INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE IN PRACTICE:

UNIVERSITY OF DENVER IT DEPT WEBSITE

I.A. WITHIN A GREATER CONTEXT

Information is no longer constrained to the physical

Moves towards conceptual/theoretical/ representation of

Democratization of information

Caution required: Information must be organized

- Ease of retrieval
- … of access

How is it presented?

IA is organizing the information and displaying to its target population

A TEXTBOOK "DEFINITION"

***Information Architecture: for the Web and Beyond* - Rosenfeld, Morville, & Arango**

"The structural design of shared information environments"

"The synthesis of organization, labeling, search, and navigation systems within digital, physical, and cross-channel ecosystems"

"The art and science of shaping information products and experiences to support usability, findability, and understanding"

Different from:

- data architecture- relational databases
- Knowledge management

Most concerned with:

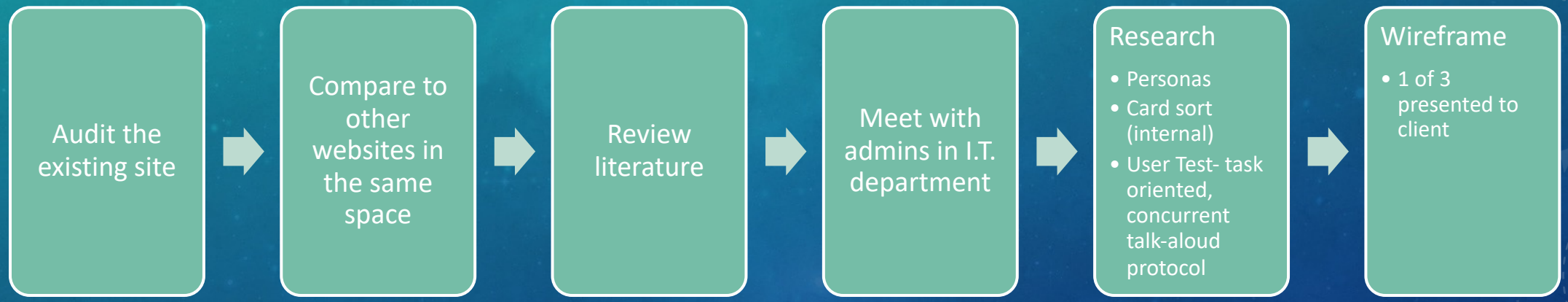
- websites, documents, software applications, images, etc
- Metadata (terms used to describe and represent content)

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

AMALGAMATION OF:

- Organization of Information
- Access to Information
- User Experience
- Design
- Psychology/Human Behavior

CASE STUDY:
UNIVERSITY OF DENVER I.T. WEBSITE



EXISTING SITE CRITIQUE

VISUAL OVERLOAD/TOO CLUTTERED

- No Calls to Action (CTAs)
- Text heavy
- Visual Real Estate taken up by unimportant graphics

