

Slide 1 - Lecture - User Experience Elements

Lecture: User Experience Elements

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GIT 340 Information Design and Usability



Slide notes

In this lecture I want to go over something called the elements of user experience. This concept was created by the user experience professional Jesse James Garrett, and it very simply and very clearly explains how users look at the different levels -- or planes -- of a website.

Notes

Slide 2 - User experience

User experience

- Web = self-service product
- Bad user experience = lost business
- User-centered design = the way to positive user experiences!
- Jesse James Garrett = The Elements of User Experience

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With the exception of sites that provide a Help section, you don't get any training before you have to navigate a website. This is why making sure your navigation is exactly what the user needs to find the information they came to the site to find. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked. The way it has been in the past -- and still in right now in some cases -- the navigation is set by the boss or the stakeholders. Luckily, business owners and stakeholders are starting to realize that the user should be the one helping to decide important aspects such as navigation.

If a user visits your site and doesn't find what they need, or more importantly, they leave frustrated or feel incompetent because they couldn't navigate your site, they are gone and not coming back. An efficient, positive user experience equals dollar signs. This is a major reason why bosses are standing up and taking notice that the user needs to be part of the process.

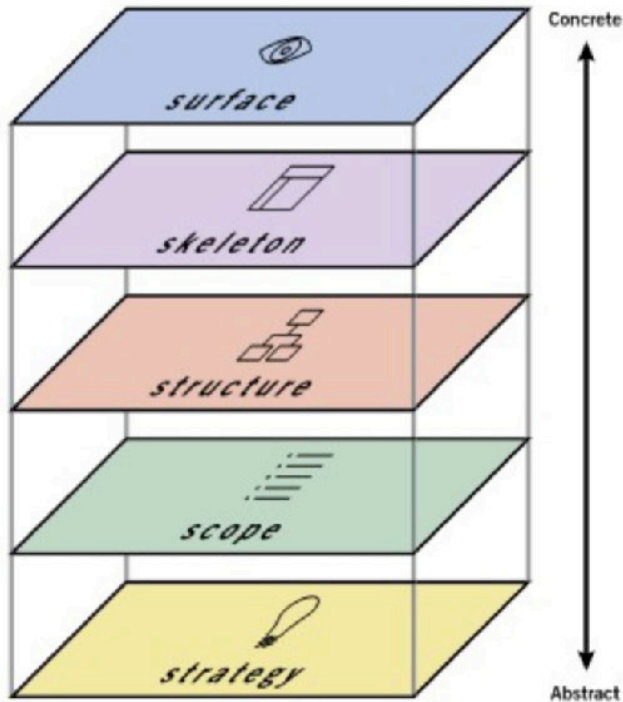
User-centered design is a simple concept but not that simple to accomplish. Ideally, users should be a part of the process every step of the way. Sometimes that is not possible, but at the very least, you must keep the user in mind. You absolutely must know who your users are in order to do this. You'll be researching users in the next module. For now, let's look at the different elements of the user experience.

Much of the material in the lectures for Modules 2, 3 and 4 are derived from Garrett's concepts. This guy really knows the user experience. He's written other books besides The Elements of User Experience, and I recommend you read any of them.

Notes

Slide 3 - Elements of user experience

Elements of user experience



- Five planes:
 - Surface Plane
 - Skeleton Plane
 - Structure Plane
 - Scope Plane
 - Strategy Plane

Source: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett

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Slide notes

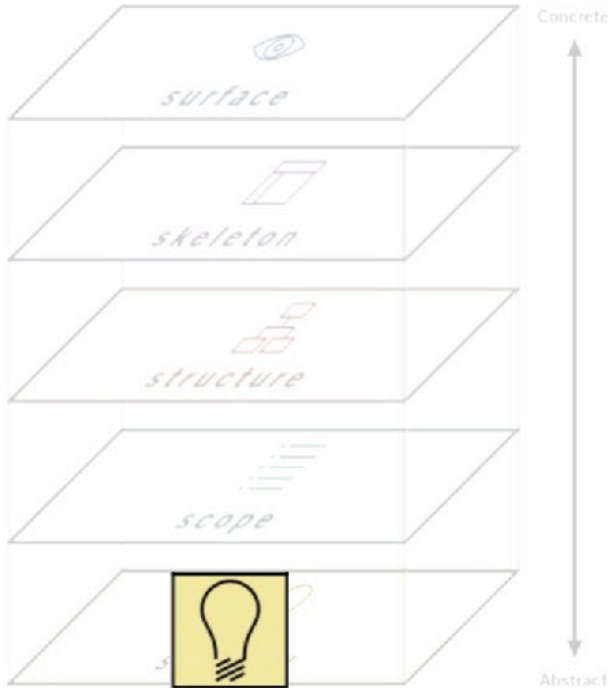
What these planes represent is all aspects of the user experience. As you can see from the diagram, they build upon each other. Each plane is dependent on the plane or planes below it. Just like a building, if one foundation layer is weak, the others suffer and can collapse. Realize that you don't need to finish work on the strategy plane before you start on the scope plane. As a matter of fact, if you do think that way, your project may fail. It's better to look at it this way: You should have work on each plane finished before work on the next plane can finish.

