Information Design Process
07W MAT 259, George Legrady

Now that you have your data, the next step is to design of how to organize, access and interpret the data

Preliminary Questions to Answer
. What is the project about?
. What are the goals of the communication
. What are the salient features
. Who is your audience? What are the cultural expectations?

Organization of Information to occur at various levels:
. The form and way the data is organized through metadata (data storage)
. The way that it is accessed through interaction design, (information architecture)
. The way that it is organized visually (visual communication)

Each step is determined through decisions based on the creator's intentions, choice of techniques, and planned usage (audience)

Data Storage
. What form will the data be stored in?
. Decision as to what set of metadata to have?
. Database software?
. MySQL: open source database, for web applications

Information Architecture
. Determines content and functionality
. Specifies how the site is structured
. Specifies how users will find information and interact
. Maps out how the site will accommodate change and growth over time

Elements of Info Architecture
. Organization systems: How the info is organized
. Navigation systems: How to get through the site
. Labeling systems: guides to identify location and data
. Indexing & search methods: Methods of access
. Metaphors: Symbolic ways by which the viewer can move through

Designing the Information Interaction
. Information seeking is often iterative and interactive
. We don't always know what we are looking for
. What you find at the beginning of your search may influence what you look for and find later in your search
. An associative Experience

Examples of Metaphors
. Mental model of a known entity to understand an unfamiliar one
. Organizational: desktop, folders, etc.
. Functional metaphors: shelves, catalogs, etc.
. Visual metaphors (yellow background for tel directory, etc.)

Visual Communication
. Visual Language: Highly sophisticated & least attended to
. Requires apprenticeship to achieve complex results
. Visual Language: Rule based, conventions, syntax
. Graphic design: balance between aesthetics and illustration
. Fry: Best solutions achieved by those trained in both graphic design and computational abilities

Some Visual Language Methods & Syntax
. Visual Identity
. Style as cultural identifier
. Form and Modular structures
. Color as formal and informational organizer
. Movement, balance, destabilizing
. Clustering

Interactivity
. Action as motivation
. Multi-linear narrative: enhance engagement through complexity
. Feedback system, allows for deeper exploration

Design Process Methods
. Top down: (pre-planned through definition and sketches)
        Project has a specific goal in mind
. Trial & error: (step-by-step process with iterative adjustments)
        Allows for experimentation results

Production Through Sketching
. A sense making process
. Sketching the organization of the data structure
. Sketching the visual lay-out
. Sketching multi-layered navigation
. Sketching as an iteractive process

Expertise & Interdisciplinary Team Approach

. Information architecture: Design Information flow
. Graphic designer: Visual Identity, effectiveness of visual communication
. Library Science: Organization and indexing of information
. Computer Science: Modeling content for database & visualization
. Journalist, and writer: Trained for information clarity and meaning
. Usability Engineer: Testing and evaluating how systems work
. Marketing: Identifies audience and effective communication methods