An Open Discussion on Web Navigation

Puget Sound SIGCHI Presentation

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Hi, I am Keith

- Information Architect, User Experience, ibm.com
- Consultant, Argus Associates
- CHI-WEB, CHI, etc.
- Usable Web
- Toledo, Ohio
- BGSU CS grad (88)

An Open Discussion, not a Presentation

- Tonight's topic Web Navigation
- I'll get the ball rolling with my stress test and a framework
- Everyone in this room is qualified to contribute their own views and their findings
- If you learn more from the other folks in the room than from me, I still call that a success

Web Navigation

- Oh, what is navigation?
- Central metaphor for the web
- If they cannot find it, they cannot buy it
- Conventions forming, but...
- ...It depends
- Future: Will navigation be less or more important?

Navigation Stress Test

- "Randomly" selected (deeper) pages
- Printed out for lower fidelity, no peeking
- Where am I?
- What is here?
- Where can I go?

The Art & Science of Web Design, Jeffrey Veen Steve Krug's trunk test in Don't Make Me Think Information Architecture for the WWW – 2nd Edition

Standard Inspection Method Disclaimers

- It depends: users, tasks, site goals, content, competition, technology, resources, ...
- Best: Testing with representative users trying realistic tasks
- At least: Inspection guides user research
- Still, useful to "get anal" about it when designing, even if not important in your situation (IMHO)

Navigation Question	Mark Up on the Paper
What is this page about?	Draw a rectangle around the <i>title of the page</i> or write it on the paper yourself
What site is this?	Circle the site name, or write it on the paper yourself
What are the major sections of this site?	Label with X
What major section is this page in?	Draw a triangle around the X
What is "up" 1 level from here?	Label with U
How do I get to the home page of this site?	Label with H
How do I get to the top of this section of the site?	Label with T
What does each group of links represent?	Circle the major groups of links and label: D: More details, sub-pages of this one N: Nearby pages, within same section as this page S: Pages on same site, but not as near O: Off-site pages
How might you get to this page from the site home page?	Write the set of selections as: Choice 1 > Choice 2 >

OK, Let's do the Test

- Review the questions & why each might matter
- Do hockey page as a group
- Pick one of the other samples, mark it up on your own
- Go over some as a group quickly

Navigation Stress Test

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	 D: More details, sub-pages of this one
	 N: Nearby pages, within same section as this page
	 S: Pages on same site, but not as near
	• O : Off-site pages
How might you get to this page from the site home page?	Write the set of selections as:
	Choice 1 > Choice 2 >
	Connect the visual elements on the page that tell you this.



Box Score

MARQUETTE, Mich. - The Bowling Green State University hockey team became the lowest seed ever to advance to the semifinal round of the Central Collegiate Hockey Association Championships, after posting a 2-1 overtime ovictory against Northern Michigan University Tuesday night (March 13). The Falcons and Wildcats met in the CCHA Play-In game at NMU's Berry Events Center.

The win sends the ninth-seeded Falcons to the CCHA's semifinal round Friday (March 16) at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit. BGSU will meet top-seeded Michigan State University in a 5:00 p.m. start at "The Joe." The second semifinal will match the third seed, Michigan, against fourth-seeded Nebraska Omaha.

Tuesday's win marked the second time in as many games that the Falcons advanced by scoring in the extra frame. The Brown and Orange received scoring from some unlikely heroes.

Ryan Wetterberg continued his recent hot streak, as he opened the scoring 14:23 into the game. Wetterberg received a pass from <u>Austin de Luis</u> and cut inside, sliding a backhand shot past NMU netminder Dan Ragusett for his second goal of the year.

NMU would rally to tie things up in the middle frame. Wildcat captain Mike Sandbeck scored his third goal of the campaign, a power-play tally on a shot from the point at 12:27.

NMU and BG would play to a draw in the third period to send the game into overtime. It was Northern Michigan's third extra-period match of the playoffs and Bowling Green's second.

