Information Architecture for Industry Events: Intention, Diversity, and Inclusion

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Abstract Industry events should reflect the diversity of their body of practitioners, but diverse, inclusive, and safe events don't happen by accident; like the information-based structures that Information Architects create in the digital space, the information-sharing structure of a conference, workshop, or other events must be designed with intent and purpose. This case study outlines efforts undertaken by several Washington, DC-area events as well as the Information Architecture Conference during 2018 and 2019 to better architect Diversity and Inclusion within industry events. The purpose of these activities was to help event organizers to plan and execute better, more diverse, and more inclusive industry events. It describes the 2019 Diversity & Inclusion Workshop series that was undertaken at three of these events to inform diversity and inclusion efforts by the IA Conference, for which one of the authors served as 2019 diversity and inclusion co-chair, and shares the diversity, inclusion, safety, and accessibility topics identified by workshop participants. The chapter concludes with actionable steps that can be taken to improve industry events and their organizational bodies. The goal of this case study is to encourage and support conscious efforts to engineer better events, by leveraging information architecture (IA) and user experience (UX) techniques applied in larger contexts and information spaces.

Background and Introduction

At the time of this writing, the notion of diversity and inclusion (D&I) is top-of-mind for many industry event organizers due, in no small part, to social unrest and cultural shifts related to issues of race, equality, representation, and justice sparked by police violence toward people of color in the United States, and the resulting Black Lives Matter and associated movements.

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But these are scarcely new issues and event organizers have been working to address them for decades. As early as the 1990s, the American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) had identified the importance of D&I in design and design-related fields (Vernon-Chesley, 1990).

The need for D&I efforts, especially in programming and curation, became a growing concern at events, leading to the creation of D&I positions or expectations explicitly stated in organizer roles. Simultaneously, the need for a proper deep dive into what D&I means to participants became apparent when a series of high-profile events each had different issues that exposed weaknesses in D&I, safety, accessibility, and enforcement of codes of conduct (COC) at events. The environment of expanded audience voices, prior event faux pas, and lack of previous exploration led to a workshop series designed and conducted across information architecture (IA) and user experience (UX) events in 2018 and 2019, culminating in a lightning talk at the 7th annual Academics and Practitioners Roundtable. This chapter is an extension of the workshops and lightning talk.

The talk summarized the D&I efforts undertaken by the Roundtable's host event, the 2019 Information Architecture Conference (IAC19), as well as the findings from D&I workshops facilitated at three industry events in 2019: UXCamp DC, World Information Architecture Day DC (WIAD-DC), and IAC19. The workshops were organized and facilitated by Jeffrey Pass to help inform and prioritize D&I efforts by the IAC in his role as IAC19 D&I co-chair.

To expand the reach of that original lightning talk, the authors worked with the organizers of IAC, WIAD-DC, UXCamp DC, as well as other Washington, DC-area events and professional association chapters to better understand their D&I (as well as safety, D&I+S) efforts and to identify actionable steps that can be taken to improve industry events as well as the organizations that run them. The contribution to this publication is meant to showcase the process, experience, and present realities for organizers to be able to architect D&I into their events, using the authors' experience during the 2019 event year as an anchor.

The authors have worked organizing industry events going back more than a decade. They have also independently organized and facilitated industry and non-industry events that focused on diversity, inclusion, and safety, as well as initiatives for their respective employers. Information presented here is meant to offer insight into the thought process for those who organize and participate in events. The authors would also like to note the following: While this chapter and the work that preceded it is born out of information architecture- and user experience-related events, its substance is broadly applicable to event organizing regardless of industry or domain; The authors are practitioners and not strictly information architects. They, like the majority of individuals that contributed to this chapter, either through event or workshop participation or through discussions with the authors about industry event organization/facilitation, fall into the larger domain of user experience design as articulated by Jesse James Garrett at the 10th annual Information Architecture Summit.

Limitations

This case study is based on work that largely focused on a single geography, the larger Washington, DC area, and a single international event, the IA Conference, during a limited period of time. The authors also acknowledge other significant limitations of this study:

- Workshop findings and resulting findings and recommendations have not yet been socialized with or validated by workshop participants or host event organizers
- The workshop organization and structure varied from host event to host event; the workshop methodology remained consistent, but size and circumstances of individual workshop sessions necessarily resulted in different information collection environments
- While the attendance at individual workshops was relatively diverse, the combination of geography and event focus (IA or UX and IA) necessarily limited the diversity of participants
- While workshop participation at individual events was significant, the combined data sample is very small
- Like websites, events are transient (here today, then gone, or gone for a month or year, etc.) and ever evolving; repeating the workshops today would likely provide similar outcomes, but there would certainly be notable differences reflecting evolving expectations, new event D&I+S exemplars, recent scholarship on the topic, etc.

