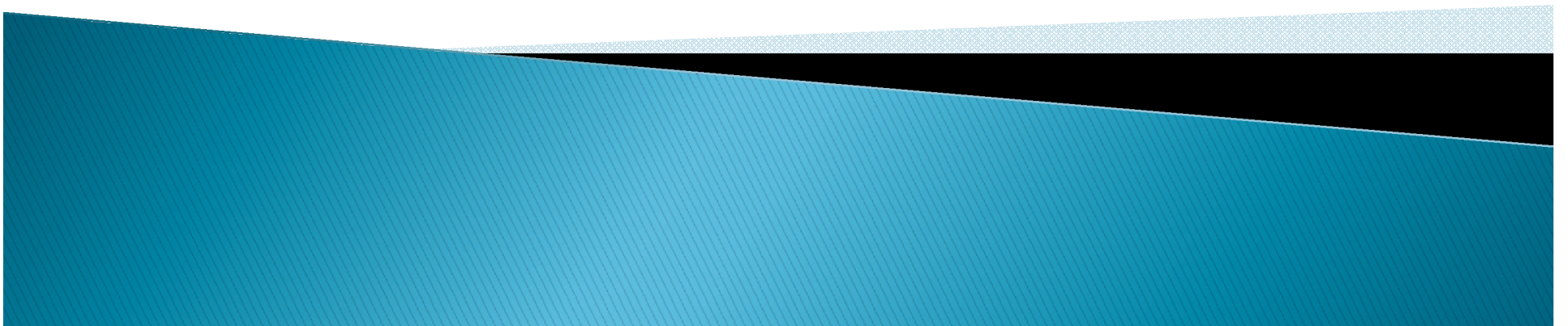
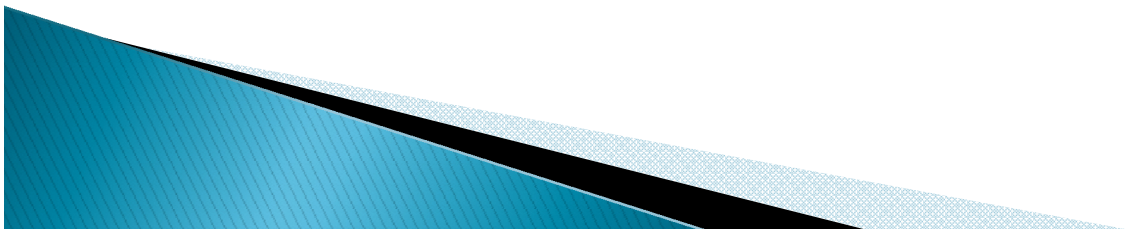


# Lecture I



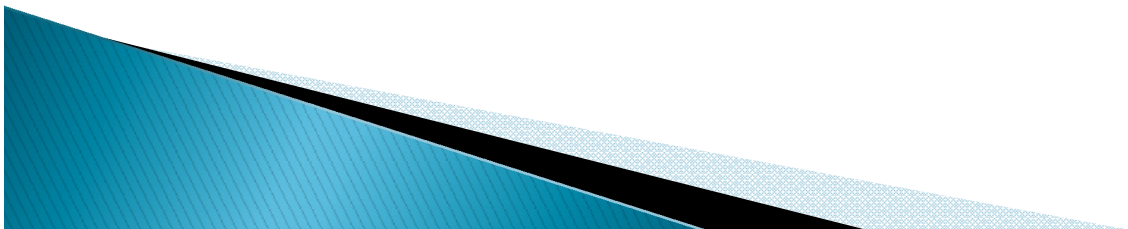
# Role of Information Architect

- ▶ The main job of the information architect is, who:
- ▶ Clarifies the *mission* and *vision* for the site, balancing the needs of its sponsoring organization and the needs of its audiences.
- ▶ Determines what *content* and *functionality* the site will contain.
- ▶ Specifies how users will find information in the site by defining its *organization, navigation, labeling, and searching systems*.
- ▶ Maps out how the site will accommodate *change* and *growth* over time.



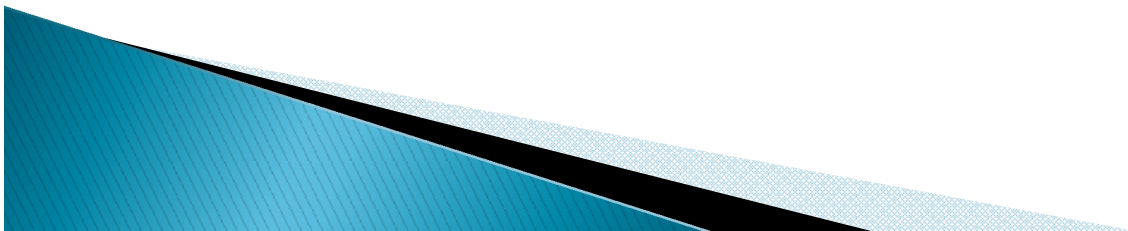
## The Consumer's Perspective

- want to find information quickly and easily
- Consumers do not like to get lost in chaotic hyper t webs.
- Poor information architectures make busy users cc frustrated, angry.
- Known-item searching
- Casual-searching
  - Must support both



