

A close-up, profile view of a person with short, white hair looking down. The person is wearing a dark blue jacket. The background is filled with tall, green grass, some of which is in the foreground, partially obscuring the person's face. The lighting is soft and natural, suggesting an outdoor setting.

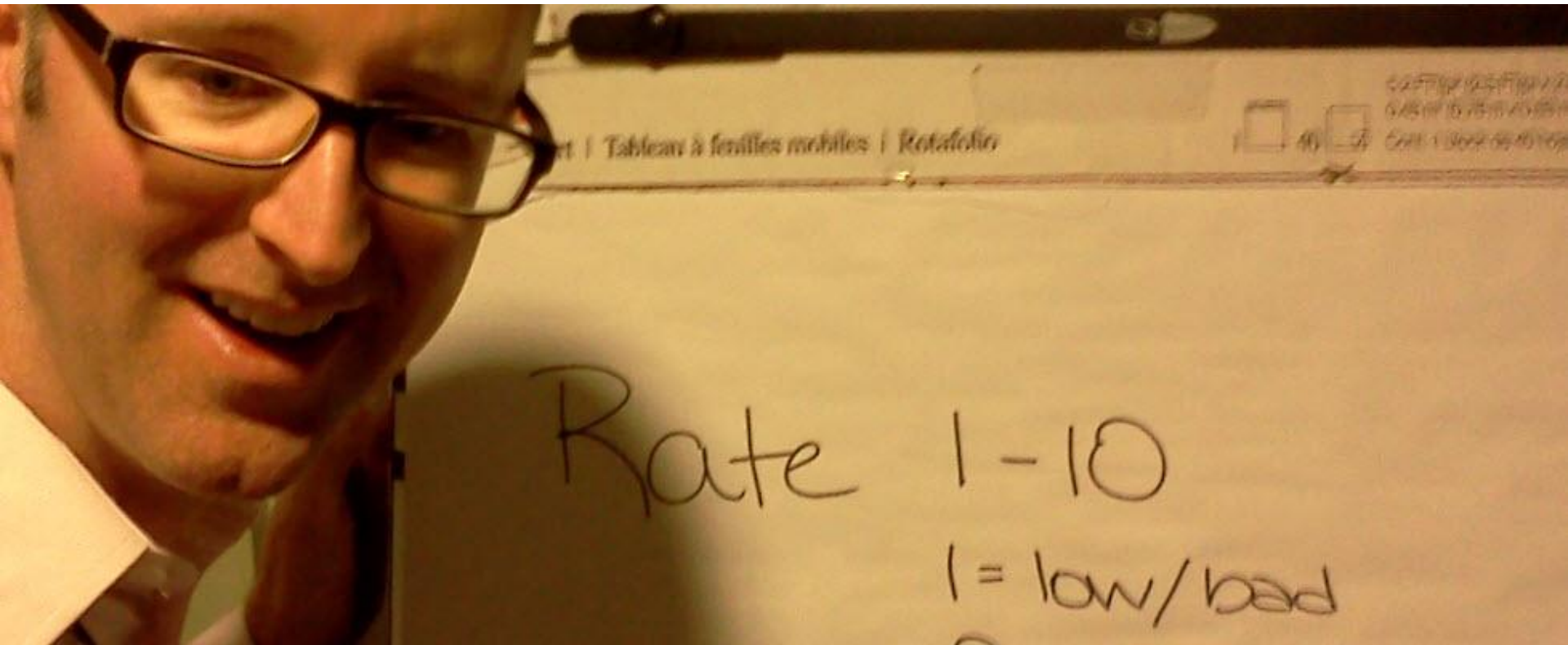
A Day in the Life of an Information Architect

Michele Kong

Stacy Merrill Surla

UX Connect September 16, 2013

Eddie James



Research

Interview Form

Name
Current City/Country
Current Position, Title
Field of Work
Date

Job and Workplace Description

Tell me about what you do. (Prompts: what does your company deliver? What sorts of clients do you have? What are their needs? Do you manage staff, how many? What are their roles? What sorts of decisions are you responsible for? How much hands on IA do you do versus other activities like business development or people management?)

How would you describe your field of work? (Prompts: retail business (mobile technologies, department store, bookseller); entertainment; web service provider (Yahoo, Google, LinkedIn); government; consulting firm or agency (small or large); service sector (finance, energy, health care, education, library); association; nonprofit; scientific organization)

Your Background

What's the story of how you arrived at where you are? (Prompts:

Job and Workplace Description (continued)

What is your workplace like? (Prompts: Do you have a physical office? Do you telecommute? Do you work from several locations? What are the physical spaces like? How many people work at a location with you? How are the offices and desks set up? What do you use for collaboration and creative areas? Meetings? Private work?)