BGSU has now won five consecutive games, each by a single goal. The Falcons have captured six of the last seven contests.

The Falcons are now 16-18-5 on the year, while NMU drops to 18-13-7.

at 14:54 of overtime against NMIL.



ns Selected In NHL Draft

RELATED LINKS

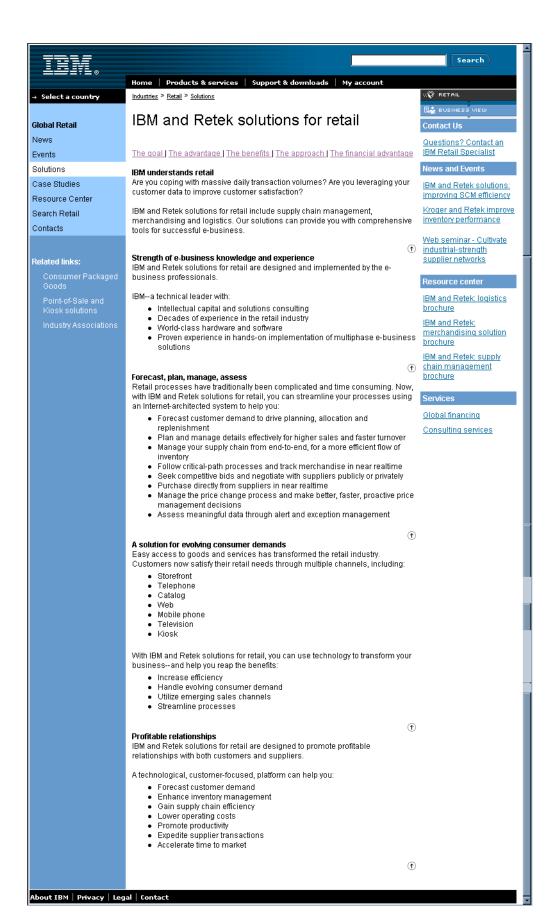
fhis Week@ Bowling Green

Bowling Green Ide Hockey



- Secondari.
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Spirituality

- ↓ Spirituality Sites Hosted on SCN
- Spirituality Mailing Lists
- Announcements updated September 14, 2001
- ↓ Buddhism
- Christianity
- **↓** Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism

Spirituality Sites Hosted on SCN

- scn ANON Faction
- scn Exist Foundation
- son North Pacific Young Adult Friends
- scn Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting
- SCII Quaker Experiential Service and Training
- scn Rooted in Spirit
- scn University Friends Meeting
- scn University Christian Church

Buddhism

- Buddhist Studies Library
- 🖾 Dai Bai Zan Temple
- Dharma Friendship Foundation
- Dharma Sound Zen Center
 Insight Meditation Society

Hinduism

- Hare Krishna Temple
- Ramakrishna Order of India

Paganism

- scn ANON Faction
- Widdershins
- Aquarian Tabernacle Church

Updated October 8, 2001 webeditors@scn.org

Calendars

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Activism Arts

Civic

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Health Housing

Jobs -

Media

Neighborhoods

People

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Spirituality

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Volunteers

Featured Sites

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<u>Help</u>

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Free Classes

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Go to Top of Page

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2000-2001 Meeting Schedule

1999-2000 | 2000-2001 | 2001-2002 | 2002-2003



meetings



membership



discussions

job posting



links



The Social Illogic of Ubiquitous Computing

Paul Andrews, Seattle Times Wednesday, September 20th

October 2000 <u>Usability Data Analysis</u>

Bob Graf, Microsoft Usability Wednesday, October 18th

November 2000 7 Ways Community Enhances the Online

Experience

Ted O'Neill, Infopop Corporation Wednesday, November 15th

December 2000 No Meeting Scheduled

January 2001 <u>Different Scopes for Different Folks</u>

Erin Schulz, Microsoft Wednesday, January 17th

February 2001 Sketchy Interfaces

Mark D. Gross, University of Washington

Wednesday, February 21st

March 2001 Speech Recognition Software:

Barriers and Solutions

Mark Griffith, Ph.D., Zephyr-TEC

Wednesday, March 21st

April 2001 Magic Book

Mark Billinghurst, University of

Washington HIT Lab Wednesday, April 18th

May 2001 Usability and the Holy Grail

Jared Spool

Founding Principal,

User Interface Engineering Wednesday, May 23rd

June 2001 Designing Office XP

Brad Weed and Christopher Konrad,

Microsoft

Wednesday, June 20th

A Special Thanks

Attachmate Corporation has been a long-time supporter of Puget Sound SIGCHI. The officers and membership of PS-SIGCHI would like to express their appreciation to Attachmate for hosting our monthly meetings and providing a pleasant environment for everyone who attends.

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Master Visio 2002 Shortcuts, Toolbars

Keep the color, printable Visio 2002 Shortcut Reference as a guide for links, keyboard shortcuts, and toolbar descriptions to help you work more effectively with Visio version 2002.



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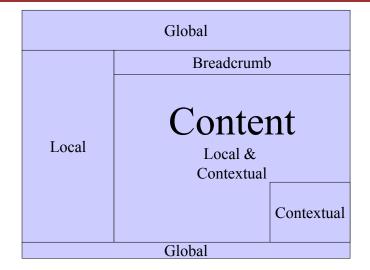
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Navigation Framework (see also Chapter 7 of PB2)

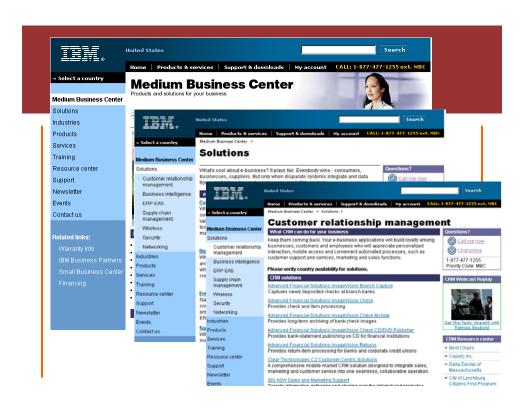


Global Navigation

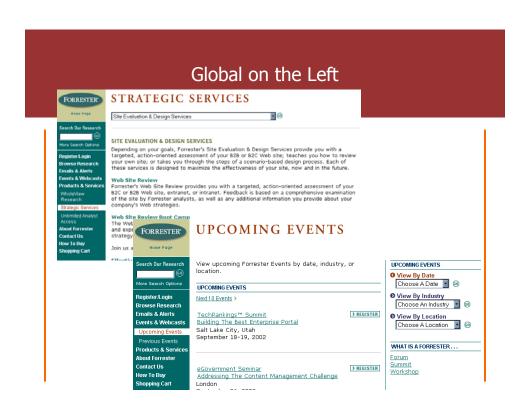
- Site identification, branding
- Major sections
- Utilities
- Almost every page
- Can (should?) change for sub-sites
- Where-am-I indicators

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







Microsoft.com



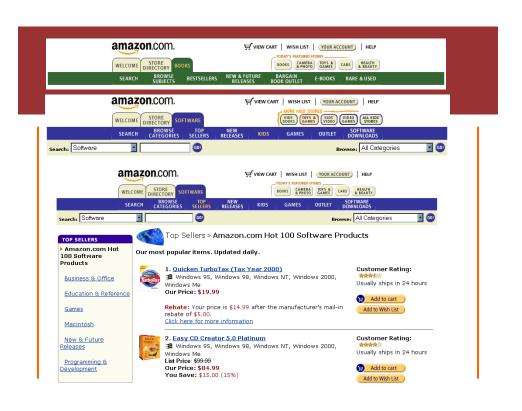




Microsoft.com

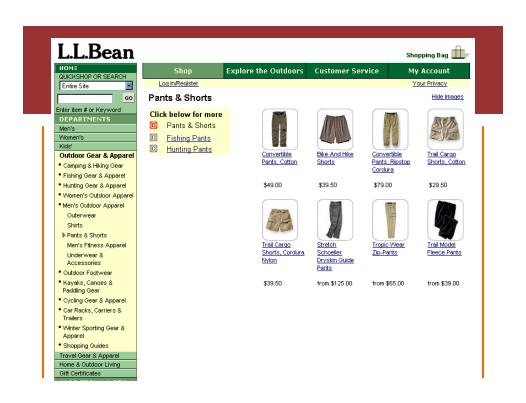












Questions: Global and Local Navigation

• Global: TLBR?

