The Academics and Practitioners Roundtable 2014–2019

Sarah A. Rice and Bernadette Irizarry

Abstract A summation of Roundtables held yearly in conjunction with major information architecture events between 2014 and 2019; details out the purpose, structure and experience of the Roundtable and describes the nature of resulting artifacts. Also presented is information about each Roundtable: 2014 Teaching Information Architecture; 2015 A Language of Critique for Information Architecture; 2016 A Discussion Of Masterworks: What Makes Good Information Architecture Good; 2017 Mapping the Domain: Navigating to a Discipline; 2018 Ethics and Information Architecture; 2019 Diversity and Inclusion.

Introduction

The Academics / Practitioners Roundtable, or the *Annual Academics and Practitioners Information Architecture Roundtable* as was most recently advertised as part of the Information Architecture Conference, is a yearly event which started in 2013. The Roundtable provides an opportunity to discuss the current status of the practice, of research and of education in information architecture, and to gather with like-minded people with wildly varying viewpoints, backgrounds, and degrees of knowledge. The Roundtable is not a traditional workshop or masterclass, rather it is an open conversation where no one, or maybe everyone, is taking the lead. There are no masters, nor apprentices. Topics are chosen yearly by the organizers, also an open group, with the goal of developing a critical discourse in the field and helping the community grapple with emerging issues and concerns. Opinions are gathered, ideas are explored, and a theme is then chosen.

Every year, the Roundtable is that moment when the table is truly round, and everyone's voice is equal and listened to. Ideas, methods, perspectives are debated, agreed and disagreed upon, usually after what can only be described as a lively but cordial discussion (fig. 1) that spans the domains of academia and the practice.

Its success stems from a combination of factors. It is completely volunteer supported, and as such must continue to offer immediately relevant and interesting

content to ensure volunteers continue engagement. It is attached to one of the biggest yearly information architecture events, making it convenient for the largest number of people to attend. A dedicated group of people who find the experience beneficial to their own professional development keep attending and adding their voices to the work of the Roundtable. Finally, leaders and decision makers within the community have provided acceptance and support of the Roundtable efforts, which have paved the way for space at the conference and ways to reach a wider audience during the planning and execution of the event.

For many who practice information architecture, the Roundtable represents an annual opportunity to meet and discuss in depth a single topic that is important in shaping the field and future of their profession. Their viewpoint is valued, and it is a key moment to bring questions, concerns, opinions and help architect a vision of how information architecture might impact enterprises, industries, their communeties and the world.

Fig. 1. Group discussion at the 2014 Roundtable

Structure and Experience

The Roundtable began as a one-day event that mixed presentations, discussion, and hands-on activities, and has since expanded to include a second day. Most Roundtables have followed a similar format, with the last three editions offering presentations and discussion during day one, and using day two for a *Make-a-thon*, a focused full-day exploration of the conversations from day one through the realization of concrete artifacts in the form of prototypes, games, tools, and methods. Through the years, the organizing committee has fluctuated

between as few as one to as many as seven volunteer members. Roundtable attendance has been thirteen at its lowest and forty-five at its highest.

A traditional welcome chat and introduction set the goals for the day, and provide a shared understanding of the activities. Day one of the Roundtable is split into two parts: the first part introduces contributions, in the form of presentations or talks, that approach critically the topic of discussion; the second part takes the form of group discussion, critique, and synthesis of the contributions. The format for the presentations of day one is that of short, five-minute "lightning" talks. Presentations are based on papers (for academics) or talks (for practitioners) that have been peer reviewed for quality and relevance of the subject matter. The lightning talk format encourages presenters to focus on summarizing key points quickly and precisely. Since the 2014 Roundtable, the M3 model[1] has been used as a basic framework for all discussions involving the relationship between the academic and the practice sides of the field.

