

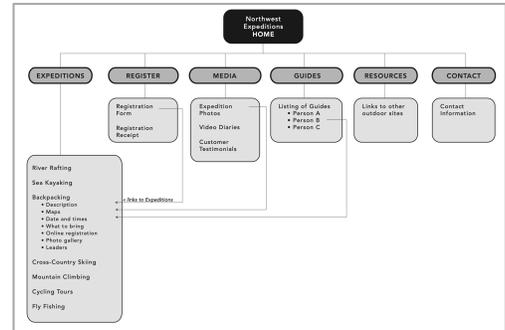
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Information Architecture

Introduction to Information Architecture

What is it?

- The blueprint for the visual, technical, and the informational (aka: content) design of a site.
- It is the practice of deciding how to arrange the parts of something to be understandable. (*The Information Architecture Institute*)
- All websites must have a well-designed information hierarchy.
- Information architecture depicts:
 - What information will be on the website.
 - How the information is organized.
 - How users will access information on the site.
- Both visual and technical design decisions flow from this work.
- Information architecture results in the creation of site maps, hierarchies, categorizations, navigation, and metadata. (*UXBooth*)
- Borrows some principles and theories from cognitive psychology, including cognitive load, mental models, and decision-making theory.
- IA should reflect not how *you* think of your content, but how your *users* think of your content.



Why do Information Architecture?

- Helps you comprehend the breadth and depth of a site.
- Helps to ensure a good user experience through easy navigation to information.
- Saves money in the end due to fewer last-minute changes.
- Users don't notice the information architecture of a site unless it isn't working.

Information Architects

What is an Information Architect?

- The Information Architect is a person on the Web team whose sole responsibility is to create the architecture of a site.
- Often these individuals are trained in information organization and taxonomy (the science of classify and organizing).
- Role goes beyond basic page hierarchy—Information Architects must also look at a wide variety of in-page interactions. However, IA is not UX design.
- While positions are scarce, there are actual job openings for *architects* of all sorts. Falls under jobs like **Data Architect**, **Solutions Architect**, **Web Architect**, etc.

What does an *Information Architect* do? (Rosenfeld and Morville, pg. 11)

- Clarifies the **mission** and **vision** for the site, balancing the needs of its sponsoring organization and the needs of its audiences.
- Determines what **content** and **functionality** the site will contain.
- Specifies how users will find information in the site by defining its **organization**, **navigation**, **labeling**, and **searching systems**.
- Maps out how the website will accommodate **change** and **growth** over time.

Navigation Outlines & Site Maps

Navigation Outlines

- Presents in **written outline form** the content & hierarchy of a website.
- Each line item (in general) represents a single page on the site.
- Is often easier to create first since minimal formatting is required.
 - Microsoft Word and other programs have outline features that make it easy to create these types of documents.
- Numbering of site pages helps you and the client communicate effectively about content and provides a convenient way to reference any page in the website.

Site Maps

- Presents in **visual form** the content and hierarchy of a website.
 - Displays the same information as navigation outlines.
- Can be helpful for designers and clients who think more visually.
 - The connections between pages and the overall hierarchy is clearer.
- Do not confuse this with a site map located on a live website—this is a document used for internal development purposes only.

What does a Site Map include?

- Home page—common point of entry
- Primary site areas
- Secondary pages under each major site area
- Tertiary pages, if required
- Interactivity requirements as needed
- User task flows
- Site maps don't have to show every link, just major navigational paths.

Hierarchical Labels

Defined

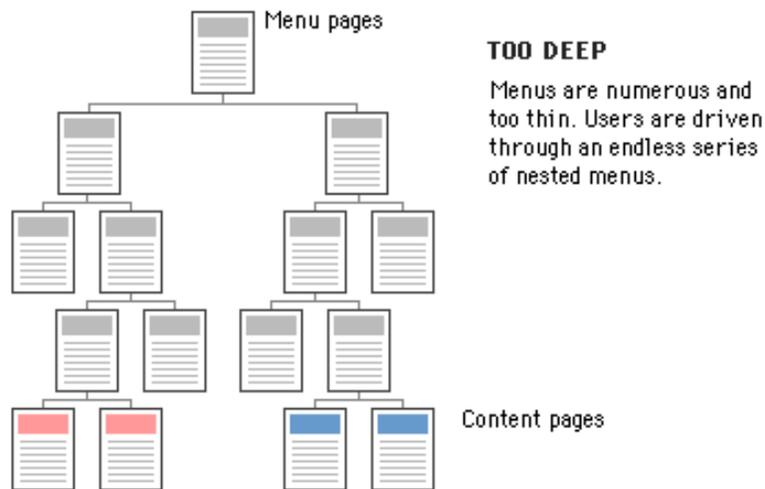
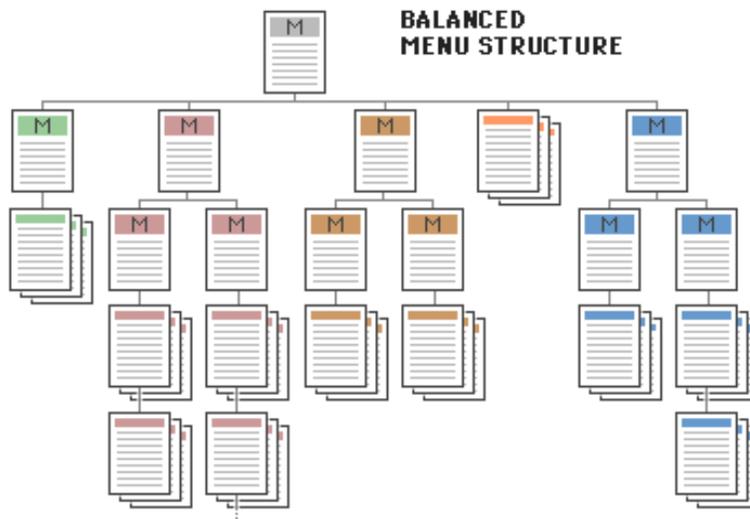
- Hierarchical labels are the names of the primary site areas.
- It is important to think these through before beginning work on the site.
 - Since a site's design is often based around the primary, changes to them during the production phase of a project can (sometimes) cost time and money.