When to use tabs for global navigation?

• When is it best to abandon the global nav?

How does global change for sub-sites?

• Local: TLBR?

How to make sure users do not confuse them?

• Right level of integration between them?

• Where-am-I indicators: useful?

Question from Kathy Roach

Is web navigation positioning (side-left menu) so entrenched now that user expectation of its location has, in and of itself, BECOME the usability standard?

And, is defying that standard for the sake of ergonomics (read: right-side nav being more sensibly positioned for mouse-driven tasking) or for the sake of simplifying or clarifying overall site organization (read: top menu model [sans overcopied Amazon.com file tabs metaphor] used to avoid content clutter or confusion) now considered to be a liability to site usability because it might not be what the user expects?

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

Contextual Link Examples

Jakob Nielsen's Alertbox, March 4, 2001:

Retaining Key Staff: What High-Tech Employees Say versus What They Do

Summary

Never listen to what people say in response to a survey: asking high-tech employees what will keep them in their jobs provides very different answers than the factors that actually drive retention.

Getting and keeping good people is one of the greatest problems facing Internet companies. Even with the latest slump in the industry, we still face negative unemployment among people who understand the Internet.

We have all seen the clueless ads looking for Java programmers with ten years' experience. Indeed, those ads started appearing back when not even James Gosling would have qualified. The real issue is not so much number of years as it is amount of insight and skills which translate into real experience. In the human interface field experience is largely driven by the number and diversity of user tests somebody has observed. Some usability professionals run a test per week, others may only get exposure to real people a few times per year.

Assume that you have succeeded in hiring an excellent staff. How to keep it?

At the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland in January 2001, Dr. David Finegold from the University of Southern California presented an interesting study of employee retention in high-tech companies.

Contextual Link Examples

Customers who bought this book also bought:

- <u>Web Navigation: Designing the User Experience</u> by Jennifer Fleming, Richard Koman(Editor)
- Designing Web Usability: The Practice of Simplicity by Jakob Nielsen
- Collaborative Web Development: Strategies and Best Practices for Web Teams by Jessica R. Burdman
 Secrets of Successful Web Sites: Project Management on the World Wide Web by David Siegel

Customers who bought titles by Louis Rosenfeld also bought titles by these authors:

- <u>Jakob Nielsen</u>
- Jennifer Fleming
 Jessica R. Burdman
- David Siegel
- Steve Krug





Browse more gear Waterproof/Breathable
Rainwear -- W/B:
Alternative Pants

Meterproof/Breathable
Rainwear -- W/B:
Gore-Tex
Jackets/Pullovers

Comparison vs. Coordinating Shopping

Boys' Full Elastic-waist Chino Pants



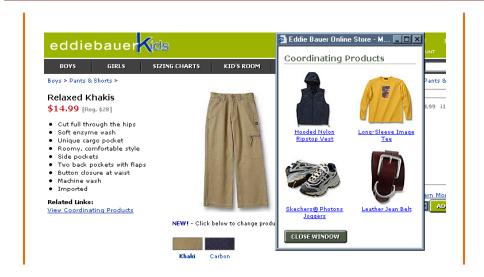
Elastic Waist Chinos go on easy, feel good all day.

- ■100% cotton twill, prewashed for softness
- Full-elastic waistband is all-day comfortable
- Zip fly with snap closure simpler for little hands to manage
- ▼ Read More.

