Search & Findability

What is it?

As the ability to search and find relevant information has become more challenging and complex, when developing information architecture to enhance the search and findability experience, it is important to consider the following:

- Unstructured information is growing at an astounding rate, resulting in "information abundance." By 2020, the amount of digital information is expected to be 50 times (40 trillion gigabytes) what it was in 2012.[1]
- Lack of formal structure (filters) applied to this information makes it difficult to sift through the overall volume, resulting in "information overload."

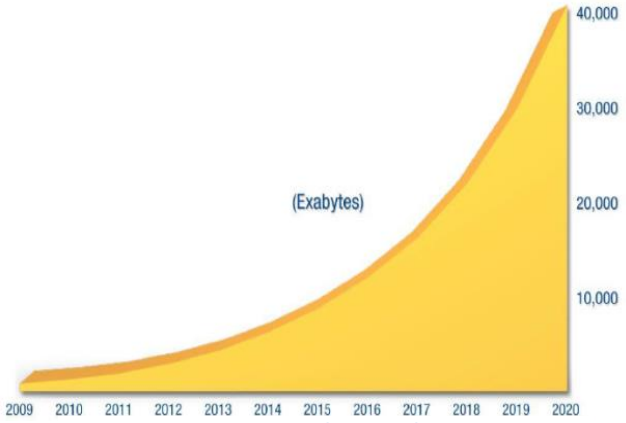

Figure 1 - Source: The Digital Universe

- As a result, there is a negative impact on findability. How content is created, captured, managed and stored can restrict or enable the ability to deliver relevant information.
- Findability depends on context and must be defined and developed with a clear understanding of information and how it aligns with needs.

How do I start?

Experts suggest effective search and findability strategies begin with the five following elements:[2]