Part two's format has varied through the years, depending on topic, number of attendees, and the goals set by the organizers. All Roundtables have engaged in some type of practical exercise to synthesize outcomes, with attendees breaking away for small group activities, and then returning to the larger group for a final debrief. The *Make-a-thons* have used a similar structure, embracing experimentation and free-flowing cross-pollination between ideas and teams. Make-a-thons have generally allowed participants to approach the problem space from the perspective they favored, using the tools they favored, from markers and paper to cardboard models to software, for the results and outcomes they thought could make for the most valuable contribution to advancing the conversation on information architecture practice and research.

Artifacts

Physical and conceptual artifacts have always been a primary outcome of the various Roundtables and physical ones have taken an even larger role with the introduction of day two and the *Make-a-thon*. These artifacts have taken the form of maps (*Mapping the experience*, 2017), mood boards (*Masterworks*, 2016), reports and presentation (*Language of critique*, 2015), storyboards and photologs

---

[1] See "Classical to Contemporary" in this same book or Lacerda, F. and Lima-Marques, M. (2014) Information Architecture as a Discipline - A Methodological Approach. In Resmini, A. (ed) Reframing Information Architecture. Springer.

(*Ethics*, 2018), games and tools (*Diversity,* 2019 *Make-a-thon*). In parallel, every Roundtable has captured the flow of thoughts and conversations through videos[2], wall boards, collective note-taking, post-it scribbling, and list-making. All of these artifacts have been gathered, documented, and preserved as raw data.

The Roundtable website[3] is an additional, important product of the Roundtable and a central hub for communication of upcoming events or call for papers, as well as the primary archive of all event-related materials and post-event reflections.

The Roundtable 2014–2019

Following is a list of the Academics and Practitioners Roundtables that took place between 2014 and 2018 as part of the pre-conference series of workshops at the ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit, and in 2019 as part of the pre-conference events at its successor IA Conference, in locations across the United States. Themes, presentations, and a few selected artifacts are briefly described.

Teaching Information Architecture (2014)

The 2014 Academics and Practitioners Roundtable on *Teaching Information Architecture*, the second Roundtable[4], took place as part of the ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit in San Diego, California, USA on March 27 2014.

Contemporary students of information architecture will be the ones to forge the path ahead in the years to come. Karen McGrane's 2013 closing plenary[5] called for a doubling down on information architecture. This included selling and positioning our practice in the marketplace as well as how we educate our next generation of learners.

---

[2] IA Roundtable YouTube Channel. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCHqryKW89KgdoVRjaSEilOw.

[3] IA Roundtable, http://www.iaRoundtable.org,

[4] The first Academics and Practitioners Roundtable, Reframing Information Architecture, is documented in Resmini, A. (2014) Reframing Information Architecture. Springer.

[5] 14th ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit, Baltimore, United States.

The Roundtable on teaching information architecture sought to extend the conversation by focusing on:

- What and how should we be teaching students of information architecture?
- How do we mature the practice of information architecture through education?
- How do we bridge practice, theory and education?
- What does the field as a whole require from education? This includes businesses, agencies, academia and the community of practice.
- What is the full breadth of information architecture education? When does it end? And how could we coordinate its development?

Those who attended the event benefited from deep discussion, lively debate and co-design sessions that explored the intersection of education, practice and theory. More specific take-aways included:

- A deeper knowledge of the current global state of information architecture education
- An understanding of contemporary theoretical positions and case studies on teaching information architecture
- An understanding of what is required to challenge and develop the field of information architecture through education
- Models for the critique of information architecture produced both for students and practitioners
- Definition of what we should be teaching from and for the field of information architecture
- Innovative approaches to teaching information architecture.

