# IA and History — Vallejo and Sonoma

The role of IA is to make visible ideas, concepts, facts—whatever you want to convey.
IA is a technique that can be applied to many things. Consider Wurman's example of the Tokyo subway.

I want to use it to improve the explication of a history I have been writing. Normally, history is presented as text in books, sometimes "improved" with tables, photos, and maps. But basically text, whose only form of organization is chapters and sections with headings and, if you are lucky, an index.

How to apply IA? Much of my work involves analysis of the subject, so I did that with this subject. Let me interject here that my history is on the early Europeans in California, and in Sonoma (my new home) in particular. I identified the following "kinds" of information in the history I compiled:

>   Routes and transportation: define latitude and how measured.
>   Chronology of key events.
>   People: early CA explorers. By date? Location? Significance? Latitude?  Vallejo family. Missionaries.
>   Geography: include relevant locations like San Blas.
>   Places: missions, ranchos, land grants, presidios.
>   California political: government by Spain, Mexico, US statehood.

Some of these have "callouts". For example:
The first structures/enterprises in San Francisco were the Presidio and the Mission San Francisco de Asis (aka Mission Dolores) which were each founded in 1776. The man who had the last word on the siting of the Presidio was the captain of a ship that he had sailed north from San Blas to Monterey and then on to San Francisco, which at that time the Spanish called Yerba Buena—Fernando Quiros.

Most of the early explorers arrived on ships they had sailed from the Atlantic Ocean around the southernmost end of South America, Cape Horn.

There is doubt that Francis Drake actually landed on the coast of modern Marin County. His records say he did. But captains have lied before about where they went, witness John Cabot who rarely published his logs and when he did, reported latitude differently.

How to present this information visually so that it is evident as a whole?

A Multi-Dimensional Story
In 1492 Columbus got an inkling that there was more here than met the eye. Subsequent exploration revealed South America, Central America, and North America. First the east side (Atlantic) , then the west side (Pacific). California emerged from the mists of imagination by the hard physical efforts of brave men in small boats without a map.

How to materialize the story? My approach is to drill down from generalities to details, but in a layered way that reflects the kinds of information. I will refer to the numbered items below as "chapters."
First, an introduction. It can describe the scope of the story.
Second, chronology. In tabular format with map to show geographical context. The information includes
>   dates, locations, and people. This is the chapter that introduces people. There is a note for latitude.
>   Notes for disputed events. Significant people who warrant more details than can fit into a table can

be discussed in their own section: "Significant People." There can be hyperlinks from the table to the detailed text discussion.

Third, <u>geography and places</u>. Start with a simple map (with key geographical features, like the Petaluma Creek) on which are codes for place items like MD (Mission Dolores), MSR (Mission San Rafael), RP (Rancho Petaluma), PSF (Presidio of San Francisco). Use text for each item that details the geography, people, and history. There can be hyperlinks from the map to the text. Some items will require lots of text, especially Vallejo and Sonoma. Those can be sections of their own which can duplicate info previously called out (? Apparently this is the best word ).

Fourth, <u>routes and transportation</u>. Start with a simple map. Add supporting detail in text with headings for each geographical place item. For example, there will be a discussion of steamships. Eventually there can be a discussion of the kinds of ships sailed by the explorers.

Fifth, an abbreviated <u>history of Sonoma</u>. In text. Reference preceding information. Certainly it will start with the mission, which is a place item and involves Father Altimira. The next event is the secularization of the mission and the construction of the presidio. The third event is the laying out of the town. Then statehood, where I end.

Sixth, an abbreviated <u>history of Mariano Vallejo</u>. In  text. Reference preceding information.

How to handle what might be, in a text document, a footnote? Such as my comments on latitude being reported correctly. Perhaps as, simply, "notes." I could employ a method of connecting a note to a table, map, call out, etc. by number, then having a section for notes at the end of each chapter. In the main content (such as a table), the note number could be in parentheses and preceded by N or NOTE, e.g., (N3) or (NOTE 3). Or use square brackets as does Wikipedia: [N1]. I prefer [N1].

Now that I've got the content organized, what form will the complete story take? I am not interested in using HTML, because the act of creating it is additional work. I think I can be as successful with a Word document which can be published as a PDF file. The chapters can follow each other sequentially, with second level headings; their sections can be organized with third level headings. A table of contents will show the overall content and structure. I expect to implement this idea piecemeal, as doing so will take time. Right now, I am most interested in the IA aspect. Already I can see that this approach will tell the story much better than text has so far.

Let me recap the IA contribution: (1) an organization of the material into chapters with sections, and a table of contents; (2) a method of connecting things introduced in one chapter with additional information in a subsequent chapter (e.g., cross-referencing); (3) a method of handling notes. The organization allows the reader a view of the big picture. The use of hypertext links allows the reader to drill-down according to their own interests.

Success!

Later, after beginning a text document with chronology and history of Sonoma and Vallejo (still no maps): How is IA involved, if at all? What organization can I use to tell the story that I want to tell? (I am thinking here of what to say about Sonoma.)

Even this question reflects IA:  (1) The <u>product</u> is a story. (2) The <u>scope</u> of the story is what I want to tell. (3) The organization of the story <u>facilitates</u> its telling. All three are critical aspects of IA.

Clearly, I am using the effort of writing a history to explore a different aspect of IA.