A brand-new fictional student-run online weekly newspaper website

Joel DesArmo
Information Architecture
Assignment 2
Spring 2012

Assignment 2

1.User Groups

PRIMARY USERS:

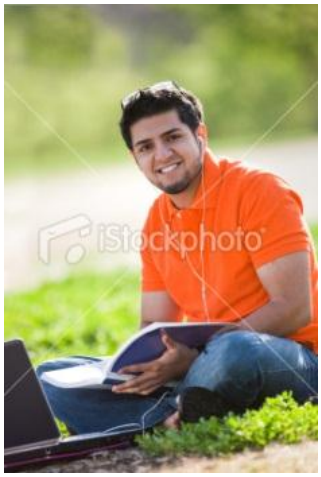
A. **GROUP NAME:** SOIS Undergraduate Students
B. **GROUP NAME:** SOIS Master's Students
C. **GROUP NAME:** SOIS PhD Students

SECONDARY USERS:

D. **GROUP NAME:** General UWM Students
   - Non-SOIS students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
     - Undergraduate students
     - Master's students
     - PhD students

E. **GROUP NAME:** General LIS Students
   - Students of Library and Information Science at institutions other than UW-Milwaukee
     - Undergraduate students
     - Master's students
     - PhD students

2. Personas



Name: Pete Wilson
User Role: SOIS Undergraduate Student
Age: 21
Location: Milwaukee, WI
Occupation: Part-time for University Information & Technology Services at Help Desk

"I love the Internet for its ability to make connections. It connects us with each other and it connects us with any kind of information we seek."

Biography:	Pete grew up in central Wisconsin. After high school, he wanted to go to a college that allowed him to experience city life. He is now an undergraduate student in the School of Information Studies at UW-Milwaukee. Pete is a real people person and loves technology. He consumes all his news online, and uses the Internet to watch television programs and movies when he gets a chance.
Goals:	• See photos of SOIS events, hopefully even appear in a photo in The Sauce to share with his family back home • Keep up-to-date with news summaries of SOIS Student Org activities • Read about technology tips and tricks to help improve his productivity as IST student and in his personal life • Watch short online video clips of SOIS interviews (1-5 minute) to help him to better get know and understand the SOIS instructors • Have a central place to go to find relevant job postings and information to help him plan what kinds of things IST employers are looking for and eventually as a hub for his job search as he nears graduation

Name: Susan Jackson
User Role: General LIS Student
Age: 27
Location: Chicago, IL
Occupation: Full-time Circulation Aide at Chicago Public Library

"I absolutely love books and libraries. I love going to new libraries, hearing about libraries, and learning about the library profession."

Biography:	Susan grew up in Chicago and attended the University of Wisconsin, where she got her Bachelor's degree in English. She met her husband on campus in the Young Democrats club in her junior year. They married the summer after graduation and moved back to Chicago to be close to her family. After struggling bouncing around part-time jobs, Susan got a job at Chicago Public Library and fell in love with the library profession. She enrolled part-time in Florida State University's fully online MLIS program with a public librarianship focus.
Goals	• Read interviews of a variety of librarians, serving in a variety of librarianship roles and in a variety of types of libraries • See photographs of exterior library architecture and interior library spaces • UW-Milwaukee is much closer than her Library school FSU, so she would like to be able to keep up with any possibilities to attend scholarly events in the LIS field • Read about tips for getting published in scholarly journals or presenting at conferences from a student's perspective • Keep relaxed but engaged by reading library related humor

3. Use Case Scenarios

SCENARIO 1

Pete Wilson is a student in the UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies. He has a two-hour gap in the late afternoon between classes on Wednesdays. Depending on the week, he likes to use this time to do homework or else surf the web. This week, he is all caught up with assignments and readings, and it is nearing time to start registering for next semester's classes. He decides to check the job postings on The Sauce Online Newspaper's website to get an idea what employers are looking for to help him select electives for the upcoming semester.

Pete settles in to a comfortable chair in the basement of the library and pulls out his laptop. He navigates to The Sauce's homepage, and briefly scans the new headlines. Pete directs his mouse to the global navigation bar in the upper area of the homepage. He clicks the button labeled "Jobs," and is taken to the Jobs section of The Sauce's website.

Pete sees the left sidebar local navigation has choices broken down by degree level. He clicks on the link for "Bachelor's in Information Science and Technology." The page now has a list of jobs relevant to the SOIS Bachelor's degree in Information Science and Technology. The list is made of job titles and a 2-3 sentence description, salary range, along with the date posted.

Pete sees that by default they are listed by the date they were posted. Every listing is a contextual navigation hyperlink to the full details of the job, including qualification requirements, job duties, and contact info. Pete has an option to sort the listing alphabetically by job title or by salary. Pete decides to sort the list by salary so he can see what the highest paying jobs in his field are looking for.

