

Term

Frame-Scale

Definition (Canonical)

Frame-Scale is a conceptual–analytic instrument used in Information Architecture Design (IAD) to specify, examine, and coordinate Information Architectures across spans of abstraction and consequence.

It does not describe the size of an object but the span of relations within which an Information Architecture is interpreted.

Expanding the frame-scale reveals additional relations, contexts, and consequences surrounding an Information Architecture. Narrowing the frame focuses attention on more local configurations.

Within the IAD canon, Frame-Scale provides the conceptual geometry that allows Information Architectures to be reasoned about consistently across objects, systems, institutions, and conceptual formations.

status: Canonical Draft

module_dependency: M02, M03, M05

concept_type: epistemic-instrument

epistemic_role: span-visibility and coordination framework

Extended Description

Frame-Scale originated as a design-scoping model addressing unresolved challenges in Design and Design Thinking concerning complexity, indeterminacy, and non-assumptive process-method.

The concept was initially introduced as a way of reasoning about how design problems and Information Architectures appear differently when interpreted across different spans of abstraction and consequence.

Although developed in relation to Information Architecture, Frame-Scale itself makes no ontological claims.

Within IAD it functions as a **visibility and coordination instrument**.

It renders visible:

- how Information Architectures are specified at different spans
- how coordination occurs across those spans
- how consequences propagate across artificial assemblages

Frame-Scale does not create Information Architecture.

It reveals the span within which Information Architecture operates.

The same relational configuration may therefore be interpreted at different spans as:

- a localised object
- a coordinated system
- or a conceptual formation

These spans are analytic perspectives rather than metaphysical layers of reality.

Conceptual–Operational Function

Frame-Scale performs several functions within IAD:

1. **Conceptual Instrument** — enables reasoning about IA across spans of abstraction and consequence.
 2. **Analytic Instrument** — reveals the coordination-range of Information Architectures.
 3. **Design-Scoping Framework** — allows designers to engage complex problems without collapsing into either local reduction or systemic overwhelm.
 4. **Epistemic Integrator** — supports the accumulation of knowledge about IA in the Wild and its application within IA in Design.
 5. **Field Scaffold** — stabilises inquiry while the object of study (Information Architecture across spans) is progressively clarified.
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Distinction from IA Types

- Frame-Scale is not equivalent to Conceptual, Systems-level, or Object-level IA.
 - IA Types describe kinds of relational configuration.
 - Frame-Scale describes the span at which such configurations are interpreted, specified, or coordinated.
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Distinction from Levels of Abstraction (LoA)

- Frame-Scale does not duplicate Floridi's Levels of Abstraction.
 - It does not specify informational filters or ontological commitments.
 - Instead, it concerns coordination-span within artificial composition and interpretation.
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Key Properties

- Conceptual–analytic instrument
 - Span-sensitive
 - Cross-frame coordination capable
 - Non-ontological
 - Operates across low/high abstraction and low/high information density
 - Supports both IA in Design and IA in the Wild
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Methodological Guardrails

Frame-Scale:

- Is not an ontological doctrine
- Is not a metaphysical layer of reality
- Does not itself explain institutional stabilisation of IA
- Does not duplicate IA Types
- Does not function as metaphor or rhetorical device

It is a disciplined conceptual instrument for reasoning about span and coordination in artificial composition.

Related Canon Modules

- M02 — IA in the Wild and in Design
 - M03 — Structural Logic and Semantic Formation
 - M05 — Frame-Scale
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Related Terms

- [Information Architecture](#)
 - [Semantic Mechanics](#)
 - [Socio-Semantic Mechanics](#)
 - [Contrived Ontology](#)
 - [IA Types](#)
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Notes / Variants

Frame-Scale currently functions as both analytic instrument and conceptual scaffold for reasoning about Information Architecture across spans of artificial composition. Its articulation may evolve as the field of IAD matures.