



Proposal for OZCHI Pre-conference Workshop:
"Information Architecture: Theory and practice"

Speaker details

Contact details

Presenter: Donna Maurer

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Speaker bio

Donna Maurer is a freelance interaction designer and information architect who specialises in making complex systems simple for people to use. She has more than 6 years experience in senior consulting and in-house roles. She has designed huge intranets & websites, e-commerce & search systems, business applications and a content management system. She has conducted so much user research she can't count it but knows she has facilitated more than 200 usability tests. She continually surprises her colleagues by talking to people rather than computers and designing the old-fashioned way with pencil, markers and reams of coloured paper.

Donna keeps starting then stopping Masters programs, preferring to follow her own path through an increasingly large pile of books. She is an experienced speaker who has presented sessions and workshops at many local and international conferences.

She spends her spare time playing in her orchard, spending (not enough) time with her family, working as program chair for next year's Information Architecture Summit, and writing a book on card sorting to be published by Rosenfeld Media in early 2007.

Description

This half-day pre-conference tutorial will provide participants with a thorough overview and understanding of information architecture theory & practice. As a short tutorial it provides a high level understanding of information architecture, outlines the fundamentals, discusses current information architecture issues and challenges and provides some practical experience that can be used immediately in the workplace.

This workshop will cover:

- What is information architecture, and how does it relate to other user experience disciplines
- Core IA techniques – analysing content, conducting user research, card sorting and more
- What is metadata and how do I use it?
- IA structures – hierarchies, database and other structures
- Putting it together in an IA project
- Current issues in IA

Topics will be at the level of an 'advanced intro' – they will cover the basics and also explore key challenges and issues. The format will be a combination of short lectures, group discussion and hands-on activities. As there is a lot to cover in a half day, most topics will not be covered in depth, but resources will be provided for further personal exploration. At the beginning of the workshop, we will discuss which topics are of most interest to participants and will cover these in as much depth as time allows.

Learning objectives

After the workshop, the participants will have:

- An understanding of fundamental IA concepts and issues
- An understanding of processes and techniques often used in an IA project
- Hands-on experience with key techniques
- Shared skills with other practitioners

Sample materials & handouts

A similar workshop was presented at the Information Architecture Summit in Vancouver in March this year. Slides for that workshop are available here (this is the introductory set – modules are available from the last slide in this set. View print preview to see the speaker notes & handouts):

http://maadmob.com.au/maadmob_id/pres/intro_ia_summit/

Schedule

Introduction to the workshop, group selects topics they would like to cover (handouts are provided for all topics).

Topics include:

- User research (optional). Lecture, discussions & practical activity.
- Content analysis (mandatory). Very short lecture with examples.
- Card sorting (optional). Very short lecture plus hands-on group activity.
- Metadata (mandatory). Brief introduction, group activity, brief theory, discussion.
- Documenting IA (optional). Very short lecture with examples.
- IA structures (mandatory). Lecture, group discussions with a lot of examples.
- Current issues in IA (optional). Short lecture, open discussions, examples.

Audiences

IA practitioners, designers of information-rich systems such as websites and intranets, HCI researchers and practitioners interested in the relationship between IA and their field, usability specialists, business analysts for information-rich environments.

The material will be presented at the level of an advanced introduction. Based on the audience's current experience, the workshop can be done as a more introductory or more advanced level, just by following different tangents and questions that arise. Some topics may be more suited to introductory material, some more advanced approaches.

Expected experience of the audience – participants should have some knowledge of usability and human-computer interaction. It would be most beneficial if participants have previously worked on a complex website or intranet (or other information-rich environment).