# User Experience of Large Web Sites

**BGSU ACM Presentation** 

November 5, 2003 Keith Instone Instone@user-experience.org http://user-experience.org

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### About me

- BGSU CS grad, 1986 & 1988
- CS Research associate 1989-97 (?)
- Consultant web usability
- Argus Associates 1999-2001
  - "I am not a librarian, but I play one on the Internet"
- IBM, 2001-

### What have I been working on – Large Web Sites

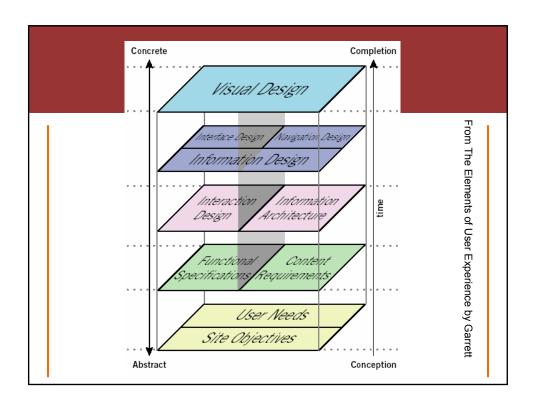
- Argus Associates, 1999-2001 (RIP)
- Ernst & Young squash country fiefdoms
- Pharmacia & Upjohn drug delivery intranet
- E-greetings & RipShot dot-com-ers
- LookSmart pure LIS == make \$\$?
- Microsoft home page take-over
- Weather.com stay #1 weather brand

### What I do at IBM

- Sales & Distribution > ibm.com > Web Strategy & Design > Site Strategy & Standards > User Experience Strategy > Information Architect
- Team responsible for the user experience across ibm.com: Across silos, (projects, brands, audiences), including standards

## What is user experience?

- Usability & user interface design
- Content & information architecture
- Functionality & technology
- Customer service
- "All the customer's [technology enabled] touch points with the company" Brand
- Team effort: many roles, skills
- Think: What is your (the student's) overall experience with BGSU? How does technology enhance/detract from that experience?



### About this talk

- Design: Global, local, contextual and breadcrumb navigation
- Content strategy: Weather.com example
- Governance: Ernst & Young example
- Challenges all at once: IBM
- Process: User engineering methodology

# The Sausage Analogy







# Global Breadcrumb Content Local Local & Contextual Global

# **Global Navigation**

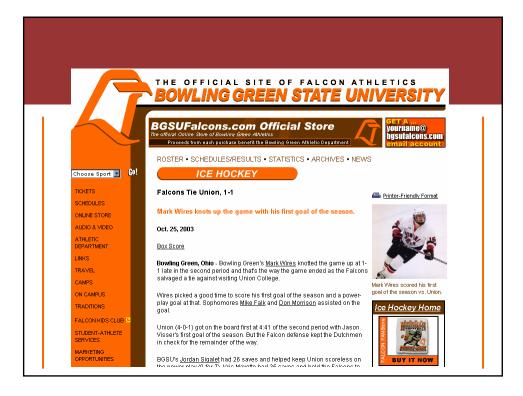
- Site identification, branding
- Major sections
- Utilities
- Almost every page
- Can (should?) change for sub-sites
- Where-am-I indicators

