

Information Architecture (the book)

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Overview

- Organizational Challenges
- Schemes
- Structures
- Databases

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Organizational Challenges

*"... We're all becoming librarians.. Not long ago, the responsibility for labeling, organizing and providing access to information fell squarely in the laps of librarians.."* (23)


:: Classification & Organization is critical to Information Architecture!

:: We must become linguists, but ...

:: Language is ambiguous

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Organizational Challenges




A tomato.

**How do you classify it?**

**Why do you classify it?**

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Organizational Challenges



**Color** (red or green? red AND green?)  
**Size** (small? medium? compared to what?)  
**Shape** (round? bulbous?)  
**Taste** (delicious? sweet?)  
**Use** (salad? sauce? stuffed shells?)  
**Variety** (cherry? pachino? san marzano?)

According to Webster Dictionary:

*"A red or yellowish fruit with a juicy pulp, used as a vegetable: botanically it is a berry"*

Fruit? Vegetable? Berry?

!(\*#&

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Organizational Challenges

**Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous**

:: When all things are the same, organization is easy.

**How do you classify these?**



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### Organizational Challenges

**Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous**

:: When things are different, organization becomes harder.

**How do you classify these?**



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### Organizational Challenges

**Homogeneous vs. Heterogeneous**

:: When things are different on multiple levels, organization becomes a nightmare.

Multiple levels of granularity  
Multiple formats  
Multiple domains

**Why is this harder?**



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### Organizational Schemes

**Exact Organization**

Divides information into well defined, **mutually exclusive sections.**

There is no ambiguity.

It is easy to find something, if you know exactly what you are looking for.

- :: Alphabetical
- :: Chronological
- :: Geographical

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### Organizational Schemes

**Ambiguous Organization**

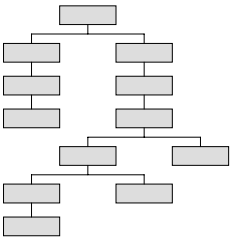
:: Often more useful than exact – because we don't always know what we are looking for

- :: Topical  
**What does this mean?**
- :: Task-oriented  
**What does this mean?**
- :: Audience-specific  
**What does this mean?**
- :: Metaphor driven  
**What does this mean?**

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### Organizational Structures

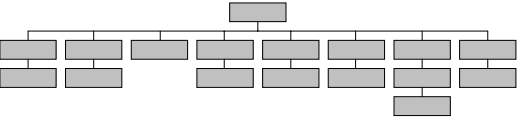
**Narrow & Deep**



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### Organizational Structures

**Broad & Shallow**



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### Organizational Structures

Which is better? When?

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### Databases

**What is a database?**

Databases have **tables** which store **data** in **fields**.

Record #	Name	Company	City	State
1	Fred Smith	Savannah College of Art & Design	Savannah	GA
2	Arthur Lewis	Savannah College of Art and Design	Savannah	Georgia
3	Jon Kolko	SCAD	Savannah	Georgia

Labels below the table: 'table' points to the entire table, 'field' points to individual columns, and 'data' points to individual rows.

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### Databases

**What is a database?**

Two major types of databases:

- :: Flat File
- :: Relational

A flat file generally has only one table.  
A relational database has many tables, linked together.

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### Databases

**Flat File**

Record #	Name	Company	City	State
1	Fred Smith	Savannah College of Art & Design	Savannah	GA
2	Arthur Lewis	Savannah College of Art and Design	Savannah	Georgia
3	Jon Kolko	SCAD	Savannah	Georgia

**Relational Database**

Record #	Name	Company	Current City	Home State
1	Fred Smith	1	1	1
2	Arthur Lewis	1	1	3
3	Jon Kolko	1	2	2

Below the relational table are three smaller tables representing linked data:

- Company Name:** 1 - Savannah College of Art & Design
- City Name:** 1 - Savannah, 2 - Pooler
- State Name:** 1 - GA - Georgia, 2 - PA - Pennsylvania, 3 - NY - New York

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### Databases

The stuff in these lookup tables is the **designers responsibility**

The lookup tables help drive the content on websites

They provide a controlled vocabulary

Important to understand your user – what are they expecting to see?

Record #	Company Name
1	Savannah College of Art & Design

Record #	City Name
1	Savannah
2	Pooler

Record #	State Name
1	GA - Georgia
2	PA - Pennsylvania
3	NY - New York

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### Databases : ER Diagrams

Entity Relationship Diagrams help us visualize the relationships between entities – the connections between major conceptual components

- :: Entity
- :: Attributes
- :: Relationships

**Why do you need to understand ER diagrams?**

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## Fitting It Together

How does classification and database design fit into interaction design?

**Featured Recommendation**  
**Project 86, Truthless Heroes**  
**Album Description**  
 Acclaimed Southern California metal-core combo Project 86 make a bold and brilliant leap forward with their extraordinary third album. [Adaptic...](#) [Read more](#) | [Why we'd recommend this](#)

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## Let's try it ..

Create an ER diagram for a simple online book and CD store.

What are the entities?  
 What are the attributes?  
 What are the relationships?



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## Summary

Organizational Challenges  
 Schemes  
 Structures  
 Databases

As an interaction designer, and as an information architect, you are a linguist.

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