



**Laura  
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# CASE STUDY

## SCALING STRATEGIC IA KNOWLEDGE ACROSS IBM

### Client

IBM

### Industry

B2B, SaaS, Technology

### Work

IA, Content strategy, Content experience, Training

90%+

adoption rate

25+

attendees/session

4

downloadable templates

The screenshot displays the course page for 'Information Architecture (IA) Academy'. The page title is 'Information Architecture (IA) Academy' with a subtitle 'Translate IA & CX theory to practice as a foundation for auditing, building, and refining pages, sitemaps and UI navigation'. A green 'Enrolled' button indicates the user is enrolled in the class, which begins on 22 November 2024. The course is part of the IA Academy and is an online, 5-hour course with 5 sessions. The date range is 22 November 2024 to 18 December 2024. The language is English and the streaming platform is not specified. The class description states that the 5-week course covers foundational IA and Content Strategy, focusing on: Information Architecture audits, Content Strategy audits & analytics, Page goals & hierarchy, Sitemaps & navigation, and Taxonomy & global site considerations. An inset image titled 'About the instructors' shows a hexagonal grid of instructor portraits, with Laura Medley, Senior CX Strategist, highlighted in the center.

## Expanding content principles through IBM's IA Academy

IBM is a global technology powerhouse with thousands of products spanning industries from fintech to AI. As IBM's product ecosystem expanded, so did the need for shared principles in information architecture (IA) and content strategy—ensuring every team could deliver seamless, customer-first experiences.

IBM's teams were deeply skilled in their respective domains, but without common frameworks, even the most talented practitioners approached IA and content differently. This created opportunities to align teams, accelerate collaboration, and scale best practices across IBM.com.

To meet this need, we co-created and co-led the IA Academy: a five-week training program blending foundational learning with hands-on workshops, designed to equip peers with practical tools and shared language to transform IBM's digital experiences.

# Challenges

The opportunity wasn't about fixing broken processes—it was about empowering already talented teams with shared models and tools to scale their impact.

- **No shared frameworks or vocabulary**  
Global teams worked on millions of pages without common approaches to IA or content structure.
- **Inconsistent content practices**  
Different squads used their own methods for audits, navigation, and content design, leading to fragmented journeys.
- **Lack of practical training resources**  
Teams understood their slice of the work but needed hands-on frameworks to unify efforts and consistency across IBM.com.



## Solution

To bridge these gaps, we created IBM's IA Academy—a company-wide training program designed to give practitioners practical frameworks and tools to create consistent, research-driven experiences at scale through IBM's YourLearning.

The goal was to equip everyone at IBM with practical frameworks and tools to improve complex digital experiences through the one thing that connects all customers: content.

Take away this content inventory template

Here is a simple inventory template with examples you can use as a guide for your own content inventory.

[Template\\_Content\\_Inventory.xlsx](#)

ID	Title
EX-001	IBM Sterling Order Man
EX-002	IBM Sterling Order Man product add-ons
EX-002.1	IBM Sterling Store Enga
EX-002.2	IBM Sterling call center
EX-003	IBM Sterling Order Man B2C use case
EX-004	IBM Sterling Order Man B2B use case video

# Approach

We designed the Academy to bridge theory and practice—pairing foundational learning backed by research and data with real-world exercises participants could use right away.

