Web Navigation Design

Lessons from Usability Week 2012
Purpose of navigation?

Testing:
- ask users to perform a task - don’t ask for an opinion!
- always in context
- use full pages, full content

Wednesday, 17 October, 12
Purpose of navigation?

- Enable task completion

Testing:
- ask users to perform a task - don't ask for an opinion!
- always in context
- use full pages, full content
When to define?

It’s part of a system; it needs to be considered within the context of the goals of the site, the content, etc.
When to define?

- *After* information architecture is defined

It's part of a system; it needs to be considered within the context of the goals of the site, the content, etc.
Which components to use?

the info architecture design will identify expected ways of using the site
Which components to use?

- *Depends on the content and features*
Which components to use?

- Depends on the content and features
  - Only five primary sections?
    - consider *Tabs*
  - Will users be exploring?
    - consider *Related Links*
  - Lots of content on a single page?
    - consider *Accordion*
Wayfinding

- Where am I?
  Orientation

- How do I get where I’m going?
  Route selection

- Can I tell when I get there?
  Arrival
Legibility is how easy it is to answer these questions. There are several elements that make a space legible.
Wayfinding

- **Landmark**
  - sectional titles, highlighted tabs...

- **District**
  - colour coded backgrounds...

- **Node**
  - the links on the page, sections...

Districts: make sure you can tell when you pass an important boundary, i.e. from one region to another

Nodes are choices; paradox of choice
Effective Navigation Systems

- Intuitive
- Visible
- Provides Context
- Consistent
- Persistent

- Appropriate
- Extensible
- Cooperative
- Coordinated
- Accessible
Task Failure

- Consistency: 17%
- Context/Sense of Place: 22%
- Visibility: 28%
- Intuitiveness: 33%
Intuitive

- *Interface elements are familiar:*
  - *Language*
  - *Grouping*
  - *Presentation*
Intuitive
Intuitive
Visible
Visible
Visible
Visible

- Change Blindness
Visible

- Change Blindness
Visible

- Change Blindness

Goes to homepage of “business” site, instead of parent site.

Small link back to parent site
People are going to arrive at a site via Google more often that directly to the home page.
Context

- *Should be at-a-glance*

- *Always consider deep-links*
  - 75% of the time, the first page a user sees at your site is an interior page
Context
try clicking on any one of the links at the top

http://www.lbl.gov/
Persistent

http://www.lbl.gov/
Appropriate

Navigation component and/or style is appropriate to the purpose of the site.
Appropriate Navigation component and/or style is appropriate to the purpose of the site.
Navigation component and/or style is appropriate to the purpose of the site.
Extensible
Extensible

March 2000

Wednesday, 17 October, 12
Extensible

June 2007
Extensible

June 2007

amazon.com

Gift Certificates | International | New Releases | Top Sellers | Today's Deals | Sell Your Stuff
Extensible

- Better choice: vertical sidebar, flyout menus

as product line expands, new entries can be added, categories can be adjusted much more easily
Extensible

as product line expands, new entries can be added, categories can be adjusted much more easily
Coordinated navigation components on a site should work together.
Coordinated navigation components on a site should work together.
Coordinated the various navigation components on a site should work together.
the various navigation components on a site should work together
Group Exercise
Group Exercise

- Analyze the Stanford Law School website against the important attributes of navigation

http://www.law.stanford.edu/
Evaluate against...

- Intuitive
- Visible
- Provides Context
- Consistent
- Persistent
- Appropriate
- Extensible
- Cooperative
- Coordinated
- Accessible