

Visual Organization and Content Organization

September 20

Unit 5

Four Principles of Design

- **Proximity**
 - Keep related items close, separate unrelated items
- **Alignment**
 - Related items should be aligned along imaginary line
 - Items of equal importance should be aligned
 - Indent subordinate elements
- **Consistency**
 - Have some elements repeated throughout the page and the site
- **Contrast**
 - Make different items really different

Proximity

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- www.orbitz.com
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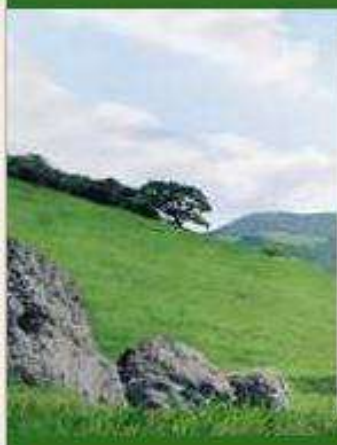
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Alignment

- BBC News
 - Very strong alignment
- www.travelocity.com
 - Alignment is different, but it works well

BBC News



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LATEST: Prosecutors to begin questioning defendants in Uzbek protest trial.

Last Updated: Wednesday, 21 September 2005, 07:22 GMT 08:22 UK



Insurgents 'inside Iraqi police'

An Iraqi official admits insurgents have penetrated its security forces, after UK forces free two soldiers.

- How Basra drama unfolded
- Iraq probe into soldier incident
- 'We have all become targets'



Storm forces New Orleans evacuation

Residents of the flood-hit US city of New Orleans are being evacuated because of the threat of a new hurricane.



Police launch Moss drugs inquiry

Tabloid newspaper claims that model Kate Moss snorted cocaine are to be investigated by Scotland Yard.

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'Super-diversity'

What does it mean for integration in Britain?



A life's passion

Simon Wiesenthal sought justice for the dead and the living

AROUND THE WORLD NOW

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- ▶ Sudan's rebels seize Darfur town

ASIA-PACIFIC

- ▶ Victorious Koizumi to push reform

AMERICAS

- ▶ Fed lifts interest rate to 3.75%

EUROPE

- ▶ Vienna to hold Wiesenthal service

MIDDLE EAST

- ▶ Israel buries West Bank synagogue

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Last Updated: Tuesday, 20 September 2005, 12:46 GMT 13:46 UK

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'Whale riders' reveal evolution

By Alison Ross
BBC News

Scientists have examined the genes of "whale lice" to track whale evolution.

The small parasitic crustaceans were taken off right whales, which have been driven to the brink of extinction in some waters by commercial hunting.

The genetics of the lice reveal their hosts split into three species 5-6 million years ago, and these were all equally abundant before whaling began.

The study, carried out by University of Utah scientists, is reported in the journal *Molecular Ecology*.

'Right' for hunting

Right whales were the first whale to be commercially hunted, 1,000 years ago.

They were so named because they were the "right" whale to kill; their blubber made their carcasses float for easy



Whale lice are related to crabs and shrimp

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- ▶ Reform likely on whaling process
24 Jun 05 | [Science/Nature](#)
- ▶ Unweaving the song of whales
28 Feb 05 | [Science/Nature](#)
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- ▶ Northern right whale

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- BBC News is shows a lot of consistency
 - Front page and articles are similarly laid out
 - All articles are nearly identically laid out
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 - Also has good navigation!
- www.invisionpower.com
 - Changes colors, but still consistent

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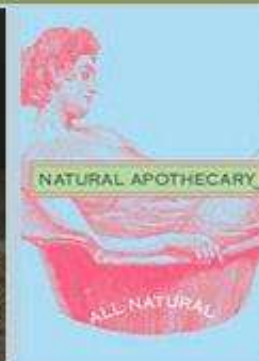
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Contrast Example

- www.orbitz.com
 - Uses contrasting colors for different parts of the site
- www.travelocity.com
 - Also uses color, but much more subtle
- www.w3c.org
 - Huge difference between heading and text sizes

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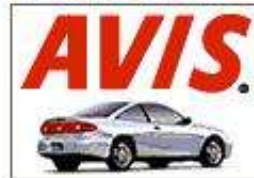
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W3C

► Working Draft: Web Services Internationalization

2005-09-14: The Internationalization Core Working Group has released the First Public Working Draft of [Web Services Internationalization \(WS-I18N\)](#). The draft enhances SOAP messaging for locale and international preference negotiation and defines a locale policy. Without using Accept-Language and user identity, implementations can handle the requester's locale, locale policy and language preference. Visit the [Internationalization home page](#). ([News archive](#))

