used by Information Architects to develop and produce Information Architecture documentation for reports. It is an individual's choice and decision to use software programs that best serve their particular professional goals.

Implementation of Information Architecture Increases Productivity

Developing Websites or online training programs benefit from having Information Architecture done prior to implementation. That also means doing usability testing and continuously making evaluations to see if Websites really work—or do not work. Doing Information Architecture prior to implementing a final version of a Website may save a corporation a lot of money and time. If the Website is designed to work right and more usable, end users will desire to use the Website. If end users get frustrated when online, they may not be able to quickly find information they want to get at and say: “forget it.” Information Architects figure out objectives—their goal is to create meaningful experiences for end users—this makes using online products easier. That means incorporating user-centered design and “best practices” in all design products!

Since Information Architecture is a complicated subject matter, it cannot be fully elucidated in this brief synopsis. Many Information Architects have completed in-depth graduate-level programs to specialize in Information Architecture and usability testing. This enables them to specialize in Information Architecture, designing Navigational Systems—fully integrated Navigational Systems and search functions for design products. Other aspects include: interaction design, developing and performing usability tests after production—prior to implementation. Because Information Architecture is such a specialized arena, now universities are beginning to develop and offer advanced degree programs.

The value of doing Information Architecture, in the long run, reduces usability issues—lack of user-centered design. It can save corporations money. It increases productivity for their work force and raises a return on their investment because end users and employees are better able to use Websites or other design products. While a few critics may interject they feel it is not worth spending extra money for an Information Architect, viable research demonstrates one's money is well spent on Information Architects and usability experts. For increased profit margins and higher productivity for end users (for a variety of audiences—from employees to people who use the Internet), Information Architects and Usability Experts design Websites that work more effectively, increasing productivity and profit margins for corporations.

Using The IA Model

Steven Heitman is the original author of the **The IA (Information Architecture) Model**. Following a standardized systematic approach, this provides Information Architects and instructional designers with a better way to document their researched findings in detailed reports. A systematic approach is an iterative process and incorporates high-quality designs or well thought out conceptual ideas into design products. Another good reason for using an Information Architecture model is that it gives one a way to more readily and easily communicate with stakeholders as well as with team members.

The IA Model provides a systematic approach for doing specific Information Architecture design research, and it helps in an iterative design process to communicate to others and do high-quality work. If a good model and systematic approach is followed, it provides a solid framework for every person on the team. In addition, using a model is an excellent way to communicate and document conceptual ideas. It enables researchers to do brainstorming and create good designs. Let us talk about The IA Model.

The IA Model is comprised of eight steps: 1. Design Research, 2. Concept Generation, 3. User Scenarios, 4. Wire Frame Mockups, 5. Prototyping, 6. Usability Testing, 7. Implementation, and 8. System Testing (see Figure 1). Thus, The IA Model provides a systematic approach for every person to use on projects. While it is true processes and procedures have to be followed, The IA Model provides a solid framework and excellent model that any person can use on projects, including a systematic approach for building Websites or other digital design products.

The IA Model

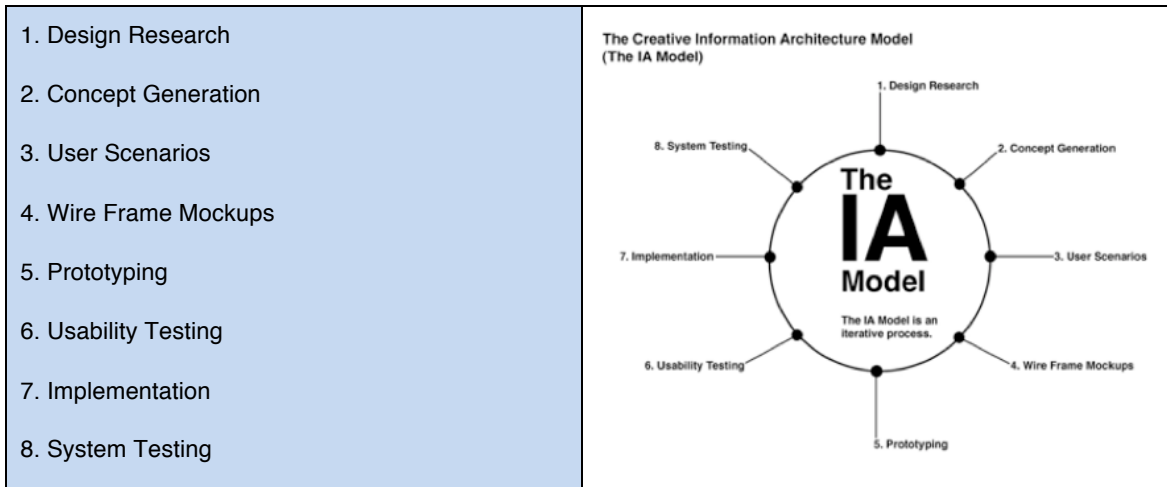


Figure 1: The IA Model

Experience Doing Information Architecture, User Experience Design, Project Management

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