



# Senior Information Architect—Usability Firm

**SALARY RANGE (2018): \$90,000–\$120,000**

My job is about organizing and categorizing data to make it meaningful for an end user. Before the architect can best point users to the data they seek, he or she needs to know how or why the user is seeking that information in the first place. The information architect then uses that base categorization model to create the site structure of a website or the interface for an information application. My goal is to make the complex clear.

**The Tip:** Find your professional community and engage in it actively while in school. Every professional has been where you are and wants to help. Book a coffee with one person a week and ask them this single question: “What is the one thing you’d tell your 18-year-old self?”

## **PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**

### **Management Skills**

- Manage the design process
- Manage multiple workflows
- Act in a responsible manner with regard to the needs of people, their communities, and society as a whole

### **Research & Insights Skills**

- Formulate focused and practical research questions
- Apply a deep knowledge of human behaviour to understand usability
- Systems mapping and knowledge transfer

### **Communication Skills**

- Apply content management strategy
- Conduct user testing
- Use specialized software to prepare, edit and distribute content across multiple platforms

### **Design Skills**

- Build prototypes out of a variety of materials
- Apply information architecture principles various online and print mediums
- Critique and improve design artifacts

### **Core Transferable Skills**

Be an expert at all core transferable skills:

- Thinking skills
- Communications skills
- Organizational skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Technical literacy

## BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

<p><b>Education &amp; Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Bachelor of Communication (information design) with a minor in marketing</li><li>● I'm continually updating my multimedia technical skills</li></ul>	<p>Technical communications is changing fast; stagnation is a career killer. My information design degree and related experience taught me how to concisely communicate complex issues. Today, what was once technical writing has become technical communication. Keeping up to date was critical for my promotion to manager.</p>
<p><b>Employment Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Worked in retail telecommunications sales during university</li><li>● Completed an internship as a technical writer for a technology start-up</li><li>● Did a second internship for a large global technology company and was offered a full-time position at graduation</li><li>● After four years, I was promoted to technical communication manager. In this role, I have two writers, a designer and videographer report to me.</li></ul>	<p>My employment pathway was intentional. I built my technology credentials early at home, but with a vision of working in a global technology company. My big break was doing internships for both a start-up and a large global company. The pace of the start-up was exciting, but I learned I need structure. The processes embedded in large companies supports this need.</p>
<p><b>Community Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● I founded the technical writing society at my university. Today, I am an alumni mentor for Arts and Computing students.</li><li>● I'm an active member of the Society for Technical Communication. I chair our professional development sub-committee.</li></ul>	<p>Being engaged in my professional community is critical for my career. It provides me access to senior people and mentors. It also acts as a lens for what "leading-edge" looks like in technical communication and the professional development required for success.</p>
<p><b>Contextual Experiences:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Doing an international exchange program in high school sowed the seed for my life as a traveler</li></ul>	<p>It sounds like a cliché, but the exchange program I did in high school was life-changing. After this, the question wasn't "if" I would travel again, it was "where should I travel next?"</p>
<p><b>Relationships:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● I'm focused on building international networks</li></ul>	<p>I have a genuine passion for other people's stories and this interest is reciprocated. I consider my international relationships a constant opportunity to learn from others.</p>