Additionally, the case is built on the reflective practice of longtime industry event organizers rather than on a purposeful preexisting research question. While the authors believe that the observations and recommendations offered here are valuable and actionable, they acknowledge that they are not necessarily repeatable and that the topic of organizing events fostering diversity, inclusion, and safety warrants more formal, academic studies, perhaps informed by the work accounted in this chapter.

Definitions

It is important to acknowledge the meanings of the terms used here (diversity, inclusion, safety, and accessibility) vary across events and have evolved over the years. This is all the more important viewed through the lens of information architecture (IA), wherein labeling is at the very heart of information architecture practice and critical to context and understanding. To clarify what is intended for this chapter, we offer the following definitions (and framing) for our use of these terms:

Diversity. Diversity refers to "a range of many people or things that are very different from each other" (Oxford Learner's Dictionary, n.d.). Applied to workplace and professional environments, traditional definitions of diversity used by

Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964) and Generation X (born 1965–1980), generally focus on gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation (Smith & Turner, 2015, p. 7). Importantly, this focus has been expanded by the entry of Millennials (born 1981–1996) and Generation Z (born 1997–2012) into the workforce. They have expanded the definition to include cognitive diversity, diversity of thoughts, ideas, and philosophies; i.e., diverse, inclusive perspectives (Smith & Turner, 2015, p. 7). The notion of "diversity of thoughts" is sometimes understood as the inclusion of alternative perspectives, but it is important that it also be understood to mean not only the visible inclusion of minorities, but also inclusion of their perspectives and insights.

Inclusion. Inclusion refers to "the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized" (Lexico, n.d.). Applied to workplace and professional environments, "diversity refers to the traits and characteristics that make people unique while inclusion refers to the behaviors and social norms that ensure people feel welcome" (Musser, 2019).

Safety. Safety is the "condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury" (Lexico, n.d.). At events, it is the trust those attending have that harms have been mitigated and that infractions will be enforced, especially when there is a code of conduct, or an established guidance all participants have agreed to follow.

Safety is somewhat problematic in that legal considerations and liability come into play (or at least potentially do). For this reason, safety is often not included with D&I when discussing event facilitation. The authors include it here because of their core belief that safety is integral to both diverse event participation and broad adoption of inclusive behaviors and norms.

Accessibility. Many different definitions of accessibility exist ranging from academic to legal (e.g., the Americans with Disabilities ACT [ADA] or the European Accessibility Act [EAA]).

For the purposes of this chapter, the authors posit that accessibility is a measure of how simply a person can participate (or engage) in an activity. For events, it relates to how comfortable or difficult participation in any capacity is, and for organizers, the breadth to what kinds of accommodations for which types of abilities or disabilities have been accounted for.

As we learn more about neurodivergence, individuals whose neurological development and state are atypical (Disabled World, 2020), different ability levels, and better strategies to adapt to these differences, notions of "accessibility" are likely to expand or become more nuanced.

D&I+S Efforts and Activities

The work and events that informed this chapter all occurred before 2020 and the global coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic. Virtual/remote event facilitation was not a consideration for the authors at that time and the following does not consider

changes to the event organizing landscape as a result of COVID-19 (however, the Coda for this chapter does consider COVID-19 and makes broad recommendations for post-COVID-19 event organizing and facilitation).

Planning Considerations

D&I+S efforts should be viewed as occurring along a continuum, beginning with pre-event planning and preparation efforts (the majority of effort), continuing on to "day-of" efforts (what is actually done during the event itself), and concluding with post-event follow-up and documentation efforts (all of which then inform pre-event planning for the next event).

Important considerations that help identify what sorts of D&I+S efforts should be undertaken include:

Event scope and location. Events that are associated with a single organization (e.g., a college or employer), are typically easier to manage and have fewer variables to control for. Open events, at public venues such as a hotel or convention center, have more variables to control for. These variables include audience uniformity; for example, a departmental event at an academic institution draws from an insular and well-defined audience as where an open event at a public forum may draw a broad audience, potentially including passers-by.

