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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Users, Content & Context



Users, Content & Context

Lecture Contents

- ① Overview
- ② The User
- ③ The Content
- ④ The Context
- ⑤ Bibliography



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OVERVIEW

Information Architecture can be grouped into **three important elements** [1]:



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Users, Content & Context

OVERVIEW

Information Architecture can be grouped into **three important elements** [1]:



THE USER



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Users, Content & Context

OVERVIEW

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THE USER



THE CONTENT



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Users, Content & Context

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THE USER



THE CONTENT



THE CONTEXT



USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Users, Content & Context

Users, Content & Context

The User



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Users, Content & Context



[Video] Career Foundry - *What Is Information Architecture?* [1]



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THE USER



Users are at the center of any digital experience, and information architecture is inherently **user-centric**. IA involves understanding **the needs, preferences, behaviors**, and **mental models** of the target audience.

By considering user characteristics and **designing with their perspectives in mind**, information architecture helps create interfaces that are **intuitive, user-friendly**, and **aligned with user expectations**.

Through user research, personas, user journeys, and usability testing, IA ensures that the structure and organization of information **resonate** with users, leading to **improved usability and satisfaction**.

[2]



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Users, Content & Context

THE USER



It is important to remember **WHO** you are designing for!

Making use of **Mental Models** – obtained through research – is a very useful source of information that will help in this area.

According to Herben, a Mental Model is “**Someone’s thought process and how they perceive the world.**”

Mental models are **expectations of users** formed through **experiences of existing products or experiences**. For example, the default mapping of a specific game genre’s controls to an input device, which is based on other games that have set a standard and/or expectation.



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The Content



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[Video] Career Foundry - *What Is Information Architecture?* [1]



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THE CONTENT

Content is the substance that **fills the digital experience**, including **text, images, videos**, and **interactive elements**. Information architecture plays a crucial role in organizing and presenting content in a logical and intuitive manner.

By **structuring content hierarchically, categorizing information**, and **designing navigation pathways**, IA ensures that users can find the content they need **quickly and easily**.

Effective information architecture **optimizes content discoverability** and enhances the overall user experience by presenting information in a **coherent and accessible way**. [3]



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THE CONTENT

Example:

Complex options screens in games are often **divided up into categories** to allow players to focus on **specific elements**.





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THE CONTENT

Cognitive load is the **mental effort required by someone** to get through a task. When this load gets too high, users are more likely to **make mistakes, feel overwhelmed**, or **abandon the task** altogether.

When considering your content, it is **important to guide users** and **only show relevant information** to minimise cognitive load. [3]



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Users, Content & Context



THE CONTENT

The Nielsen Norman Group website suggest **four principles** to help with reducing Cognitive Load:

- 1 Structure
- 2 Transparency
- 3 Clarity
- 4 Support



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Users, Content & Context



THE CONTENT

The Nielsen Norman Group website suggest **four principles** to help with reducing Cognitive Load:

① Structure

Human brains naturally **look for patterns and relationships** in information. When content is structured logically, users can see the big picture, understand how different pieces fit together, and move through your experience or product more **efficiently**.

A clear **visual hierarchy** naturally guides users' attention to the most important elements. When implemented effectively, this hierarchy clarifies relationships between components and **helps users understand the overall structure** at a glance. [3]



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Users, Content & Context



THE CONTENT

The Nielsen Norman Group website suggest **four principles** to help with reducing Cognitive Load:

① Structure

Visual Hierarchy is a topic in itself and will be covered in more detail in a future session in the module.



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Users, Content & Context



THE CONTENT

The Nielsen Norman Group website suggest **four principles** to help with reducing Cognitive Load:

2 Transparency

Uncertainty increases cognitive load — when users don't know where they are or cannot predict what comes next, **they must spend mental energy on speculation** rather than completion.

Transparency builds trust and puts users in control, making the experience feel **predictable and less stressful**. [3]



THE CONTENT

The Nielsen Norman Group website suggest **four principles** to help with reducing Cognitive Load:

3 Clarity

Clear instructions and design ensure that users don't waste precious mental resources deciphering how to interact with the interface.

Using plain language benefits all users, regardless of their background or expertise.

On the other hand, technical jargon, internal company terminology, or overly complex language **creates barriers that slow users down and lead to confusion.** [3]



THE CONTENT

The Nielsen Norman Group website suggest **four principles** to help with reducing Cognitive Load:

4

Support

Offering **visible, persistent guidance** should prevent mistakes before they happen, providing timely assistance when errors occur. Please note this can be achieved through **good design flow** as well as literal guides such as prompts.

Consistent, thoughtful support **builds user confidence** and makes users more likely to stick with your product or experience until they have achieved their goal. [3]



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Users, Content & Context

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The Context



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Users, Content & Context



THE CONTEXT

Context refers to the **broader environment** in which the digital experience exists. This encompasses factors such as the **user's goals, tasks**, and the **specific circumstances** in which they interact with the product or service.

Information architecture takes into account the context to ensure that the **structure and organization of information are relevant and meaningful** within the given context.

Understanding the context **helps designers create interfaces that are tailored to users' needs and scenarios**, ultimately **enhancing usability and user satisfaction**. Context is the goal of the design, and it needs to define where and why the user uses the content. [2]



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Users, Content & Context



[Video] Career Foundry - *What Is Information Architecture?* [1]



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Users, Content & Context

THE CONTEXT

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USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Users, Content & Context



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USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Users, Content & Context

Users, Content & Context

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USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Users, Content & Context

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