INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE

and

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

Grant Patten

CCMN 279
Chang School
Ryerson University

Assignment #6b

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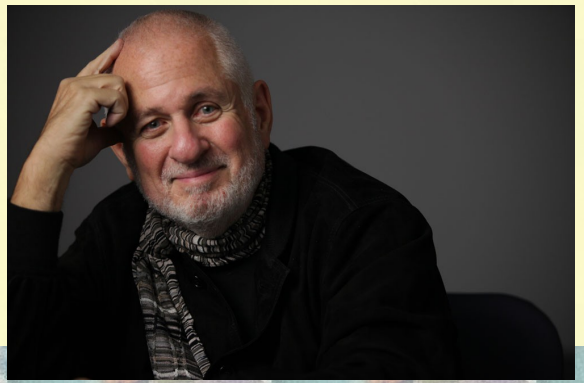
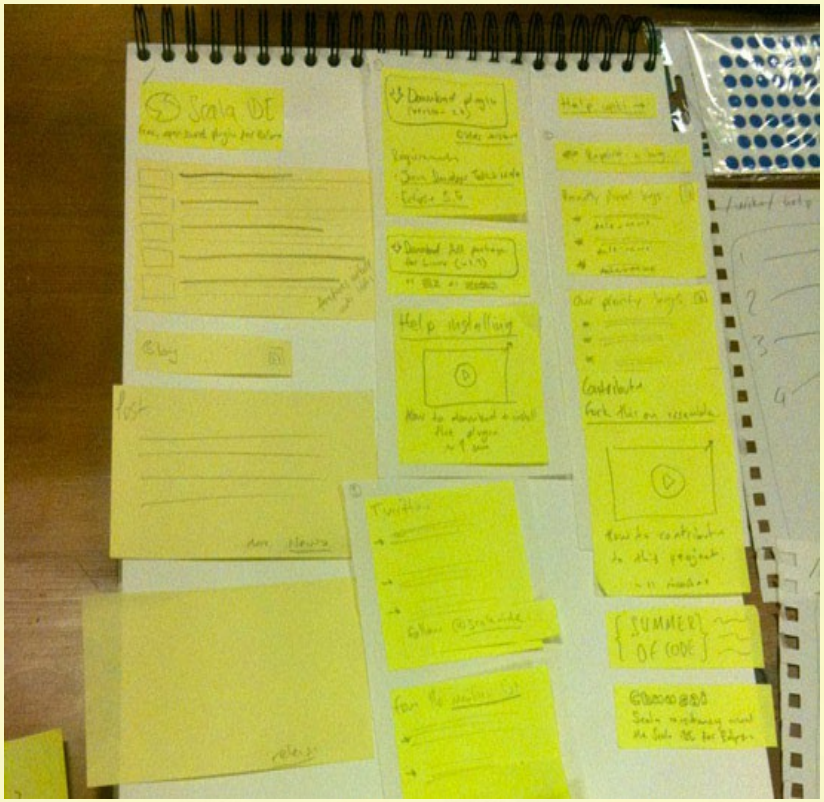
What is information architecture?

- Information architecture (IA) is the art and science of organizing and labelling websites, intranets, online communities and software to support usability (Wiki)
- Information architecture (IA) is “the structural design of shared information environments” (Morville & Rosenfeld, 2007)
- Richard Saul Wurman in 1976: “I thought the explosion of data needed an architecture, needed a series of systems, needed systemic design” (Wiki)