► Working Group Note: Test Metadata

2005-09-14: The Quality Assurance (QA) Working Group has published [Test Metadata](#) as a Working Group Note. Developed on the [W3C QA wiki](#), this set of metadata elements can be used to track and filter tests, to identify what is tested, to construct a test harness and to format test results. Dublin Core is reused where appropriate. Visit the [QA home page](#). ([News archive](#))

► Working Draft: EARL 1.0 Schema

Content Organization

- Now you should have a pretty good idea about how to pick visually appealing colors
- And, a basic understanding of how to place items on a page
- So what's left?
- How to organize the content on the site so users can find what they are looking for
 - *Information Architecture*

Organizational Systems

- Organizational Systems have 2 parts:
 - Organizational *schemes*
 - Organizational *structures*
- **Organizational *schemes*:**
 - Classification system
 - Way of grouping items
- **Organizational *structures*:**
 - Relationships between groups
 - Reflects the “scope of the content”

Organizational Schemes

- We use them everyday
- A planner is an organizational scheme
 - To look up what I've got planned for today, all I have to do is flip to the page and look
- Other simple schemes include
 - Phone books
 - Mall directories
 - Index in a book

Not All Schemes are so Easy

- Imagine going into a new grocery store looking for olives
 - Is it in the canned vegetable section?
 - Deli?
 - Condiments?
- Food in a grocery store is usually laid out with some sort of organization
 - Just not always what we expect

Organizational Schemes, cont.

- There are 2 types of organizational schemes:
 - *Exact*, where information is put into mutually exclusive groups
 - *Ambiguous*, where information may not fit neatly into one group
- Exact is easier to understand, but a lot of information won't fit into exact schemes

Exact Organizational Schemes

- Information is neatly divided into mutually exclusive groups
 - Each bit of information goes into one group and could not possibly go into another
- Some common exact schemes are:
 - **Alphabetical**: obvious
 - Index to a book, phone books, dictionaries
 - **Chronological**: grouped by time
 - Planners, printed archives
 - **Geographical**: grouped by location
 - Maps, floor plans

Exact Schemes, cont.

- These are best when you know exactly what you're looking for
- This type of searching is called “known-item searching”
- With websites, people often don't know exactly what they're looking for

Ambiguous Organizational Schemes

- Ambiguous Organizational Schemes do not have easy grouping rules like exact schemes
- In some ways, ambiguous schemes can be more useful than exact schemes
 - Don't have to know exactly what you're looking for
 - You ended up searching for an approximation of what you want
 - Can find lots of good related information
- Example:
 - Subject index at the library
- 5 main types of ambiguous schemes

Topical Scheme

- Organizes content by topic (subject)
- Searching by subject at the library is an example of this scheme
- Not just for large collections of information like libraries or encyclopedias
- A lot of websites have topical schemes (at least in part)
 - www.yahoo.com
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk>

Task Oriented Schemes

- Information is organized according to functions, services, or tasks
- Most software is organized this way
 - File, Edit, View, Format, etc. in MS Office products
- A lot of websites use a task oriented scheme for part of their navigation
 - www.ebay.com has a section where you select from “buy”, “sell”, “community”, “help”, etc.
- Useful when there are only a limited number of options for the user which will be used frequently

Audience Specific Schemes

- One website with very different groups of users
- Simple example is a banking website which may have different functions depending on whether you are an individual, a small business, or a corporation
 - <http://www4.bmo.com/>
- Not all groups will need the same information
- This is a way to separate content so that users can access just what they need

Metaphor Driven Schemes

- More difficult to use well
- Basically, you would organize your content to relate to an easily understood topic or concept
- If you have a website which sells products, you can use a real store as a metaphor for your site
 - Shopping cart
 - Front doors to enter
 - Cash register for checking out
- If you use a metaphor that people are familiar with already, they don't have to learn as much to use your site
 - They already have some knowledge of how it “should” work

Hybrid Organizational Scheme

- Not truly a scheme in and of itself
- It's a blend of the other main schemes
- Most websites use hybrid organization
 - Shopping websites: separate navigation for browsing online store and navigation for handling account needs
- Some even blend exact and ambiguous schemes
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk> has navigation relating to geography (exact) and topical (ambiguous)

Hybrid Schemes, cont.

