

Guidelines for Designing Web Navigation

by

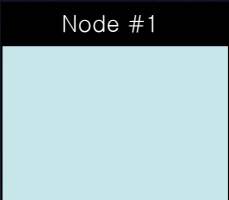
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A presentation by Byeong Sam Jeon and Joel Ross

Introduction

- Web navigation
- The language of Web use and Web design = the language of navigation and travel
- Two reasons why human beings perceive Web use as navigation
- Node, Link, Web Site, and World Wide Web

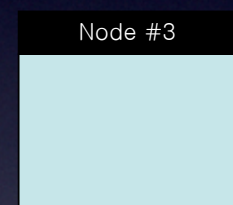
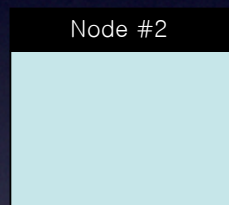
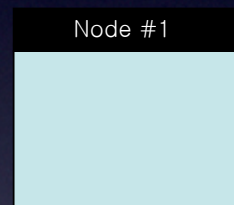
Node, Link, Website, and World Wide Web



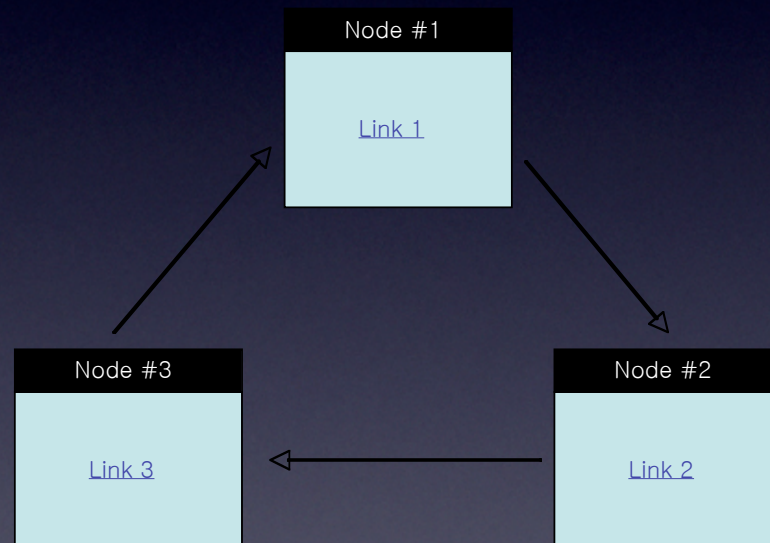
Node #1

A diagram of a single node in a network. It consists of a light blue square with a black header bar at the top containing the text "Node #1".

