



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Information Architecture



Information Architecture 1

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Overview



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OVERVIEW

Information architecture (**also known as IA**) is the process by which **content is organized and made readily available to users**. It encompasses and makes sense of the work of multiple fields, including marketing, sales, design, and customer service.

It is **similar** to User Experience Design but the two disciplines are distinct [1]:



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It is **similar** to User Experience Design but the two disciplines are distinct [1]:

- UX design is **broader**, focusing on **creating a positive and meaningful user experience** through intuitive interfaces and interactions



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It is **similar** to User Experience Design but the two disciplines are distinct [1]:

- UX design is **broader**, focusing on **creating a positive and meaningful user experience** through intuitive interfaces and interactions
- Information architecture focuses on **organizing and structuring content** to make it **easily accessible**



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OVERVIEW

Information Architecture is the practice of **organizing content in an effective way**.

The famous UX designer, **Jared Spool**, stated that “Good design, when it’s done well, becomes invisible. It’s only when it’s done poorly that we notice it.”

The same applies for information architecture (IA). When all is in order, it becomes invisible [2].



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



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OVERVIEW

According to Career Foundry, **Information Architecture** is the structure and organization of **information in a digital space**.

Maureen Herben summarises Information architecture as the following:



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OVERVIEW

According to Career Foundry, **Information Architecture** is the structure and organization of **information in a digital space**.

Maureen Herben summarises Information Architecture as the following:

**Where can I find information
quickly and easily?**



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Types of Information Architecture



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TYPES OF INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

IA is **structure, not navigation**.

There are many ways to structure any set of information. **Depending on the content type** or project goals **some ways are more suitable** than others.



|



Benefits of Search Design



Search Design Tips



TYPES OF INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

One (or at most two) of the following approaches are normally used to **define your IA structure**:

CATEGORIES

Some things are like other things

TASKS

What do you want to do?

SEARCH

Used when Too many types of things for the 'category' approach

TIME

News feeds and Social Media

PEOPLE

Often used with categories, e.g. photos, friends, posts



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Key Processes for IA



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KEY PROCESSES FOR IA

The **information architecture** of a website needs to be designed very early in the project. Ideally the information gathered to support this should be done as part of the **user research**.

Some of the key processes undertaken to define the best Information Architecture for your product include:

- **Brainstorming**
- **Card Sorting**
- **Creation of an Information Architecture Document**



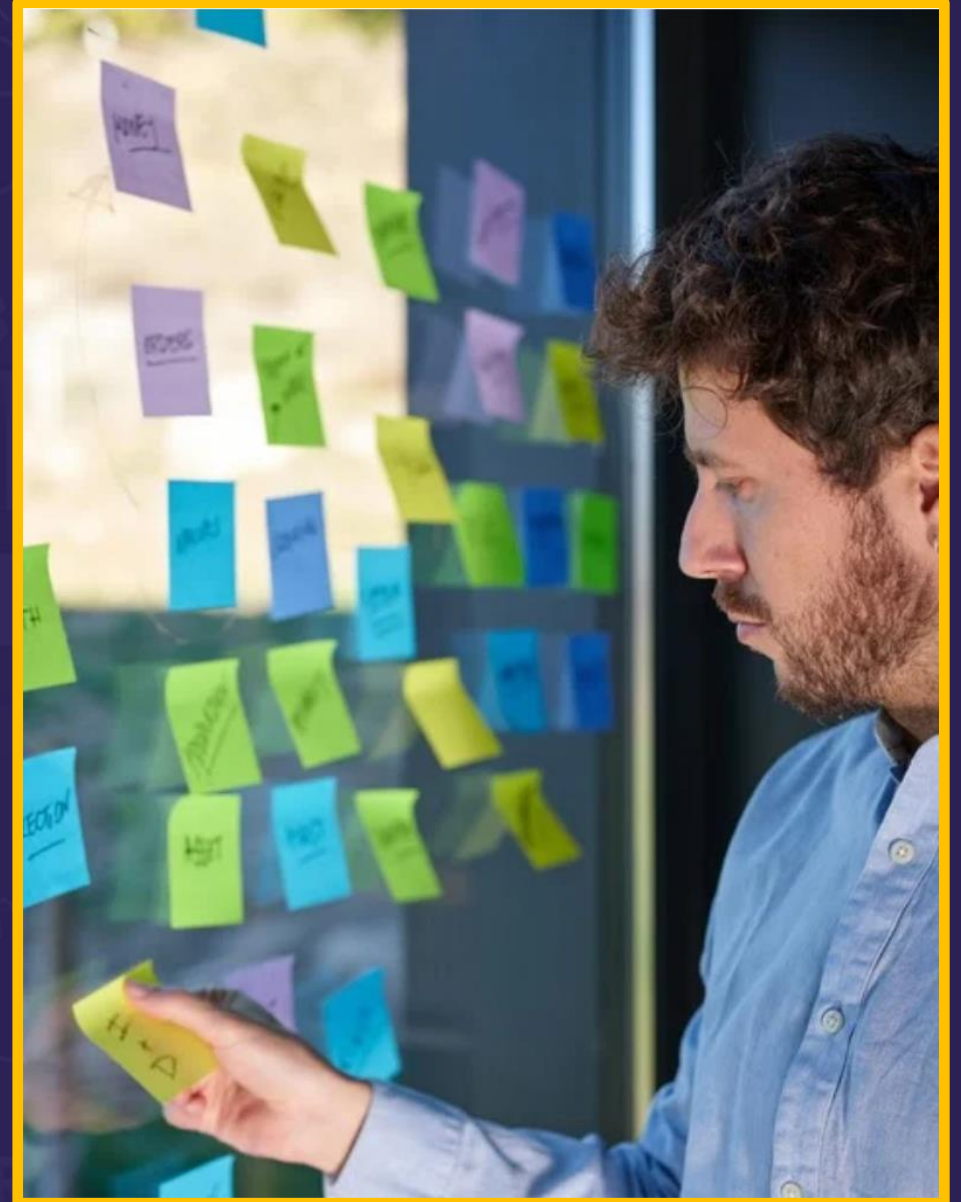
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KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is a business technique used to **generate large numbers of ideas in a short time**. These ideas can then be **considered for their suitability** to the solution required.

