IA FOR THE WEB

Information Architecture
Fall 2014

LESSON TARGETS

- State possible definitions of IA
- Recognize and apply the IA systems
- Recognize the phases of IA projects
- Run a card sort
- Perform a content inventory

Targeting this objective:

- Create organized, attractive, and accessible websites

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

- Helps us understand our requirements and organize our content accordingly

- Helps us know our customers and develop strategies to connect them with our content

MANAGING COMPLEXITY

- Website size and complexity are related
- Small sites can be difficult; what about larger ones?

EXAMPLES

- http://www.tearoundapp.com
- http://spotify.com
- http://dp.la
- http://wikipedia.org

DEFINITIONS

in•for•ma•tion ar•chi•tec•ture n.

1. The structural design of shared information environments.

2. The combination of organization, labeling, search, and navigation systems within web sites and intranets.

3. The art and science of shaping information products and experiences to support usability and findability.

4. An emerging discipline and community of practice focused on bringing principles of design and architecture to the digital landscape.

- Morville and Rosenfeld (p. 4)

IA AND LIS

- Students with library and information science coursework are well placed to do IA work
- Related classes:
  - Z503: Representation and Organization
  - Z515: Information Architecture
  - Z516: Human-Computer Interaction
  - Z532: Information Architecture for the World Wide Web (i.e., this class)
  - Z556: Systems Analysis and Design
  - Z634: Metadata
  - Z653: Ontologies
  - Z636: Semantic Web

IA AND LIS

- Morville and Rosenfeld surveyed IA practitioners in 2006
- They found that 48.6% had formal education in IA, HCI, usability, or library science
- Of those with formal education, 40.3% were from a library science background
- (See http://iainstitute.org/en/learn/research/survey_5_ia_education_for_practitioners.php)

The Information Architecture Institute

- Offers a student membership ($20 a year or $35 for two years)

- Benefits: personal profile, members-only IA discussion list, networking opportunities