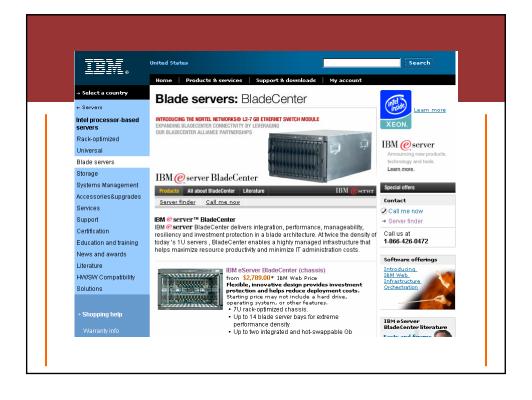
### **Local Navigation**

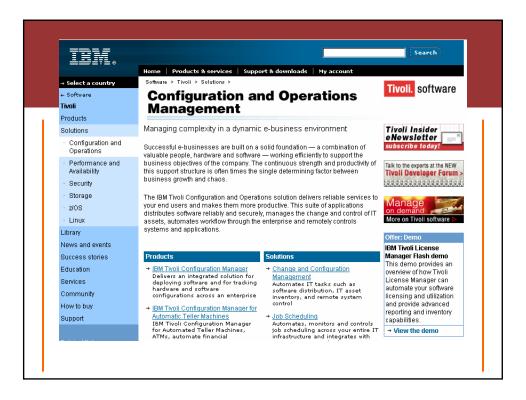
- Specific to this section of the site
- Varies from section to section, but consistent (hopefully)
- Parental, sibling, child relationships
- Where-am-I indicators

### **Contextual Navigation**

- Specific to this page
- Cuts across hierarchy (local navigation covers the stuff in the same bucket)
- Hand-crafted and/or automated
- Embedded in the content and/or given its own space on the screen







### Other examples you want to talk about?

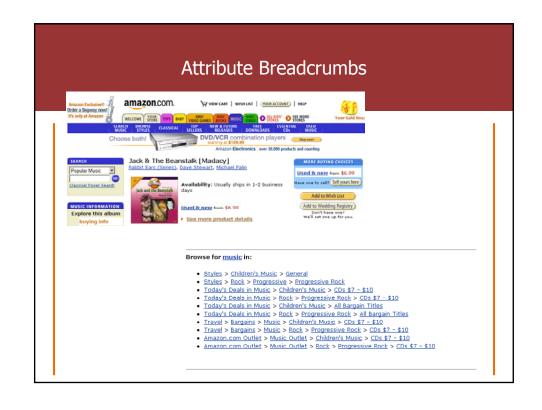
- Favorite sites?
- Least favorite sites?
- Unusual or common characteristics?

## **Breadcrumb Navigation**

- Location: A page always has the same breadcrumb no matter how you get there ("you are here")
- Path: Breadcrumb differs based on how you got there
- Attribute: A page has many breadcrumbs, each representing a characteristic

# **Location Breadcrumbs** From: Directory > Business and Economy > Shopping and Services > Sports > Hockey → Ice Hockey Directory > Recreation > Sports > Hockey > Ice Hockey → Shopping and Services Shopping and Services > Ice Hockey Directory > Business and Economy > Shopping and Services > Sports > Hockey > Ice Hockey Search • the Web C just this category INSIDE YAHOO! NHL Hockey on Yahoo! Sports get scores, news, schedules, team and player info, and more Hockey Gear | NHL News | Fantasy Hockey | Groups CATEGORIES • Books@ • Collectibles (9) Instruction (59) Magazines@ Gear and Equipment (55) Software (4)





### Stories to tell

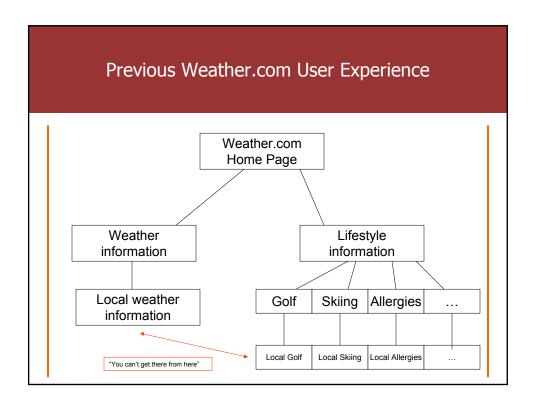
- Weather.com
- Ernst & Young
- IBM

### Weather.com

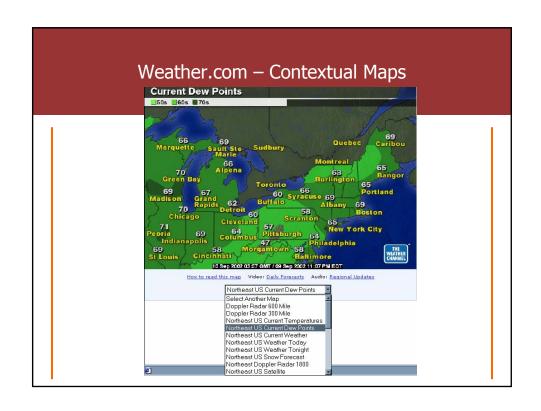
- Weather.com was #1 but feeling pain: organic growth, content management, keeping up with the business strategy (scaling)
- Stakeholder interviews, business analysis
- Content analysis
- Competitive reviews (experts, users)
- User research (card sorting, usability testing)
- Developed the IA strategy how the organization of information supports both the business strategy & the user experience