Event size and duration. One-day (or shorter) events have fewer considerations compared to multi-day events, especially those involving event hotels or multiple locations, complicating logistics, and creating situations where event participants may be: gathered at the event location outside of event hours, moving between event locations, or offsite for unofficial programming (such as networking dinners or happy hours).

Event audience and affiliation. Association-based events may have existing CoC and D&I policies in place as well as structures for lodging and processing complaints as well as administering rulings (e.g., expulsion from the association, fines, legal action). For open events, in which anyone can attend, the only binding expectations and rules are set by the event itself.

Event cost and cost-related expectations. While all events should be diverse, inclusive, and safe, free, or volunteer events may not have resources to devote to D&I+S efforts whereas there is an expectation that high-cost events include such efforts within the price tag.

Accessibility requirements and accommodations. Beyond meeting basic, legal accessibility requirements (e.g., ADA or EAA), including additional services or accommodations (e.g., live captioning services, sign language interpreters, or transportation services for multi-location events) necessarily increases event budgets (unless they are provided gratis or underwritten by sponsors). Costs inevitably rise for each accommodation, forcing many organizers to weigh costs against values to the largest possible number of participants.

Safety measures, staffing, and liability. Safety considerations potentially increase in more diverse and inclusive gatherings, and with them possible event liability. Some events provide their own safety officers, but these roles are typically volunteer and do not carry any authority (or if they do, they also carry liability).

Additionally, based on the authors' experience and discussions with other industry event organizers, most event organizers are not trained in, qualified to, or legally empowered to enforce safety. Options for incorporating official safety staff include using venue-based security (may incur additional costs), contract security (requires contracting and budget), or local law enforcement (for larger, public events; may require licensing/permitting as well as fees). If working with official safety staff, important considerations include having a CoC, and a clear, documented escalation plan including when and under what circumstances to involve official safety representatives.

Event-Specific Efforts, Activities, & Underpinnings

The following table identifies notable D&I+S efforts and activities that were taken by events the authors helped organize, as well as the foundational codes and documentation that supported them.

All of the items listed in Table 1 were found to be successful and impactful based on event participant feedback and event organizer postmortems.

Table 1 Event-specific efforts, activities, & underpinnings

Item	IAC19	IAS18	WIAD DC 17-19	DCUX19	UXDC17
Leadership roles/duties	D&I co-chairs	D&I chair	Executive team (ET)	ET + curators	ET + curators
D&I Goals	Internal	--	Internal (18, 19)	Internal	--
CoC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CoC hotline	Yes	--	Yes	Yes	--
D&I statement	Vision & Values	CoC	Driving Principles	CoC	CoC
D&I+S info included in/on/with	Welcome packet, badge, web, blog, emails	Welcome packet, web, blog, emails	Welcome packet, web, emails	Welcome packet, badge, web, emails	Welcome packet, webs, emails
D&I survey/poll	Pre-, Post-event	Pre-event	Post-event	Post-event	Via event survey
Must accept CoC	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 1 (continued)

Item	IAC19	IAS18	WIAD DC 17-19	DCUX19	UXDC17
Participant D&I self-ID	Optional in registration	Optional in registration	--	Optional in registration	--
Accommodations	Accessibility, dietary	Accessibility, dietary	Dietary (18, 19)	Accessibility, dietary	Accessibility, dietary
Speaker D&I self-ID	Optional in registration	Optional in registration	Optional in registration	Optional in registration	--
D&I workshop	Yes	--	Yes (19)	Yes	--
D&I event	Roundtable	--	Panel (19)	Talk	--
Financial assistance	Scholarships, discounts	Scholarships, discounts	Discounts	Discounts	Discounts
Quiet, nursing, and prayer rooms*	Quiet room, multi-purpose rooms	Quiet room; event office if needed	Multi-purpose (17, 19); designated (18)	Quiet room; event office if needed	Event office if needed
Gender-neutral bathrooms*	"Family" bathroom (in lobby)	--	Designated gender-neutral bathroom (19	"Family" bathroom (in lobby)	"Family" bathroom (in lobby)

Notes (1) *subject to venue accommodations and event budget; (2) "--" indicates explicit data on this category was not captured for that event

While it is not possible to make any causal statements, the IAC, WIAD DC, and UXPA DC (parent of both DCUX and UXDC) organizers feel that the above efforts, activities, and underpinnings contributed to the success of their events, not just in terms of D&I+S, but also more generally.