We'll be talking about each of these in detail in future lectures, but I want to give you a synopsis of what each stands for and why each is crucial to the user experience.

Notes

Slide 4 - Elements of user experience

Elements of user experience



- Strategy Plane
 - User needs = what do users want from the site?
 - Site objectives = what do we (client/stakeholders) want from site?

Source: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett

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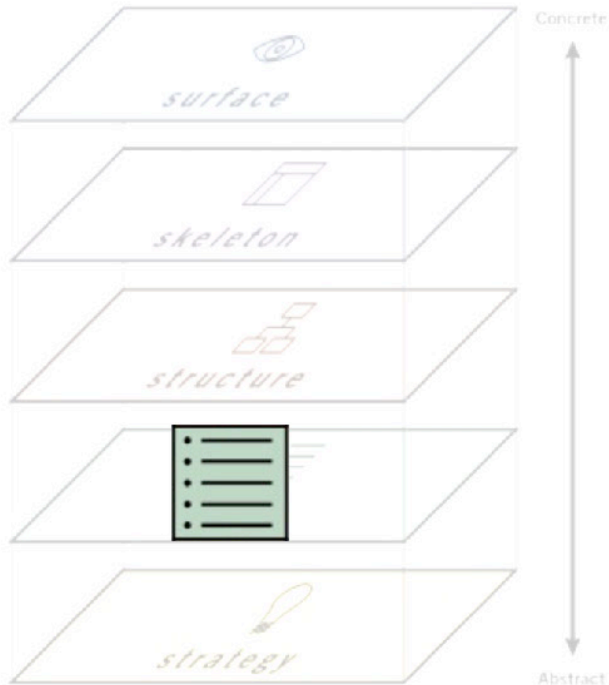
User needs are what we have to know in order to be able to design a site to meet those needs. This shouldn't be confused with the clients, or stakeholders, needs. Often, these are very different from what the users need. That does not mean that the site objectives are not important. They are, and they should be balanced against those user needs. For most businesses, a main site objective will be to bring in new customers and keep current customers coming back. Like I mentioned in the last lecture, it's all about recruitment and retention for businesses. There probably will be other site goals, such as getting information out about a product recall, for example.

Obviously, if you don't have the user needs and site objectives correct, the rest of the planes will suffer. Although each plane is important, this one may be the most important. You have to get this one right in order for your site to succeed.

Notes

Slide 5 - Elements of user experience

Elements of user experience



- Scope Plane
 - Content = what content is needed to meet user needs and site objectives?
 - Functionality = what is needed to ensure user interaction is successful?

Source: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett

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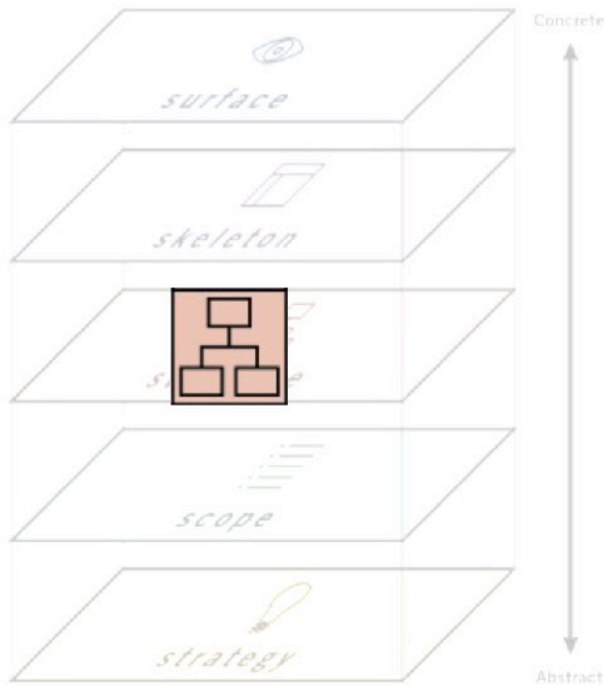
When I say content, I'm not just talking about text. This includes everything from images to web applications to content management systems.

For example, if users need to create accounts on the site, then there needs to be functionality that will allow them to do that, such as a secure sign-in area.

Notes

Slide 6 - Elements of user experience

Elements of user experience



- Structure Plane
 - Interaction Design = how system behaves when user interacts with it
 - Information Architecture = how content is arranged within the web "space"

Source: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett

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Interaction design often is associated with web applications. So using the example from the last slide, if a user needs to sign in, how is that web app going to behave? It needs to behave in two ways equally: it needs to behave as both the users thinks it should and as the business owner thinks it should. In other words, if I am a user and I enter my username and password to set up a new account, I expect to get a new account and get access to the areas I need. The business owner expects to have that username and password information to be stored in a secure area, and that he/she can access that information.

