Steven Heitman
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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE: About MAIA

Information Architect & Design Experience

Information Architect Specialist

User Experience Designer

MAIA

Information Architecture & Design Program

Curriculum for MAIA Program

"The program is designed for students who want to pursue professional work in design firms, teaching, project management, strategic planning for design firms, or management roles in technology. We emphasize problem-solving competencies, both conceptual and practical. Students in the program study visual communication design and product design with an interdisciplinary perspective. Students with a wide range of backgrounds work with a graduate advisor to design an MA program that meets their career goals. Based upon focused research into a chosen design problem, students develop a specialized area of study in graphic design/visual communication design, product design/manufacturing, industrial technology, project management, or digital media. Many students prepare for doctoral work at other institutions."

In the School of Design Graduate Program—MAIA program—I specifically majored in user-centered design, design/user research, information architecture, interaction design, user experience design, navigation systems design, information design, Adobe Creative Suite, computer/Web programming, usability testing, graphic design, exhibit design, design, technical communications, and project management.

User Experience Design & Information Architecture

End users provide the opportunity to tell us about what they need. We create personas and profiles to think about how an end user might use a digital design product. Sometimes the information architecture or structure is not organized properly to allow for access. Search functions do not work right. Interface designs are awkward—needs improvement. Or, alternatively, navigation systems fail us. Then the user experience design has to clearly discern the user's unique online experience, not every person will use online products in the same manner. Information architecture and interaction design are distinct layers—really invisible layers to end users—expect they should all be components that work harmoniously together. User experience design is about creating unique online experiences that enable all the components to work right together.

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Why I Do It

I love working on improving user-centered design. Yes, that means I really strive to think about how an end user will actually use the produce. How can I work to provide products that work right for people? Design research is paramount to figuring out good solutions. Keeping in mind that building and designing digital products is an iterative process—why we do rapid prototyping. Sometimes we think a certain design product will work right. Then we discover from usability testing it does not really work right.

Details

Produced and completed multiple information architecture, user experience design, graphic design and typography portfolios (successfully accomplished); experience gained from real-world internships and additional projects.