- A lot of corporate (versus personal) sites will use a hybrid scheme to organize their content
- Especially true of any site which sells products
- Can be very effective, but:
 - Schemes must be physically separated
 - Proximity, if they aren't related, move them apart!
- Check most large online stores for instance and see where they place their sections for shopping versus handling things like logging into the site

Organizational Structures

- Now that we have about 8 different ways to organize content into groups, what is the relationship between those groups?
- This gets defined by its *organizational structure*
- Determine how the user will actually navigate the site
- For a small site, like assignment 1, it's not so crucial to consider the organizational structure
 - For large sites, it is extremely important

Organizational Structures, cont.

- Three main types of organizational structures:
 - Hierarchy
 - Hypertext
 - Database
- All have advantages and disadvantages
- While some sites will lend themselves neatly to one of these three, many use combinations

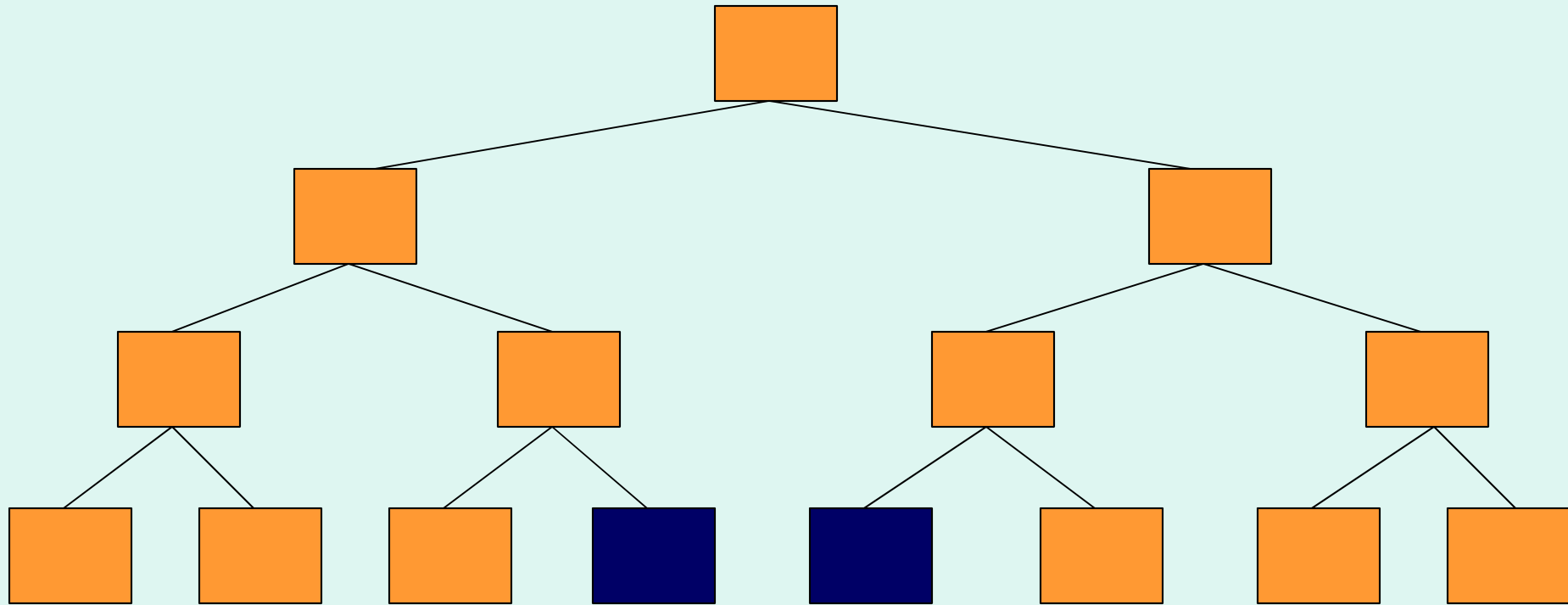
Hierarchy Structure

- A hierarchy structure relates groups to each other based on their rank or level.
- Examples include:
 - Family trees
 - Company organization charts
 - Books
- Hierarchies are easy for users to understand
 - We're used to them!
- Shows the overall picture
 - As you click you get finer and finer details

Hierarchy, cont.