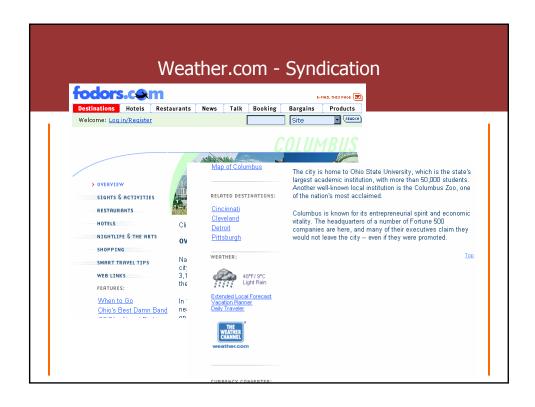
# Weather.com – Information Architecture Strategy (1999)

- Local weather "home pages", both weather data and life-style information
- Syndicate Weather Channel brand for "convenience" users
- Personalization to stay ahead of the competition (a model - http://argusacia.com/white\_papers/personalization.html)









# Ernst & Young

- Global "branding" problem
- Each country had its own web site, its own design, its own content
- An "international" site made it all worse
- Assumption: the business will be integrated
- Task: How to integrate the content to make a good experience (promote the global brand)

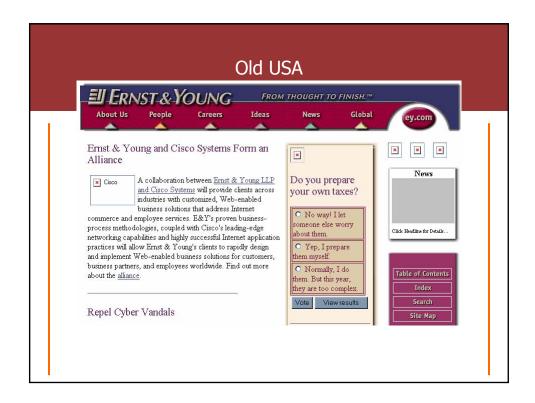
### Problem statement



Very soon you will be able to access the existing Ernst &Young International site at the new address of www.ey.com.

This move is part of a continuing process to unify the Ernst and Young brand globally. We intend that the new site design, navigation and search functions will make access to our global resources easier.

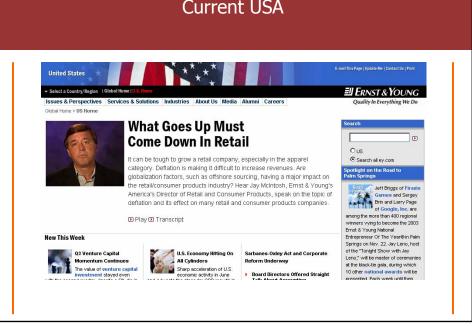
The new site will contain the same exacting standards of information, the same concise content. So don't be alarmed by any changes that you see, because while ey.com is a new site, the quality stays the same.