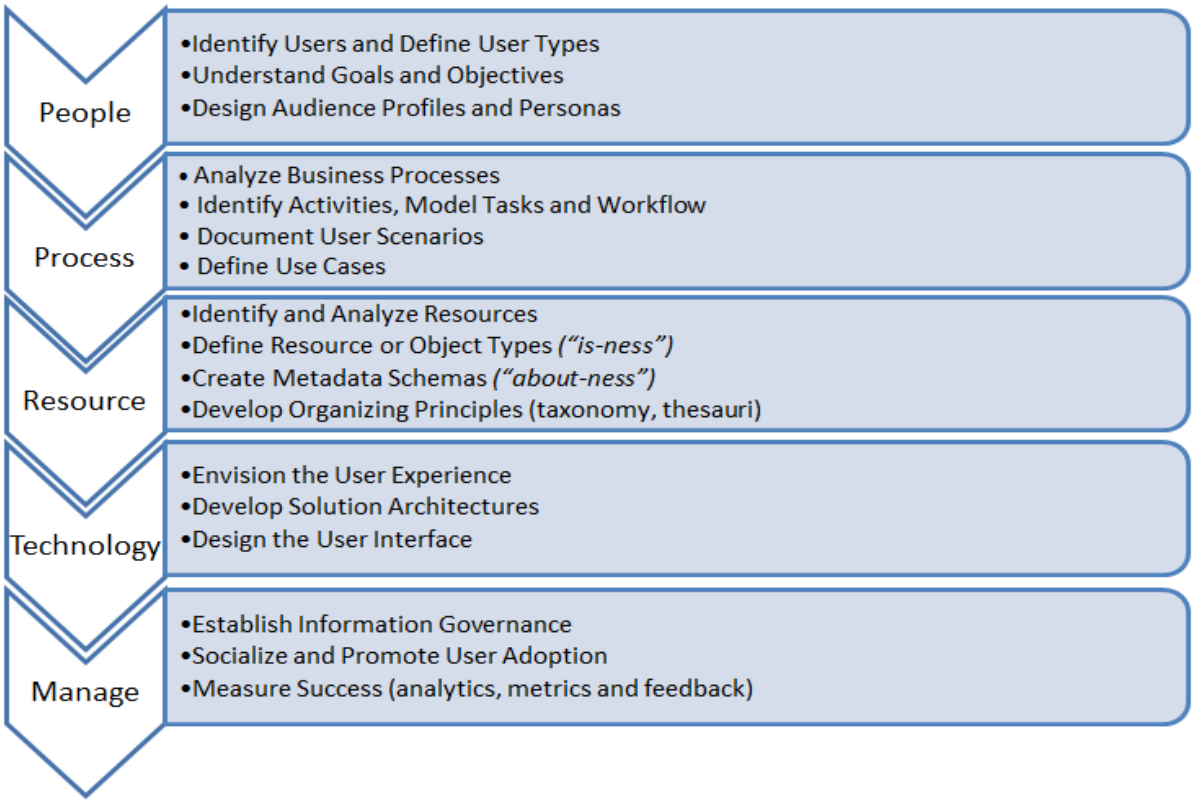

Figure 2 - Source: Morville & Callender Search Patterns

[1] Gantz, J., & Reinsel, D. (2012, December). *The Digital Universe.* Retrieved October 2014, from EMC: http://www.emc.com/collateral/analyst-reports/idc-the-digital-universe-in-2020.pdf

[2] Morville, P., & Callender, J. (2010). *Search Patterns.* Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.

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Important Tips

- **Search** is fundamentally about **Find**. Search is a means to an end, a mechanism used to connect the searcher to something (answers, facts, people, media, etc.).
- The five elements (people, process, resources, technology, and manage) are used to describe high level features that comprise the search experience:

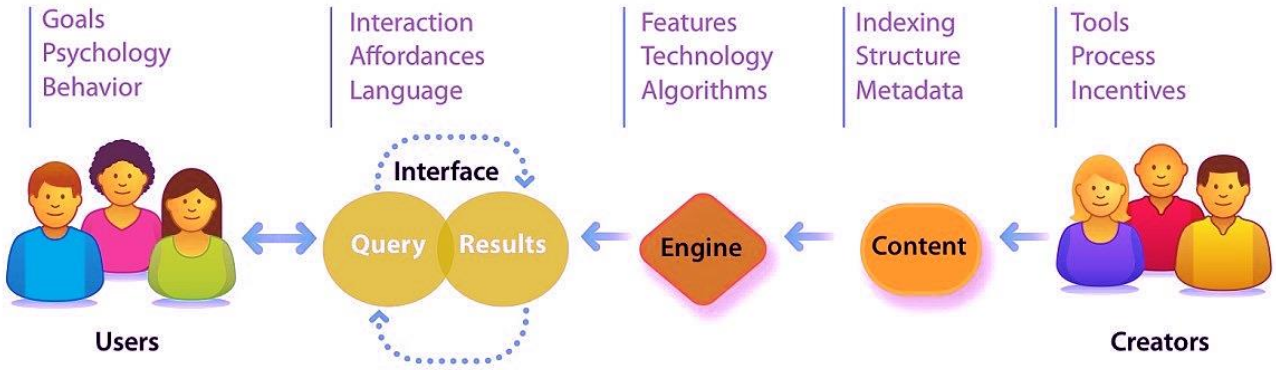

Figure 3 - Source: Morville & Callender *Search Patterns*[3]

How can I learn more?

- **On Developing Better Magnets for Finding Needles In Haystacks:** https://appel.nasa.gov/2014/10/02/on-developing-better-magnets-for-finding-needles-in-haystacks/
- **Graphing a Lessons Learned Database for NASA:** http://neo4j.com/blog/nasa-lesson-learned-database-using-neo4j-linkurious/
- **Three-minute Video Summarizing Findability and Internal Search:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dI05KLDvKZM
- **Designing the Search Experience:** http://designingthesearchexperience.com/downloads/dtse-chapter2.pdf
- **Peter Morville – A Detailed Presentation on Findability and the Future of Search:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YU56Myi_0Ok&noredirect=1

[3] Morville, P., & Callender, J. (2010). *Search Patterns.* Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.