



Quick and Easy Information Architecture (IA)

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What is Information Architecture?

- Organizing, labeling, classifying information on a web site
- Providing appropriate navigation to get to that information
- Making sure the structure of the site helps users complete their tasks successfully



Organizing Things in the Real World



1) Assess What You Have

- Content inventory

- Make a list - Each item of content on a separate line
- Add columns to indicate status, owner, section, page style, etc.

#	Page Name	Filename/URL	Section Name	Status	Page Type	
1	Home	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/home.asp	Overview	Needs Updating	Home/Menu	See http://
2	About Us	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/aboutus.asp	Overview	Need to Check	Text	Need to fix
3	BillDr	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/billdr.asp	Overview	Need to Check	Text	Need to fix
4	Contact Us	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/contact.asp	Overview	Needs Updating	Text	Mailing Ad
5	Frequently Asked Questions	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/faq.asp	Overview	Need to Check	Text	Need to fix
6	Consultant Registration	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_edit.asp?type=new	Registration	Need to Check	Form	
7	Consultant Overview	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_overview.asp	Registration	Need to Check	Text	
8	Discipline List - Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_dlist.asp?id=1	Registration	Up-To-Date	List	
9	Discipline List - Court Reporter	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_dlist.asp?id=2	Registration	Up-To-Date	List	
10	Discipline List - Expert Witness	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_dlist.asp?id=3	Registration	Up-To-Date	List	
11	Discipline List - Investigative Services	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_dlist.asp?id=5	Registration	Up-To-Date	List	
12	Discipline List - Practice Consultant	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_dlist.asp?id=600	Registration	Up-To-Date	List	
13	Attorney Overview	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_overview.asp	Registration	Need to Check	Text	
14	Attorney/Firm Registration	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_register.asp	Registration	Up-To-Date	Form	
15	Search Results Consultants	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_search_dlist.asp?catpage=1	Management System	Up-To-Date	List	Needs to be
16	Logout - Link	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/logout.asp			Redirect	
17	Privacy Policy	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/privacy.asp	Overview	Need to Check	Text	
18	Tell Your Friends About Us	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/tellafriend.asp	Overview	Up-To-Date	Form	
19	Terms and Conditions of Use	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/terms.asp	Overview	Need to Check	Text	
20	Attorney Challenge	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_challenge.asp	Registration	Need to Check	Text	
21	Attorney FAQs	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_faq.asp	Registration	Need to Check	Text	
22	BillDr	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_billdr.asp	Registration	Need to Check	Text	
23	Pricing	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/pricing.asp	Registration	Needs Updating	Text	
24	Attorney/Firm Login	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_login.asp	Registration	Up-To-Date	Form	
25	Attorney Forgot Password	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_forgetpassword.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Form	
26	Search for Consultants	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_search.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Form	Up-To-Date
27	Attorney/Firm Registration Confirmation	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_confirm.asp	Management System	?	?	
28	Attorney Home	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_home.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Dashboard	
29	Attorney Search Results	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_searchr.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Form	
30	Attorney Search Results RFDs	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_searchrfd.asp	Management System	Needs Updating	Form	Need to be
31	Attorney User RFDs	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_profile.asp?E_opertID=	Management System	?	?	
32	Attorney User Consultant Profile	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_profile.asp?E_opertID=	Management System	?	?	
33	Attorney Favorite Consultants	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_favorites.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	List	
34	Attorney Disabled Consultants	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_disabled.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	List	
35	Attorney Add/Edit Tour Profile	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_edit.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Form	
36	Consultant Home	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_home.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Dashboard	
37	Consultant Edit Your Profile	http://www.lawfirm.pro.com/ft_edit.asp	Management System	Up-To-Date	Form	



