

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
<i>Why Blueprint a Web Site?</i>	
Why This Book Exists	3
Yes, It's a Short Book	6
Not Going to Go There	7
Hey You, Information Architect	8
Why Bother?	8

1 Gurus and Rules	10
<i>In which some people like to boss you around, when we know that's my job.</i>	
The Rules	13
1. Users don't read. Use as little writing as possible.	15
2. Users don't scroll. Don't make your pages scroll.	18
3. Font size "1" should never be used. No one can read it.	21
4. There should be a maximum of seven links on each page; more than that and we lose the user. It's just too many choices.	25
5. Users won't click on items they believe are advertisements. Banner ads work only if they appear on the right side of the page.	28
6. Three goals of a site have to be identified to determine the direction and voice for the site.	29
The User Doesn't Do the Thinking, You Do	30

2 First Principles	32
<i>Some rules of thumb, and some thumbing of rules.</i>	
Principle #1: Design for Wayfinding	33
Principle #2: Set Expectations and Provide Feedback	38
Principle #3: Ergonomic Design	41
Principle #4: Be Consistent and Consider Standards	45
Principle #5: Provide Error Support—Prevent, Protect, and Inform	47
Principle #6: Rely on Recognition Rather than on Recall	49
Principle #7: Provide for People of Varying Skill Levels	51
Principle #8: Provide Meaningful and Contextual Help and Documentation	52
"This Chapter Will Self-Destruct in Five Seconds"	54

3 Balancing Acts—Users, Technology, and Business	56
<i>In which we discover that businesses like to make money.</i>	
The Squinty Eye	58
Defining Your Play Space	61
Who?	61
Why?	62
What?	63

4	Those People	68
	<i>In which we discover that asking users to read the mind of the designer is a waste of time, and we learn to read their minds instead.</i>	
	Marketing Talks to Users; Can't I Just Talk to Marketing?	71
	Where Do I Start?	72
	I've Got People; Now What?	74
	Effective Interviewing	76
	Neutral Interviewing	77
	Probing Effectively	77
	Accurate Interviewing	78
	Design a Site for the People	79
	Test a Prototype of the Site with the Potential Users	79
	How to Prepare a Prototype Test	81
	Testing the Prototype	84
	Running the Prototype Test	85
	Analyzing Prototype Test Results	86
	Test the Final Site with Users	87
5	Sock Drawers and CD Racks— Everything Must Be Organized	88
	<i>In which we learn that a lot of stuff can be a bad thing, and organization can be a good thing.</i>	
	May I Help You?	90
	Question #1: Am I in the Right Place?	92
	Question #2: Do They Have What I'm Looking For?	95
	Question #3: Do They Have Anything Better?	96
	Behind the Curtain	101
	Organization for the Masses	102
	You Really Can Be in Two Places at Once	108
	Faceted Classification	111
	Labels Are the Tip of the Iceberg	114
	Naming a Label	116
	Stuffing the Stuff	118
6	A Bricklayer's View of Information Architecture	120
	<i>In which we learn to design our architecture from the bottom up.</i>	
	Getting Meta	121
	Storytelling for Findability	126
	Hand-Crafted Metadata for Your Finding Pleasure	129
	One Language for All	134
	Controlled Vocabulary	136
	Everybody Spels Difernt	140
	Building a Controlled Vocabulary	144

7	From A to C by Way of B	152
	<i>In which we design a nice path for the user to get from one place to another, surviving such perils as shopping carts and pop-up windows.</i>	
	The Do-Something Part	153
	Simple Interactivity: A Mad Lib	155
	If I Only Had a Brain: Smarter Storytelling with Interaction Design	156
	The Shirley Maclaine Method	159
	Sam I Am	159
	The Archetypal User	164
	How to Create Personas	165
	1. Summarize Findings, Distribute to Stakeholders	165
	2. Hold a Work Session to Brainstorm Personas	167
	3. Prioritize and Cull Personas to Develop Primary and Supporting Personas	171
	4. Make the Personas into Real People	174
	5. Apply the Personas	177
	Scenarios: The Joseph Campbell Method	178
	Writing Scenarios	179
	New Feature: The Festival Planner	180
	Task Analysis: Sister Mary Diagrams It All	185
8	Eat Me, Drink Me, Push Me	190
	<i>In which the subtle arts of the interface are examined.</i>	
	From Box to Page	192
	Some Examples	198
	The Tao of the Page	203
	Principle #1: Simplicity and Elegance	203
	Principle #2: Proximity and Relevance	204
	Principle #3: Focus and Feedback	206
	Principle #4: A Hierarchy of Importance, a Hierarchy of Task	207
	Principle #5: The Right Tool for the Right Job	208
	Navigation—Windows, Doors, and Staircases	209
	Using a Different Color	210
	Click Me! Click Me! Pointers	212
	Universal Icons	213
	Linkmania	215
	The UnTab	219
	What Does It All Mean?	229
	Handles, Switches, and Shelves for the Interface	230
	The Many Forms of Forms	233
	The Widget of the Future	241
	Whence Interface?	245

9	Making It All Up, Writing It All Down	246
	<i>In which we learn that pencils make us smarter.</i>	
	Drawing for Thinking	248
	Sitepath Diagramming	248
	Topic Mapping	252
	Drawing for Communicating	257
	Interactive Storyboards	258
	Wall Diagrams and Functional Specifications	263
	Words, Words, Words	267
	The Content Inventory	267
	Drawing for Documenting	271
	The Site Map	272
	The Wireframe	284
	Slot A, Tab B	289
10	All Together Now	292
	<i>In which we make a web site.</i>	
	Project: The Internet Magazine	293
	Our Story Thus Far	294
	Step #1: What Does Nick Want from This Redesign?	295
	Step #2: Who Is the User Base?	296
	Step #3: What's There Now?	299
	Step #4: Go Outside	302
	Step #5: Go Inside	303
11	Being Effective	310
	<i>In which we learn that there is more to getting your job done than drawing a straight line.</i>	
	Jump Start Your Brain	311
	1. Nap	312
	2. Zen Chores	312
	3. Articulation	313
	4. Narratives	314
	5. Caffeine Abuse	314
	What Is the Common Thread?	315
	Presenting Your Solutions	315
	1. Background	315
	2. Reasoning	316
	3. Suggestions and Arguments	317
	Persuasion	319
	1. Give Positive Attention	319
	2. Reciprocity	320
	3. Be a Guru	320
	4. Peer Pressure	321
	Be Kind to Each Other	323

12	And in the End...	324
	<i>In which the ghosts of Information Architecture past, present, and future visit.</i>	
	The Present	326
	The Future of Information Architecture	327
<hr/>		
	Recommended Reading	331
	Must Haves	331
	The Slim Book Collection	335
	Web Sites	337
<hr/>		
	Colophon	339
<hr/>		
	Index	340