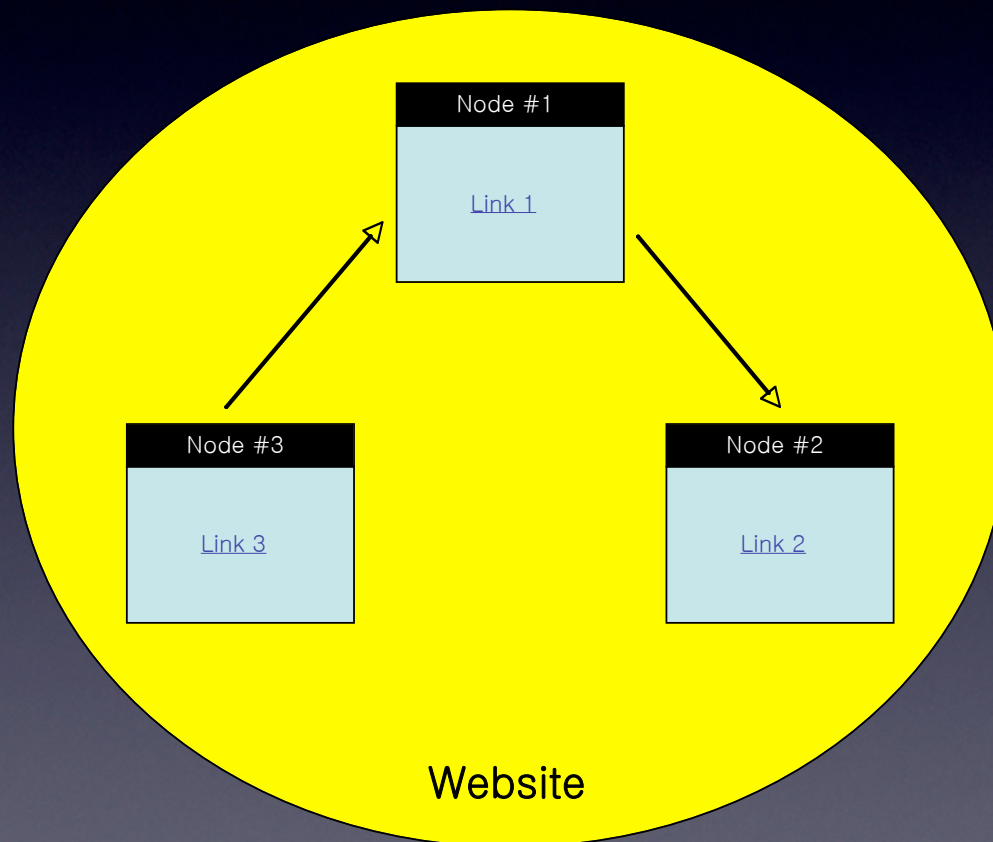
Node, Link, Website, and World Wide Web



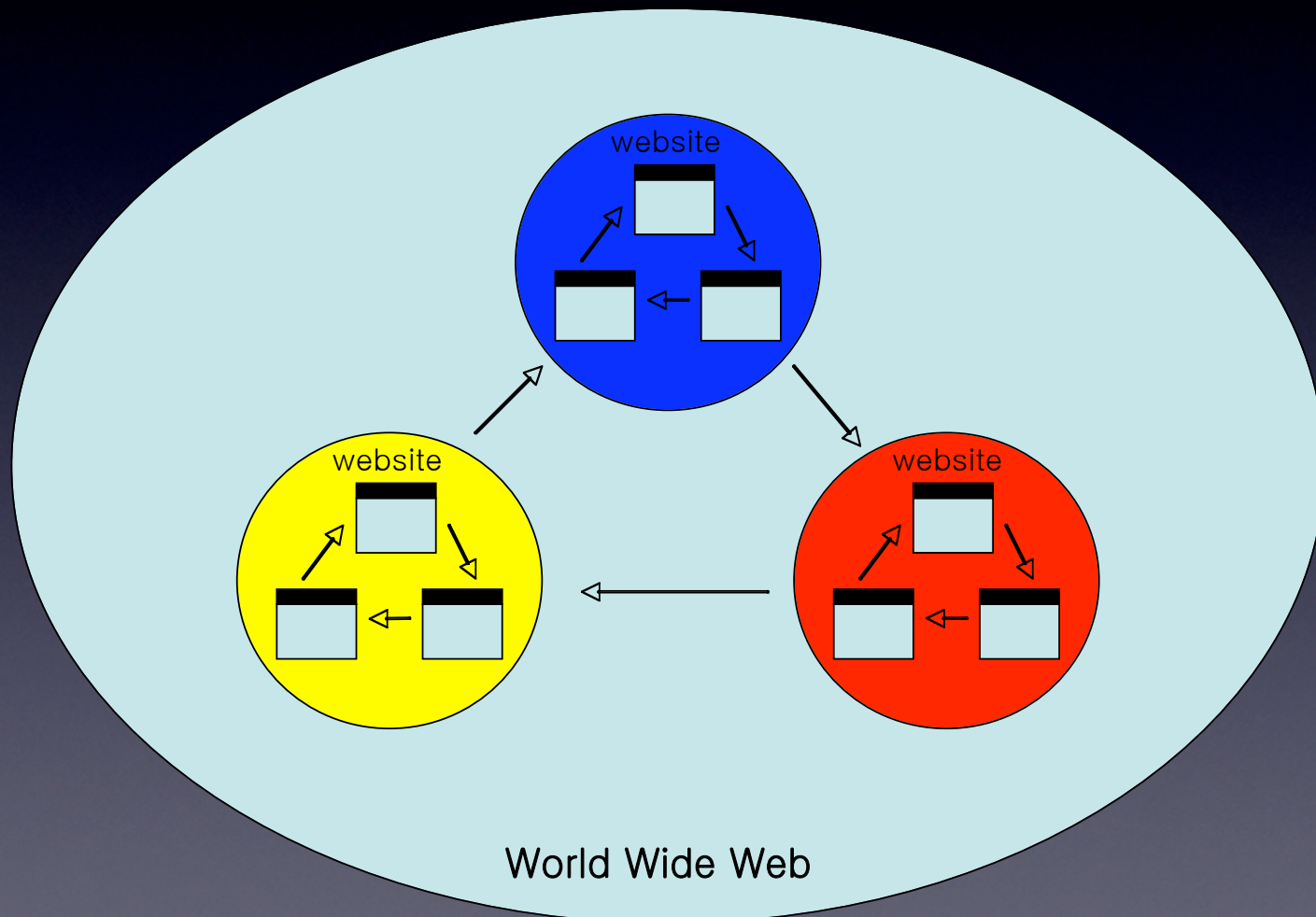
Node, Link, Website, and World Wide Web



Node, Link, Website, and World Wide Web

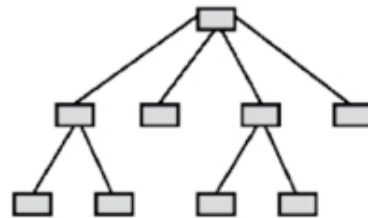


Node, Link, Website, and World Wide Web

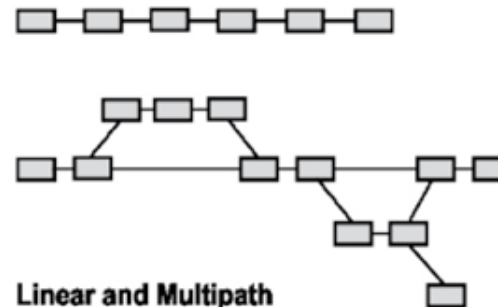


Information Structures

Information Structures



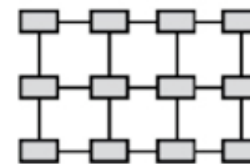
Hierarchy



Linear and Multipath



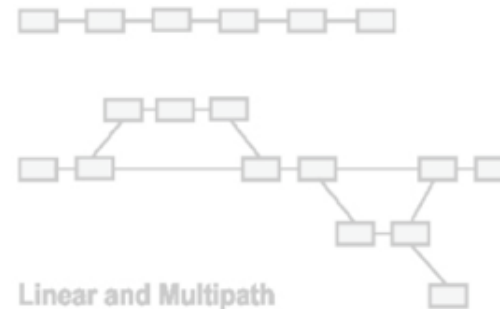
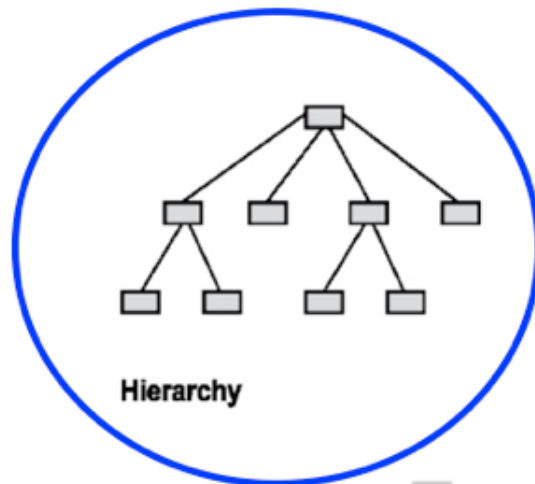
Web



Matrix

Information Structures

Information Structures

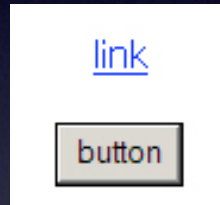


I. Designing an Effective Link

- 1.1 Be sure that all links indicate that they are links
- 1.2 Work to ensure that users will view and notice links
- 1.3 Be sure that all links clearly indicate their destinations

I.I Be sure that all links indicate that they are links

- Well-established cues such as underlining and the raised “button” appearance should be used to indicate links. Do not use these cues for other purposes.



- Links can also be indicated by semantic meaning, layout, and formatting. These cues, however, are less reliable and should be used with care. <http://www.architresures.org>
- Graphics, other than icons, are usually not interpreted as links. A special cue, such as a text label, may be necessary to indicate the link. <http://www.nytimes.com>

I.2 Work to ensure that users will view and notice links

- Avoid cluttered page designs that make links hard to see. <http://www.yangachi.org/info.php>
- Make sure the most important links appear high enough on the page to be visible without scrolling, regardless of the resolution of the user's monitor. <http://www.nytimes.com>
- When pages must scroll, provide visual cues to encourage users to scroll down to links that are below the scroll line. <http://www.nytimes.com>

I.3 Be sure that all links clearly indicate their destinations

- Use layering techniques, such as adding supplemental text and mouse rollovers, when necessary to make the destination of text links clear: <http://www.architresures.org>
- Use labels and mouse rollovers (created with an ALT tag) when necessary to clarify the destination of icon links. ALT tags are especially desirable because they can be recognized by text-only and text-to-voice browsers.
- Use link typing to indicate external links and links that initiate a process, such as opening a mail message window or starting a download.

