

# Why Johnny Can't Find: Some Random Thoughts on Information Architecture

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PowerPoint presentation (130KB) available from:  
<http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~iag/>

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## Getting started with IA

Louis Rosenfeld & Peter Morville, *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*; O'Reilly & Associates, 1998.

<http://www.ora.com/catalog/infotecture>

SIGIA-L (information architecture mailing list)

[http://www.asis.org/Conferences/Summit2000/Information\\_Architecture/listserv.html](http://www.asis.org/Conferences/Summit2000/Information_Architecture/listserv.html)

Argus Center for Information Architecture

<http://argus-acia.com>

UsableWeb (Keith Instone)

<http://www.usableweb.com>

InfoDesign (Peter Bogaards)

<http://www.bogieland.com/infodesign>

Information Architecture Resources (including "The Elements of User Experience") (Jesse James Garrett)

<http://www.jjg.net/ia/>

Tomalak's Realm (Lawrence Lee)

<http://www.tomalak.org/>

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## Learn more about...

### Berrypicking (Marcia Bates)

“The Design of Browsing and Berrypicking Techniques for the Online Search Interface” in *Online Review* 13 (October 1989): 407-424.

### Sense-making (Brenda Dervin & Michael Nilan)

“Information needs and uses” in *Annual Review of Information Science and Technology* 21 (1986), 3-33.

### Faceted Classification (S.R. Ranganathan)

<http://scout.cs.wisc.edu/addserv/toolkit/enduser/archive/1998/euc-9803.html>

### Discount Usability (Jakob Nielsen)

[http://www.useit.com/papers/guerrilla\\_hci.html](http://www.useit.com/papers/guerrilla_hci.html)

### Ethnography and Information Architecture (Dennis Schleicher, Jennifer Kush)

[http://argus-acia.com/white\\_papers/ethnography.html](http://argus-acia.com/white_papers/ethnography.html)

### Information Ecologies

- Thomas H. Davenport, et al., *Information Ecology*; Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Bonnie Nardi & Vicki O’Day, *Information Ecologies*; MIT Press, 2000.

### IA and Business Context

- Louis Rosenfeld, “The Tail Wags the Dog”  
[http://www.webreview.com/1999/06\\_04/strategists/06\\_04\\_99\\_4.shtml](http://www.webreview.com/1999/06_04/strategists/06_04_99_4.shtml)
- Peter Morville, “Information Architecture and Business Strategy”  
[http://argus-acia.com/strange\\_connections/strange006.html](http://argus-acia.com/strange_connections/strange006.html)

### Navigation Stress Test (Keith Instone)

<http://keith.instone.org/navstress/>

Skills to help us Understand Users, Content, and Context (Louis Rosenfeld, Jess McMullin)

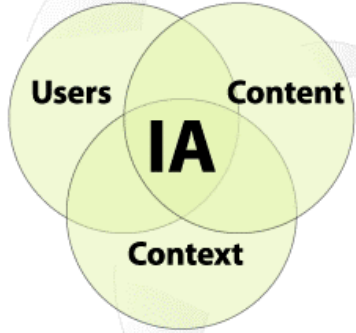
Diagram below:

# IA Areas of Practice

## Users + Context + Content = IA

**Professional Development?**  
**Balance your strengths by exploring other areas....**

We all come from a background that fits into one of these areas. For example, you might have a background in technical communications and therefore may feel very comfortable working with content. Or you might have an MBA and feel especially strong about your skills in the business context area. I suggest taking one of these "majors" and complementing it with a "minor" in one or two of the other areas. So if you're that MBA, consider boning up on ethnography or UE to address gaps you may feel in your understanding of users.  
<http://www.louisrosenfeld.com>



**Users**  
 who they are, what their information-seeking behaviors and needs are

**Skills and Roles**

- Contextual Inquiry
- Personas
- Ethnography
- Task Analysis
- Usability Testing
- Usability Inspection
- Articulating User Needs
- Documenting User Experience Requirements



**Content**  
 volume, formats, metadata, structure, organization

**Skills and Roles**

- Indexing & Cataloging
- XML and Metadata
- Thesaurus Development
- Site Architecture
- Writing
- Content Management
- Navigation and Labeling



**Context**  
 business model, business value, politics, culture, resources and resource constraints

**Skills and Roles**

- Defining Business Needs
- Project Management
- Project Scope and Definition
- Business Analysis
- Systems Analysis
- ROI Calculation
- Managing Client Expectations
- Technical Constraints

*Of course there's overlap in these skills and roles. Where does card sorting fit in - under Users or Content? The important thing to remember is that we're a multi-faceted bunch, and that it's a rewarding experience to explore outside your own area of expertise as you develop your career.*

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