One title particularly catches Pete's eye; it's a job for a systems administrator paying $74,000. Pete thinks to himself, "Wow, I'd have to get a bigger, fatter wallet. Or maybe just carry two wallets to hold all that money." Pete clicks on the link to get the full details of the job.

He reads that one of the qualifications is knowledge of computer networks. Pete has not taken a class on networks yet, and decides he had better enroll in the SOIS networking elective in the upcoming semester if he is going to be making the big bucks.

Satisfied that he has decided on a useful elective to enroll in, he powers down his laptop and decides to go celebrate with a big cheeseburger dripping in barbeque sauce in a silent gratitude to the help the online newspaper The Sauce has just given him.

SCENARIO 2

Susan is an online student in Florida State University's MLIS program and works at the Chicago Public Library as a circulation aide. Recently, her branch has installed two new self-checkout kiosks for patrons. Her library has installed them right at the same counter where the traditional check-out service is performed.

Susan has mixed feelings about the placement of the machines. She feels somewhat invaded by the proximity of the devices to her workspace. At times, it is helpful to be close to the new machines because people sometimes ask for help, but then Susan wonders, "Why don't they just have me check-out their materials like I have been?" Susan is curious if other libraries install self-checkout kiosks at a distance, separately from traditional check-out counters.

Susan knows The Sauce has many photographs of the interior spaces of many libraries. She decides to visit the website to search for any images of self-kiosk machines and get an idea of how other libraries are using them. She sits down at her computer and navigates to the homepage of The Sauce.

She is met with a top-row global navigation organized by topics; news, interviews, jobs, multimedia, humor, etc. Susan considers clicking the Multimedia link, but instead opts for the search bar in the upper right. In small font on the right of the search box is a link for "advanced search."

Susan decides it might be easier to just enter a search to see if The Sauce has any photos of self-checkout kiosks rather than spend time just browsing through their image collection. She clicks the "advanced search" link and is presented with options that can help her narrow her search.

There are several search options, but Susan decides to use just one of the advanced options. She selects "image" from a drop-down list labeled Format. Susan enters her keyword "self-checkout kiosk" into the search box. The system returns 5 results presented in thumbnail format.

Each thumbnail is labeled with the name of the library at which it was taken, followed by a 1-5 keywords describing the image with the keyword she searched for highlighted among the others. One-by-one, Susan clicks on the thumbnails and the full-sized image is displayed along with the date it was taken, the name of the person who took it, the location, and a brief description.

She sees that 4 out of the 5 show self-checkout kiosks installed as freestanding units apart from the traditional check-out service. Susan decides to copy and paste the URL of the images into an email for her boss describing her feelings.

4. Card Sort Test Plan

Who

The Sauce will conduct card sorting with a sample of its primary users. Since The Sauce is created by students in the UW-Milwaukee School of Information Studies and its primary target audience are SOIS students. The card sorting will use a proportional stratified random sample of SOIS students. The strata will consist of BSIST students, MLIS students, and PhD students. There are approximately 800 total students in SOIS. This card sort will seek to test 40 total students, which represents approximately 5% of the total population.

How

This card sort will be an open sort card sorting process. The goal will be to see how primary users of the site organize and label into a top-down hierarchical structure of the content that The Sauce intends to provide. A list of terms will be written on cards and users will be asked to arrange into groups. The

participants will be asked to provide a name for each group. The participants will be told that any cards they feel do not fit into a group to set aside. In generating the list of terms, every effort was made to keep the terms specific but simultaneously ambiguous. Test participants may use a term on a card or they may suggest and alternative term to use as a label. One hour will be allotted for each test, for a total of 40 hours of testing.

What

- Advice
- Call for proposals
- Campus
- Cartoons
- College life
- Conferences
- Connect with us
- Contact us
- Corrections
- Current events
- Editorials
- Galleries
- Information technology
- Internships
- Job postings
- Jokes
- Libraries
- Mission
- Open letters to us
- Opinions
- Photos
- Recorded interviews
- Research presentations
- Social gatherings
- Student organization
- Tips and tricks
- Videos

5. Architectural Design Strategy Overview

A. User Research Methods

The Information Architecture Strategy will include a number of user research methods. Our research phase will begin by reviewing the competitive analysis we performed on an existing online weekly newspaper at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, The UWM Post. From this, we moved into user-

center research concerning the information architecture of The Sauce. Five research methods will be employed. The first three methods help in developing a low-fidelity prototype, which will in turn be used to conduct two additional research methods. An iterative approach will be used, allowing the IA team to use findings from a method, apply them to the IA, and then step backwards to repeat a previous method if need be, and time and funding allow.