D&I+S Workshops

The D&I+S workshop series was initiated by Jeffrey Pass, in his capacity as IAC19 D&I co-chair, to inform and help prioritize D&I+S efforts at IAC19 as well as the larger IAC. The workshops not only occurred during events focused on information architecture and user experience, they leveraged traditional methods and tools (labeling, affinity mapping, categorization, etc.) long employed by information architecture and user experience practitioners. They were open to all event attendees (with certain space limitations) with the goals of:

- Learning about D&I+S efforts for that particular event
- Improving future instances of the event
- Informing and improving event planning and facilitation work for IAC and across the larger domain.

The workshop outputs provided a useful tool for identifying the depth and breadth of possible D&I+S efforts that can be undertaken as well as validation for efforts already underway by the participating events.

Workshop Facilitation

2019 workshops were conducted at Washington, DC-area events and at IAC19.

- January 12: UXCamp DC—D&I+S@UX-events
- February 2: WIAD DC celebration event—Architecting IA Industry Events For Diversity & Inclusion
- March 16: IAC—IAC19 Diversity & Inclusion Roundtable.

All workshops began with the setting of expectations and establishment of definitions and parameters (not unlike the preceding sections of this chapter). Additionally, the WIAD DC workshop was immediately preceded by a D&I panel. Additionally, the IAC19 workshop was preceded by a presentation on the work undertaken by the Conference Co-Chairs, Diversity & Inclusion Co-Chairs, and event volunteers and staff.

Following this background and framing, workshop attendees broke up into informal groups organized around stations with a variety of sticky notes, pens, and other supplies alongside large posters boards, horizontally or vertically oriented depending on the space, broken out into four categories (Fig. 1).

- **Experiences:** what happened to you
- **Observations:** what you witnessed
- **Lessons Learned:** personal, professional, insights
- **Recommendations:** constructive, realistic, actionable feedback.

Participants were encouraged to create sticky notes and to place them on the board within the appropriate category. Additional exercise instructions and encouragement (projected on-screen during the exercise with printed versions at each station) included:

- Be honest, no accusations please
- Focus on industry conference-related D&I+S topics
- Work as a group; affinity map (group topics)
- "Dot" to indicate shared topics
- Discuss, share, and synthesize.

Understanding that some workshop participants might feel overwhelmed by this approach or have (physical) accessibility issues, instructions also included prompts for anyone that wished to post their stickies from afar to identify themselves to the workshop facilitators and volunteers (or any other surrogate) who, in turn, worked with those individuals to ensure their comfortable participation in the exercise.

Fig. 1 Representation of the matrix used to capture workshop participant inputs
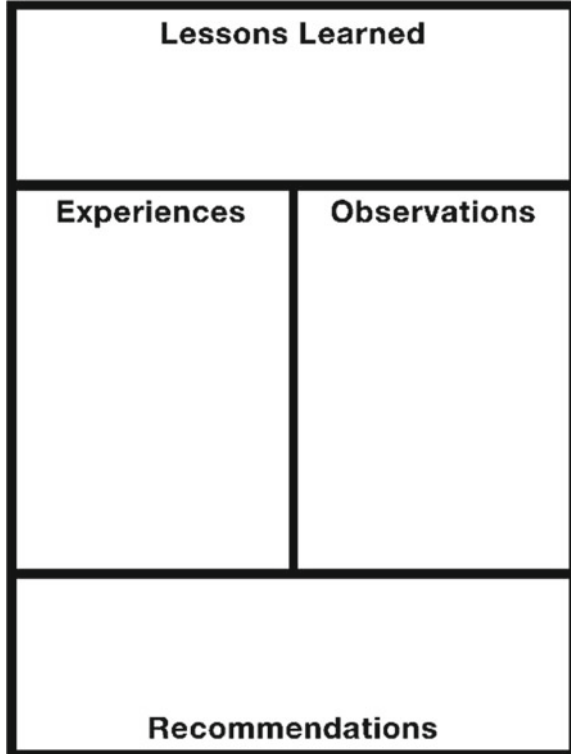
Workshop Participation

Workshop participation varied based on the event-based format. At UXCamp and IAC the workshop occurred during normal conference sessions, when event participants could choose among sessions; for both events, the workshops filled their rooms beyond capacity. For WIAD it occurred as part of a D&I plenary session (Table 2).