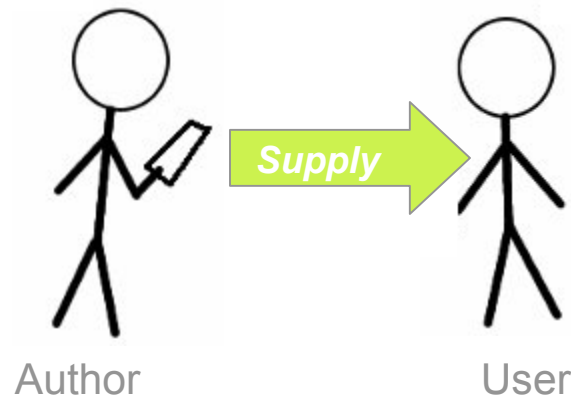
1) Assess What You Have

*Quick
& Easy*

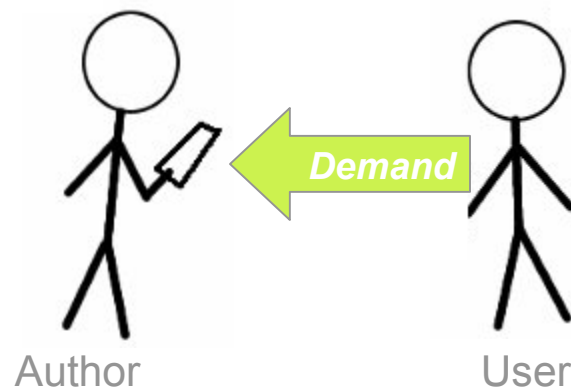
- Tips for speeding this up:
 - List *groups* of content rather than individual pages of content
 - Sampling of content (representative content), not all content
 - Inventory only a specific section
 - Narrow the focus to identifying:
 - How much content is there?
 - What can you cut back / throw away?
 - If possible, ask different people to review different content areas



2) Think “Supply and Demand”



Do you know what information you want to provide on the web site?



Do you know what information your users are looking for, and what situations will bring them to the web site?

2) Think “Supply and Demand”

Quick & Easy

- Brainstorm a list of user groups, and the top questions of each group.
- Look at web metrics to identify top questions.
- See if your web site answers those questions.
- Highlight questions it doesn't answer, but should.
- Set expectations: if your site doesn't have some of the information they are looking for, let them know gracefully and point them to other resources.

Web Site User Groups

User Group	Importance	% of Visitors	Top tasks and questions
General public who needs services	Low-med	Low	Is this useful to me? Is this for me? Where is it? Is there one near me? Helps strengthen relationships
Members (community health centers)	High	High	Find training—What kind of training is available in the next six months? Do I need to attend national conferences or can I stay in state (keep travel costs down)? What is the call in number? Recruitment—Where can I post a job opening that I have? (not on our site but will post it on another one) Retention – What are best practices for retention of skilled staff? What workforce development resources are available? What job opportunities are available? What are the best practices for clinical quality? Marketing? What are other people doing? How can we do this better?
A rural health clinic who wants funding to become a comm. Health center	High	Low	What is the benefit of becoming a CHC? What are the different services they offer? What funding is available? What would we have to do to become a community health center? What's the benefit of this vs what we already have? (The more outreach we do, the more this percentage might increase)



3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Users)

- Find out how users expect the content to be organized
- Typical approaches:

Shortcuts

- User interviews

Get input from people who have contact with your users.

Put yourself in your users' shoes and imagine coming to the site from their perspective.

- Card sorting

Try remote card sorting.

Sort the topics yourself (IF you are not too close to the content!)

- Competitive analysis

Look at a few web sites with similar types of content, to see what categorization schemes they use.





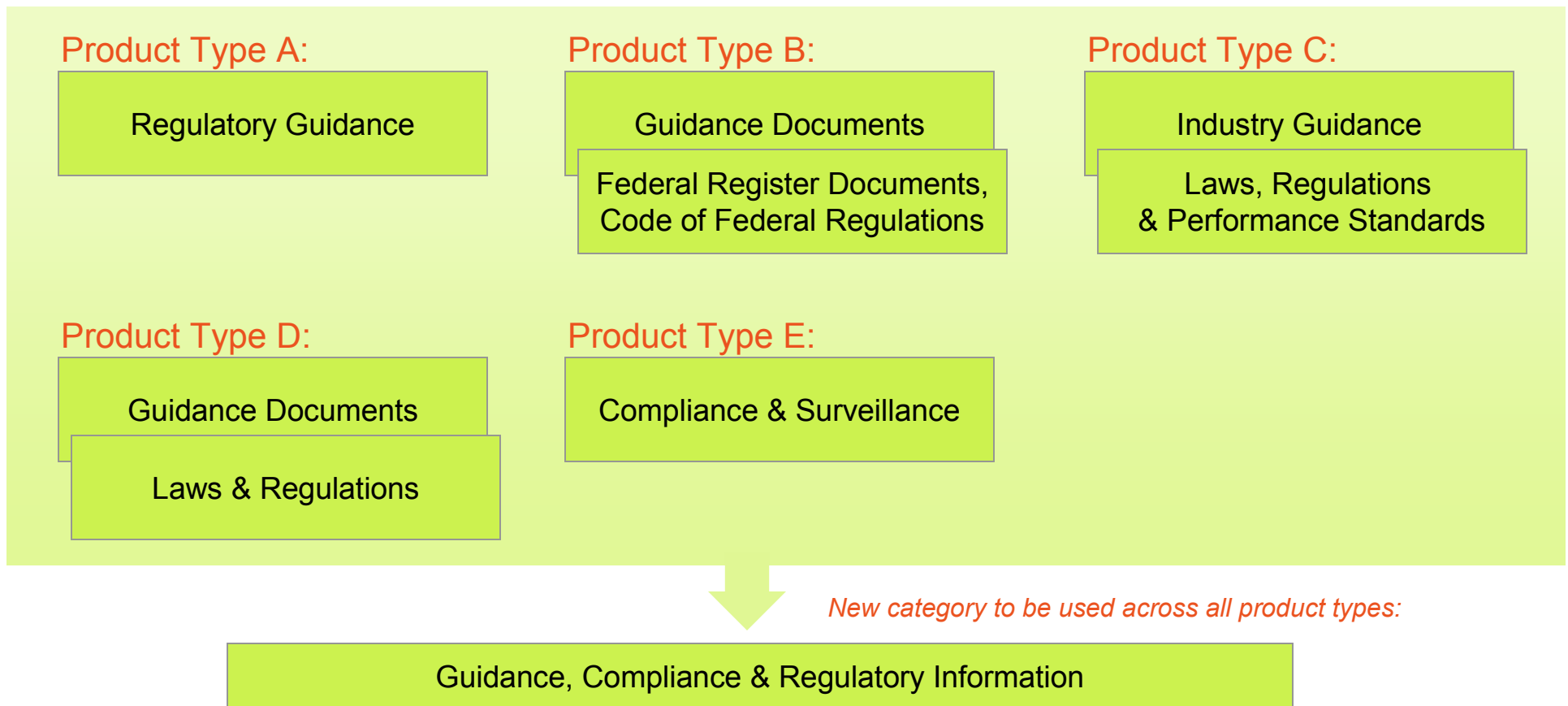
3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to [^]Users)