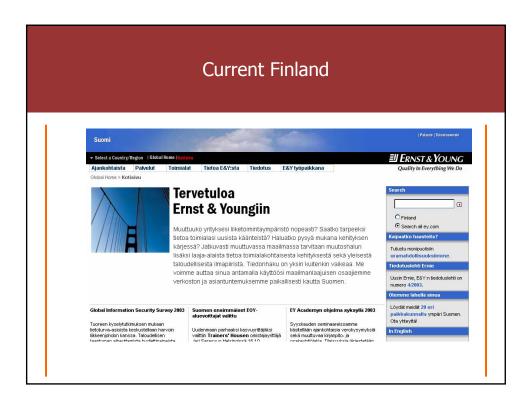


### **Current Global**



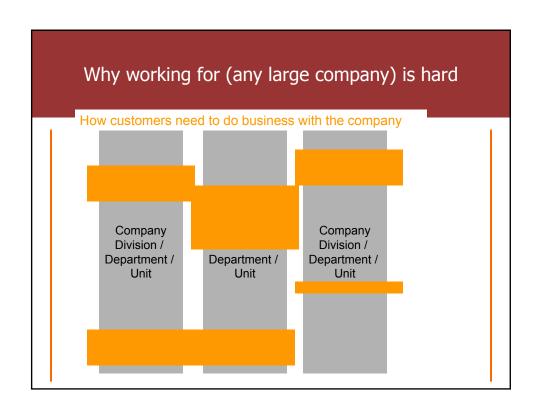
### **Current USA**

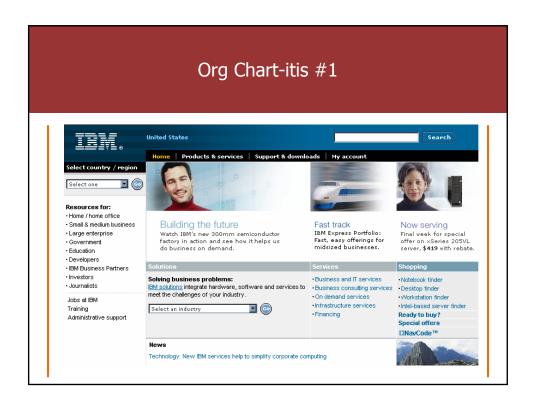


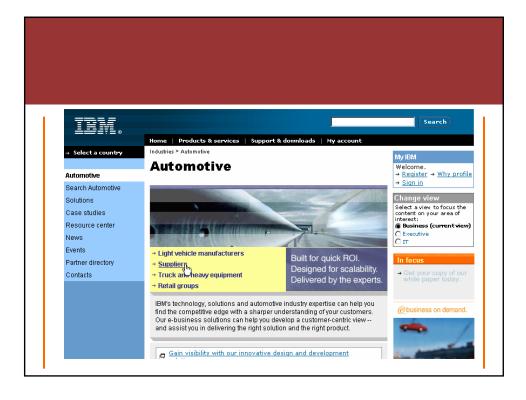


### **IBM**

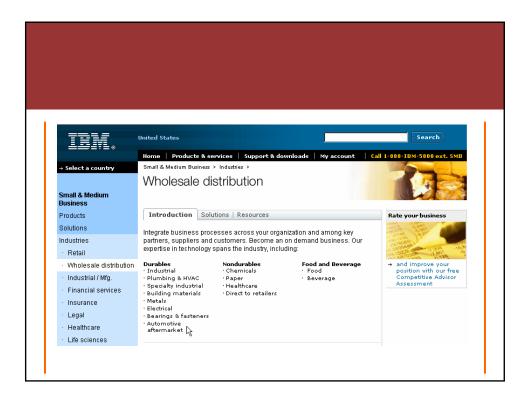
- User experience == constant struggle against the way IBM operates
- Other UE problems addressed "naturally" and easily
- The larger the organization, the harder it is to change, but once it gets moving, watch out ("the oar and the battleship")