Featured Talks

- Research in Information Architecture, Andrea Resmini
- How I teach Information Architecture to design students, Abby Covert
- Information Architecture thinking, Jason Hobbs and Terence Fenn
- Teaching Information Architecture, Keith Instone
- Teaching Information Architecture by learning about architecture, Dan Klyn

- What can Information Architecture learn from Library and Information Science: Perspectives from LIS education, Craig M. MacDonald
- Designing a shared digital future: Institutionalizing UX and IA. Teaching executives the value of Information Architecture and User Experience, Simon Norris
- Teaching Information Architecture .... until I sketched it, Thomas Wendt
- Teaching Tangibly on Rodents and Religion, Christina Wodtke

Sharing of Results and Dissemination

The Roundtable was brought into the main program of the conference by means of an impromptu 45-minute session, during which the organizers were able to summarize the Roundtable activities and share what had taken place during the day-long event. Sarah A. Rice was in the audience for the session and wrote[6] about her experience learning of the 2014 Academics and Practitioners Roundtable. Here is an excerpt from that post:

> Until now, I thought I'd moved beyond IA. I thought my career growth would come from outside this domain and community. If I went back to school, I assumed it would have to be in another field.... Business administration. Cognitive Psychology. Computer Science. These aren't bad fields, and the knowledge they offer would be very beneficial to me. What troubles me is that… I'm an information architect. I framework. I listen. I understand. I explore. I clarify. I get overwhelmed by complexity. I doubt if things will ever become clear. I talk with others. I listen some more. I construct hypotheses. I build models. I wrangle oceans of information. I talk with users, customers, participants, members. I sketch. I ponder. I give up, but never for very long. I ask lots of questions. And I framework. Document, share, update, repeat.

> What have I heard at the 2014 IA Summit that has provided me such relief? I heard that we've moved beyond the web but have kept our identity as information architects. I heard about reframing IA...we don't just build navigation, we support wayfinding. We don't draw sitemaps, we show context. We don't (just) build models, we support sense-making. And we can do this anywhere.

---

[6] Rice, S. A. (2014) 2014 Information Architecture Summit -- Reflections. *Telling the Whole World*.
https://tellingthewholeworld.blogspot.com/2014/04/2014-information-architecture-summit.html

We started with digital environments and are expanding from there. For example, I've architected future plans for nonprofits, and revised messaging platforms for emerging startups. My current project is to create a culture of customer experience (within) a growing company…. This is the path I've taken, and until recently, I thought I was alone. I thought I needed to leave my chosen field in order to pursue the Next Step. But the 2014 IA Summit [and the Academic / Practitioners Roundtable] set me straight.

The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly: Developing A Language Of Critique For Information Architecture (2015)

The Third Academics and Practitioners Roundtable on *Developing a Language of Critique* took place as part of the pre-conference workshops at the ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit in Minneapolis, MN, USA on April 22 2015.

This Roundtable focused the discussion on how we define what is good and what is bad in information architecture, given that "the sprawling, cross-channel information spaces we design today are nothing like those we designed in the 1990s, and we have struggled to articulate a comprehensive language to describe and critique them. Is this one good? Is that one bad? Why?".

To lay the initial basis for a conversation on a language of critique for information architecture, the 2015 Roundtable intended to provide preliminary answers to questions such as:

- Is such a language really necessary or can this proposition be challenged?
- If necessary, is this language an entirely new language? Can it be derived from existing languages, such as those for new media or architecture?
- How would such a language work?
- Who should help in shaping it?
- Can practice and research share a common language of critique or are their goals different if complementary?

Summary of Interviews from Roundtable Participants

Participants were individually interviewed during the course of the Roundtable and asked about their views in relation to the questions put forward on the necessity of developing a structured language of critique. These semi-structured interviews were conducted one on one in a separate space, and collectively supported the idea that the field needs a language of critique. Points raised included the necessity of identifying what is the object of critique proper, how such a language should be first developed and then, even more critically, used, and whether or not academics and practitioners could use a shared language or not.