CONFUSING IMPLEMENTATION OF TERMINOLOGY

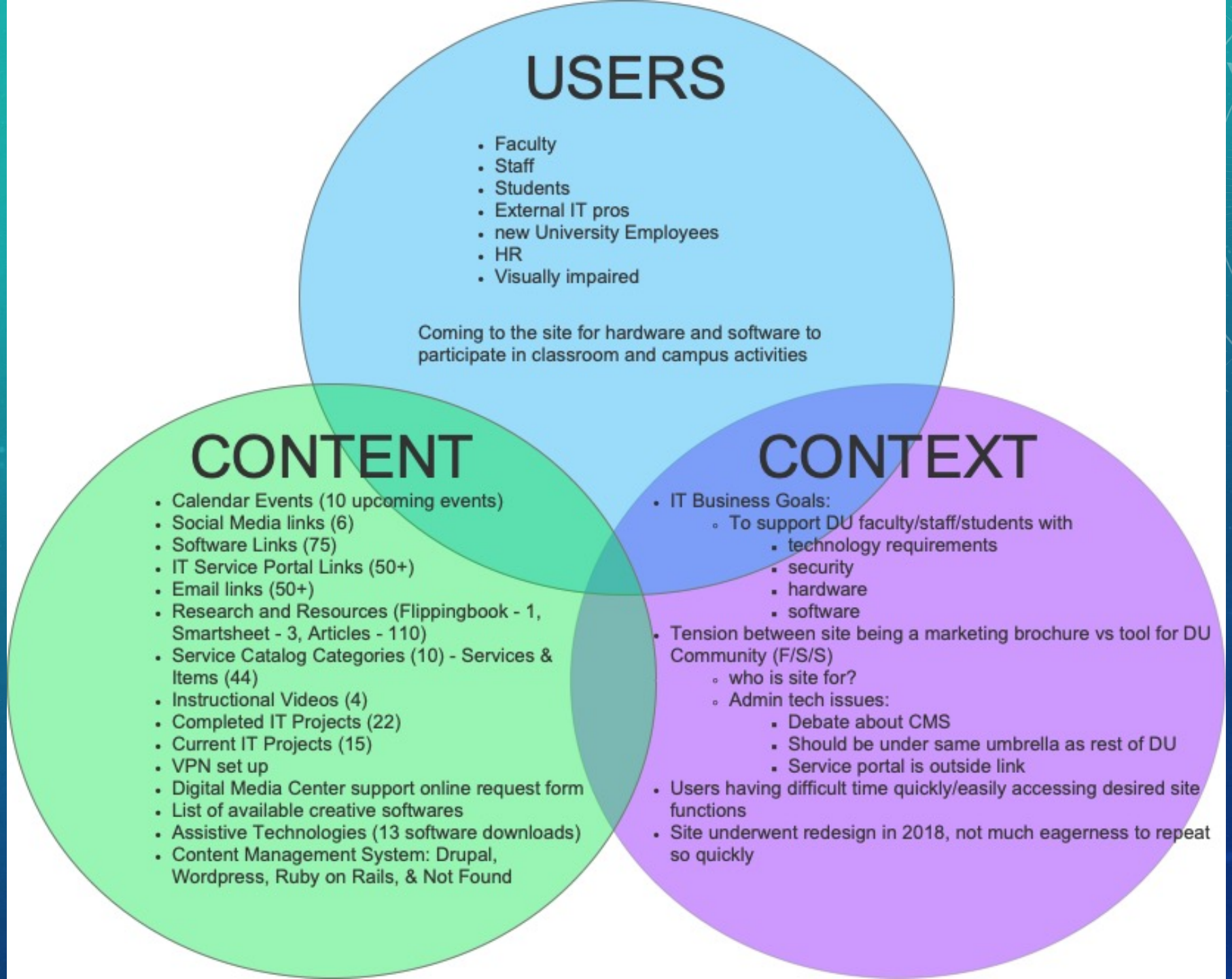
- Doesn’t help or inform the user
- No navigational clues to get user to end-goal

GOALS OF WEBSITE UNCLEAR

- Does it exist merely to let the public know the I.T. dept. exists or can users accomplish tasks for themselves through the site?
- What is promoted on the website does not match the analytics of user desires

CONTENT, CONTEXT, USERS

- PURPOSE
  - Help IA professionals level-set:
    - Who cares about the site?
    - Who uses the site?
    - What the site is used for (ostensibly)?
    - What does the site contain?
    - Context within which the site exists (university structure, recent changes, any conflicts)


USERS
Faculty
Staff
Students
External IT pros
new University Employees
HR
Visually impaired
Coming to the site for hardware and software to participate in classroom and campus activities
CONTENT
Calendar Events (10 upcoming events)
Social Media links (6)
Software Links (75)
IT Service Portal Links (50+)
Email links (50+)
Research and Resources (Flippingbook - 1, Smartsheet - 3, Articles - 110)
Service Catalog Categories (10) - Services & Items (44)
Instructional Videos (4)
Completed IT Projects (22)
Current IT Projects (15)
VPN set up
Digital Media Center support online request form
List of available creative softwares
Assistive Technologies (13 software downloads)
Content Management System: Drupal, Wordpress, Ruby on Rails, & Not Found
CONTEXT
IT Business Goals:
To support DU faculty/staff/students with
technology requirements
security
hardware
software
Tension between site being a marketing brochure vs tool for DU Community (F/S/S)
who is site for?
Admin tech issues:
Debate about CMS
Should be under same umbrella as rest of DU
Service portal is outside link
Users having difficult time quickly/easily accessing desired site functions
Site underwent redesign in 2018, not much eagerness to repeat so quickly