- http://www.iainstitute.org

IA SYSTEMS

- Organization
- Labeling
- Navigation
- Searching

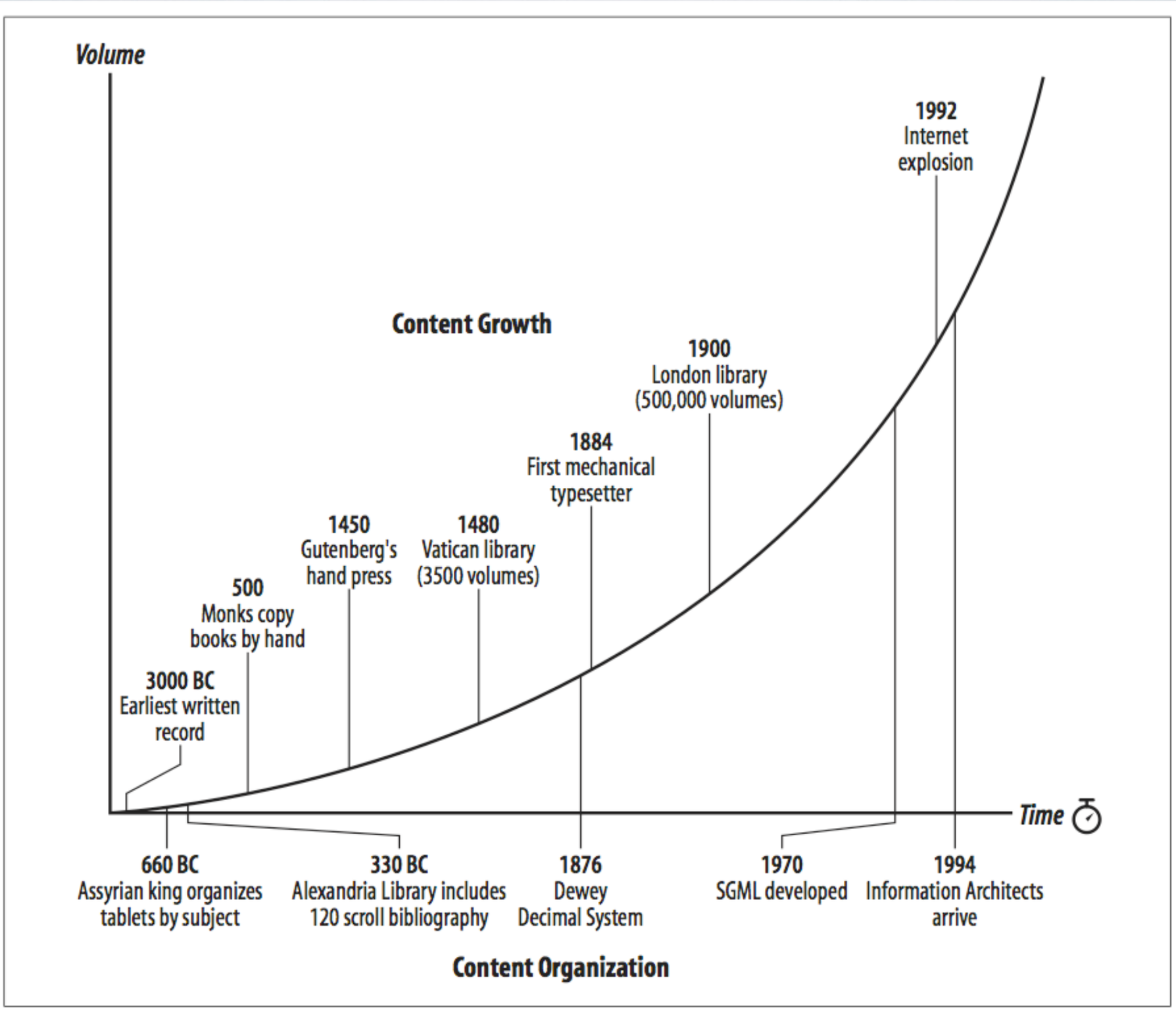
ORGANIZATION SCHEMES

- Exact: alphabetical, chronological, geographical, etc.
- Subjective: topic, task, metaphor, hybrid, etc.

ORGANIZING STRUCTURES

- Taxonomy (hierarchical and polyhierarchical, breadth vs. depth)
- Database model (data and metadata)
- Hypertext (items and links)

Morville and Rosenfeld argue that content growth drives organization



LABELING

- Contextual links
- Headings
- Navigation choices
- Index terms

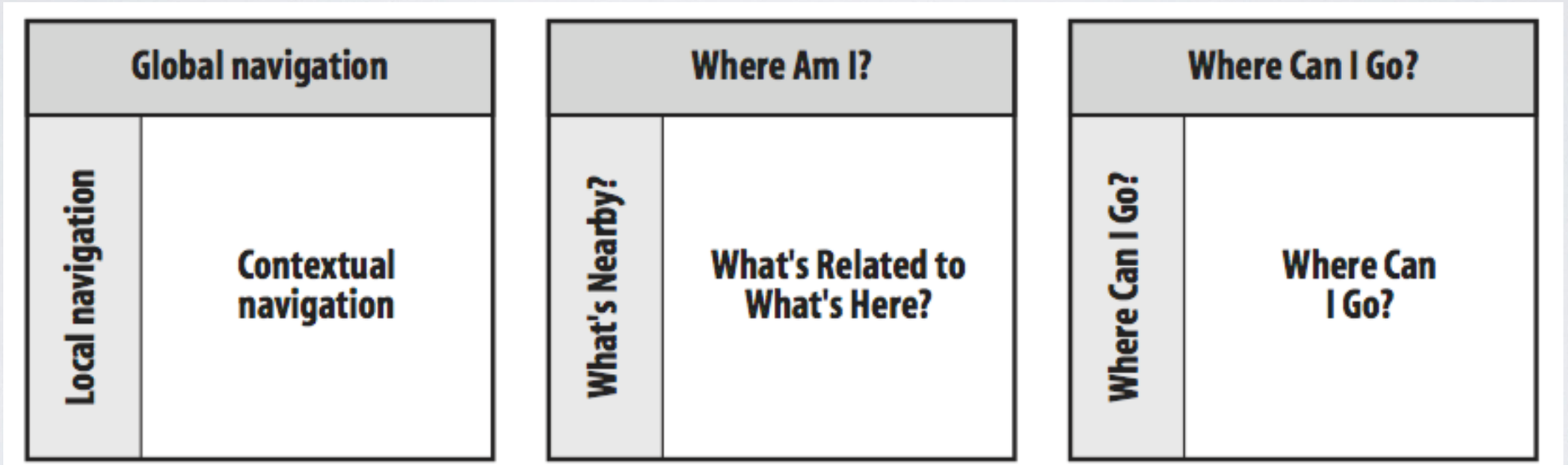
HOW TO LABEL?