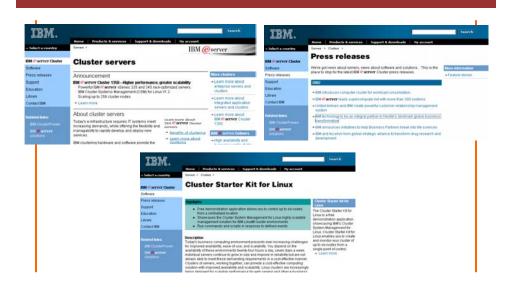


size charts

Comparison vs. Coordinating Shopping



ibm.com Right Column & Related links



Questions: Local and Contextual Navigation

- Do users care about differences in local and contextual navigation? Can they tell the difference? Does it matter?
- Should all contextual navigation be embedded within the main content, or should it have its own space?
- How much contextual navigation is worth doing by hand? How useful are the automated recommendations?
- Which is better: comparison shopping (local) or coordination shopping (contextual)? When?

Warning! More than you ever wanted to hear about breadcrumbs

 Those faint of heart may want to leave now....

About Breadcrumbs in General

- Use these definitions and examples to talk more intelligently about breadcrumbs
- Element (links) and Separators (characters)
- <u>First Element</u> > <u>Second Element</u> > <u>Third</u> Element > Last Element
- Last element (optional): Unlinked, title of the page

About the 3 Types of Breadcrumbs

The term "breadcrumb" is used for several different concepts – causing confusion during design discussions

- Location Breadcrumb "You are here", static
- Path Breadcrumb how you got here, dynamic
- Attribute Breadcrumb meta-information

(When you go home, start using these terms!)

I still am not sure breadcrumbs are a good idea

- There still are a lot of questions we need answers to re: breadcrumbs (like, are they even useful?)
- These definitions do not provide any answers, only more questions
- Ask these questions before using breadcrumbs on your site
- Just because we now have these definitions, it does not mean you have to include breadcrumbs in your designs

Other Terms

- ibm.com Navigation trail (location)
- Depth maps (location) and breadcrumbs (path)
- Others?

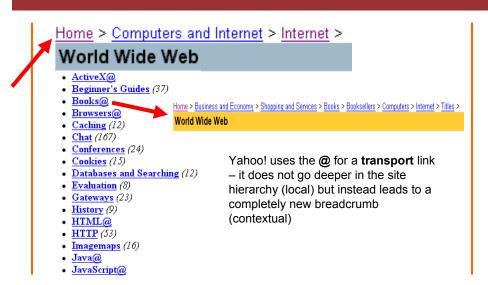
Definition of Location Breadcrumbs

- The single location of this page within the site's hierarchy
- Hard coded best choice for static sites
- Tells users "you are here" not how they got here
- Gives them a way to go "up" to higher sections of the site

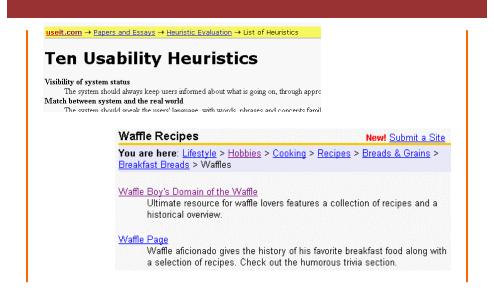
Yahoo Directory: Everyone's first exposure to breadcrumbs?



