

How I spent my research leave exploring
~~Best Practices in~~
Web Usability &
User Experience Design

...with a little bit of...

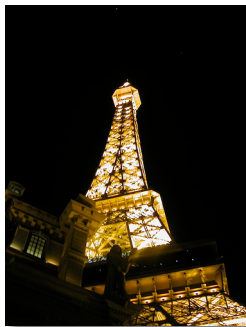
What Not to Do On Research Leave

Amanda Etches-Johnson

Why?

- We're redesigning our website
- Take the time to engage with the subject & the literature
- Think about what it *really* means to be user-centred

How it all began...



IA Summit, March 2007



What I learned at the IA Summit

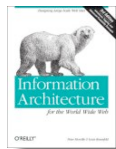
- IAs are people too.
- And they're *my* peeps!
- ...and how to design forms, how to let your data drive your design, how to engage your users, how to use search logs to inform design decisions, and....

So, what is IA?

- Information Architecture =
 - “The structural design of shared information environments”
 - “The combination of organization, labeling, search, and navigation systems within web sites”
 - “The art & science of shaping information products and experiences to support usability and findability”

Got all that?

Opening line of the “IA Bible”:

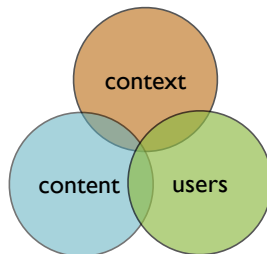


“On the Web, if a site is difficult to use, most people will leave.”

IA is...

- Building a site that will not make people want to leave.
 - navigation
 - search
 - findability
 - usability
 - ...etc.

3 Circles of IA



Peter Morville's Three Circles of Information Architecture
<http://semanticsstudios.com/publications/semantics000029.php>

Where does “Usability” fit?

- Part of the practice of information architecture
- It's about always keeping the user in mind when designing for the web and testing your design with actual users at every stage in the design process.

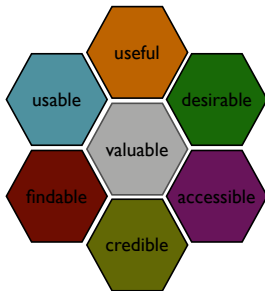
Usability questions

- What are we trying to accomplish with a certain page?
- What do you want users to be able to do on that page?
- Does your labeling, terminology, instruction, navigation (etc.) make sense to your user(s)?

What about “User Experience Design”?

- Practiced by many IAs
- An interesting way to break down usability into its facets (thank you, Peter Morville)

UX Honeycomb



Peter Morville's User Experience Honeycomb
<http://semanticstudios.com/publications/semantics/0000029.php>

What I read



Information Architecture for the World Wide Web
Louis Rosenfeld & Peter Morville



Don't Make Me Think! A Common Sense Approach to Web Usability
Steve Krug



Ambient Findability
Peter Morville



Communicating Design: Developing Website Documentation for Design & Planning
Dan Brown



The Elements of User Experience: User-Centered Design for the Web
Jesse James Garrett

Was it useful?

- Definitely!
- Great foundation, learned the methodology, the vocabulary, and a lot of the questions that we need to be asking
- Long term: web redesign
- Still learning the more methodology, best practices

What not to do on research leave

- Think about work (good luck with that).
- Check your email.
- Have no project plan. And no timeline.
- Set unrealistic goals.
- Have no idea what the prize is. Don't keep your eye on it.

Thanks!

- Questions? Comments?