Lecture 3

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Reading

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

chapter 5 (not worth reading)

Structure

Organizing the information on the web site

1. why label
2. individual labels
3. labelling systems
labelling

A label is a short expression that represents a larger set of information.

Example: "contact us"

Labelling is an outgrowth of site organization, that we have discussed previously. Labelling communicates the organization.

why bother

- We need to guess at how users respond to a label
- Users will not spend much time interpreting the label
- Appropriate tone, no "hot", "cool", "stuff"
- Danger of designer-centered thinking: should reflect thinking of the user, not of the owner
- It is easy to have unplanned labelling

sticking with the familiar

- Main, main page, home, home page
- Search, find
- Browse
- Contact, contact us, feedback
- Help, FAQ, Frequently Asked Questions
- About, About Us, About name

Labels may be augmented with scope notes
grammatical consistency

- contact us, search our site, browse our content
- contact, search, browse
- contact information, search page, table of contents

labels as indexing terms

- use in <meta> tags, or in <title> tag
- use as controlled vocabulary in the database

some search engines do not use metadata

textual label

labels as headings

good practice:

- consistency in terminology: wording on labels is uniform and cohesive

- consistency in granularity
  - chunks covered by labels at the same level is roughly equal
  - chunks covered do not vary by their depth

iconic labels

- a limited "vocabulary" of commonly understood labels

- fine for some key concepts

- need to be very consistently placed

- can communicate a graphic identity for the page

- are easy to find on a page (provided that page is not long

setting up a good labeling system I

- start from existing one
  - put in table or tree (on paper)
  - make small changes towards consistency

- "benevolent plagiarism" from competitors and academic sites

- use controlled vocabularies, example yellow pages
setting up a good labeling system II

- use a thesaurus, example legislative indexing vocabulary
  - “see” link
  - “see also” links
  - broader terms
  - narrower terms
- labels from contents: best judged by an outsider
- labels from query logs
- labels from user interviews
- labels from modeling user needs

fine tuning a labelling system

- remove duplicates
- sort alphabetically
- homogenize case and punctuation and grammar
- remove synonyms according to audience
- make labels as different from one another as possible
- search for gaps
- look into the future
- keep scope focussed
- consider granularity

non-representational labelling systems

- may be good to stimulate user interest in the odd case
- may work on a fun site