- Think about what goes together:
 - What is the purpose of this information?
 - Who is the audience for this information?
 - In what situation would this information be used?
 - Are there other pages on the same topic?
 - Would people looking for this information also need information that is on another page?



3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Users)

- Look for ways to harmonize categories across sections of the web site



3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Users)

- Consider using multiple categorization schemes

Primary topic categories

Alternative path: site index

Alternative path: timely information

Alternative path: by user group

The screenshot shows the CDC website interface with several key sections:

- Header:** CDC logo, "Centers for Disease Control and Prevention", "Your Online Source for Credible Health Information", and a search bar.
- Navigation:** A-Z Index and a search bar.
- Main Content Area:**
 - H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu):** A large featured article with a video player and a "GO" button.
 - Health & Safety Topics:** A grid of categories including Diseases & Conditions, Healthy Living, Emergency Preparedness & Response, Injury, Violence & Safety, Environmental Health, Travelers' Health, Life Stages & Populations, and Workplace Safety & Health.
 - Data & Statistics:** A section titled "Rates for New Cancer Cases and Deaths by Sex" with a bar chart showing rates per 100,000 for New Cases (414.8) and Death (158.9).
 - Publications:** A list of recent publications including "Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID)", "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)", and "Preventing Chronic Disease (PCD)".
 - News & Events:** A section titled "CDC Responds to H1N1 Flu Outbreak Among Humans" with a photo of a press conference.
 - Publications:** A list of recent publications including "Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID)", "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)", and "Preventing Chronic Disease (PCD)".
 - Publications:** A list of recent publications including "Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID)", "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)", and "Preventing Chronic Disease (PCD)".
 - Publications:** A list of recent publications including "Emerging Infectious Diseases (EID)", "Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)", and "Preventing Chronic Disease (PCD)".
- Footer:** "CDC for YOU" with links for Individuals, Public Health Professionals, Researchers, Media, Healthcare Providers, Students and Educators, Partners, Policy Makers, and Businesses.

3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways [^] (to Users)

- Consider using multiple categorization schemes



Narrow down by Special Offers

Narrow down by Brand

Narrow down by Price Range

Narrow down by Megapixels

Product category

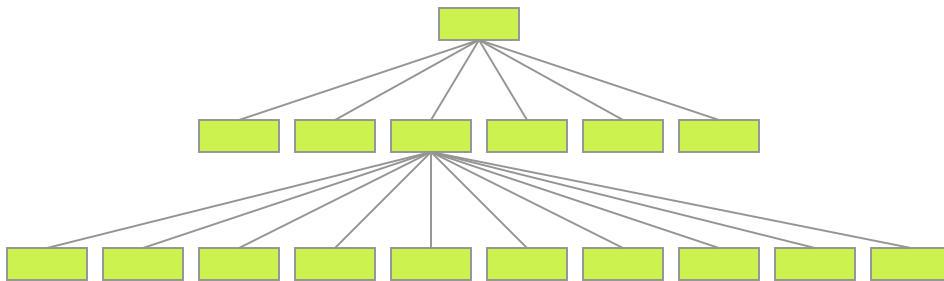


3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Users)