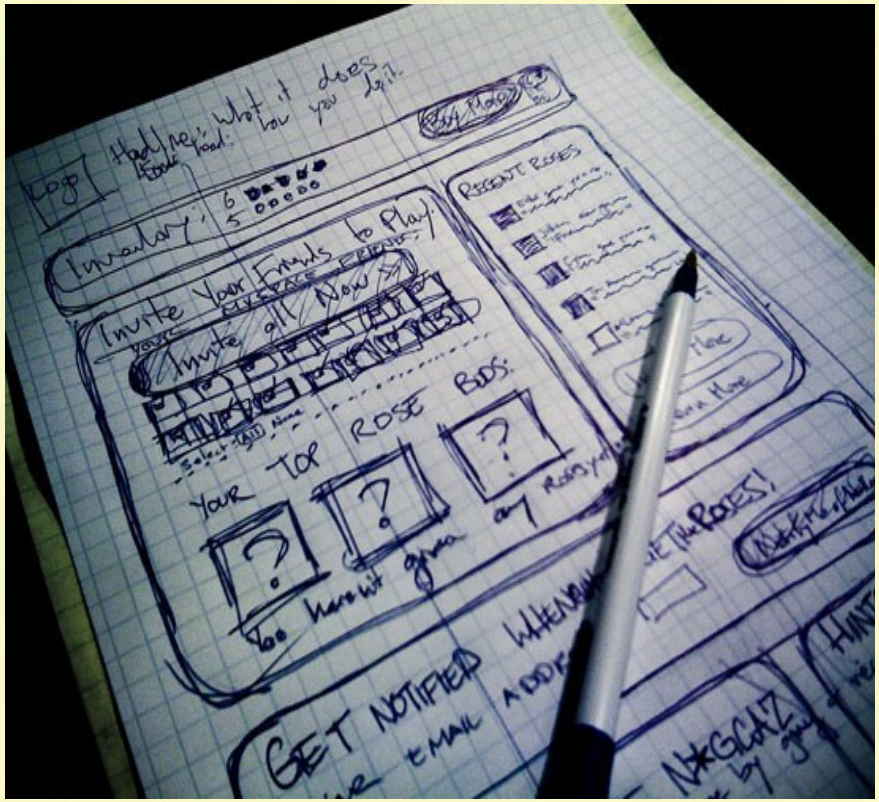


Communicating to stakeholders with IA

Low-fidelity prototyping



Post-it note prototyping



Wireframe sketches

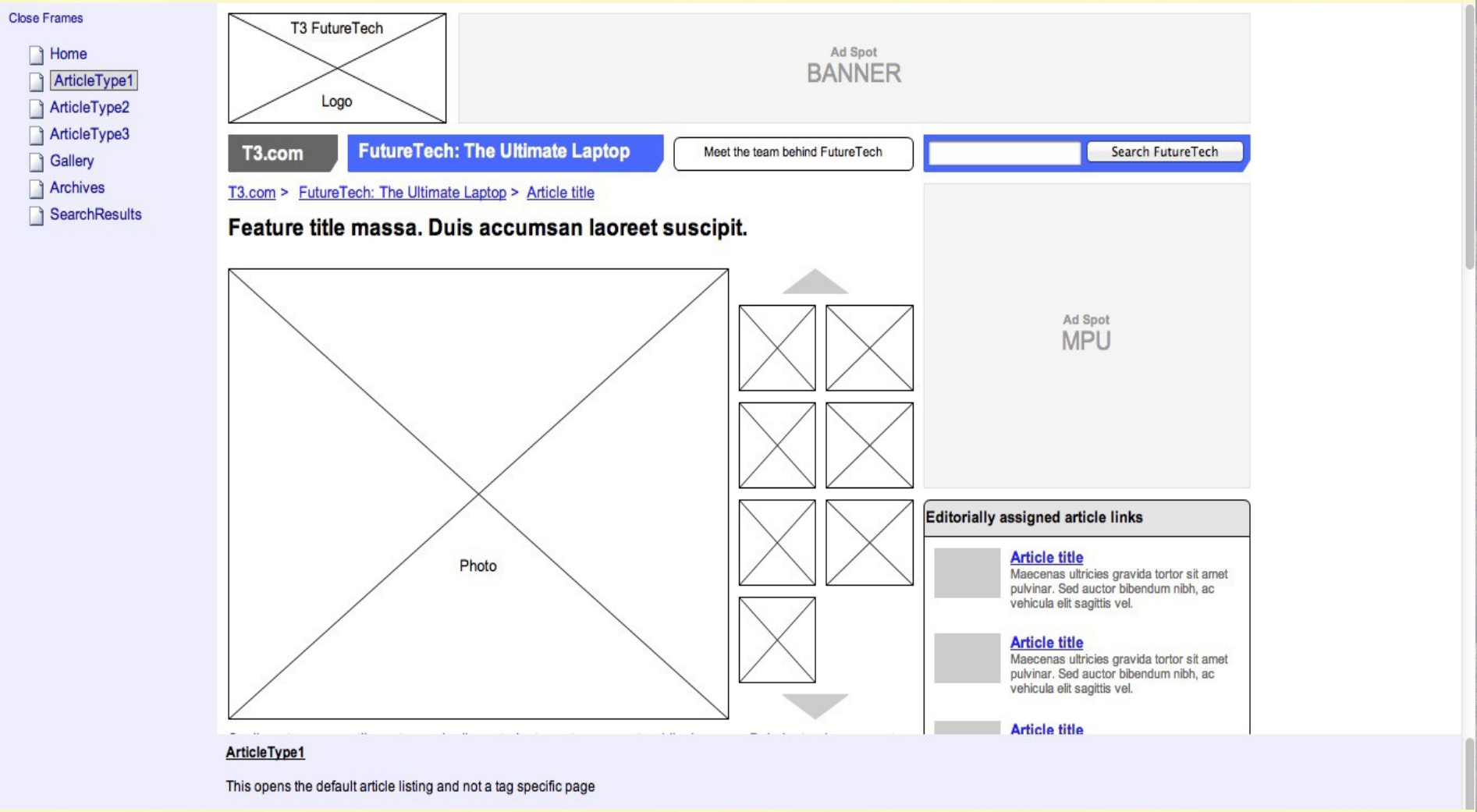
Communicating to stakeholders with IA

High-fidelity prototyping

- Static wireframes (e.g., Visio)
- Interactive/clickable wireframes (e.g., Dreamweaver, OmniGraffle, Axure)
- "Axure prototypes are a fundamental **communication** tool in our process. Developers and testing analysts especially love the clickable prototypes. They convey the features and functionality more easily than lengthy functional specifications. There's just no way we could go back to static wireframes" (Axure.com)