How do you interact with people working in other disciplines? (Prompts: IT? Marketing? Visual? Management? Product development? Legal?)

Is IA a recognized field where you work? In your area of work in general?

Does your metro/rural area affect opportunities or challenges? What other aspects of your environment, location, or field affects your work?

Typical Day

Walk me through a typical day. (Prompts: Do you start work before you're at the office? What was an unusual day?)

Skillsets

What IA skills are important for your work? What about non-UX skills?
Technologies? (UX: User research; Visual design; IA, Content; Taxonomy; CRM; Training;
FED. People management skills; business development; vision;

Pros and Cons

What are the key benefits of your work style and work situation? (Prompts:

What are the challenges? (Prompts:

Opportunities

What is the demand for IAs in your type of position? (Prompts:

IA Perspective

What guiding tenets do you follow? I'd love to hear your personal gems of wisdom.
(Prompts: This could include philosophies, particular tools, perspective on the world, etc.
For instance, I have a bug about the continuum between tactics and strategy.)

Concepts



Rüdiger Kortz

Eddie James



Jacksonville, Florida

Owner/User Experience Designer

Circling Sharks LLC

Mobile and tablet projects for financial clients

User research, service design, wireframes, interaction design, and working with decision makers

Eddie James



Even if there are **no jobs**,
that **doesn't mean**
there's not work

Rate 1-10
1 = low/bad

Eddie James



One man shop

Hires freelancers

Often advisor to clients - on retainer

Built skills and focus through energetic engagement in his work experiences

Naoko Kawachi



Tokyo, Japan

Communications Manager

Concent, Inc.

**Writing, editing, event
planning, media relations**

**Improving understanding of
IA, UX and Service Design;
connecting people and things
"in the right way"**

Naoko Kawachi



She discovered her interest was **not on visual design** but on **invisible structures**

Matthew Milan



Toronto, Canada

CEO/Design Leader

Normative

**Sales, Design Practice, and
Project Direction**

**"We build software to drive
organizational change, in a
studio environment. "**

Matthew Milan



We run on a **pod-based model.**

There's **no broken telephone at our business.** The client can talk directly to the designer, IA, and engineer.