- Industry standards?
- Social norms?
- Legal requirements?
- Existing vocabularies?

NAVIGATION

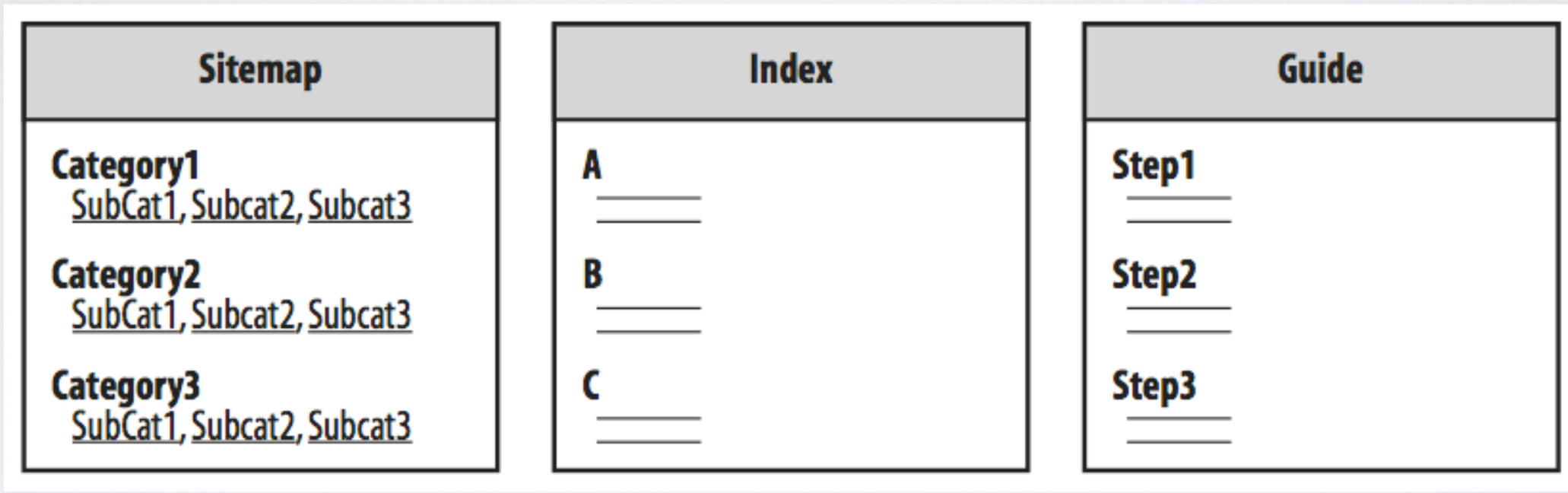
- Embedded systems
- Supplemental systems