PERSONAS

- Help designers know/remember for whom they are designing

Personal Background:
Name [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Age: 33
Occupation: DU Graduate Student
Frequency of visits to IT website: 2 times per quarter
Preferred Device: Mac/iPhone

Goals/Motivations:
- Software access (research and analysis)
- General setup documents
- Relevant resources

Suggestions for Improvement:
- Put space between listed links (long lists of text is overwhelming to look at. Shorten the lists)
- Organization of links/services is strange. Put them in order of use?
- Remove some animations in graphics - slow and don't always execute well.
- Section headings/terminology need rephrasing to be more clear at what they are referencing.

Personal Background:
Name: [redacted]
Email: [redacted]
Age: 32
Occupation: Digital Accessibility Specialist
Frequency of visits to IT website: weekly
Preferred Device: For work- windows desktop, not at work safari- iPhone.

Goals/Motivations:
- Learning stuff
- Knowledge based articles
- Meeting a need in the moment

Suggestions for Improvement:
- Improvements for Accessibility
- Widgets don't work well
- Expand Collapses need work
- Less lists of information

USER FEEDBACK & ANALYTICS

"It's trying too hard to be everything for everyone. The links are not clear on your first visit."

… it requires anyone who wants support. To take time to learn the resources… Not everyone likes to take that kind of time"

"It really is just a lot of lists. I don't find anything particularly useful"

USER TEST TASKS

7 Usability Tests

•3 Students •1 Faculty • 3 Staff

Reset	Reset your password.
Find	From the homepage, find information about how to access your Office 365 account.
Find	From the homepage, find how to download Zoom to your device.
Set up	Set up an appointment with the Digital Media Center.
Report	Report a compromised account.
Download	Download a VPN client to your device.

USABILITY RESULTS

Search System

- Over-reliance on search function
- Too many search bars
- Accessibility problems with the search bar

Accomplishing Tasks is confusing

- Locating the Digitial Media Center (top request) is obscure
- Reporting a compromised account (Big Deal) was not immediately available
- Download links for key software (Zoom, VPNs, Multifactor Auth) buried amongst text heavy pages
- Reset password function exists outside main I.T. site

Navigating the Site

- Global navigation bar was lost in the clutter and proved difficult to use
- Users wanted to utilize the Faculty, Student, Staff sections but had difficulty finding them
  - the widgets in the middle of the page weren't found
- Red color scheme fails accessibility standards

THEORY -> PRAXIS

The Psychologist's View of UX Design
by Susan Weinschenk, Ph.D., 2010

- People Don't Want to Work or Think More Than They Have To
- People Have Limitations
- People Make Mistakes
- Human Memory Is Complicated
- People are Social
- Attention
- People Crave Information
- Unconscious Processing
- People Create Mental Models
- Visual System

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3 IDENTIFIED GOALS

Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
More intuitive, accessible, ***functional*** homepage	Simplify the user's search process	Task-oriented website experience

DESIRED IMPACT

01

Allow users to solve their own problems/do on the site what they came to I.T. for help with

02

Decrease burden on I.T. admins by alleviating time spent searching through menial support requests

03

Market I.T. as a resource for the DU community through functionality and practicality

