

HCI & IA: Information, Interaction, Interface and Usability Architects Share Deliverables

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Keywords

Information architecture, interaction architecture, interface architecture, usability architecture, information design, deliverables.

TOPIC

Following the successful SIG [1] (and panel [2]) on information architecture (IA) at CHI 2001, we feel there is a need to expand the work to compare and contrast HCI and IA. *How does what information architects do compare with what other HCI practitioners do?*

Information architecture has grown to be an important aspect of web site design. It has a lot in common with other aspects of user interface design, like interaction design, interface architecture and usability engineering, which do have a stronger HCI history. HCI "folk" have participated in the major information architecture conferences; this workshop is an attempt to continue "bringing IA to CHI" to establish stronger ties between the two areas.

Trying to define the role of information architects in the product development cycle is a multi-disciplinary discussion, involving library and information science, interaction design, and information design. Lists of what information architects do vary from metadata standards to support reusable content, functional specification development, contextual inquiry, wireframes and page schematics, and usability evaluation.

Today, corporations developing information systems have to deal with new ways to provide access to large quantities of information for multiple audiences. Information architects aim to bring additional skills to build this world of functionality, content, and users.

ISSUES

Some of the larger questions we hope to answer during this workshop:

- How do IA skills fit into the HCI skill set? Where are there overlaps? Where does IA fill a gap in HCI

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CHI 2002, April 20-25, 2002, Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA.

ACM 1-58113-454-1/02/0004.

expertise?

- How does the Information Architect role fit into roles served traditionally by HCI practitioners?
- Where do IA skills go beyond web site structures into the broader contexts of HCI?
- How do IA methods, processes and deliverables differentiate from those practiced in the HCI field? How are they the same?
- Is there a significant difference between information / interaction / user interface *design* and information / interaction / user interface *architecture*?

GOALS

- Bring HCI practitioners and information architects together ("can't we all get along")
- Encourage more detailed discussions on similarities and differences with the focus on deliverables ("are we creating similar artifacts")
- Start down the path to developing a framework for placing IA within the HCI discipline ("we need to know our place")
- Understand the combined roles of HCI and IA in product development ("together we are stronger")

In order to help the workshop stay "down to earth", the discussion will revolve around deliverables, physical artifacts that help show the type of work that is done. Participants will have to be able to share actual deliverables or create "sanitized" documents that can be shared within and outside the workshop.

More information on the workshop is available at <http://keith.instone.org/hci-ia-chi2002/>

REFERENCES

1. *Practicing Information Architecture*, SIG at CHI 2001. <http://keith.instone.org/practiceia/>
2. *Measuring Information Architecture Quality*, CHI 2001 Extended Abstracts, pp. 219-220. <http://keith.instone.org/measureia/>