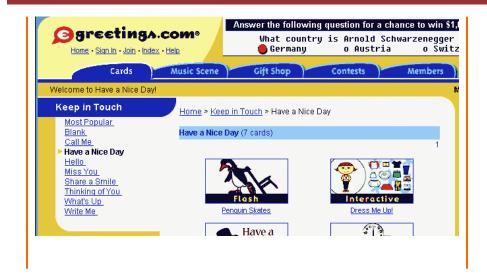
Yahoo Directory: @ means Transport



Common Location Examples



Common Location Examples



Common Location Examples



Uncommon Location Examples



Uncommon Location Examples





Old BBC Breadcrumbs

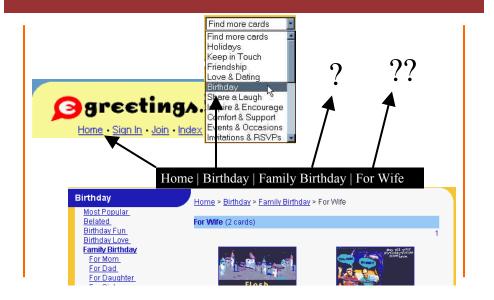


- The old BBC vertical breadcrumbs were NOT useful to people
 - Inconsistently created and named because they were manually entered
 - Located in a blindspot on the page
- Biggest result from testing was that horizontal breadcrumbs were "something all websites have, but I do not really pay attention to".

What syntax / layouts are "standard"?







Definition of Path Breadcrumbs

- Like the Hansel-and-Gretel metaphor how you got to the current page
- Same result via different paths = different breadcrumbs
- Possible with dynamic sites that retain some aspect of the user's state

Epicurious: Faceted browsing

Main Ingredient

Beans, Beef, Berries, Cheese, Chocolate, Citrus, Dairy, Eggs, Fish, Equits, Garlic, Ginger, Grains, Greens, Herbs, Land, Mushrooms, Mustard, Nuts, Olives, Onions, Pasta, reppers, rore, Potatoes, Poultry, Rice, Shellfish, Tomatoes, Vegetables

Cuisine

African, American, Asian, Caribbean, Eastern European, French, Greek, Indian, Italian, Jewish, Mediterranean, Mexican, Middle Eastern, Scandinavian, Spanish

Special Considerations: <u>Kid-Friendly</u>, <u>Low Fat</u>, <u>Meatless</u>

Preparation Method

Advance, Bake, Broil, Fry, Grill, Marinade, Microwave, No Cook, Poach, Quick, Roast, Saute, Slow Cook, Steam, Stir Fry

Season/Occasion

Christmas, Easter, Fall, Fourth of July, Hanukkah, New Years, Picnics, Spring, Summer, Superbowl Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day Winter

Course/Dish

Appetizers, Bread, Breakfast, Brunch, Condiments, Cookies, Desserts, Hors d'Oeuvres, Main Dish, Salads, Sandwiches, Sauces, Side Dish, Snack, Soup, Tegetables

- Main ingredient = Mushrooms
- Cuisine = Asian
- Course/dish = Soup

Epicurious: 6 breadcrumbs for the same end result



Rashmi Sinha comment

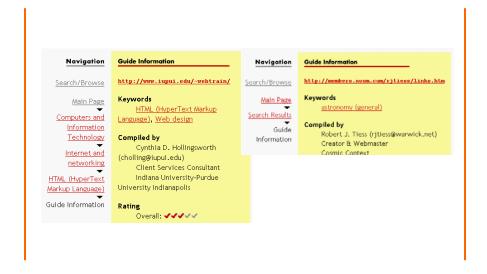
- Epicurious breadcrumbs were not confusing in a usability study we did as part of Flamenco
- See

http://bailando.sims.berkeley.edu/flame nco.html

3 ways to Marvin Gaye



Search vs. Browse Paths

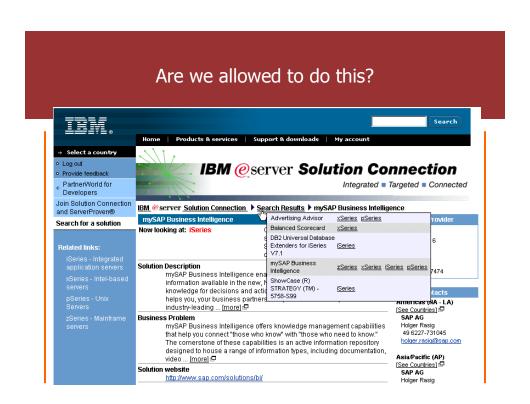


Are we allowed to do this?