Participant feedback from all three events indicated a deep appreciation for the workshops and excitement (and in some cases relief) that D&I+S were being discussed in such an open and "democratic" forum.

Table 2 Workshop participation

Metric*	UXCamp DC	WIADDC	IAC
Event Attendees	120	135	255
Workshop Participants	12	100	42
% of Attendees	10%	74%	16%

*All numbers approximate. Attendees based on event registration, participants based on room counts during workshops. Percentage based on those estimates

The authors interpret workshop participation and participant feedback as evidence of a larger trend toward professional awareness of and commitment to D&I+S both as concepts and as an endeavor. Anecdotally, in the authors' experience, events that make a point to undertake explicit D&I efforts, and especially those that involve event participants in those efforts, are lauded for their efforts.

Data Collection and Tagging

Following each workshop, boards were photographed, as-is (to preserve groupings) then individual sticky note topics were recorded as well as the number of "plus one" dots. All data was plugged into a spreadsheet then tagged by theme, with themes emerging from the data itself.

- Categorization (theme-based tagging) was performed by the workshop facilitator (and co-facilitators when involved) in the days immediately following the event
- Some topics appeared in multiple categories (Experiences, Observations, Lessons Learned, Recommendations) and were recorded accordingly
- Topics were frequently tagged with multiple themes
- For a given event topics were de-duplicated; duplicates were recorded as part of the "Plus" column; however, topics were not de-duplicated across events, though they were consolidated when generating the list of key, actionable items by theme.

The initial workshop at UXCamp DC 2019 informed the creation of the original theme tag set; however, additional themes were added when identified at subsequent workshops. When this occurred, the facilitator revisited preceding workshops and, if the new topic was in evidence from the past workshop tagging, notes, or recordings, the tag would be retroactively applied.

A total of 249 topics were recorded that consolidated down to 185 unique topics. Key, actionable D&I+S topics were identified from select themes and are listed below, followed by a complete listing of themes.

Key, Actionable D&I+S Topics by Theme

Accessibility

- Control noise (ambient as well as attendee); ensure participants can hear proceedings and presenters
- Require that all presentations (or other materials) meet accessibility guidelines, especially related to color, contrast, type size, strobe effects, etc.
- Provide subtitles or sign language interpretation for all sessions
- Record all sessions and make them available in an accessible format

- Select venues with accessibility in mind and clearly identify accessibility limitations and accommodations
- Plan and facilitate with accessibility in mind (including understanding your audience and their needs)
- Provide portable microphones for Q&A sessions and discussions (static microphones on a mic stand pose accessibility concerns).

Culture

- Understand all groups you are designing (events) for (design for everyone)
- Promote a culture in which all participants stand up for themselves and others
- Convey interest in and appreciation for all participants regardless of their role, skill, or experience
- Define and promote D&I together; it is the responsibility of all event participants, not just organizers
- Commit to respectful, honest, and transparent communication; create structures supporting constructive dialogue as well as promoting feedback aimed at improving future events
- Create a safe space to challenge/grow self and community
- No one should dominate the proceedings; everyone should make space for others to engage and participate
- Promote honestly.

Curation and Programming

- Provide outreach and support for new, underrepresented, and marginalized voices
- Avoid tokenization; don't simply have D&I speakers addressing D&I topics
- Incorporate the event audience in the curation process where appropriate and feasible (e.g., via input on theme/topic, speaker recommendations, or even community curation)
- Provide presenter resources and support; help prepare and elevate new or disadvantaged presenters
- Make no excuse for majoritarian programming.