# The Producer's Perspective

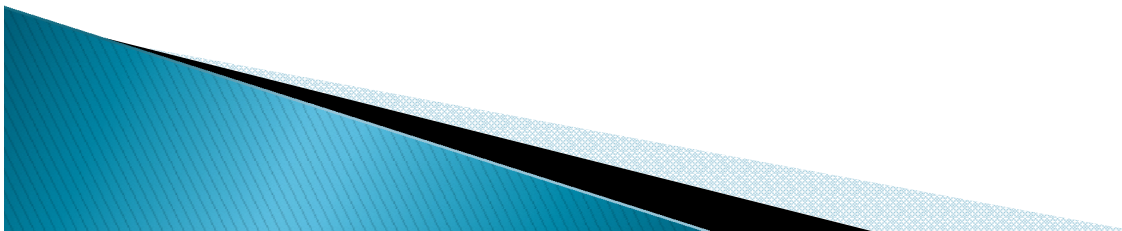
- ▶ we need to consider the actual costs of designing and implementing the architecture.
- ▶ Redesign of the information architecture impacts all other aspects of the web site
- ▶ See the forest not only the trees
- ▶ information architecture is about understanding and conveying the big picture of a web site.
- ▶ issues of information architecture must be resolved during the design process, *before the site is built.*



# Who Should Be the Information Architect?

The information architect of a large, complex web site should be two things:

- someone who can think as an outsider and be sensitive to the needs of the site's users, and
- at the same time is enough of an insider to understand the site's sponsoring organization, its mission, goals, content, audiences, and inner workings.
- In terms of disciplinary background, the information architect should combine the generalist's ability to understand the perspectives of other disciplines with specialized skills in visualizing, organizing, and labeling information.



# Thinking Like an Outsider

- ▶ a logical choice for the architect role is a senior person who knows the organization as a whole and who isn't involved exclusively within the activities of one department.
- ▶ One drawback to choosing a senior level manager is that he or she may have so many other responsibilities
- ▶ Another approach is bringing in a true outsider: a new hire or a consultant.
- ▶ The drawbacks of bringing in a true outsider are that they can be expensive and can lack sufficient knowledge of the organization to do the job, thus delaying the project's progress.



# Thinking Like an Insider

- ▶ As many organizations can't afford to outsource information architecture, the responsibility often goes to an insider who is not a senior level manager.
- ▶ Sometimes this is ideal; it's the people in the organization who often know the most about an organization's processes, and how to get things done within that organization.
- ▶ The problem with a lower-level person is that his or her knowledge may be too specific.
- ▶ A possible solution is to make information architecture this person's only job responsibility.



# Disciplinary Background

- Since information architecture is a relatively new field, you'll need to actively recruit, outsource, or perhaps *become* the information architect for your site.
- If you are looking for someone else, you might consider the disciplines listed below as potential sources:

## Graphic design


- Graphic design is much more than creating pretty pictures. It is geared more toward creating *relationships* between visual elements and determining their effective integration as a whole.
- Most people who have written about and practice information architecture are graphic designers by training.



## Information and library science

- So librarianship is an important discipline to turn to for information architecture expertise.
- By definition, librarians deal with organization of and access to information within information systems and are trained to work with searching, browsing, and indexing technologies
- librarians are also prone to get lost in details

## Journalism

- Because of their writing experience, journalists are also good candidates for architecting sites that will have high levels of edited content.
  - Journalists, like librarians, are trained at organizing information, If your web site delivers highly dynamic information, like a news wire
  - Occasionally, journalists are constrained by their experience in organizing information for print and other traditional media.
- 

## Usability engineering

- usability engineering is probably the most scientific in its view of users and the quality of their experiences with information systems.
- Usability engineers are experts at testing and evaluating how systems work. For information systems, they measure such criteria as how long it takes users to learn how to use a system, how long it takes them to find information in a system, and how many errors they make along the way.
- usability engineers concentrate on measuring a system's performance, not in designing or redesigning a system.

## Marketing

- Marketing specialists are expert at understanding audiences and communicating a message effectively to different audiences.
- 

- ▶ Marketing expertise can ensure that the message is presented in a user-oriented manner .
- ▶ The drawback to marketing-based approaches is the danger that they are more geared toward selling rather than helping users.

### **Computer science**

- ▶ Programmers and computer specialists bring an important skill to information architecture, especially to architecting information from the bottom up.
- ▶ For example, often a site requires a database to serve the content; this minimizes maintenance and data integrity problems. Computer scientists have the best skills for modeling content for inclusion in a database.