• Who is responsible for the user's path: the browser or the site?







Path vs. Location Breadcrumbs

- When are path vs. location breadcrumbs appropriate?
- Does it depend on the information architecture of the site (e.g., hierarchy vs. database), user's goals, type of user, type of site, ...?

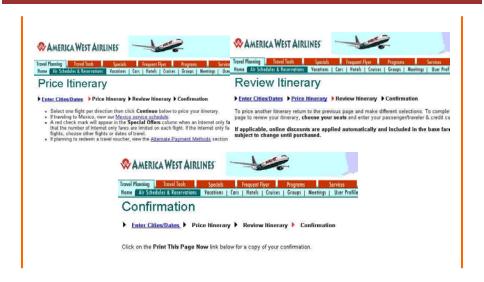
What if a page lives in more than 1 place?

- What if a page could live in more than one place and you can't choose a "buddha place" – all are equally valid. Example, Service A lives in 3 places and you do not want to pick 1 as the default location:
- Consulting > Services > Implementation > Service A
- Consulting > Services > Optimization > Service A
- Consulting > Services > Upgrade > Service A
- Should you cut off the breadcrumb at a higher level, like "Consulting > Services"?

My answer

- In this case, do not use LOCATION breadcrumbs – use Path or Attribute instead
- This is exactly why we need more detailed definitions for breadcrumbs
- And, no, do not cut off your breadcrumbs at a higher level – it makes them useless

Should a step-by-step indicator look like a breadcrumb?



Definition of Attribute Breadcrumbs

- Breadcrumb does not represent the whole page, but attributes of it
- Meta-information presented in a breadcrumblike manner (instead of as a "flat" keyword)
- Tend to be at the bottom or on the side of the page, or near the object they are describing
- Common in e-commerce sites where each product has a large set of attributes
- Could be either path or location breadcrumbs

Google results tell you where each link exists within the ODP



More Google Results



Amazon: 5 attribute breadcrumbs for a toy



How useful are these sets of attribute breadcrumbs from Amazon?

Browse for **Toys**

- <u>Categories</u> > <u>Activities & Learning</u> > <u>Pretend Play & Dress-Up</u> > <u>Fashion & Beauty</u> > <u>Body Arts</u>
- Favorite Characters > Rocky & Bullwinkle

Browse for Baby items in:

- Categories > Strollers > Full-Size Strollers
- Brands > Chicco

Browse for music in:

- Styles > Children's Music > General
- Styles > Rock > Progressive > Progressive Rock
- Music Outlet > Children's Music > CDs \$7 \$10 • Music Outlet > Rock > Progressive Rock > CDs \$7 - \$10
- Music Outlet > Children's Music > All Bargain Titles
- Music Outlet > Rock > Progressive Rock > All Bargain Titles

Attributes

- Style = General Children's Music, Progressive Rock
- Price = Bargain, \$7-10

Browse for books in:

- Subjects > Religion & Spirituality > Christianity > Reference > Criticism & Interpretation > New Testament
 - Christian Living > General
 - Bibles > Study Guides, History & Reference > General

When are simple keywords better than attribute breadcrumbs?

Look for similar books by subject:

Browse for <u>books</u> in:

- Subjects > Computers & Internet > Web Development > Internet Commerce > Web Site Design
 Subjects > Computers & Internet > Networking > Internet, Groupware, & Telecommunications > Internet Publishing
 Subjects > Computers & Internet > Web Development > HTML, Graphics, & Design > Interface Design
- Subjects > Computers & Internet > General

Search for books by subject:

- □ <u>Web sites</u>
- □ Design
- ☐ Web site development
- Desktop Publishing ☐ Computer Networks
- Computer Bks Internet
- ☐ Computers
- ☐ Internet Web Site Design
- Internet General

Link for each element?

