

## ITR5 Information Usage

### Lecture 2

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### Reading

"Information Architecture" by Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville,  
O'Reilly 1998

chapter 3 and 4 (not worth reading)

### Structure

Organizing the information on the web site

1. classification schemes
2. organizational structures
3. navigation

## Challenges of Classification

- ambiguity: "a tomato is a red or yellowish fruit with a juicy pulp, used as a vegetable, botanically it is a berry."
- heterogeneity
  - in a library
  - on a web site
    - \* granularity
    - \* format
- difference in perspective
- internal politics

## organizational schemes

- exact schemes
  - alphabetical
  - chronological
  - geographical
- ambiguous schemes
  - topical: should be there, but not the only scheme
  - task-oriented: relatively rare
  - audience-specific: open or closed
  - metaphor-driven: not as overall organization
- hybrid schemes: confusion guaranteed.

## the mixed up library

adult

arts and humanities

community center

get a library card

learn about our library

science

teen

youth

### organizational forms: designing hierarchies

- keep balance between breath and depth
- obey 7  $\pm$  2 rule horizontally, no more than 5 levels vertically
- cross-link ambiguous items if really necessary
- keep new sites shallow

### organizational forms: designing hypertext

- great flexibility
- great potential for confusion
- not good as a prime organizational structure

### organizational forms: database approach

- powerful for searching
- useful if there is controlled vocabulary
- easy reorganization
- on the fly or static generation of pages
- not for heterogenous data

## Navigation aids

- provide context
- allow for flexibility of movement
- support associative learning
- danger of overwhelming the user

## browser navigation aids

- open
- back
- forward
- history
- bookmarks
- prospective view
- visited url color

sites should not corrupt the browser.

## context building

the “you are here” mark

- pages should indicate site name
- navigation should be consistent
- navigation not to refer to current pages
- highlight current page in a different way

allow for lateral navigation

## types of navigation systems

- global hierarchical navigation systems
  - text
  - icon
- local navigation systems: integration with global system can be challenging
- ad hoc navigation: clear labels are required

## frames

### problematic

- real estate
- speed of display
- page model
- complex design

## remote navigation system I

- table of contents
  - good in a hierarchical web site
  - reinforce the hierarchy
  - facilitate known-item access
  - resist temptation to overwhelm user
- indexes
  - presents key term without hierarchy
  - key terms found from search behavior
  - links terms to final destination pages
  - use term rotation

## remote navigation systems II

- site maps
  - is a graphical representation of the site's contents
  - new because no equivalent in print
  - there are automated tools to generate site maps
  - seldomly well-done
  - to be kept simple
- guided tours
  - important for sites with restricted access
  - should feature linear navigation