

Executive Summary

In September of 2013, the Department of Liquor Control (DOLC) hired information architect-in-training, Andrea Atkins, to redesign its website in accordance with IA principles. In October of 2013, Ms. Atkins submitted her first deliverable assessing the design needs of the site. In this deliverable, she presents an analysis of the website addressing the target audience and the tasks associated with these users, the content of the site, and some lessons from DOLC counterparts in other states. In this deliverable, the main objectives of the website redesign are identified. The strategic objectives are:

- to re-categorize the site content by implementing a re-designed organization system that accords more with users needs and intended tasks;
- to increase the findability of information within the site;
- to make the site more helpful to users by improving navigability;
- to provide clues on each page such that the user may orient herself;
- to improve the public relations of the DOLC, and by extension the state government, by presenting a website that invokes delight in the user.

Through research and further analysis, Andrea was able to create designs and documentation that will shape the final product. She submitted this deliverable in November of 2012. The documentation in the deliverable reflects major redesigns: the justifications for the redesigns are found in Part II of this report; the recommendations for implementing the redesigns are found in Part III of this report. Also in Part III of this report are recommendations aimed at the various components that comprise IA strategy. The success rate of the DOLC's website redesign project will be increased by addressing these components and recommendations. Some highlights of these recommendations are:

- to replace the crowded global navigation menu bar with category portals, i.e. sub-pages designated as a gateway to access the information under each category;
- to eliminate the site's search system and concentrate on better navigability;
- to pare down the dynamic content on the homepage;
- to feature certain of the most sought-after information on the homepage to save users time;
- to implement a consistent labeling system, e.g. opt completely for *licensing* or *permit* and eliminate the other term from the site.

By implementing the recommendations provided in Part III of this report, Andrea is confident that the DOLC's website will better suit the needs and tasks of its users. She believes that the combined salutary effect on users will likely not be noticed by them. For, people tend not to notice when interactions go well, but they can be very vocal when their intentions have been frustrated. Poor information architecture tends to frustrate users with unpleasant ramifications. Thus, it is the thankless task of IA prevent the negative aspects of using a website while the positive aspects remain invisible. Such is the nature of IA, and the DOLC should be commended for recognizing its usefulness.