- Should each element be a link in attribute breadcrumbs, or should it all be one link?
- Do users really need to be able to jump to any part of the path?

```
• Subjects > Cooking, Food & Wine > Drinks & Beverages > Beer
```

- <u>Subjects</u> > <u>Cooking, Food & Wine</u> > <u>General</u>
- <u>Kitchen & Housewares</u> > <u>Categories</u> > <u>Cookbooks</u> > <u>Drinks & Beverages</u> > <u>Beer</u>
- <u>Kitchen & Housewares</u> > <u>Categories</u> > <u>Cookbooks</u> > <u>General</u>

Category: Recreation > Food > Drink > Beer

Breadcrumb Summary

- I warned you it was too much!
- Use these definitions in design discussions saves hours of headaches
- But do not automatically assume that you should now add them to your sites
- Share your in/formal findings with me
- Anybody else want to do a thesis on breadcrumbs?

More possible Web navigation discussions...

- Value of rollovers
- Bullet lists vs. pop-up menus
- Text vs. graphics
- Navigation vs. content
- Technology: HTML vs. Flash vs. DHTML
- Information vs. applications
- We could be here all night...

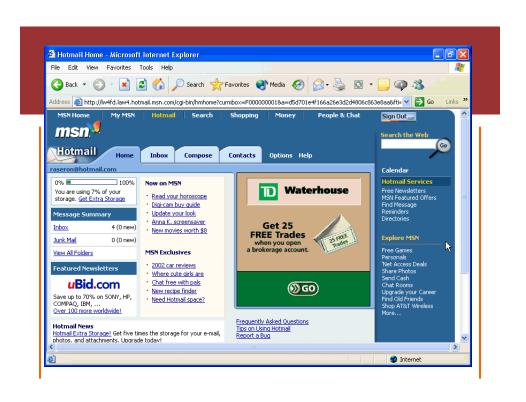
Late addition from Rob Aseron (Hotmail)

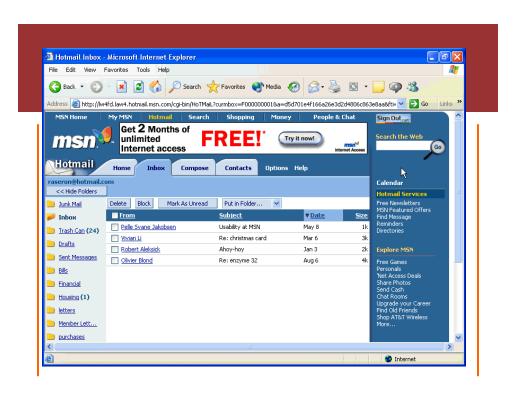
I'm lead program manager for Hotmail UI & Usability.

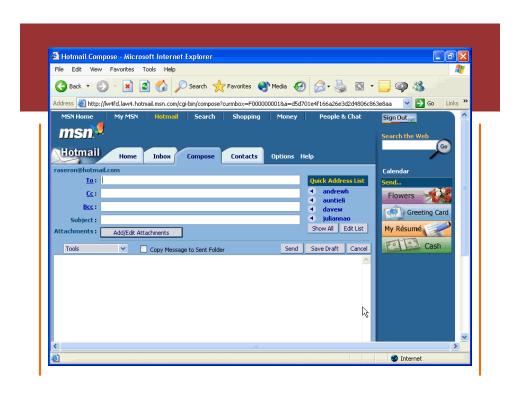
One of the questions that comes up whenever I tell a design person what I do is Hotmail's high level navigation (the tabs and other items on the same row). The argument usually goes that it's not conceptually clear because if 'Inbox' is a core conceptual space, then maybe Contacts is too, but Compose certainly isn't (or at least not at the same 'level'). Conceptually Compose belongs 'below' Inbox in the mail experience. ...

My explanation is that by and large frequency rules the day over conceptual clarity.

Does a lack of conceptual clarity matter if users quickly get to their important tasks and get them done? Over the past several years we've had all manner of 'conceptually clearer' designs. None of them sold us enough to go away from what we have.







Thanks for your participation!

- If you become aware of research addressing the many questions we discussed, drop me a line.
- keith@instone.org