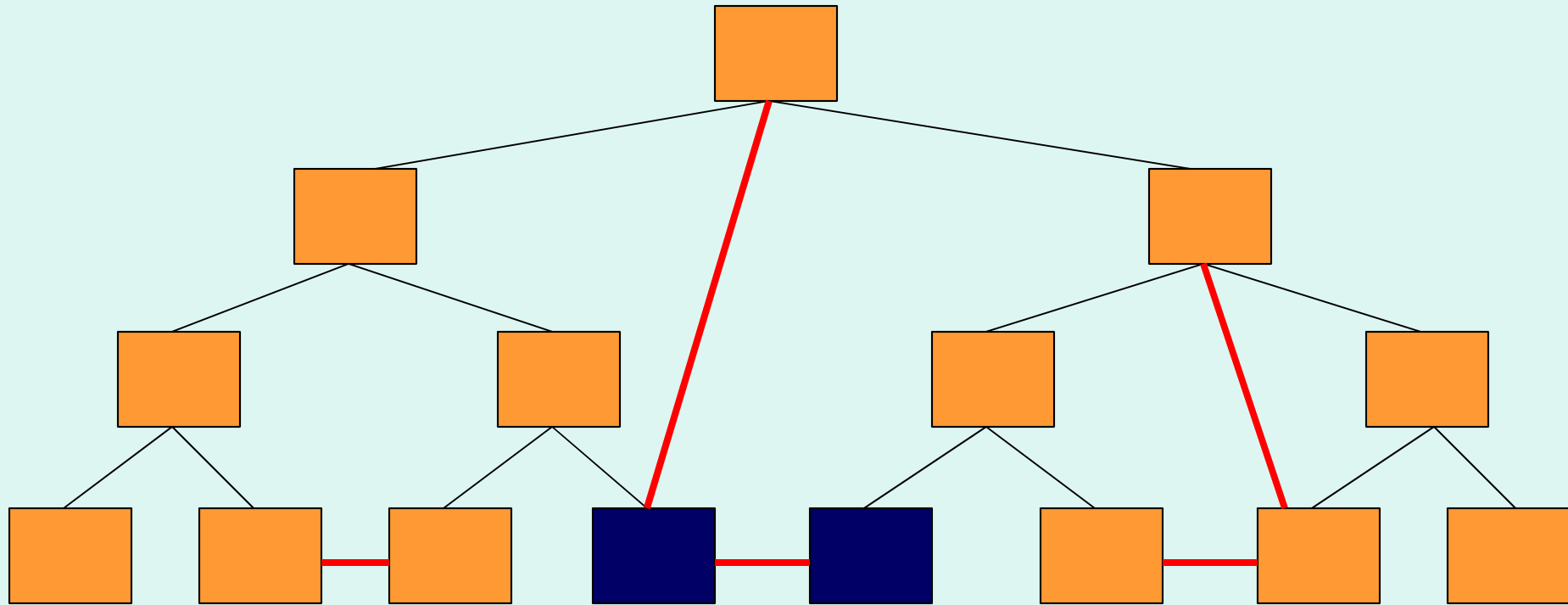
- **Breadth:** number of links available at each level
- **Depth:** number of levels in the structure
- Typically, if the breadth is bigger, the hierarchy is wider if pictured as a tree
- The larger the depth, the more clicks it will take to get to the “deepest” page
- Users prefer a wide, shallow hierarchy
 - Fewest clicks to access any page

Disadvantage of a Pure Hierarchy



- To go from one blue page to the other it takes a LOT of clicks

Making a Hierarchy Easier to Use



- Keep the hierarchy, but add extra appropriate links to make navigation faster
- Not necessary to go through every level

Hypertext Structure

- If pure hierarchy is at one end, pure hypertext is at the other
- Much more flexible than hierarchy
- A bit too flexible at times
 - Easy to get “lost in the links”
- Adding additional links to the hierarchy structure is like combining hierarchy and hypertext
 - Users can locate content easily, and move between content faster

Database Structure

- Allows users to find specific information while looking at as few pages as possible
- www.google.com is an example
 - You don't "browse" google
- Google also provides relevance information
 - The more relevant, the higher it is in the list of links when you search
 - This is useful for users
- Much more complicated than hierarchy or hyperlink
 - Requires a database, set up properly, and knowledge of how to access it
 - Can be tricky
 - Outside the scope of this course

Summary

- Websites need good information organization
- This helps users to get the most out of your site and prevents frustration when they can't find what they're looking for
- Organizing content requires putting the information into categories (organizational schemes)
- These categories are then linked to each other using organizational structures
 - How the information should fit together

Basics for Building a Good Website

- Use *content organization* to lay out your site (like a blueprint)
 - Should be done first
- Use good *visual organization* so that users can locate your content effectively and quickly
- Use pleasing and effective colors to help make your site easier to navigate and visually appealing

Questions?