2. Providing Orientation Information

- 2.1 Plan effective ratios of breadth and depth in Web site hierarchies
- 2.2 Supplement the primary links with secondary links--when appropriate
- 2.3 Allow branches of a hierarchy to converge--when appropriate
- 2.4 Design the interface to readily reveal the underlying information structure

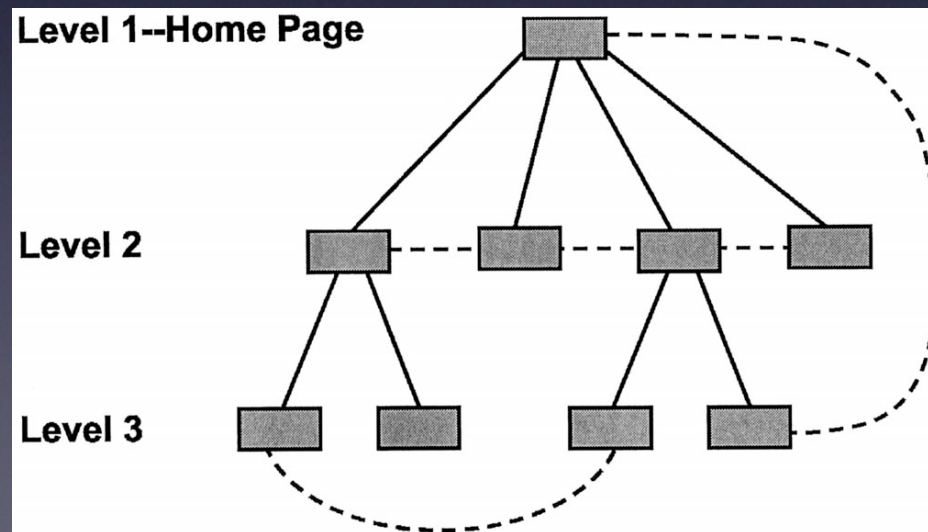
2.1 Plan effective ratios of breadth and depth in Web site hierarchies

- Within limits, it is best to favor breadth over depth in designing a hierarchy.
- To help users cope with breadth, consider grouping links under headings.

Mint Products
○ PRODUCT CATALOG
○ 50 STATE QUARTERS™
○ NEW DOLLAR COIN
○ COMMEMORATIVES
○ BULLION
○ MEDALS
Coin Production
○ MINT TOURS
○ MAKING OF COINS
○ SPECIFICATIONS
○ MINTMARKS
Discovery Vault
○ DOWNLOADS
About the Mint
○ PRESSROOM
○ DIRECTOR'S OFFICE
○ HISTORY
○ FUN FACTS
○ JOBS

2.2 Supplement the primary links with secondary links--when appropriate

- Use shortcut links to provide quick access from the home page to important nodes located deeper in the hierarchy.
- Use systematic secondary links to connect a group of closely related nodes.
- Use associational links to indicate a special relationship between two nodes.



2.3 Allow branches of a hierarchy to converge--when appropriate

- Allow branches of a hierarchy to converge on a single node when the node fits logically under two (or more) branches and you anticipate that large numbers of users will look for it in both places.
- When the basic structure of a Web site is a strict hierarchy, limit the use of converging branches so as not to obscure the user's perception of the hierarchical structure.
- For large, complex Web sites (in particular e-commerce sites), it is often useful to allow branches to converge in an extensive and systematic manner with many nodes appearing at the bottom of multiple overlapping hierarchies.
- Write the nodes in converging branches in a modular style so that they fit the context of both branches.

2.4 Design the interface to readily reveal the underlying information structure

- The interface should help users build a mental map of the node-link structure of the site.
- On the home page, the links to the main branches of the hierarchy (primary links) should be prominent. Shortcut links and links to utility nodes (such as help and search) should be easily distinguishable from the primary links.
- On lower-level pages, the interface should enable users to readily distinguish links to the next level down in the hierarchy from various kinds of secondary links.
- Highlighting and markers in navigation bars and columns allow users to visualize the location of the current node in the hierarchy.