- **Survey:** Our initial research method was a survey sent out to the full student population of SOIS via email using an online survey tool. Although response rate was only about 15%, the cost to conduct the survey was minimal, and yielded useful data about the type of content that our target audience would like to have. This was helpful in generating a content inventory.
- **Card sorting:** This forms our second phase of user research. Based on the content inventory we generated by combining data from our competitive analysis and our initial user survey, we will ask a proportional stratified random sample of 40 primary users to sort content-based terms into groups and give the terms category names and labels that they find meaningful. This will gives us a good understanding of the mental model of our users.
- **User Interviews:** Following the card sorting session, we will conduct user semi-structured interviews with the same 40 research participants. We will have a list of questions as follow-up to the card sorting and survey that will allow us to clarify and better understand what content is most important to users and how to best structure the content. Using a semi-structured approach will give us the flexibility to linger on a topic to fully comprehend how the users will content on The Sauce to fulfill their information, entertainment, and educational needs.
- **Usability testing:** Based on the first three research methods, we will develop a low fidelity prototype and ask users to complete simulated tasks. This will help to confirm or deny our analysis and interpretation of the previous data. We will be able to see if our concept of the users' mental models is in alignment with their actual mental models.
- **Focus groups:** The final phase of our user research will be a moderated group discussion. The results of this discussion will help us to know if we need to iterate back or are ready to move forward.

B. Top-Down Organization and Labeling

The top-down hierarchical organization will be organized in an ambiguous scheme by topic. Our research has identified 7 top-level categories. The taxonomy will be three levels deep. The first two levels have been presented below. The breadth of the main categories has a reasonable range, with a minimum breadth of 2 to a maximum breadth of 6, and the statistical mode of the breadth being 3. The top level labeling generally consists of single word nouns, with the exception of the two-word noun-phrase "professional development." The second level labels continue the trend of single word or short phrase nouns, with a single exception being a verb phrase "call for proposals."

- News
  - Libraries
  - Information Technology
  - Campus
  - Student Organization

    - Tips and Tricks
    - Corrections
- Jobs
    - Job Postings
    - Internships
- Professional Development
    - Conferences
    - Research presentations
    - Call for proposals
- Gallery
    - Photos
    - Videos
- Entertainment
    - Jokes
    - Cartoons
    - College life
    - Social gatherings
- Interviews
    - Faculty Interviews
    - Administrator Interviews
    - Staff Interviews
    - Student Interviews
- Opinions
    - Editorials
    - Letters to the editor
    - Advice

C. Bottom-Up Organization

Every piece of content on the site will be given metadata to facilitate searching. In general, controlled vocabularies will be used. The Author and Keyword attributes will be controlled, but additional metadata elements will be allowed to be added by the site administrator as needed when new authors contribute content or content requires a new keyword. The keyword field will function much like a subject field. Scholarly articles often describe subject terms as keywords. The description field will be free-text. The bottom-up organization will be accessed by using the search bar or advanced search features.

- File format [controlled vocabulary]
- Author [controlled vocabulary*]
- Date [controlled vocabulary]
- Keyword [controlled vocabulary*]
- Description
- Title

D. Navigation

The global navigation will primarily consist of the top level hierarchical categories. These will appear below the Site ID which will provide a persistent link back to the homepage. In addition to the top level categories, the global navigation will also include a utilities bar that will have an "about us," a "contact us," a "connect to us," a link to the site map, and a search box that will all be positioned above the site ID.

The local navigation will appear as a horizontal bar immediately below the top-level global navigation. It will vary display the second or third level hierarchy, depending on which level the user is at.

Many pieces of content will employ contextual navigation as part of headings. Articles and multimedia items will have headings that contain the authors name and date of creation that will able to be used as contextual navigation to get to other resources with a common metadata as the contextual link.

The supplemental navigation system will include a search box with advanced search features and a site map.

As a way-finding device, the category that has been selected will appear as a different color than the other navigational buttons. In addition, breadcrumbs will be present on pages in the third level of the hierarchy.

E. Search

A simple search box will be part of the global navigation and will be located in the upper right hand corner of the screen. Search results will be presented in the same window and tab. The search results will be the only content display. Each individual search result will be composed of a title heading of the search hit, the metadata "Description" field of the hit, and the URL path of the hit.

The advanced search features will be access by clicking a link that says "advanced" in small font-size on the right of the basic search box. This will open a new advanced search page. There will be fielded search options for Title and Description which will limit the search terms to only those fields. File Format, Author, and Keyword will be drop-down lists of controlled vocabulary. The date field will consist of "from" and "to" textbox. Clicking in either will pop up a small calendar that the user can navigate to the date they would like and the search system will enter the date in the appropriate controlled format. The results of advanced search will be displayed in an identical fashion to the basic search results.

Conclusion

The key to effective Information Architecture is in taking user centered approach. Without involvement from actual potential users, the systems developed will be mere educated guesses, rather than research based structures of beauty. The Sauce believes in iterative user-centered design and that the site exists for users, and not that users exist for the site.