Diversity and Inclusion

- Ensure that the D&I focus includes all event participants (participants + organizers, presenters, sponsors, volunteers, etc.) as well as the event venue and surroundings
- Involve the larger event community in planning as much as possible

- Program in a variety of formats to facilitate different types of speakers and topics as well as different attendees
- Proactively engage underrepresented groups mindfully (taking care to avoid superficial representation or tokenism)
- Don't just seek demographics (arbitrary goals and "safe" KPIs do not a D&I+S event make)
- Provide, or at least fight for, non-gendered bathrooms (potentially including "family" restrooms) as well as labeling and directions to help participants find/utilize them
- Provide accommodations for participants with special needs such as designated lactation, prayer, and quiet rooms
- Provide scholarships or discounts for students and individuals with limited financial resources
- Provide pronoun stickers and promote (or require) their use (note: from a safety standpoint, optional pronoun sticker use can make a target of individuals that chose to use them)
- Offer resources, coaching, and periodic outreach designed to address Imposter syndrome, especially for emerging leaders and new talent
- Facilitate inclusive participation, including addressing systemic power politics, issues relating to accessibility and introversion, etc.
- Mitigate against individuals dominating discussions, Q&A, etc.; normalize inclusion strategies, such as "Move Up, Move Back" (a technique for creating space for marginalized participants to speak).

Introversion and Social Anxiety

- Heavy-handed facilitated participation can backfire or reduce participation; ensure that mechanisms to encourage/facilitate introvert participation leave room for non-participation (listening/observing only)
- Provide safe/quiet rooms; monitor or manage rooms to ensure their proper use
- Provide clear info about event, activities, accommodations (set reasonable expectations); alternatively, include flexible, open-ended activities that participants can shape in real-time
- Provide mechanisms for introverts to engage comfortably (e.g., having volunteers provide feedback on behalf of attendees, or including feedback received digitally (via text, tweet, etc.)
- Include social/networking activities that do not involve alcohol (e.g., happy hours) or loud, crowded environments (e.g., karaoke).

Safety

- Provide/promote a clear mechanism for reporting, escalating, resolving, and learning from issues
- Acknowledge relevant safety concerns as well as relevant movements related to safety (as well as D&I such as #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo)
- Make safety an explicit part of event planning, marketing, and facilitation
- Limit activities (e.g., banquets, happy hours) involving alcohol and for those that do, guard against drunken, aggressive behavior
- Clearly identify and promote safe spaces (e.g., lactation, prayer, and quiet rooms)
- Make any D&I data collection entirely optional.

All Identified Topic Themes

Data tagging was based on a distillation of themes identified during the sticky note exercise. Identified topic themes included:

- Actionable Solutions: use in combination with any other topic theme where a clear action is identified
- **Accessibility** *(see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme)*
- Communications & Promotions: the full life cycle of event-related messaging, marketing, and other content
- Cost (event): primarily the cost associated with event attendance/participation (inclusive of travel and accommodations), but also related to the cost of running the event
- **Culture** (event, industry, society) *(see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme)*
- **Curation & Programming** *(see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme)*
- Dispute Resolution: clear mechanisms for reporting, investigating, resolving or remediating, and learning form issues and complaints
- **Diversity & Inclusion** *(see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme)*
- Gender-Related: including gender representation, gender identification, gender-based services or accommodations (e.g., restrooms), etc.
- Hospitality (event): vegetarian and vegan options, affordances for dietary restrictions, non-caffeinated and non-alcoholic beverage options, etc.
- **Introversion & Social Anxiety** *(see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme)*
- Logistics & Location: issues relating to event site access (both in terms of distance as well as accessibility), setup, scheduling, etc.
- **Move Up, Move Bac**k (culture and inclusion) *(see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme)*
- Outreach: event marketing and communications as well as targeted outreach to communities of practice, institutions (associations, educational, etc.), and D&I target audiences
- Planning: all aspects of event planning and the team(s) that undertake it

- **Safety** (*see Key, Actionable D+S Topics by Theme*)
- Social Events (associated, outside): both official events, such as event-sponsored banquets or sponsored activities such as a karaoke night, as well as ad hoc events such as informal happy hours or outings into the event host city
- Support (for attendees, presenters, etc.): overlapping with Accessibility and Cost, including accommodations, communications, facilities, logistics, etc.
- Training (all parties): including training for organizers, volunteers, presenters, and sponsors, as well as resources for attendees.

Concrete Guidance for Architecting Diverse, Inclusive Events

Organizing an event, especially for D&I+S, is a kind of information architecture endeavor employing both IA theory and practice in order to:

- Identify and understand the event audience (inclusive of organizers, presenters, vendors, and attendees)
- Define and categorize participants based on both observable and hidden characteristics
- Frame the event via policies, procedures, and guidelines (information and relationships)
- Facilitate attendance and involvement based on physical, social, psychological, economic, and other criteria.

