

WHAT IS INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE?

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Information Architecture was born in the late 90s, based on the classical principles of solid traditional Information Science (mainly from the discipline of the Organization and Representation of Knowledge). In a technical sense, it is a discipline (and at the same time a community of practice) focused on design principles and architecture of digital spaces in such a way that they comply with criteria of usability and information retrieval. In other words, it is a discipline that deals with structuring, organizing and tagging elements of informational environments to facilitate searching and retrieval of information they contain, this way improving the usefulness and benefit for users.

One of the main characteristics of the information architecture in an information environment (for instance, a web page) is that it is usually not recognizable by the users. In other words, such architecture is invisible to the user. But while this is so, there are a number of (not visible) systems or articulated structures among themselves, each defining the information architecture of a web page. These systems or structures are called components of the Information Architecture of a web or also anatomy of the Information Architecture of a web. Among these systems or structures that build the information architecture there are systems such as: organization systems, labeling systems, navigation systems, search systems and controlled vocabularies.

Organization systems are classifications that allow to structure and organize the contents of a website. The labeling systems, however, define the terms used to name the categories, options and links used on the web with a useful language for users. Navigation systems permit to navigate or move through a site to find the information we need; it shows us where we are and where we can go inside the structure of a site. Search systems enable the retrieval of information within the website using tools such as the index. Finally, in this context, controlled vocabularies are documental resources designed to articulate other systems and facilitate searching and finding information.

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