Qualities of Good Hierarchical Labels

- Labels should be *mutually exclusive*.
 - M.E. defined: Unable to be both true at the same time.
- Labels should be familiar to the end user.
- Good sites find a balance somewhere in-between these two extremes: **5–9 primary site areas**.
 - Generally follows the *7 plus-or-minus* rule (think 7-digit phone numbers)
- Poor label extremes: (see next page)
 - *Narrow and Deep* (too deep; too many clicks)
 - *Broad and Shallow* (too shallow; too many choices)
- Some common label conventions:
 - Products, Services, Shop, Cart, Check out
 - Search, Find, Browse, Search/Browse, Site Map, Contents, Support
 - About, About Us, About *company_name*, Who We Are
 - Contact, Contact Us, Feedback

Site Hierarchy Examples

- o From online version of *Web Style Guide*. (Lynch & Horton)



13 April 2004

Navigation Outline

Children's Cancer Association Web Development

navigation outline

13 April 2004
Version 1.1

Introduction

The navigation outline is a textual representation of the scope and organization of site content. The outline defines the structure and menu labels for the CCA Web site. Each page has a unique identifying number, mainly for our internal tracking purposes. The numbers also assist in understanding the depth and structure of the site. Numbers that end in a '0' indicate that the page is part of the main navigation menu. The number of digits (separated by periods) indicates the number of clicks a user must make to get to that content, or how *deep* the content is within the site.

Main Navigation

- 1.0 About CCA
- 2.0 Programs
- 3.0 Resource Directory
- 4.0 Donate
- 5.0 Volunteer
- 6.0 News
- 7.0 Contact
- 8.0 Hero Kids*
- 9.0 Art Gallery*

* Sections 8.0 and 9.0 are included in the main navigation menu (and are present on every page of the site) but should appear in a manner visually distinct from sections 1.0 through 7.0. Hero Kids and Art Gallery content should be leveraged to support content and desired user actions within other sections of the site (e.g. a hero kid story may be used to inspire someone to volunteer). A hero kid or art gallery piece would also be a good choice for a rotating homepage tout.

Site Structure

0.0 Home

The CCA homepage will include links to the following sections:

- 0.1 Alexandra's story (from homepage copy and/or 1.0 About page copy)
- 0.2 English/Spanish version (if implemented this link will appear prominently on every page)
- 0.3 Privacy Policy
- 0.4 HIPPA Compliance Statement

Version 1.1

#9230

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Navigation Outline

Children's Cancer Association Web Development

1.0 About CCA

- 1.1 Board of Directors
- 1.2 Staff
- 1.3 Annual Report (pdf download and html?)
- 1.4 Awards
- 1.5 Get to Know CCA Video

2.0 Programs

- 2.1 Music Rx
- 2.2 Pediatric Chemo Pal
 - 2.2.1 'Out and About' Chemo Pal Events
- 2.3 Dreamcatcher Wish
- 2.4 Caring Cabin
 - 2.4.1 Construction Update
- 2.5 Kids Cancer Pages
- 2.6 Alexander Ellis Family Resource Center
- 2.7 Presentations and Outreach
- 2.8 Community Heroes

3.0 Resource Directory (sub section labels appear unaltered from their current form, we may want to revisit some of these labels if we can do so)

- 3.1 Search results (dynamic page)
- 3.2 Order a directory
- 3.3 Where to Begin Your Research
 - 3.3.1 Places to Start Your Research
- 3.4 Information and Resources
 - 3.4.1 Disease Specific Resources
 - 3.4.2 Support Organizations
 - 3.4.3 Medical Information Resources
 - 3.4.4 Medical Guides Online
 - 3.4.5 Pain Management
 - 3.4.6 Disability Resources
 - 3.4.7 Transplant and Donor Programs
 - 3.4.8 Home Care
 - 3.4.9 Complimentary Medicine Resources
 - 3.4.10 Intercultural Resources
- 3.5 Financial Assistance
 - 3.5.1 General Financial Assistance
 - 3.5.2 Emergency and Temporary Cash Assistance Program
 - 3.5.3 Fundraising
 - 3.5.4 Ministries and Churches
 - 3.5.5 Local Children's Charities
 - 3.5.6 Insurance and Medical Treatment Aid
 - 3.5.7 Pharmaceutical Aid
 - 3.5.8 Reimbursement Assistance Programs
 - 3.5.9 Pharmaceutical Reimbursement Assistance Programs

Version 1.1

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