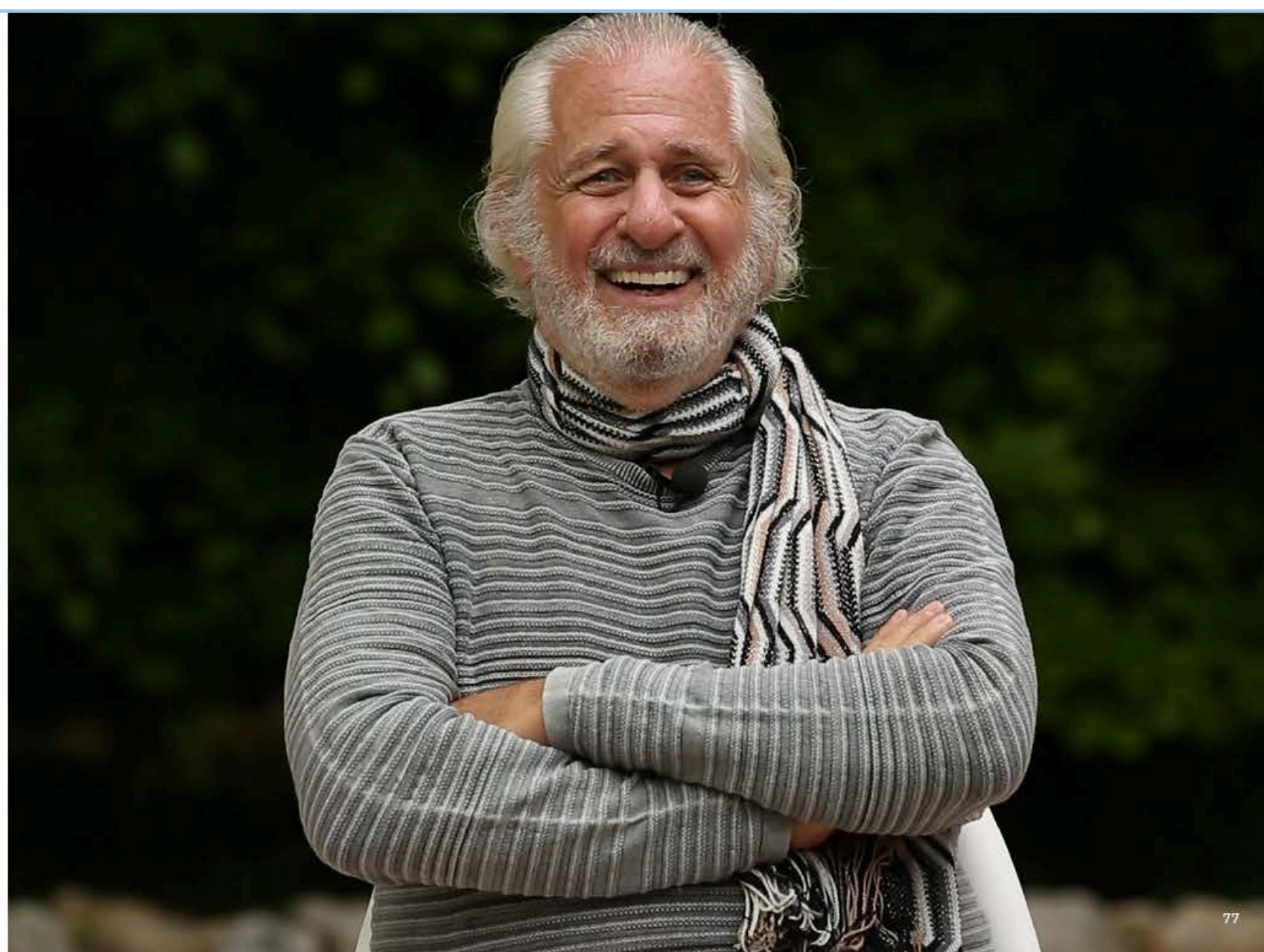
- **A structured curriculum**  
Co-authored modules covering CS and IA fundamentals, auditing, content experience analysis, navigation, and findability.
- **Interactive workshops**  
Facilitated live sessions where participants audited live pages, sparking discussions and shared learning.
- **Reusable toolkits**  
Delivered downloadable checklists and templates for audits, inventories, and analyses for immediate application.
- **Ongoing learning**  
Recorded sessions and created a learning roadmap, enabling continued on-demand training beyond the live cohorts.

## Beyond LATCH

LATCH was coined by Richard Saul Wurman, in his 1988 book [Information Anxiety](#) and he also founded [TED Talks](#).

Other good reads:

- [Everyday Information Architecture: Auditing for Structure](#) by Lisa Maria Martin
- [Information Architecture for the World Wide Web 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition](#) by Peter Morville, Louis Rosenfeld (available free with IBM login on O’Rielly)
- [Organizing things](#) Medium article by David Gray
- [Pervasive Information Architecture](#) by Andrea Resmini, Luca Rosati



# Results

The Academy aligned teams, accelerated content decisions, and became a lasting asset for IBM's digital ecosystem.