Interviews showed general agreement among interviewee that there is a problem within the field of information architecture: the community of practice confuses "what we do" as a field with the medium in which we do it; it conflates the field with current practice, and so muddles the distinctions between core information architecture theories, principles, methodologies, and models that guide work, and the deliverables that are created in response to a specific task or job. The result is that many practitioners have been pigeon-holed into small boxes, "wireframe jockey", "creator of web sites", and many assume that information architecture simply means executing a card sort. Such an approach keeps the community small, and makes it irrelevant. Marsha Haverty mentioned the necessity of bringing rigor into any conversation about the field, while Stacy Surla stated that being intuitive, rather than methodological, is the consequence of a lack of consolidated frameworks. Clarity is required in distinguishing problem space, the "what", from process, methodology, and tools, the "how", and from the philosophical "why". Misty Weaver maintained that broad support from the wider community is needed for change, and Simon Norris stated that a language of critique that we can agree on and disseminate is what can help that process and demonstrate the value of information architecture in a design process.

Ren Pope stated that a common language to identify good and bad information architecture will also provide a shared understanding and facilitate discussions in and out of the field. Bern Irizarry noted that this will give us rules and stories that govern what was done and provide structure to the discipline. Duane Degler commented that such structures would also help challenge assumptions, both methodological and philosophical.

Discussion

It was suggested that a language of critique could be seeded from a number of different fields and disciplines, such as traditional architecture, design in its various flavors (industrial, graphic and print, service), cinema, game design, computer science, human factors, library science, business administration, and the social sciences (psychology, sociology, anthropology). Building a body of critiqued work would be done over time, and would likely be done by multiple people or groups, in order to ensure robustness. Such individual critiques could then lend themselves to revealing patterns to further develop the coalescing framework and formulate a specific language to clearly and objectively communicate quality and value. Such developments would help give the field some of the structure and clarity it is currently lacking.

> Abby Covert – We know we need a language of critique. We need to talk about what we do, consistently. Can we pick words to use that we all agree on?
> Sarah Rice – Who does the picking?
> Abby Covert – Whoever shows up. If you are reading this, consider this to be a formal invitation into the process to develop a language of critique for information architecture. Be part of the community. Be part of the conversation.[7]

A Discussion of Masterworks: What Makes Good Information Architecture Good? (2016)

The 4th Academics and Practitioners Roundtable on *Masterworks* took place as part of the pre-conference events at the 17th ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit in Atlanta, Georgia, on May 5 2016.

In an ideal continuation of the conversation from the previous year's Roundtable, the debate centered on what is a masterwork in information architecture. How do we recognize, identify, explain a work's value, relevance, originality, and influence? Questions included:

- What defines a masterwork of information architecture?
- What are examples of masterworks of information architecture?

---

[7] Excerpt from the 2015 Roundtable Final Report. https://is.gd/RoundtableFR2015.

- How do we determine if an architecture is "good"? What are the frameworks? What are the indicators?
- What is a masterwork in the age of postdigital artifacts and anonymous mass co-creation?
- What is the role of the information architect?
- How are individuals or studios and collectives recognized for their contributions to communal work?
- Can a masterwork be the deliberate creations of corporations? Can it arise from like-minded creative thinkers drawing inspiration from one another?
- Can it be the product of mass co-creation?
- What are the benefits of establishing a canon for information architecture practice?
- Can a solid body of knowledge and an established canon broaden discourse and become platforms for well-rounded education and research?
- Do we risk division in the field? Are ambassadors necessary to drive broader acceptance of information architecture?

Featured Talks

- Structuring the Conversation: The M3 Model and Information Architecture, Flávia Lacerda
- Learning from James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Richard Saul Wurman's *The City, Form and Intent*, Dan Klyn
- The Information Architecture of the Mundane, Michael Adcock
- A Language of Critique for Information Architecture, Stacy Surla
- CAMP: A Model for Critique of Masterworks, Christina Wodtke
- Taxonomies of Othering: Creating Systems of Oppression, David Bloxsom
- Machines for Making the Future, Marsha Haverty

Fig. 2. The 2016 Roundtable.

