**Mobile Information Architecture**

The success rate of mobile websites does not solely depend on how it is designed and it’s layout, but a great deal is also determined on how the content of the site is structured and organized, which can be referred to as the websites’ information architecture (ref mobile design and development). Information architecture can affect both the appearance of websites, as well as their usability, why it is an important part of the development process.

**Definition of Web Information Architecture**

Morville et al. describes the definition of information architecture with the help of the following outline:

* The structural design of shared information environments
* The combination of organizations, labeling, search, and navigation systems within websites and intranets
* The art and science of shaping information products and experiences to support usability and findability
* An emerging discipline and community of practice focused on bringing principles of design and architecture to the digital landscape

The main focus of information architecture is how the information on websites is managed. An important notice to take from the outline above is that management of information not only comprises the actual structure, or layout of information, but that is also treats aspects such as how information can support usability and findability, as well as how to apply typical non-digital principles to the digital world. However, Morville et al. explains, information architecture is not graphics design, software development or usability engineering, but instead something in the areas between these principles. The work involved within the field of information architecture could be exemplified in a way that it deals with questions on why certain information is needed, how it should be structured, how usage of information could support usability, and not on questions regarding which colors web elements should have, how the information structure should be implemented in code and how to test the usability of a website. By being in the areas between the mentioned principles, information architecture forces communication and collaboration among them to provide a better result.

**Web Information Architecture on Mobile Devices**

Web information architecture deals with several aspects ranging from the layout of a website to how information can support a site’s usability. When developing mobile websites there arises new challenges and new ways of thinking is required. Smaller screens means less space to show information. Consequently, websites that are user friendly and designed in an appropriate way for desktop computers can be worsened when stripped down to fit a mobile device. Therefore, it is preferable to expand the principles of “traditional” information architecture and discuss mobile information architecture. There are four elements that mobile information architecture consists of: representation, structure, navigation and content. (ref : <http://download.springer.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/static/pdf/495/art%253A10.1007%252Fs10796-005-1486-z.pdf?auth66=1354873580_dc156ce8b103c77fda3427bbb9a6efa2&ext=.pdf>) The way information is presented visually, i.e. the layout and design of the information, is what the representation element refers to. Representation affects the ability for users to make use of the presented information and how well it takes advantage of the small screens of mobile devices and the variety of situations where device is used. The structure element denotes the structure of different content on the mobile website and the content that it refers to is compromised of not only text or images, but also includes all other web elements such as links, menus, labels etc. Mobile websites have much lesser screen space to utilize, which emphasizes the need for adapted structure. The third element, navigation, is about how people navigate themselves through information on mobile websites and to other external websites. A subcomponent of the element directs the question on how easy it is, or how intuitive it is to learn the navigation procedures. Navigational aspects of mobile websites are of importance due to the fact that mobile devices have different input facilities, such as human fingers. The fourth and last element of mobile information architecture, content, points to the relevance of the information on websites, especially in regards to the contexts that the information is presented in. The element involves a subcomponent that refers to the effectiveness in the presentation of information, for example the reliability of the information and the frequency in which it is being updated. Content is of importance because the context in which it is presented in can make it more or less relevant.