

User Experience Design

- ▶ M6X01111
- ▶ Lecture 6 – Information Architecture I

What is Information Architecture?

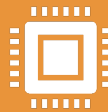


In the last session we did a user research exercise to identify how users organise information

Different users will organise things in subtly different ways



Information Architecture (IA) is the idea of organising information in a manner that makes it easier to access



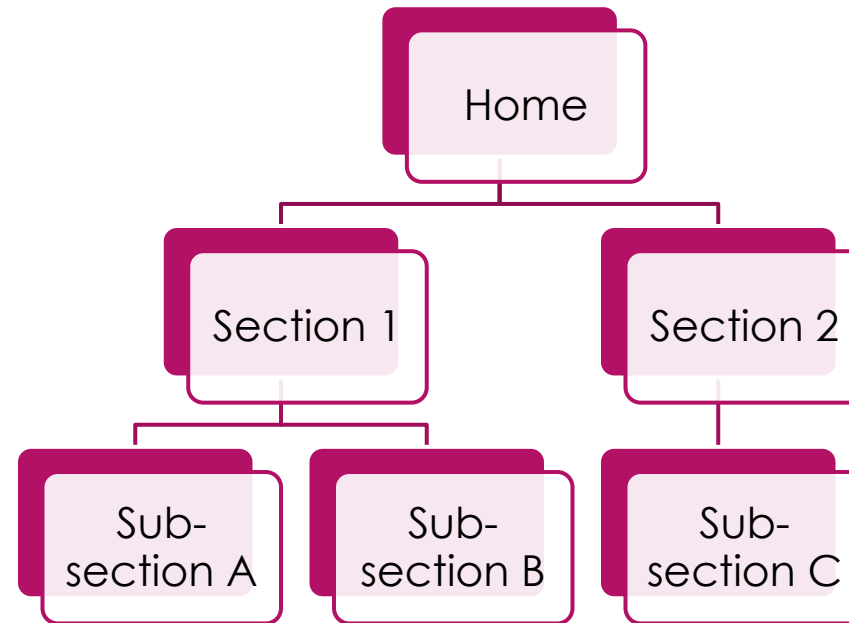
This varies in complexity with the size of the project; in general, the larger the project, the more complex the information architecture



This is mostly used for websites but can also be used for menus and other control systems

Site Maps

- ▶ Information Architecture is invisible
- ▶ To work with it we need to define a *site map*
- ▶ Hierarchical structure
- ▶ Guidelines for drawing a site map
 - ▶ Just because it looks clear doesn't mean it makes sense
 - ▶ Top→Bottom, not Left →Right
 - ▶ Plain and clear – it's a technical document



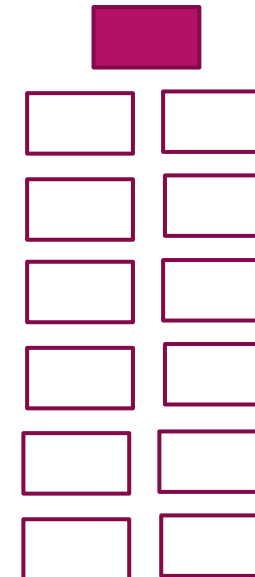
Deep or Flat?

- ▶ A site map is likely to be either *flat* or *deep*
- ▶ Flat
 - ▶ Lots of sections in the menu
 - ▶ Fewer clicks to reach the bottom
- ▶ Deep
 - ▶ Simple menus
 - ▶ More clicks to get to any particular page
- ▶ Choice depends on content
- ▶ 3-click rule no longer applies 😊

▶ Flat (e.g. YouTube)



▶ Deep (e.g. Tesco)



Scenarios (User Stories)

Scenarios are a useful source for IA ideas



Example scenario for Google.com:

Sam arrives at the main Google search page

She enters a search query and submits it with the mouse or keyboard

The next page displays a list of search results with the most relevant results at the top