Mapping the Domain: Navigating To A Discipline (2017)

The 5th Academics and Practitioners Roundtable on *Mapping the Domain* took place as part of pre-conference activities at the 18th ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit in Vancouver, Canada, on March 22 2017.

The Roundtable reflected on how over the past several years, the information architecture community had been considering how to progress beyond the practice (what's done in the field), help establish a body of knowledge, and consolidate its disciplinary part in research and education. It brought together results and open questions from the four previous editions and resulted in the collective creation of a domain map of information architecture as a discipline.

Featured Talks

- The Evolution of Information Architecture: A Journey in the Micro-Meso-Macro-Meta, Simon Norris
- Designing Against Humans: Lessons from Masterworks, Jeffrey Ryan Pass
- Lessons from UXPA, Carol Smith

- What is our responsibility to the information environment? Bram Wessel
- Is Information Architecture Undefinable? Stuart Maxwell
- Information Planners, Chris Chandler
- Roundtable Retrospective: 2013 to Today, Sarah A. Rice
- Agile Heuristics, Laura Federoff

Artifacts: The Domain Map

The primary goal of the Roundtable was to map the domain of information architecture. The Domain Map, which in its "live" version consisted of a wall-to-wall board in a three-by-three grid, with the three levels of the M3, "Paradigm", "Theories and Models", and "Solutions to problems" as its horizontal rows, and "Questions", "Discoveries", and "Examples" as its vertical columns. This board was used throughout all of day one as the collective hive mind for the room to allow moment-by-moment capture of insights, comments, thoughts, and questions. Sticky notes were added, moved, edited, removed, in an exercise which was part reflections on the ongoing conversation and part an emergent systematization of the attributes and characteristics of the field at large.

Towards the end of the day, a final loose clustering activity of all content on the board was conducted in the form of a group discussion, to consolidate the concepts and relationships between them.

Domain Map

	Higlights	Examples	Problems
Epistemology	Some want IA as a **discipline**, not just a craft, but there has been pushback. Building our **discipline**: Thats why we have the Roundtable. Value academic discourse. Our discipline has **evolved**: moving from wireframes to strategy. More architecture than design. **Defining IA**: help practitioners define what they do; empower them to do their craft. Many fields constantly **question** their definition. IA is inherently **abstract**. Info is abstract, arch is abstract.	**Definitions** as seen in: Official IA org websites Polar Bear book Pervasive IA Wikipedia **Gap**: Computational IA missing from our epistemology We've relied on qual, but quant is out there as well.	**Defining it** - is IA: science or philosophy discipline or craft? **Not easy** If it is easy, it has little value Should we aim for discourse rather than definition? **Why should we do it?** Funding, professions **What framing are we using?** Disciplines can exist outside of economic systems, like capitalism **Professional needs** Language for critique Defining masterworks Ethics & values
Theories	**Defining: What goes into a definition?** Facilitate conversations Focus on meaning Framing problems Standards and objectives Information ecologists **Teaching IA:** How to let others know this profession exists? What classes are there in IA? Teaching information literacy **Evaluating IA works:** Lang. of critique - what is peer review for IA? Heuristics: best practices & common sense Is heuristic at model level or practice level? Language of IA is still evolving	IA as job title absorbed into other things. IA lives at the conceptual level. Output is validated when clients pay more for IA services Books about IA Books about navigation and search Design critique - finally catching up to this in 2017	What is the thing that tools live in? How do we define rigor in our field? **Heuristics** are valuable for novices and new practitioners. Standard process for an IA heuristic? How to identify **masterworks** in a changing and evolving field? What is canonical? What are the masterworks? Why are all masterworks things not designed by IAs?
Practice	Businesses need IA but don't know it IAs need jobs Students are the best bridge from academia to practice Impact of tech on environment and context (means our craft is changing) Not have a point of view with others When doers become mentors or teachers Agile structure does more harm than good some of the time. IAs become grand advocates (IA informs overall brand strategy)	Still focus on web sites, but now *with* user. How much more of the bridge. Lots of **challenges** bridging research & practice	Who are students of IA? What are pedagogical priorities? Formal teaching vs apprenticeship or journeymen IA? Is certification important or meaningful? Diverse continuums How do we identify and preserve IA masterworks?

