

Trends and Issues in Information Architecture: April Chapter Meeting Review

by [Ron Arner](#)

The April Chapter Meeting was worth a year's worth of dues to the STC. In April, Laurie Lamar presented a summary of the IA (Information Architecture) Summit, an annual event sponsored by the [American Society for Information Science and Technology](#). Over 400 professionals from a variety of backgrounds attended this year's summit in Montreal.

What is information architecture? Technical communicators may compare it to single-sourcing, or view it as a way to chunk information so that it is more easily absorbed by one's audience. Unlike Tech Comm, however, IA historically tends to take a bottom-up approach to information processing, rather than a top-down one. This is because IA has its roots in metadata, very similar to the information processing methods found in libraries.

Most of Lamar's presentation detailed the similarities and differences between the top-down and bottom-up methods of information processing. (You can view a complete .pdf of her presentation at: <http://www.laurielamar.com/Trends-and-Issues-in-IA-2005-LaurieLamar.pdf>.) What made the evening particularly enjoyable were Lamar's knowledge of the subject and the way she often interspersed her presentation with hilarious comparisons from the non-technical world.

The last part of the evening consisted of example Websites that were organized following classic IA guidelines, as well as some that were not so great. Lamar also provided a list of recommended books for anyone who is interested in exploring the topic further.

April's chapter meeting was exactly the kind of professional development experience our chapter strives to provide, and fortunately, in this instance we succeeded!