3. Providing Orientation Information

- 3.1 Provide clear, brief, and highly conspicuous orientation information on the home page
- 3.2 Provide orientation information on lower-level pages to support continued exploration of your website

3.1 Provide clear, brief, and highly conspicuous orientation information on the home page

- To become properly oriented to an unfamiliar Web site, the user needs to know the **name** of the site, the general **purpose**, and the **sponsor**. If the purpose and sponsor are clear from the context, this information does not need to be explicitly stated.
- Orientation information must be **conspicuous**. It should not be overshadowed by other elements, *including advertising banners*.
- Orientation information on the home page of a subsite should make clear the subsite's identity and purpose, and the relationship of the subsite to the main site.



3.2 Provide orientation information on lower-level pages to support continued exploration of your Web site

- Include the site name or logo on lower-level pages to maintain site identity.
- Use orientation elements to show differences among sections of the site while also providing continuity to the user's experience.

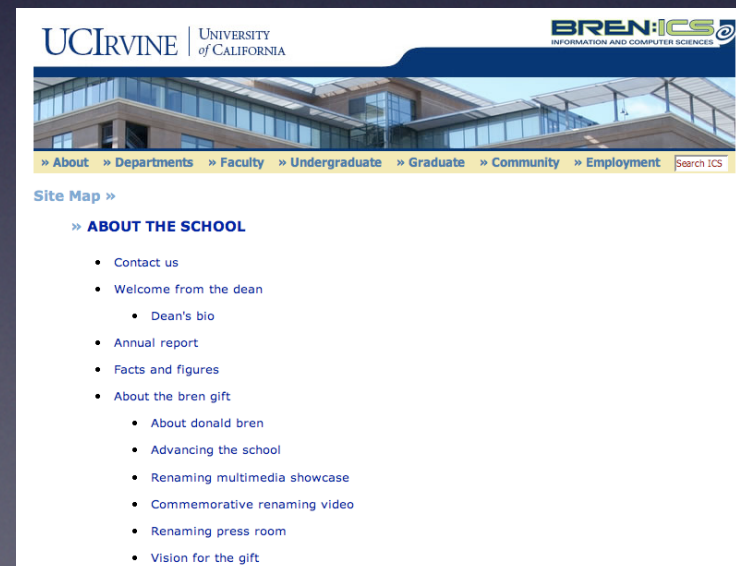


4. Augmenting Link-to-Link Navigation

- 4.1 Employ site maps to show the global structure of a site and to provide direct access to nodes
- 4.2 Provide a search facility or an index for direct access to content
- 4.3 Provide a link to the home page throughout the site

4.1 Employ site maps to show the global structure of a site and to provide direct access to nodes

- Site maps should show all branches of the hierarchy, although space limitations may limit the number of levels that are displayed.
- Site maps are more effective when they include a “You are here” (or “Last page visited”) marker.
- When designers face too many constraints—if, for example, a designer can build only a small, rudimentary site map for a large Web site—it may be best to forego the site map entirely.



4.2 Provide a search facility or an index for direct access to content

- A search facility should be provided in all but very small Web sites.
- The size of the site, the way the information is organized, and the information needs of the user should be considered when choosing a search engine and customizing the search interface for the site.
- The search interface should typically be configured both for users who simply type a word or phrase and for those who wish to formulate more complex searches. The interface, however, should be optimized for the kind of searches that will most often be performed.
- Search results should be listed in the most appropriate order and should provide enough information about each Web page for the user to differentiate successfully among the choices.
- A quality index is likely to give better results than a search facility, but indexes are expensive and difficult to maintain. Consider using an index when the Web site is relatively small and the content is stable.

4.3 Provide a link to the home page throughout the site

- With only occasional exceptions, provide a link from every page to the home page.
- A convention is emerging in which a corporate logo is recognized as a link to the home page. Follow this convention if you have confidence that your users are familiar with it.
- If your Web site is divided into one or more subsites, provide links from every subsite page back to the subsite's home page. It is also desirable to provide a direct link from the subsite pages back to the home page of the main Web site.



Conclusion

- Follow the guidelines already presented
 - Metaphor
 - Consistency
 - Undo / Escape