POTENTIAL RISKS

Resources

- Dedicated staff for project?
- Duration
- Cost

CMS limitations

- DU has a new online style guide, all sub-sites are conforming

Volume of content

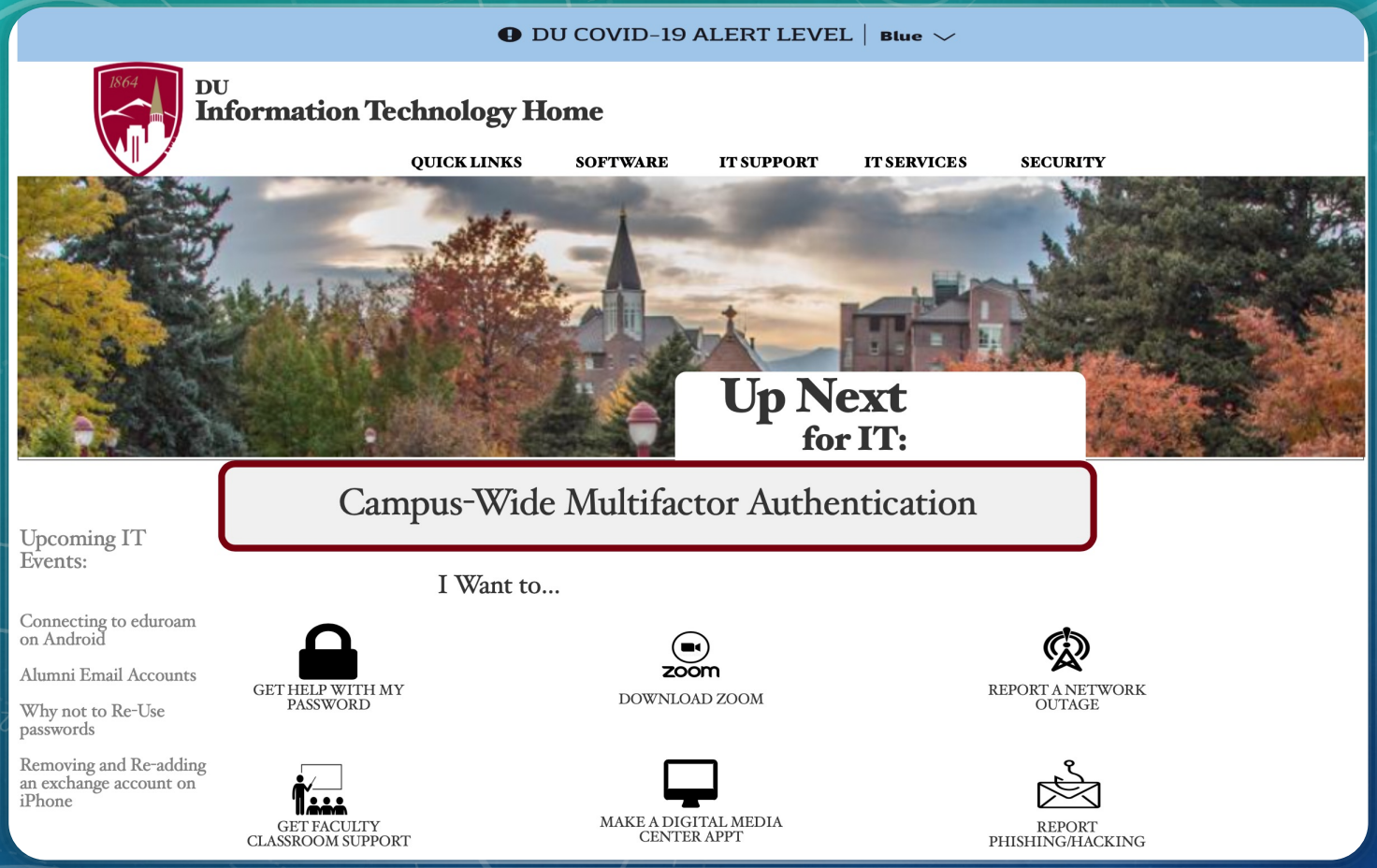
- Pare down number of pages, text on pages
- promote important functionalities/user agency

Buy-in

- Gotta convince the right stakeholders

IMPORTANT ADDITIONAL CONTEXT

DU Marketing & Communications Dept is overseeing a University-wide, piecemeal overhaul of the school's websites


DU COVID-19 ALERT LEVEL | Blue
DU
Information Technology Home
QUICK LINKS
SOFTWARE
IT SUPPORT
IT SERVICES
SECURITY
Up Next
for IT:
Campus-Wide Multifactor Authentication
Upcoming IT Events:
Connecting to eduroam on Android
Alumni Email Accounts
Why not to Re-Use passwords
Removing and Re-adding an exchange account on iPhone
I Want to...
GET HELP WITH MY PASSWORD
DOWNLOAD ZOOM
REPORT A NETWORK OUTAGE
GET FACULTY CLASSROOM SUPPORT
MAKE A DIGITAL MEDIA CENTER APPT
REPORT PHISHING/HACKING

EL FÍN