

## Another Look at What an Information Architect Does (April 2001)

This is the result of an analysis conducted in April 2001 of Information Architect positions listed on Monster.com and HotJobs.com during the first quarter of 2001.

The idea for this type of analysis came from the similar analysis performed by Jesse James Garrett in July 2000. See <<http://www.jjg.net/ia/iaadoes0700.pdf>> for Jesse's original.

Lest you think that I'm a thieving copycat, I asked Jesse after his breakout presentation at ASIS Summit 2001 if he would mind if I did a new version of this analysis and he very kindly encouraged me to do so.

The format is intentionally close to that used by Jesse so that the two might be compared. On the other hand, differences were introduced due to the motivation behind development of the chart.

This was a background exercise in a consulting engagement in which one of the tasks was to develop a job description for the position of Information Architect within the client's organization.

As Jesse did, I break the types of requirements into four main domains. Subcategories of related requirements within each domain are listed in bold, with specific requirements listed immediately underneath.

Numbers to the left of each specific requirement indicate how many companies out of 31 included the requirement in their position descriptions for Information Architect

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responsibilities/tasks	
<b>client interaction</b>	
5	participate
4	lead client workshops
3	end-user advocate
1	client presentations
<b>documentation</b>	
12	flowcharts
12	prototypes
11	wireframes/templates/storyboards
10	site maps
3	use cases
2	business processes
2	information design
2	written requirements
1	technical/functional spec
<b>interface design</b>	
13	navigational hierarchies
10	interaction design/definition
6	conceptualize/develop
5	naming conventions
4	intuitive user experience
3	taxonomies
3	user experience/flow
2	functionality
2	site metaphors
1	layout
<b>requirements definition</b>	
8	audience analysis/profiling
6	content analysis
4	task analysis
4	user scenarios
3	gather requirements
3	user research
2	define
2	determine project goals/strategy
2	prioritize
1	focus groups
1	interviews/field studies
1	manage
1	user surveys
<b>team interaction</b>	
17	teamwork
8	software developers
6	visual designers
3	usability specialists
2	business analysts
2	web developers
1	content developers
1	leading role
1	product managers
1	support others
<b>usability</b>	
9	usability testing
2	usability analysis
1	heuristics testing
1	usability evaluation
<b>quality assurance</b>	
1	assist
1	test

skills	
<b>approach</b>	
8	translate business needs into design
6	user-centered design
2	business knowledge
2	cognitive psychology
<b>communication</b>	
10	documentation/written
10	verbal/oral
9	client interaction
4	presentation
3	analytical skills
3	visual
<b>project</b>	
4	leadership
4	project management
2	integrate site/visual concept/function
1	estimating/sizing

technical expertise	
<b>technologies</b>	
15	html
7	dhtml
5	databases
5	dynamic websites
5	javascript
4	css
4	web applications
2	activex
2	asp
2	cgi
2	e-commerce systems
2	operating systems
2	personalization
2	programming languages
2	tcp/ip
1	client/server architecture
1	interactive entertainment
1	java
1	taxonomy creation/efinition
1	uml
1	xml
<b>tools</b>	
6	MS Word/Powerpoint/Excel
6	Visio
5	Photoshop
4	design software
4	Dreamweaver/web authoring
4	Freehand/Illustrator
2	rapid prototyping
2	web development tools
2	Director
1	Flash
1	Inspiration
1	MS Front Page
1	MS Project
1	Quark
<b>disciplines</b>	
1	graphic production
1	scripting

education/experience	
<b>bachelors</b>	
7	HCI
7	related field
5	Industrial Design
4	Computer Science
4	Graphic Design/BFA
3	Cognitive Psychology
3	Information Architecture
2	Interactive Design
2	Library/ Information Science
1	Human Factors
1	Journalism
1	Marketing
1	Web Design
<b>masters</b>	
2	Cognitive Psychology
2	Computer Science
2	HCI
2	Industrial Design
2	Information Architecture
2	Library Science
2	related field
1	Interactive Design
<b>work experience</b>	
<b>exhibit design</b>	
1	more than 4 years
<b>graphic design</b>	
1	1-2 years
1	3-4 years
1	more than 4 years
<b>industrial design</b>	
1	more than 4 years
<b>information architecture</b>	
9	3-4 years
7	1-2 years
1	more than 4 years
<b>interactive design</b>	
1	more than 4 years
<b>large-scale site design</b>	
2	1-2 years
<b>related field</b>	
2	more than 4 years
1	3-4 years
<b>software design</b>	
1	1-2 years
1	more than 4 years
<b>UI design</b>	
3	1-2 years
3	3-4 years
<b>Usability</b>	
3	1-2 years
<b>web design/development</b>	
3	1-2 years
1	3-4 years
1	more than 4 years

companies
Active Logic
ADP
Agency
Atmosphere
CEPI
digitalwave
First Union
Fitch
flutter.com
Frankfurt Balkind
IBM
Igicom
Ionic
Isys
KPMG
Liquid Thinking
Luminant
NetNumina
Novo
Orbitz
Proxicom
Red Rover
Red Sky
Sapient
Sengen
Show and Tell
Simstar
Sonamo
Tvisions
UCEA
Vertebrae
Adds posted during Q1 2001