All of these, and indeed all of the D&I+S topics identified in this chapter, are contributing factors to creating the underlying information architecture of what an event is; or perhaps put another way, an event's IA of inclusion.

In their years of experience organizing industry events with an eye to D&I+S, the authors have employed all of these points into their efforts helping to define and adopt many practices and approaches that are now D&I+S best practices. The D&I+S workshops not only validated this work, they informed and expanded it.

Taken together, along with insights gained during the COVID-19 global pandemic, the authors offer the following guidance that, their experience indicates, will help industry event organizers (and event organizers in general) meet their diversity, inclusion, and safety goals, and help empower event attendees to hold the events to a higher standard.

Lead by Example

Organizing a diverse, inclusive event is easier when the event itself has diverse and inclusive leadership, organizers, curators, and volunteers. Often, this requires both active recruitment and mentorship of individuals who have little to no active

experience organizing events and for existing event organizing leaders to make room for new individuals. If the goal is not merely to incorporate but center D&I+S, these individuals should be spread across the leadership team, not just in a single "D&I" position that may or may not have tangible impact on the larger event, (e.g., curation of the program or selection of the safety enforcement policies).

Plan, Prepare, Document, and Share

Diverse, inclusive, and safe events don't happen by accident or coincidence. Organizers must frame, define, create, architect, label, document, promote, and evolve underlying structures to support D&I+S goals, including:

- A strong Code of Conduct (CoC) with enforcement provisions
- An articulated stance or statement on diversity and inclusion (ideally also safety), including any articulated goals or key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Promotion and diligent enforcement of the CoC and D&I+S stance, including prominent inclusion in the event website(s), registration and confirmation materials, communications (be they via mail, email, blog, or social media), and event welcome materials
- Resources and/or training for leadership, organizers, curators, and volunteers, as well as speakers/presenters, vendors, and attendees
- Communicate what D&I+S efforts have been undertaken and what accommodations are being provided at the event (e.g., gender-neutral restrooms, sign language interpreters, or prayer rooms).

The authors would recommend that event organizers meet together to review the Event-Specific D&I+S Efforts & Activities and Key, Actionable D&I+S Topics by Theme sections. These sections can serve as a starting point for events that are just beginning to focus on D&I+S or to validate efforts already underway. Not all efforts, activities, and topics will apply to every event, but you would do well to consider those that do.

Remain Vigilant and Engage Your Audience

The event landscape is ever-changing and social norms are ever-evolving. At the time of this writing, the Black Lives Matter, racial equality, and anti-racism movements are driving important discussions and actions related to equity and safety. It is impossible to organize perfectly diverse, inclusive, and safe events, but you can make the process easier (and likely more successful) by:

- Setting realistic and attainable D&I+S goals and revisiting them with some frequency

- Polling, surveying, or otherwise communicating with the event's audience well in advance of the event
- Socializing any CoC, D&I+S policies, as well as reporting and escalation procedures as part of the event welcome and materials/documentation
- Follow-up communications, surveys, or polls to evaluate the success of D&I+S efforts and to identify any failures, gaps, or future goals.

For recurring events, It is prudent to revisit your goals, targets, KPIs, and general definition of Diversity on at least an annual basis. As diversity is, by definition, a resulting difference between the majority and minority, organizers should be prepared to adjust their D&I targets, categories, and KPIs to reflect the community's changes over time in order to continue elevating voices that are less represented.

Coda: Learning from COVID-19

The D&I+S workshops all occurred prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, as did most of the work that laid the groundwork for this chapter. The pandemic has forced the cancellation of many industry events, but others, like the Information Architecture Conference 2020 (IAC20) shifted to an all-virtual format. The broad adoption of remote work and all-virtual events like IAC20 will likely create higher expectations relating to D&I.

These practices have allowed many individuals with accessibility issues, financial limitations, and social traits such as introverts and individuals with social anxiety disorders, to engage and participate in ways that may not have previously been possible/practical.

In a post-COVID-19 world, industry event organizers would do well to consider hybrid (in-person and virtual) events or, at the very least, virtual participation options for those with a personal preference for or a demonstrable impediment to in-person participation. Early observations seem to suggest that hybrid events may allow for broad participation: the 8th Academics and Practitioners Roundtable—part of the IA Conference 2020—was entirely virtual and benefited from increased participation from Asia and Europe, owing largely to the format that freed many from the necessity to travel.

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