Communicating to stakeholders with IA

Example of high-fidelity prototype



Communicating to stakeholders with IA

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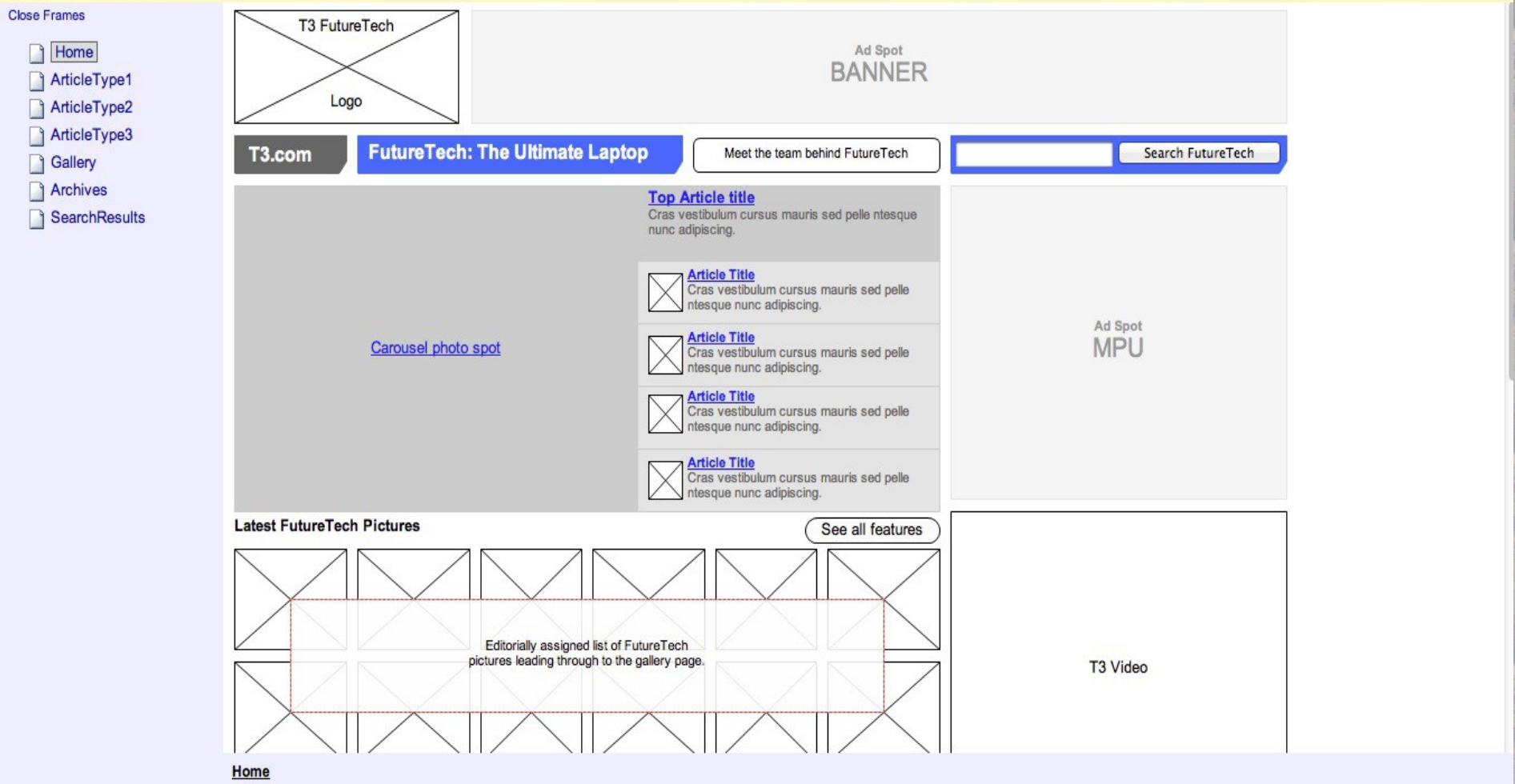
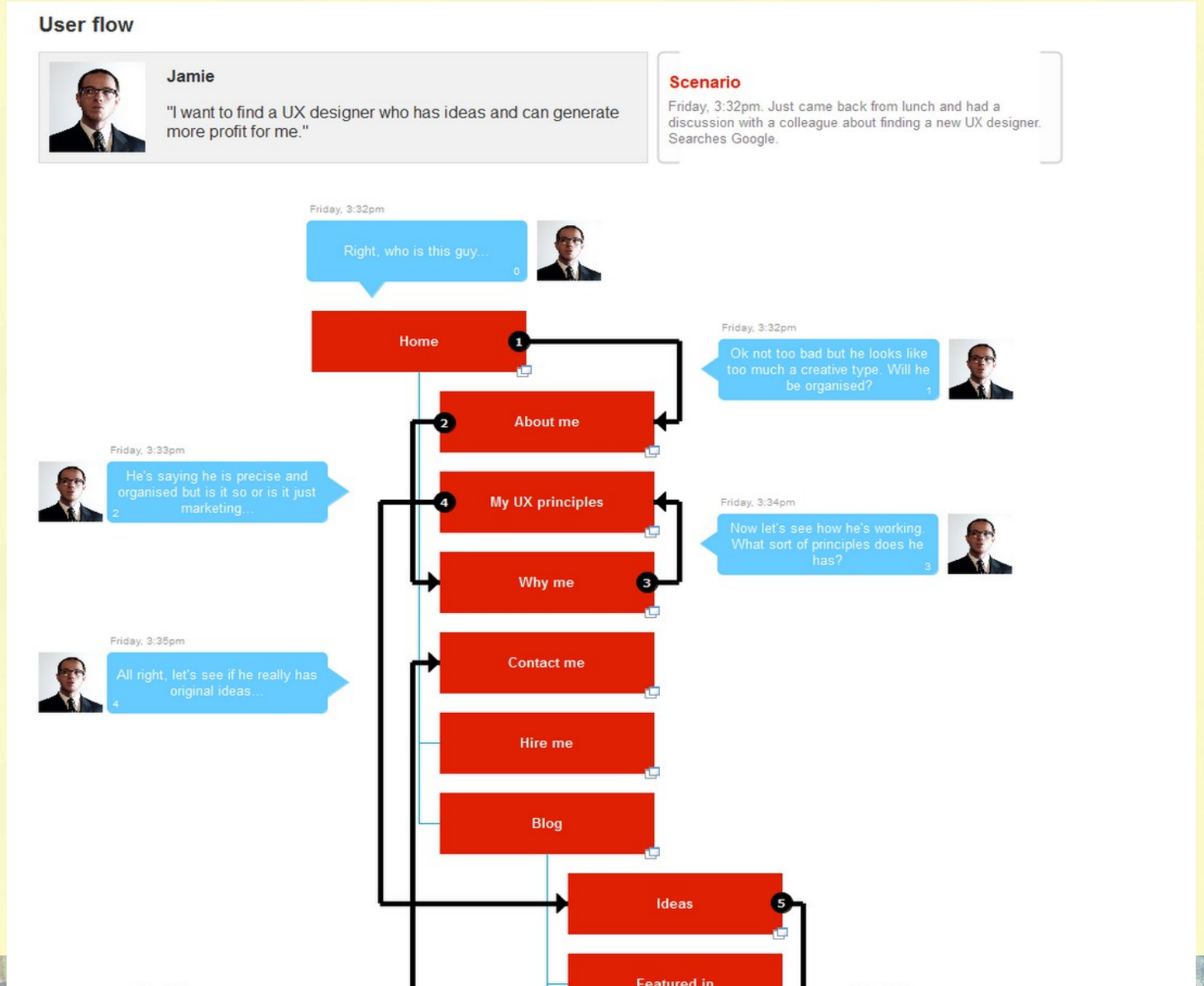


Communicating to stakeholders with IA

User flow diagram



Communicating to stakeholders with IA

Personas

- Narrative descriptions of user ‘types’ for whom a product is designed (Massanari 2010)
- Facilitate **empathy** between designer and user and highlight important information about users that might otherwise be lost or discounted during the development cycle
- Help to avoid the “**design for oneself**” mentality

Communicating to stakeholders with IA

Kyle Fisher - Potential Drake Motors Small SUV Buyer

Personal Profile
Kyle is a 42-year-old and owner of a late model Ford Escape.