Often UX designers have to **brainstorm to generate an initial list**, then take it to users and/or clients to see if there is **anything else to add**.

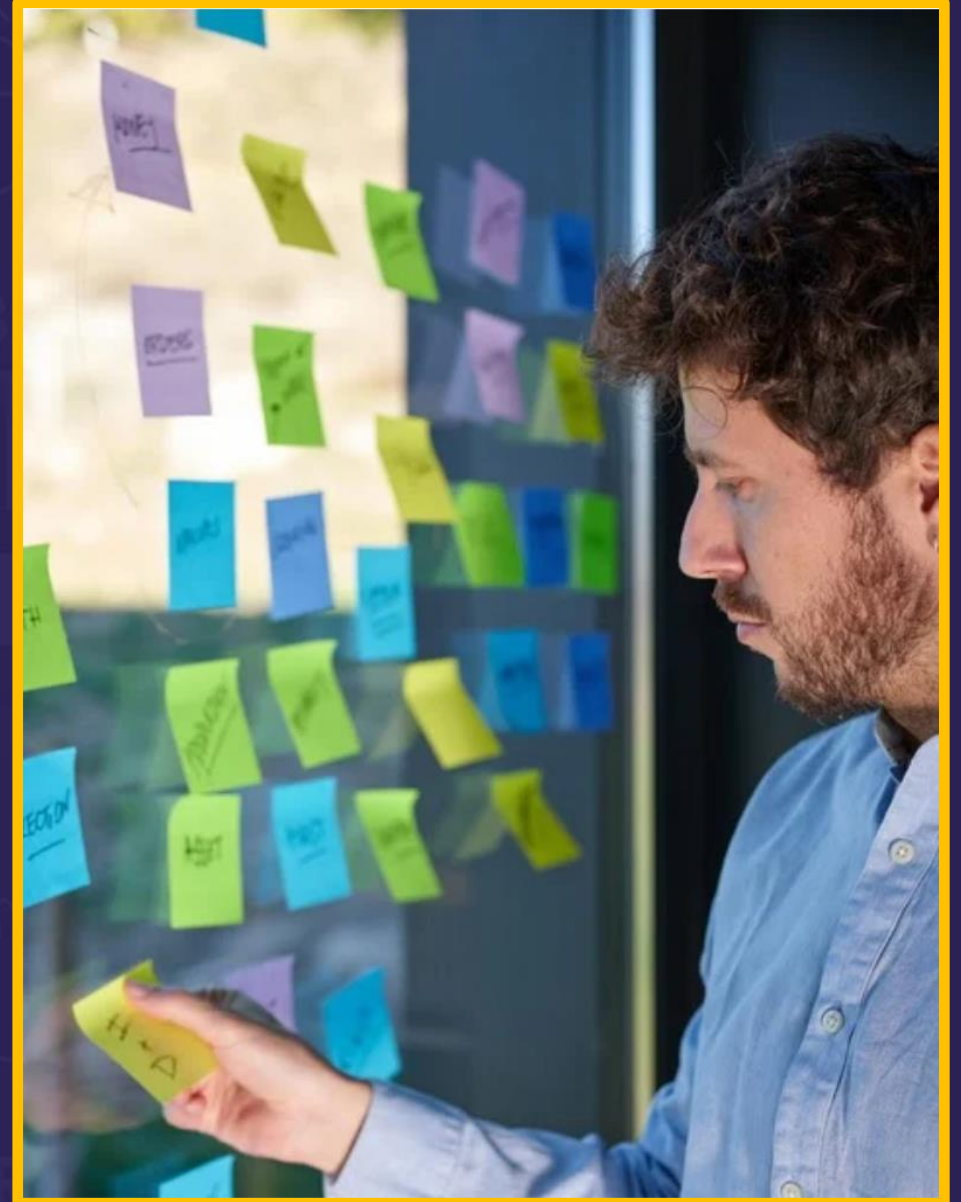




KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: BRAINSTORMING

The process of brainstorming generally follows **these steps**:

- ① Defining the problem
- ② Generating ideas
- ③ Evaluating the ideas





KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: BRAINSTORMING

The process of brainstorming generally follows **these steps**:

- 1 Defining the problem
- 2 Generating ideas
 - The more ideas, the better
 - Don't worry about how crazy the ideas are – do not criticise them at this point
 - Combine and improve ideas
 - Record the ideas – mind maps are good for this
- 3 Evaluating the ideas
 - Apply MoSCoW Criteria to help identify priorities and then synchronise your ideas



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[Video] Wenell Management – *What is the MoSCoW Method?* (4:19)



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KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CARD SORTING

Card Sorting is good for identifying how users categorise things, but how do you identify all of the items to be categorised?



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Card Sorting is good for identifying how users categorise things, but how do you identify all of the items to be categorised?

- **Clients** will generally provide a **partial list of items** that need to be developed or defined as part of a design specification or brief
- Creating **User Personas** and using these in **Scenarios** will identify some desires or elements that you may need to consider as part of your design



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We will look at Card Sorting as an exercise in a future session of this module.



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KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

In a similar fashion to a GDD, you **should spend time on an IA document** and see it as a worthwhile long-term **investment** in your project.

Please note that while the examples from Career Foundry's blog featured in this presentation are tailored to creating IA for a website, you can easily **take the process and adapt it to similar or non-digital products** [2].





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KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

Information architecture is to a website, library or shop, what the concrete foundations are to a house. **To create the best possible foundations, we need to create an IA document [2].**

Creating the document happens in a **few stages**:

1. **Define the company goals**
2. **Define the user's goals**
3. **Analyze competitors**
4. **Define content**



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

1. Define the company goals

In order to determine goals of creating Information Architecture you can ask yourself **two questions**:

- *Why do you want to do it?*
- *What do you want to achieve with it?*