EMBEDDED NAVIGATION



Global, local, contextual

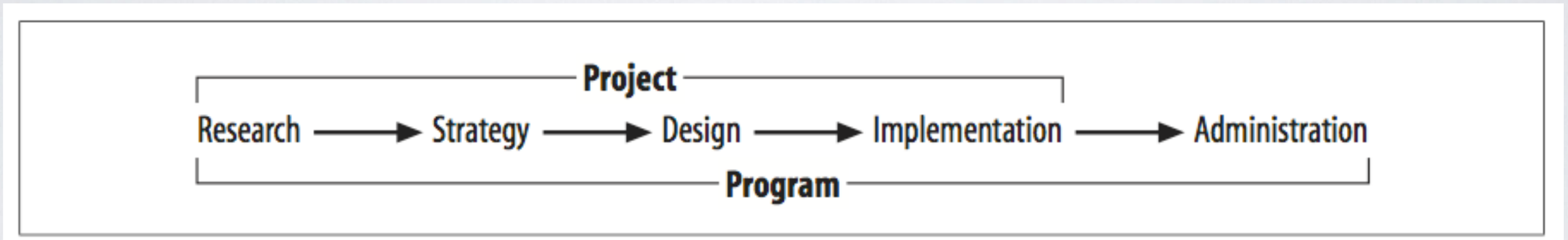
SUPPLEMENTAL NAVIGATION



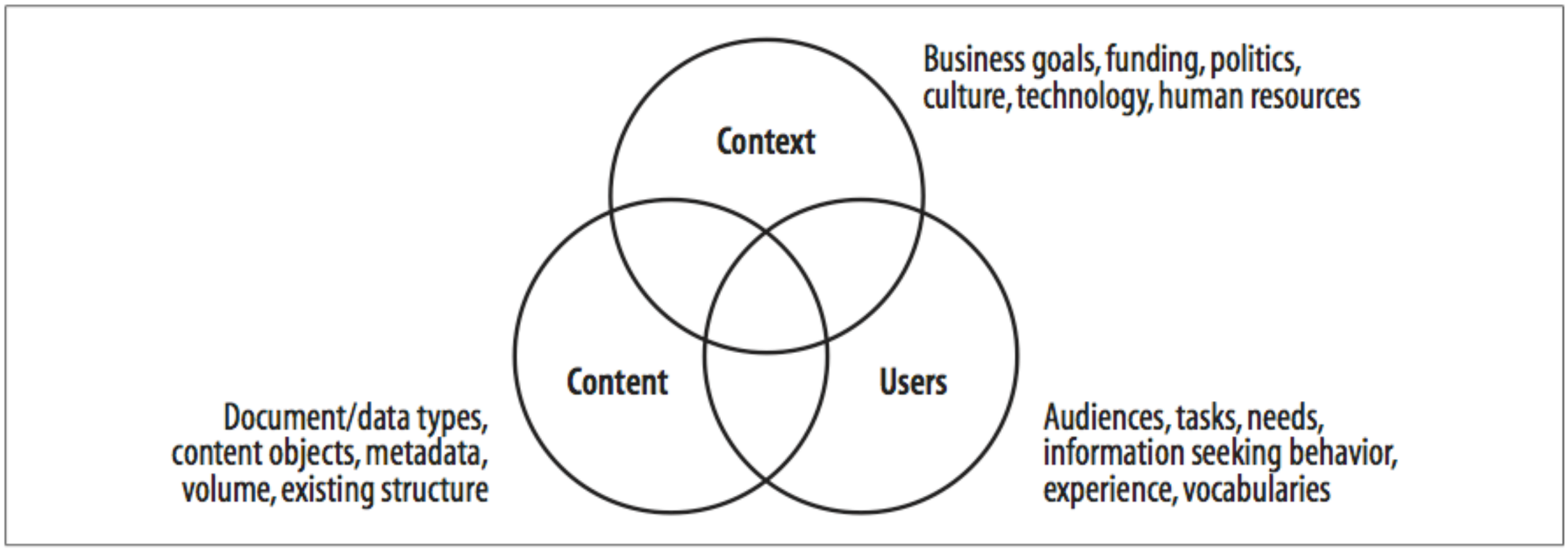
SEARCHING

- Information retrieval is its own complicated subject
- IA aspects:
  - Organization of search controls
  - Delineation of what's searchable
  - Metadata, etc.
  - Presentation of search results

IA PROJECT PHASES



MORVILLE & ROSENFELD'S RESEARCH FRAMEWORK



RESEARCH

- Market research
- Focus groups
- Interviews
- Card sorting
- Log analysis (for existing sites)
- Content inventory