He's an active father of two, still plays team sports and is always connected to friends and family through the **internet** and his **mobile phone**.

Kyle is looking for a vehicle that offers outstanding fuel economy since he commutes approximately 90 miles round trip each day.

He's also considering the Ford Escape Hybrid, Toyota Highlander, the Honda CR-V and the Ford Flex.

He uses a variety of **review** and **third party print research** sites in addition to dealer **catalogs**.

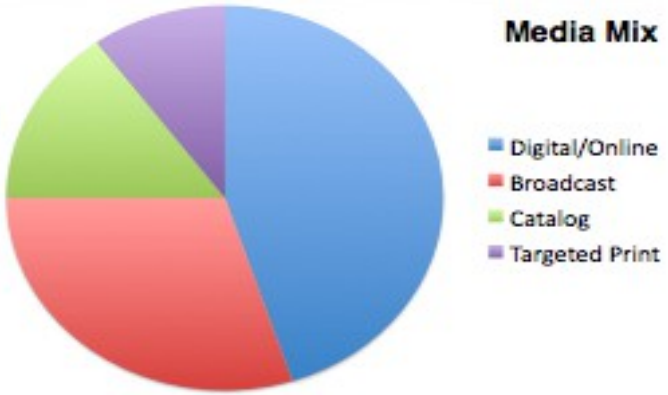
Background
- 42-year-old caucasian male
- Father of two
- Plays drop in hockey 3 mornings a week
- Uses vehicle daily for commuting, picking up kids from sports, weekend coaching and vacations
- Drives long distances and puts 20,000 miles on vehicle every year

Attributes
- Upper Middle class
- Smartphone and laptop user
- Influenced by online reviews, heavy user of print
- iPod and Smartphone user
- Spends time reading in social media researching, but less time contributing

"I want a vehicle with outstanding fuel economy, smart features and enough space for me and my family."

Kyle's Product-Content Needs
- Information supporting fuel economy
- Photos and video that highlight vehicle's technology and styling features
- Guidance, education and reassurance that the brand can be trusted
- Competitive comparisons to his current vehicle
- Ability to gather and share information easily

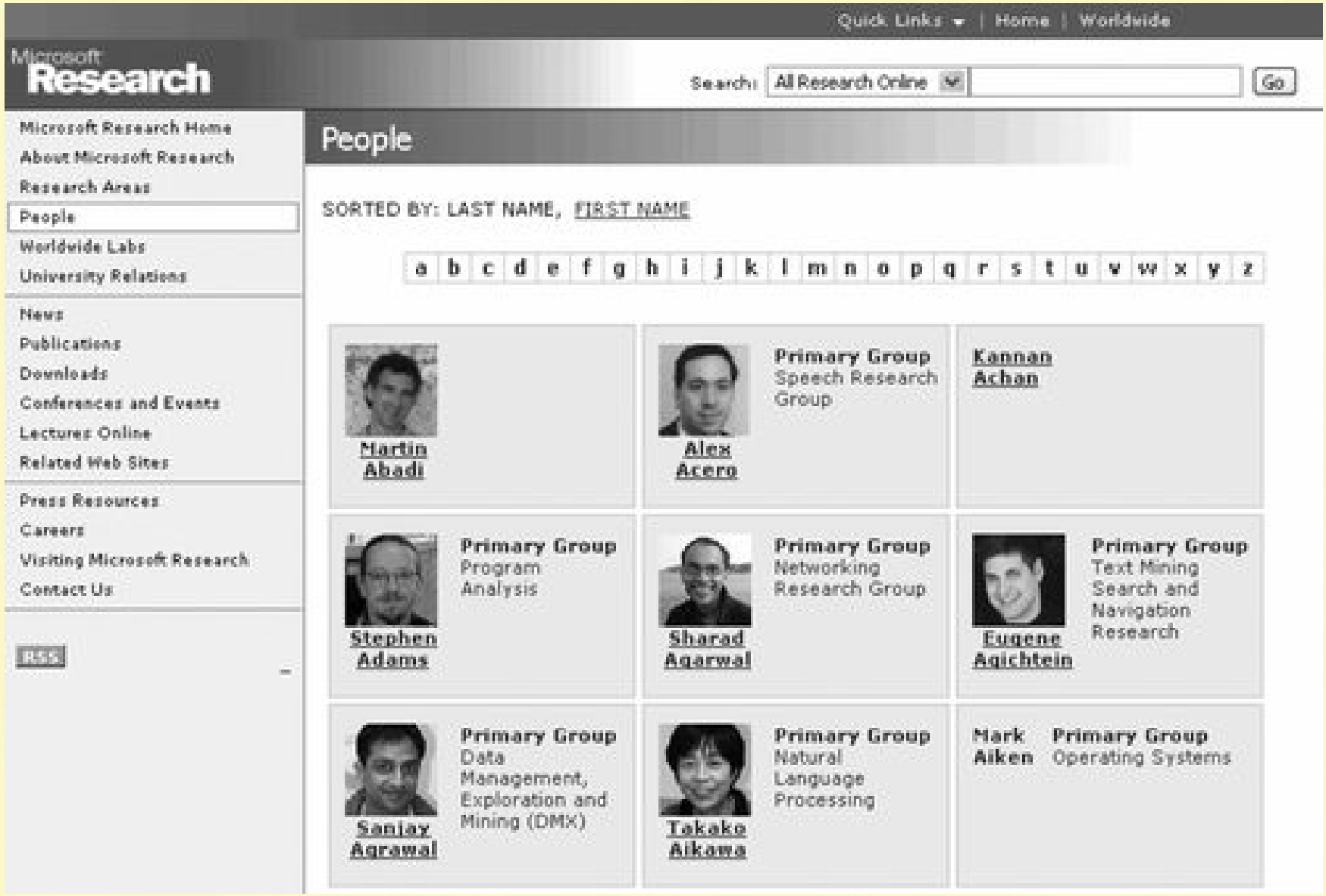
From Existing Assets
- Running Footage
- Still Photography
- Build Your Own Material
- Catalog Images
- Longform video
- 'Other' Images