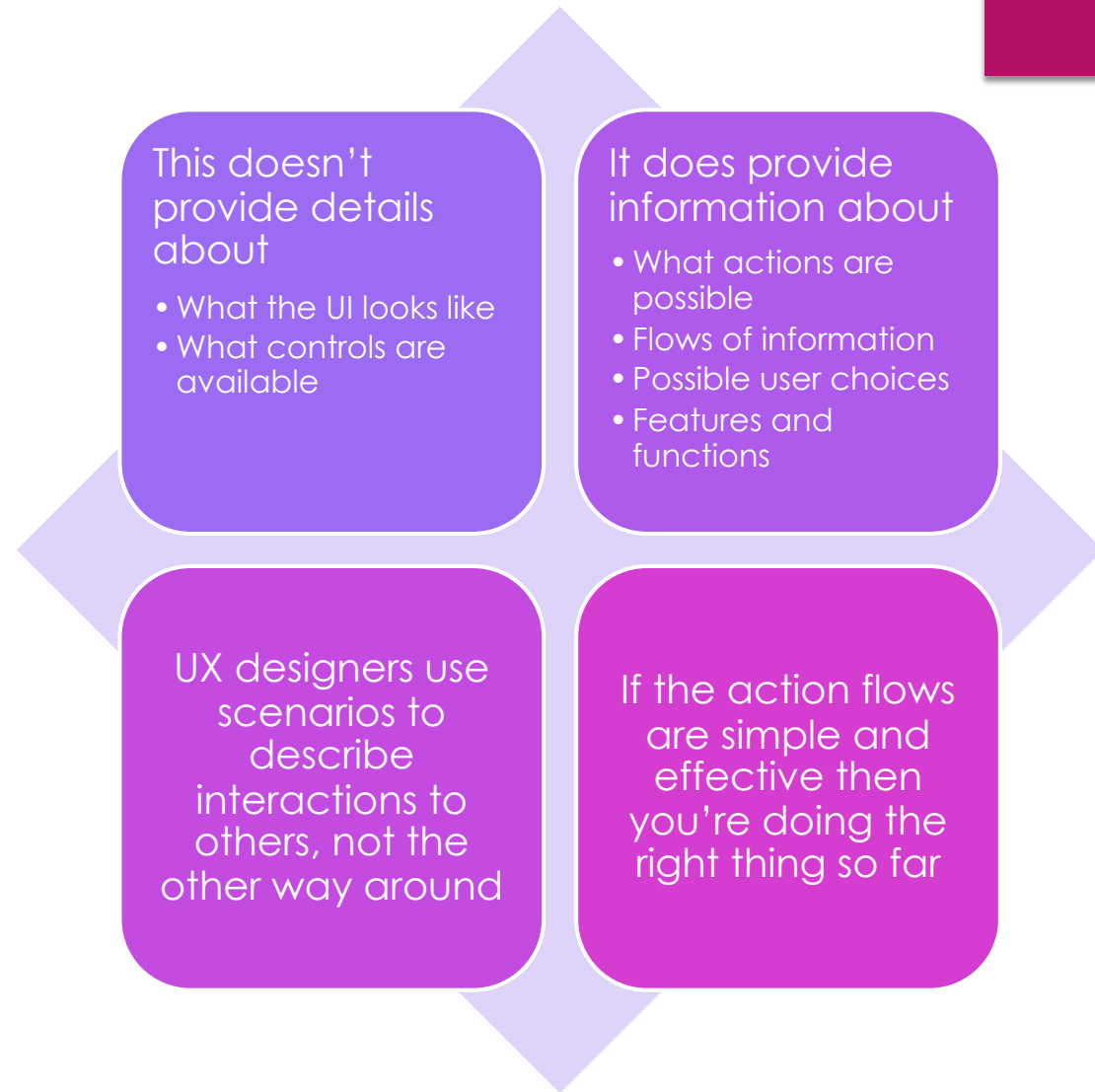
Sam reads the list and clicks on the third link

The web browser takes her from Google to the new URL



Scenarios describe a flow of actions and user choices

Scenarios (User Stories)



Types of IA

IA is structure, not navigation

There are many ways to structure any set of information

- Some ways are more suitable than others, depending on the content type or project goals

Normally use one (or at most two) of the following approaches:

- Categories – Some things are like other things
- Tasks – What do you want to do?
- Search – Too many types of thing for categories
- Time – News feeds
- People – Often used with categories, e.g. photos, friends, posts

Designing Flow

- ▶ Users normally don't find what they want on the home page of a website; they must be directed to the page of interest
 - ▶ The easier it is for users to 'flow' through your IA to where they want to go then the happier they will be
- ▶ Giving users the right information at the right time is more important than making sure that every page is available within three clicks
 - ▶ If you give users too many choices on a page they can get confused and frustrated
- ▶ Make sure that the next step is always obvious



Designing Flow



Users do not read pages carefully

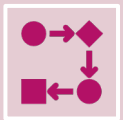
Users click on the first control that looks as if it might do what they want

If it doesn't do what they want, then they might click 'Back'

'Back' clicks can therefore mean that the user doesn't know what to do next



Always give the user a way to move forward



Design interactions in loops

Include "Return to ..." options rather than relying on the 'Back' button

Don't make users think!

IA, Navigation and Behaviour



The IA is the backbone of any system

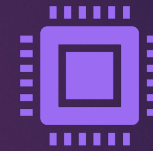


Without an IA it is very difficult to design effective ways to get users where they want to go



A well-designed IA allows the UX designer to predict popular paths through a site

This influences the UI design by defining what navigational elements are needed



It can also allow the designer to manipulate users into taking a certain path through a site, or to perform particular actions while on the site

Good IA is therefore essential if you want to design user behaviours

Coming Soon...



NEXT LECTURE: MORE ON
INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE



HOMEWORK: READ THE
ARTICLES LINKED TO THIS
LECTURE ON MOODLE.