- > **90%+ adoption**  
Participants reported using IA Academy frameworks in daily work across UX, design, and marketing
- > **Enterprise-wide reach**  
Two live cohorts (25+ participants each) with recordings reused across multiple global IBM business units
- > **Shared frameworks and language**  
Reduced friction across siloed teams, enabling faster alignment on content decisions.
- > **Reusable assets with lasting impact**  
Templates and frameworks became standard for content strategy and information architecture discipline work.



## Signal vs Noise insight

Before the Academy, perceptions of “quality content” varied widely across teams—often based on personal perspective and bias rather than user research. The training introduced evidence-based frameworks grounded in user psychology, helping teams distinguish between personal preference (noise) and actual behavioral impact (signal).

*Supporting research: Nielsen Norman Group notes that expert intuition often misaligns with user behavior, making research-backed frameworks essential for consistent design decisions*

### Top Tasks Alignment

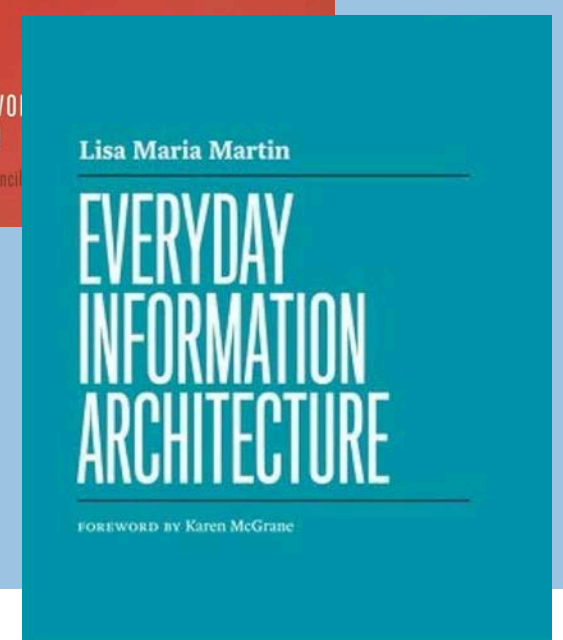
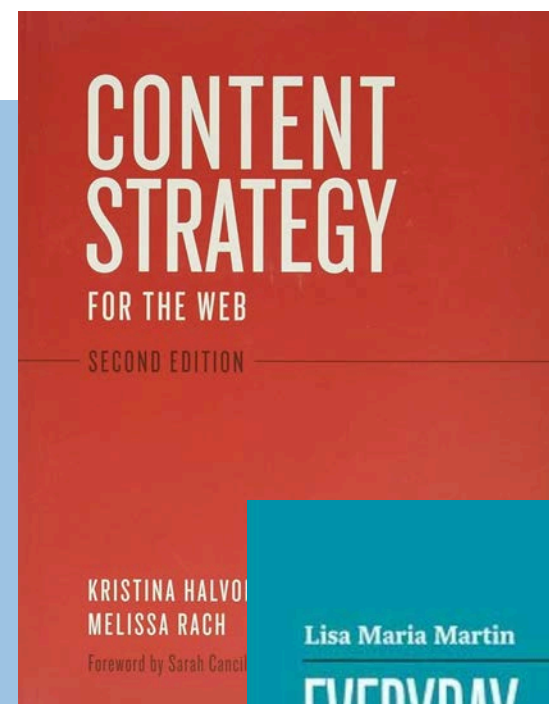
TASK	✓	✗	N/A
<u>N/A</u> Does the product footprint offer easy access to <b>integrations</b> info?			
<u>✓</u> Does the product footprint offer easy access to <b>pricing</b> info?			
<u>✗</u> Does the product footprint offer easy access to <b>technical documentation</b> ?			
<u>✓</u> Does the product footprint offer <b>short videos</b> about the product?			
<u>✗</u> Does the product footprint offer easy access info about the <b>client support experience</b> ?			

# Key Deliverables

- Four instructional modules covering IA and content strategy
- Three interactive workshops using Mural and real-world audits
- Templates for audits, taxonomy planning, and page goal mapping
- Recorded sessions hosted on IBM YourLearning for on-demand access
- Learning roadmap for continued skill development

## Tools used

- IBM YourLearning
- Mural
- PowerPoint
- G4 Analytics
- Airtable
- Xcel
- Photoshop
- *Content Strategy for the Web 2nd Edition* by Kristina Halvorson and Melissa Rach
- *Everyday Information Architecture* by Lisa Maria Martin




## On the Web

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