Communicating to users/customers with IA

"The real value of both **personas** and **storytelling** is the way they give us a clear, human picture of the people we design for. It's so easy to get caught up in all the mechanics of creating technology and forget that there are real people out there. The other really important value of personas is in helping us empathize with people who are not just like us." (Quesenbery)

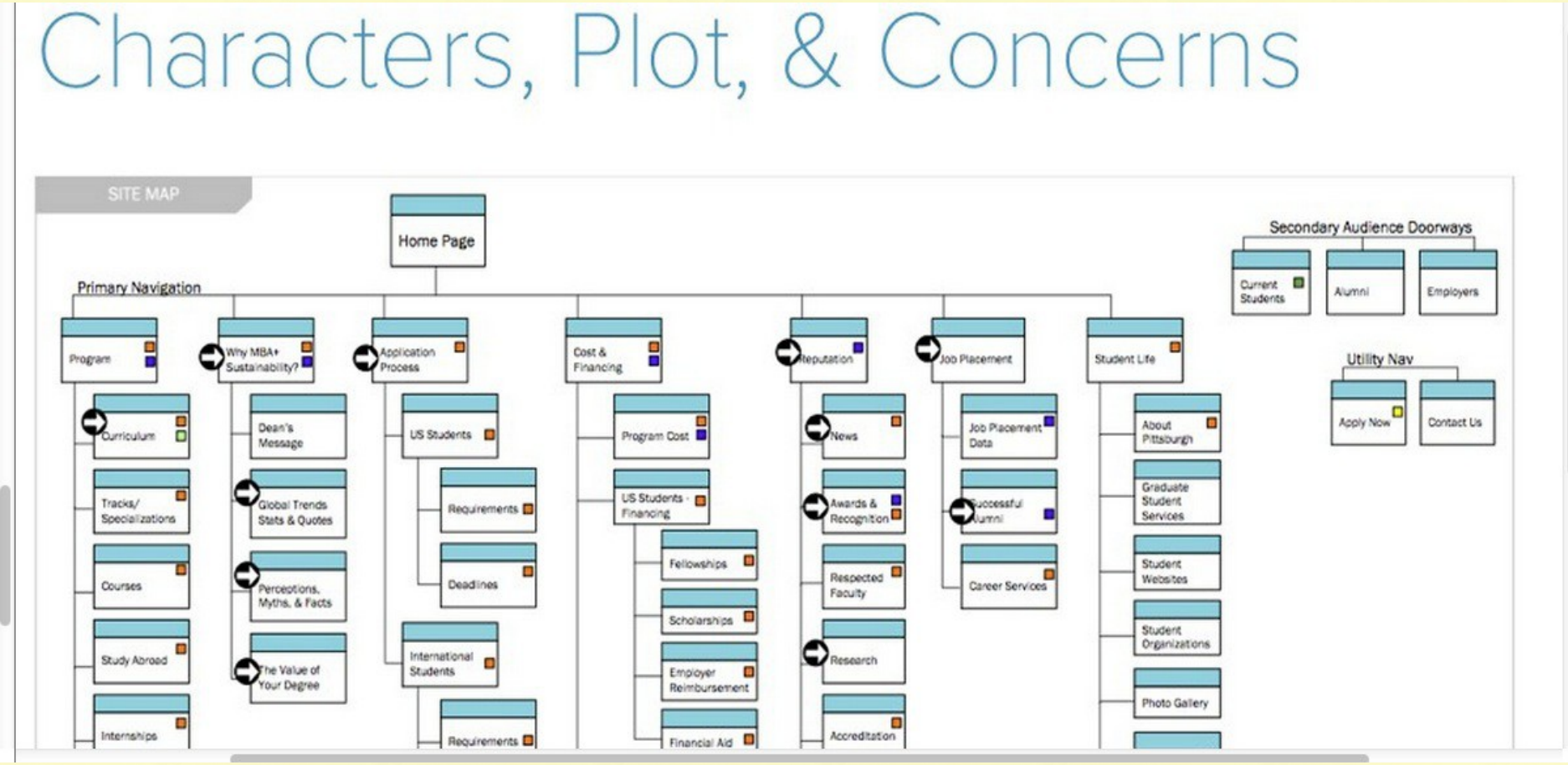
Objective organization scheme



Ambiguous organization scheme

Communicating to users/customers with IA

Site map as narrative outline



Communicating to users/customers with IA

AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action)

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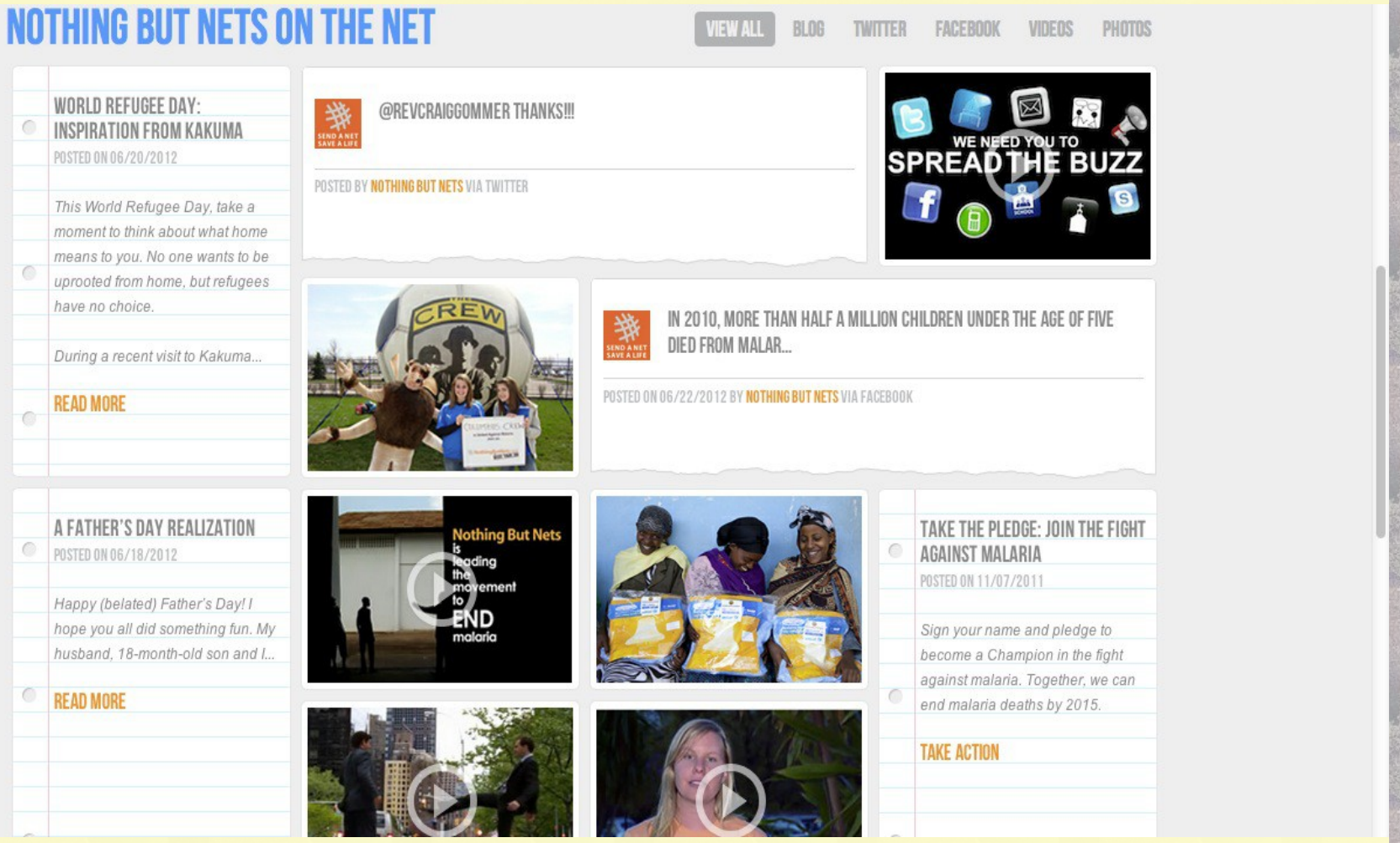