CARD SORTING

Participants group information items and come up with category names

CONTENT INVENTORY

- A matrix of existing content items and their *current* properties
- Properties can include an ID (made up for the inventory), page title, URL, format, author, metadata, description, dates, categories, etc.
- Often implemented as a spreadsheet
- Can be exhaustive or limited to a portion of the site

STRATEGY

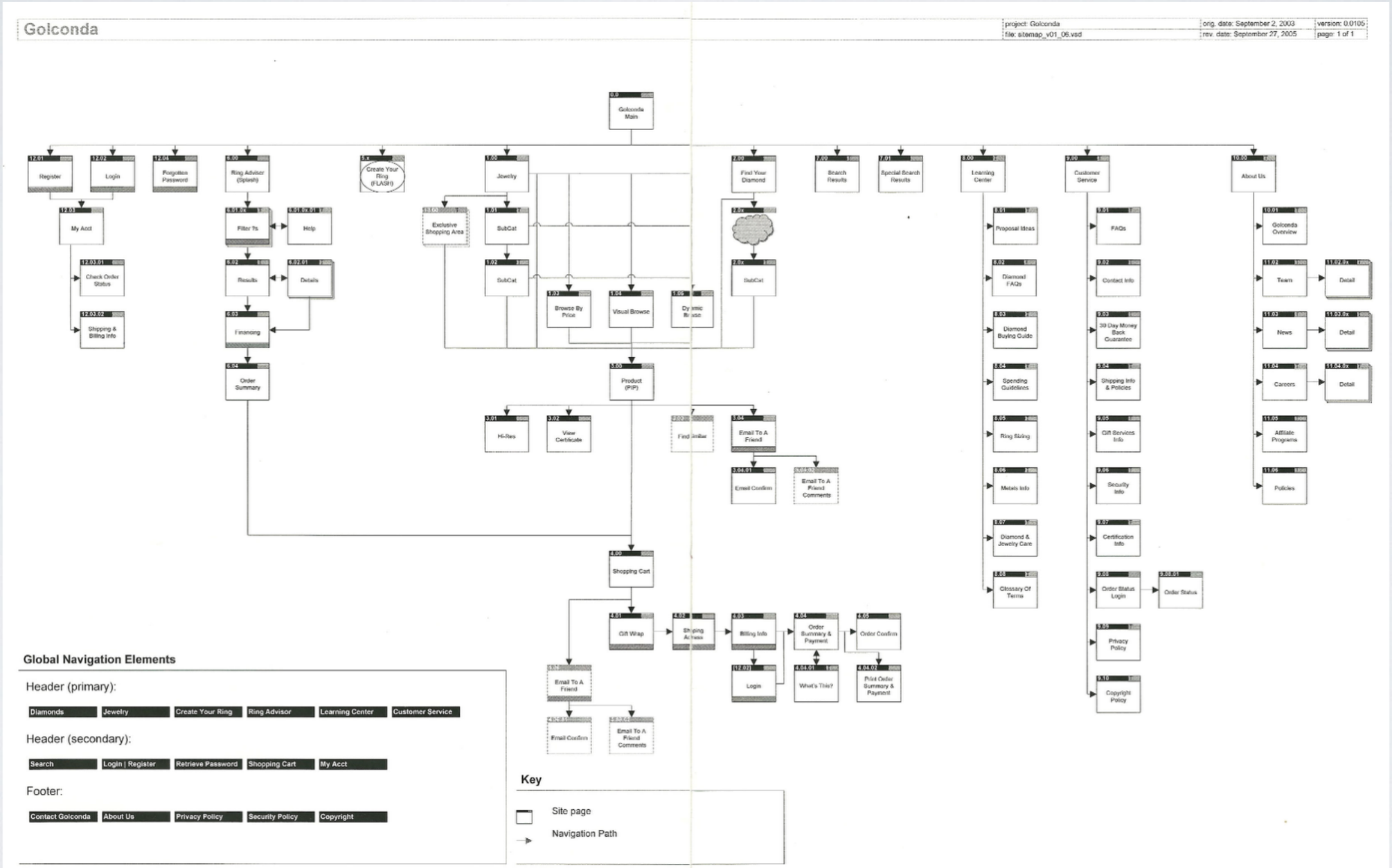
- "The bridge between research and design is an information architecture strategy" (Morville & Rosenfeld, p. 264)