Jason Hobbs



Johannesburg, South Africa

**Owner/User Experience
Designer**

**Teacher, Researcher,
Practitioner**

**Clients: corporations, arts
and culture, public sector,
and non-profit**

Jason Hobbs



IA is a powerful tool to help
people solve **wicked**
problems

Jason Hobbs



Work on many projects, in diverse sectors

Get a mentor

Agency, client-side, and working for yourself

Different social, political, and cultural contexts

Learn from other fields

Be ambitious

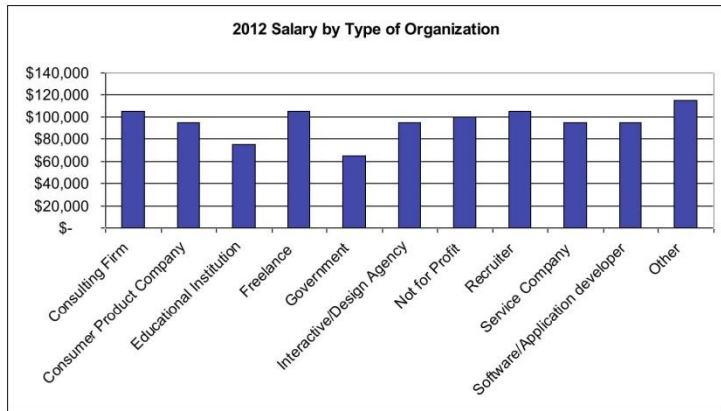
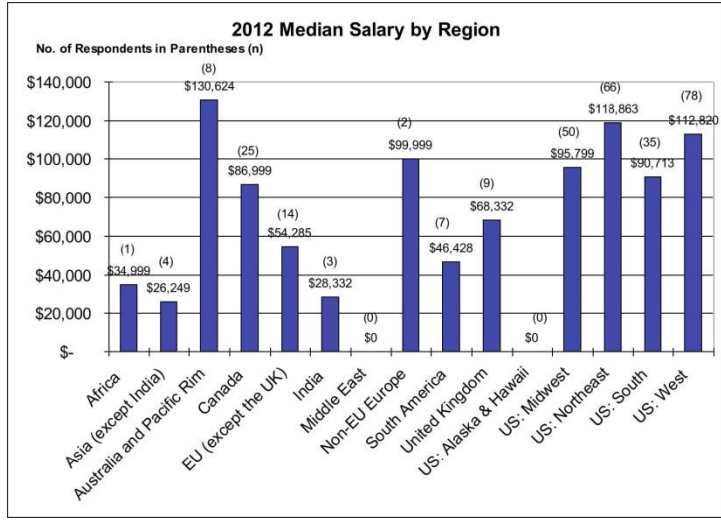
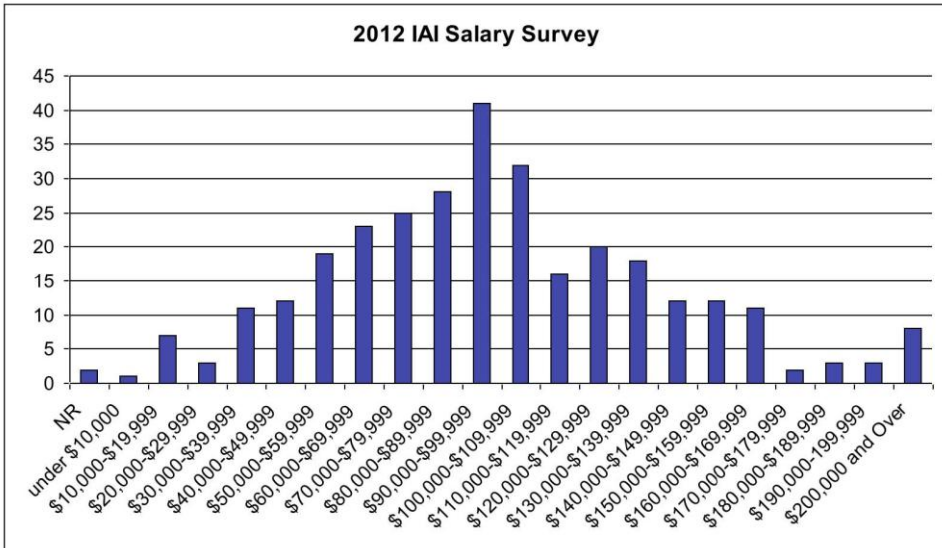
Love doing it - or try something else

Employment Outlook



http://iainstitute.org/en/learn/research/salary_survey.php.

Employment Outlook



http://iainstitute.org/en/learn/research/salary_survey.php

Getting a Job



<http://www.slideshare.net/runger/career-workshop-ia-summit-2013>

Takeaways

Know your core values

Even where there are no jobs, there is work

Solid skills are just the start

Client skills, strategic thinking, and domain expertise are distinguishers

Always On versus Unplugged is a choice

Find organizational settings that work for you

References

- Bowles, Cennydd. The fall and rise of user experience. ASIS&T Information Architecture Summit 2011. Denver, CO, <http://www.cennydd.co.uk/2011/fall-and-rise-of-ux>.
- Leiman, Layla. "My Day Job: Jason Hobbs." 10and5 (March 14, 2013), <http://10and5.com/2013/03/14/my-day-job-jason-hobbs>.
- Surla, Stacy Merrill. "Building IA means building local groups." Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology Volume 33, Issue 2 (2007), <http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Dec-06/surla.html>.
- The Information Architecture Institute. 2012 Salary Survey: Annual IA Salary and Benefits Survey (2012), http://iainstitute.org/en/learn/research/salary_survey.php.
- Unger, Russ. Career Workshop: IA Summit 2013. (2013), <http://www.slideshare.net/runger/career-workshop-ia-summit-2013>

Photos

- Michele Kong, Keeping A Balance: The Legacy of Shigemori Mirei (1896-1975) , <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rx84-XXe3iY&feature=c4-overview&list=UU4bEEAWCPicKJgzq4RViDnQ>
- Rüdiger Kortz, "Charles Jencks Garden of Cosmic Speculation" www.ilona-grundmann-filmproduction.de/en/filme/charles-jencks-garden-of-cosmic-speculation/
- Ivanoff. view from Saiho-ji (Kokedera) pond. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Saihouji-kokedera01.jpg>

Contact

Stacy Merrill Surla
stacy@greenfx.net