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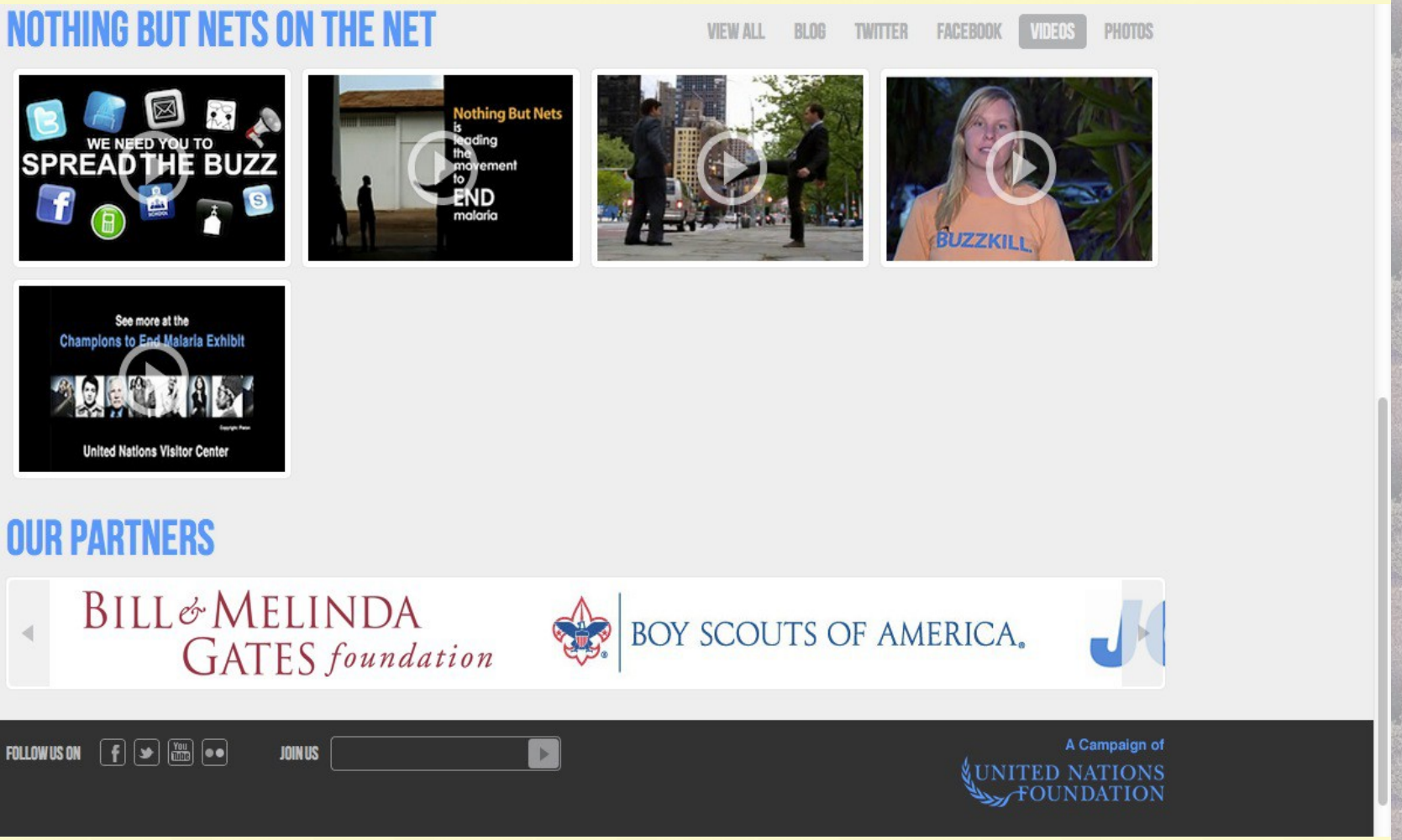

Conclusions

- Comments?
- Questions?
- Can **you** think of a website (or other information environment) that uses IA to effectively communicate a story?

References

Papers/books:

Massanari, A. (2010). Designing for imaginary friends: information architecture, personas and the politics of user-centered design. *New Media & Society*. 401-16.

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