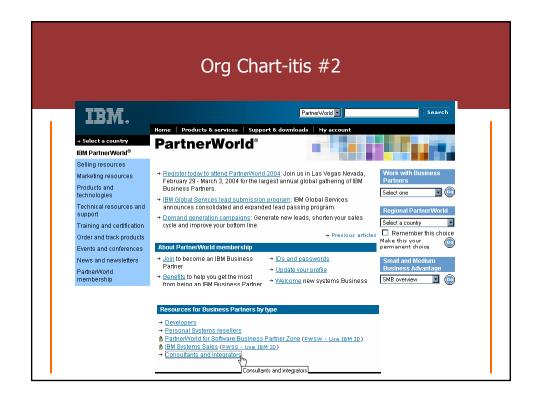


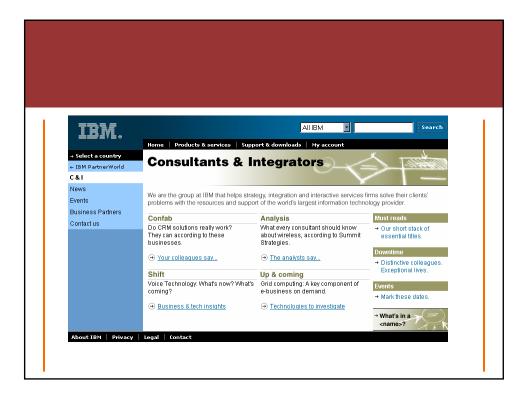


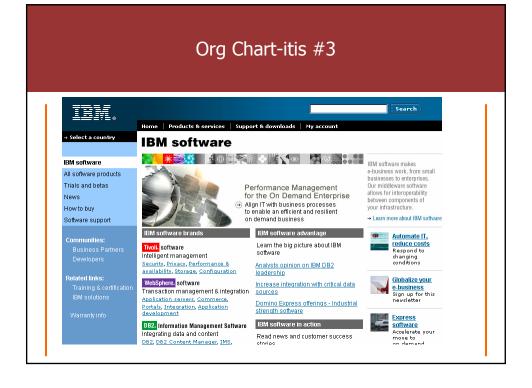










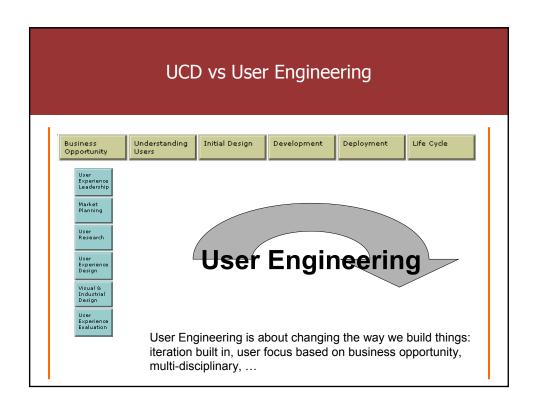




# Major IBM challenges

- Resolving marketing conflicts (e.g. large enterprise vs. mid-market, sub-brands)
- Serving customer sets instead of serving yourself
- Addressing topics users care about instead of what you own

# The Business/System Engineering Methodology Rules Concept (Strategy) Plan (Design) Build Qualify (& Launch?) Waintain UCD is about the tools you use when building according to someone else's uber-methodology



# Methodology importance: Not design or testing

- CHI 2002, A survey of user-centered design practice
- Top 2 are pre-design, tell us WHAT to build, not how to build it (traditionally not "usability")
  - Field studies ("Users in the mist")
  - Requirements

Table 6. Ranking of Importance and Frequency of Most Commonly Used UCD Methods

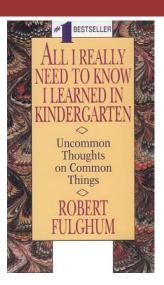
	Ranking						
	1	2	3	4	5	Average Ranking	Frequency
Field studies (include contextual inquiry)	12	6	5	2	1	2.00	28
User requirements analysis	3	3	0	0	1	2.00	7
Iterative design	17	21	9	5	2	2.15	65
Usability evaluation	12	8	10	7	1	2.39	43
Task analysis	6	8	6	7	1	2.61	34
Focus groups	5	2	2	1	4	2.79	16
Formal heuristic evaluation	3	2	5	2	2	2.86	15
User interviews	2	0	3	4	0	3.00	11
Prototype without user testing	1	3	5	4	1	3.07	15
Surveys	0	2	2	1	1	3.17	9
Informal expert review	4	6	3	10	6	3.28	31
Card sorting	0	1	1	0	1	3.33	5
Participatory design	1	0	1	2	1	3.40	7
No code/too sketchy to be categorized							64

# The new challenges because "user experience is everywhere"

- Providing input vs. taking ownership
- User experience as dictator/enforcer vs. user experience as advisor vs. user experience as teacher (therapist)
- When do you tell the business to go straighten itself out first - before or after you lose all your hair?

# All I really need to know about building large web sites...

- Share
- Put things back where you found them
- Flush
- Take a nap
- Hold hands, watch out for traffic, stick together



# **Concluding Remarks**



- Thanks!
- BTW, if you are interested in user experience and want to hang out with others in the area with the same interest, contact me
- instone@user-experience.org