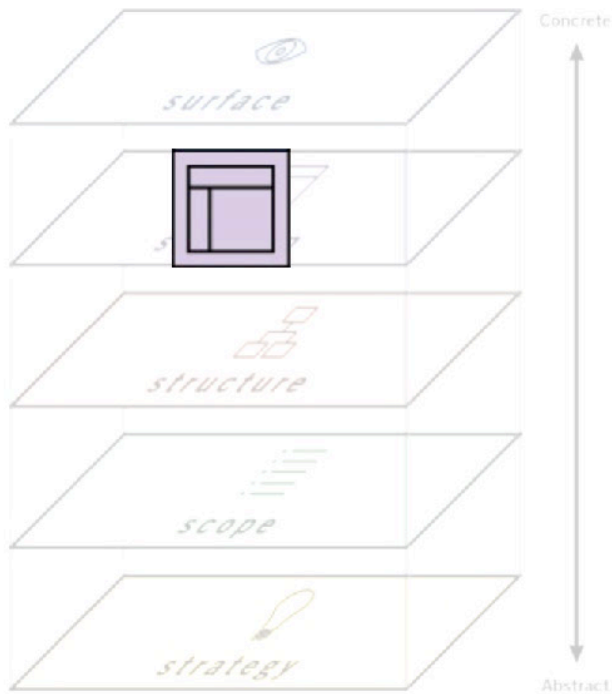
Information architecture has to do with the organization of content. How is information being conveyed to the user? Information architecture includes navigational schemes and creating categories that make sense to users.

Both of these are all about how users think, how they work or accomplish tasks on a website. Once we can understand this, we can create a positive user experience.

Notes

Slide 7 - Elements of user experience

Elements of user experience



- Skeleton Plane
 - Information Design = involves communicating ideas to users
 - Interface Design = involves users doing things on site
 - Navigation Design = involves users going places on site

Source: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett

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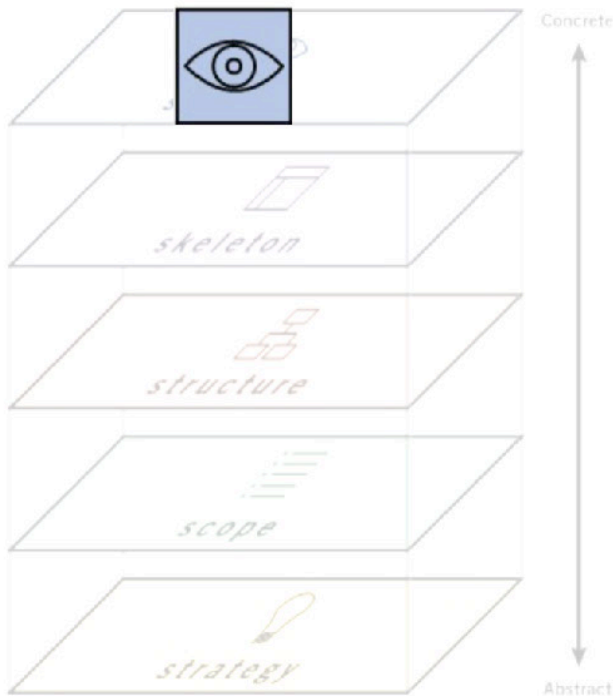
This one has three components. Information design is presenting information in the best way to effectively communicate ideas to users. Interface design is about arranging the interface elements -- like buttons, form fields, etc. -- in a way that users can interact with the site's functionality. Navigation design is just what you think it is -- it's making sure those navigation elements allow the user to move through the information architecture of the site in the most efficient manner.

These three are closely related, probably more so than any other elements in a site.

Notes

Slide 8 - Elements of user experience

Elements of user experience



- Surface Plane
 - Visual Design = how does the finished product look? Does it fulfill goals of other four planes?

Source: The Elements of User Experience by Jesse James Garrett

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Slide notes

The surface plane is the first thing users see. While the skeleton plane is all about arrangement of elements, the surface plane is all about the visual presentation of those arrangements. Obviously the surface plane is very dependent on the skeleton plane. If you don't have the right skeleton in place, the visual design will not be effective.

Notes

Slide 9 - Honorary elements

Honorary elements

- Content
 - Content is king!
 - Content can make or break a site's success
- Technology
 - Make sure technology used is providing a positive user experience
 - Technologies change... and so do user's needs!

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Content always has been and always will be king on a website. Content is the number one consideration for any site. Yes, navigation is crucial. Yes, a visually appealing design is crucial. But none of this is worth a darn if you don't have the content that your users are looking for. If users can't find the information they need, they will not come back. Period.

How users interact with websites has changed just in the past 5 years. It used to be that Flash was the big technology to use to create a website. Now with mobile devices like the Apple products, Flash is becoming less and less the go-to technology for website creation.

Notes

Slide 10 - End Lecture - User Experience Elements

Lecture: User Experience Elements

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