Fig. 3. Synthetic version of the Information Architecture Domain Map (S. A. Rice, 2017)

After the Roundtable, that map was then further synthesized and summarized in digital form for wider distribution. This digital Domain Map (fig. 3) preserves the original structure and grid, but offers a bullet-point, focused version of the main highlights, examples, and problems as they relate to the levels of the M3.

Ethics and Information Architecture (2018)

The 6th Academics and Practitioners Roundtable took place during pre-conference at the 19th ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit in Chicago, Illinois. Day one, March 21 2018, was presentations and discussion; day two, March 22 2018, was the first *Make-a-thon*.

That year's Roundtable discussed how information architectures are not neutral and the ethical implications of working with information. By structuring information environments that people can inhabit, by creating organizations for discovery and use, information architecture not only makes information accessible but also provides the lens through which people will experience it. It encodes power relations and imposes value choices, and presents the research and the practice fundamental ethical questions. The information architecture community has considered ethics at the micro level, that of the specific interaction, but has somewhat failed to consider it in its larger context. When designing an information architecture, do practitioners surrender their moral authority to someone else? Are they aware or unaware of this happening? Do they follow a code, a series of best practices, or do they improvise when facing ethical questions as part of their work? Does education and research consider ethics a part of the teaching and investigation of information architecture as a discipline?

Featured Talks

- Ontological and Epistemological Notion of Being, Arturo Perez
- Wicked Ethics in Design, Jason Hobbes
- Towards a Feminist IA, Stacy Surla
- Personal Ethics and Ethical Codes, Kat King
- Boundaries and Relationships in IA Practice, Dan Zollman
- Everything that Rises must Converge, Jeff Pass
- Your Ableism is Showing, Anne Gibson
- Information Architecture's Moral Imperative: Protecting Difference, Dan Klyn

Applying Ethics to Practical Information Architecture Scenarios

Attendees were split into teams, given a number of scenarios, and tasked with providing a solution while applying ethical principles. At the end of the exercise, each team had produced a storyboard-like deliverable describing an experience and its ethical implications from the point of view of the information architecture, and highlighting a principle or key insight. Each team gave a ten-minute presentation of their scenario and proposed solution.[8]

Fig. 4. Group presentations at the 2018 Roundtable

Make-a-thon Artifacts

During the day two Make-a-thon, attendees divided into teams and created both conceptual and physical artifacts that engaged with the ethical dimensions discussed during day one and that affect the domain of information Architecture. Artifacts included a scenario-creation tool and an ethics game (fig. 5).

---

[8] S. Cook, K. Instone, and S. Surla: *A Sex Offender Registry that Maximizes Good and Minimizes Harm.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsuepJhleGM; A. Perez, A. Rosenthal, C. Smith, T. Whalen, and A. Gibson: *Facebook and Fake News*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfrUV6yIA2c; D. Zollman, J. Pass, J. Hobbs, and A. Resmini: *Kill 'Em Right - Building a system to carry out the death sentence in Texas*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIFpwj4idR4.

Fig. 5. Explaining the mechanics of the ethics game at the 2018 Make-a-thon.
Photo: S. Surla

Dissemination during the Conference

Roundtable results were also disseminated during the main program of the conference by means of synthetic deliverables from day two at Poster Night, as well as during a forty-five-minute session in which Roundtable organizers presented a readout[9] of the main practical and conceptual take-aways from both day one and day two of the Roundtable.