- Can include:
  - How IA is practiced locally (centralized or not)
  - How to integrate with existing technologies
  - Organization and labeling or document identification
  - Defining the metadata fields
  - Designing the navigation

DESIGN

- Putting the strategy into action
- Diagramming (http://www.gliffy.com; MS Visio, available on http://iuanyware.iu.edu)
- Wireframing (http://moqups.com)
- Blueprints/site maps
- Prototypes (paper, HTML)

SITEMAPS


Golconda
project: Golconda
orig. date: September 2, 2003
version: 0.0105
file: sitemap_v01_06.vsd
rev. date: September 27, 2005
page: 1 of 1
0.0 Golconda Main
12.01 Register
12.02 Login
12.04 Forgotten Password
12.00 My Acct
12.03.01 Check Order Status
12.03.02 Shipping & Billing Info
6.00 Ring Advisor (Splash)
6.01.04 Filter Ts
6.01.01.01 Help
6.02 Results
6.02.01 Details
6.03 Financing
6.04 Order Summary
5.x Create Your Ring (FLASH)
1.00 Jewelry
1.01.01 Exclusive Shopping Area
1.01 SubCat
1.02 SubCat
1.03 Browse By Price
1.04 Visual Browse
1.05 Dynamic Browse
3.00 Product (PIP)
3.01 Hi-Res
3.02 View Certificate
3.03 Find Similar
3.04 Email To A Friend
3.04.01 Email Confirm
3.04.02 Email To A Friend Comments
2.00 Find Your Diamond
2.01 2.0x
2.0x SubCat
7.00 Search Results
7.01 Special Search Results
8.00 Learning Center
8.01 Proposal Ideas
8.02 Diamond FAQs
8.03 Diamond Buying Guide
8.04 Spending Guidelines
8.05 Ring Sizing
8.06 Metals Info
8.07 Diamond & Jewelry Care
8.08 Glossary Of Terms
9.00 Customer Service
9.01 FAQs
9.02 Contact Info
9.03 30 Day Money Back Guarantee
9.04 Shipping Info & Policies
9.05 Gift Services Info
9.06 Security Info
9.07 Certification Info
9.08 Order Status Login
9.08.01 Order Status
9.09 Privacy Policy
9.10 Copyright Policy
10.00 About Us
10.01 Golconda Overview
11.01 Team
11.02.0x Detail
11.03 News
11.03.0x Detail
11.04 Careers
11.04.0x Detail
11.05 Affiliate Programs
11.06 Policies
4.00 Shopping Cart
4.01 Gift Wrap
4.02 Shipping Address
4.03 Billing Info
4.04 Order Summary & Payment
4.05 Order Confirm
4.04.01 What's This?
4.04.02 Print Order Summary & Payment
17.03.01 Login
4.02.01 Email To A Friend
4.02.01.01 Email Confirm
4.02.01.02 Email To A Friend Comments
Global Navigation Elements
Header (primary):
Diamonds
Jewelry
Create Your Ring
Ring Advisor
Learning Center
Customer Service
Header (secondary):
Search
Login | Register
Retrieve Password
Shopping Cart
My Acct
Footer:
Contact Golconda
About Us
Privacy Policy
Security Policy
Copyright
Key
Site page
Navigation Path

EXERCISE

- Pick two websites that compete in roughly the same area (Twitter and Facebook, Amazon and Best Buy, indiana.edu and purdue.edu, etc.)
- Compare and contrast them in terms of the following:
    - Organizing schemes and structures
    - Labeling
    - Navigation
    - Searching
- Be prepared to discuss your findings with the class
- Submit a short writeup for this week's in-class exercise

CREDITS

- This lecture and most of its images are adapted from content in Morville and Morville's *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web, 3rd Edition.*

- Card sorting image via Stacy Vincent (http://staceyvincent.com/2012/02/21/card-sorting-inexpensive-usability-research/)

- Sitemap image via Rex Casteel (http://rexcasteel.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/golconda-map.jpg)