Work with all team members to determine this. You want them to **feel involved and agree on the final version**. If you cannot clearly articulate the reason for doing the work and the desired outcome, **stop right now**. Don't go any further until this is **clear** [2].



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

2. Define the user's goals

Who are the people that will be **using** the website?

Follow **UX practices**: conduct **user interviews**, create **personas**, create scenarios and answer the questions:

- *What are these users going to do on the website?*
- *What are their goals?*

This is also a good moment to think about any **constraints** that users may have, for example, what technology are they using? [2]



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

3. Analyze competitors

Go all out and make sure you **know your competition**. Think about **their** information architecture [2].

- *Where do they display information?*
- *Which information is common denominator (shared by two or more competitors)?*
- *Is the website easy to navigate?*
- *What makes their product good / what makes it bad?*



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

4. Define content

If your website or product already has content, **go through that first and decide what to keep and what to get rid of**. If it is new, **start from scratch**. You need to have a **clear understanding** of your content.

When your product already has content you can conduct one of the following [2]:

- **Full inventory**
- **Partial inventory**
- **Content audit**



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

4. Define content

If your website or product already has content, **go through that first and decide what to keep and what to get rid of**. If it is new, **start from scratch**. You need to have a **clear understanding** of your content.

When your product already has content you can conduct one of the following [2]:

- **Full inventory**

Write down **everything that you have on the site**. This might take a long time and perhaps even a team of people, but it's the most useful. When you decide for this option **include all pages, all downloadable content** and any **media or interactive content**.



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

4. Define content

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When your product already has content you can conduct one of the following [2]:

- **Partial inventory**

A partial inventory is still better than nothing. Focus on the **important parts and higher levels**.



KEY PROCESSES FOR IA: CREATION OF AN IA DOCUMENT

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If your website or product already has content, **go through that first and decide what to keep and what to get rid of**. If it is new, **start from scratch**. You need to have a **clear understanding** of your content.

When your product already has content you can conduct one of the following [2]:

- **Content audit**

This approach gives us the least information, but it's **quicker and simpler**. We focus on determining how **useful, accurate, and overall how effective** the content is.



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