---

[9] Rice, S. A. (2018) Summary Presentation on Ethics and Information Architecture. 19th ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit. https://www.slideshare.net/seneb/privacy-settings-analytics-free-ethics-and-information-architecture-the-6th-academics-and-practitioners-Roundtable-at-the-information-architecture-summit-2018.

Dissemination at other Venues

Outcomes of the Roundtable were further discussed at other venues following the conclusion of the conference. Stacy Surla presented *A Scenario Creation Tool for Ethical Design* at a Washington DC[10] industry event. Sarah Rice and Bernadette Irizarry developed an *Ethics Canvas*[11] based on the scenario creation tool which was presented at a number of events, including Code4Lib, Content Strategy Applied, and the Information Architecture Conference.

Diversity and Inclusion (2019)

The 7th Academics and Practitioners Roundtable on *Diversity and Inclusion* took place as part of the pre-conference activities at the Information Architecture Conference in Orlando, Florida. Day one, March 13 2019, was presentations and discussion. Day two, March 14 2019, hosted the second Make-a-thon. Additionally, a forty-five-minute session was held on March 16 2019 as part of the main conference to disseminate the results of the two days of Roundtable activities.

The 2019 Roundtable followed-up in the steps of the previous year's event, broadening and deepening the conversation on the ethical side of information architecture.

Information architectures give structure to the world we live in: they provide boundaries, enact constraints, categorize and label the opportunities for action, and allow comparison. They carry with them implicit value judgements and impact everyone in ways which can have far-reaching social implications. Working and living in a post-digital age means that many of the structures that support placemaking and sensemaking are embedded into digital as software, apps, or shared platforms, and are therefore invisible. Examples include Facebook's content guidelines, Google's search algorithms, and Twitter's rules governing user behavior. Additionally, new generations that have no direct experience of a world without computers approach categories and labeling in a fundamentally different way.

---

[10] Surla, S. (2018) Ethics and Information Architecture: A Scenario Creation Tool for Ethical Design. https://www.slideshare.net/stacysurla/ethics-and-ia-a-scenario-creation-tool-for-ethical-design.

[11] Rice, S., Irizarry, B. (2018) The Ethics Canvas. http://bit.ly/ethics-canvas.

Invisible, disempowering structures do not serve society well. Homogeneity, subordination, and group thinking do not serve society well: everyone, regardless of age, culture, gender, politics, ability, beliefs, takes part and participates in the pervasive information architectures that make up today's world. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the architectures we build to make sense of the world around us and of the information we must navigate are planned, architected, and designed by people who understand the implications of their work and who bring with them an open, diverse, and inclusive mindsets.

Featured Talks

- Racial Identity Development Theory; What's Our Role in Supporting Diversity, Veronica Erb
- Architecting Information Architecture Industry Events for Diversity & Inclusion, Jeff Pass
- Diversity of Thought; How We Can Foster Responsibility to Mindfully Shift Culture, Amy Espinosa
- Trust and Inclusion in Vulnerable Populations, Noreen Whysel
- Just Being Your/Self, Evgeni Minchev
- Do's and Don'ts for Diversity: Yes, They DO Exist!, Ylce Irizarry

Artifacts: Diversity and Inclusion Meditation Activities Cards (DIMA)

The group prototyped a series of mindfulness exercises and scenario cards to support individual, peer-to-peer or team discussions on diversity and inclusion. Titled "Diversity and Inclusion Meditation Activities Cards (DIMA)", the cards contained exercises and practices designed to encourage teams to evaluate products and services they craft on three spectrums: safety, intersectionality, and visibility. The safety spectrum challenged creators to examine the impact of their services on underrepresented communities while probing the creators' potential implicit biases. The intersectionality spectrum drew inspiration from the work of Kimberlé Crenshaw and asked creators to consider how overlaps in identity can contribute and compound the inequalities experienced by vulnerable groups. The visibility spectrum probed how open and transparent teams made the process and methodologies used for product and service development.