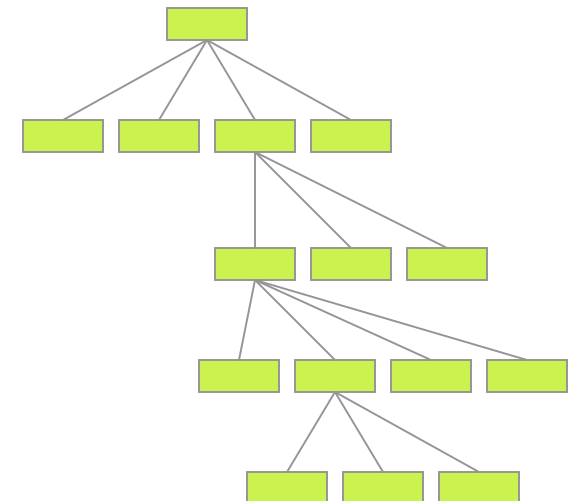
*Quick
& Easy*

- Consider breadth vs depth
 - How many items at each “level” of the IA hierarchy?
 - Broad is usually better (more items at each level)

Broad Structure



Deep Structure



- Suggest between 5 and 15 items at each level



3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Users)

*Quick
& Easy*

- Use common patterns of organization:
 - by task
 - by phases in a process
 - by year or chronology (e.g. for old newsletters)
 - by audience group
 - by geographical location
 - by topic
 - this is one of the most useful but also the most challenging
 - in whatever way it is organized in real life
 - e.g. stores are organized by product type, travel information by mode of travel or by destination



3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways *(to Users)*

*Quick
& Easy*

- Avoid organizing by:
 - alphabetical order
 - unless users know specific names of items (e.g. drug name), or no other reasonable alternative is available
 - internal departments of your organization
 - this may seem quick and easy, but is a bad idea from a usability perspective
 - the source or format of the information



3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Users)

Quick
& Easy

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window ACT! Help PDF Create!

Final Showing Markup Show ab Update TOC

Body text Show Level 3

- 3. Development and Approval
 - 3.1. Drug Databases
 - 3.2. Approval Applications
 - 3.2.1. Types of Applications
 - 3.2.2. Investigational New Drug
 - 3.2.3. New Drug Application (ND
 - 3.2.4. Abbreviated New Drug Ap
 - 3.3. Development Resources
 - 3.3.1. Pediatric Drug Development
 - 3.3.2. Over-the-Counter (OTC) Drugs
 - 3.3.3. Cancer Drugs
 - 3.3.4. Running Clinical Trials
 - 3.3.5. Patent & Exclusivity Information – from Orange book , may go away
 - 3.3.6. Drug Interactions and Drug Development
 - 3.3.7. Ingredients
 - 3.4. Forms & Submissions
 - 3.4.1. Electronic Submissions
 - 3.4.2. Drug Master Files (DMFs)
 - 3.5. Small Business Assistance Program
 - 3.5.1. Economic Assistance
 - 3.5.2. Small Business Workshops
 - 3.6. Import and Export of Human Drugs
 - 3.6.1. Imports
 - 3.6.2. Exports

Show Level 1
Show Level 2
Show Level 3
Show Level 4
Show Level 5
Show Level 6
Show Level 7
Show Level 8
Show Level 9
Show All Levels

The outline feature in Microsoft Word can help you visualize the structure of the site

● ● ● | 4) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to Authors)

- To ensure that the site is maintainable, authors must understand the structure and categories
- Make a checklist for the author to use when deciding where the content should go
 - Is this primarily for User Group A or User Group B?
 - What task will the user be doing?
 - Is this content time-sensitive?
- Make a few examples for the content authors



5) Use Familiar Terminology

- Do you want the terminology to be familiar to:

- Scientists? Specialists? The general public?

*Quick
& Easy*

- Find out what terminology is familiar to your target audience:

- Use common labels that are frequently used on the Web: e.g. "About Us," "News"
- Search logs – what terms are they searching for on your site now?
- Look up terms from your web site on other web sites, like Amazon and Wikipedia, and see what terms and topics are related



6) Use Structured Vocabulary [^]

(only if you need it)

- Taxonomy can be useful but also time consuming to create
- Think globally, act locally:
 - Think about the use of vocabulary in the organization, how much does it change, where would it add value if there was a structured vocabulary
 - Pick one or two places where structured vocabulary would help
- Ask yourself, “How little can you get away with?”





7) Match “Top Down” and “Bottom Up”

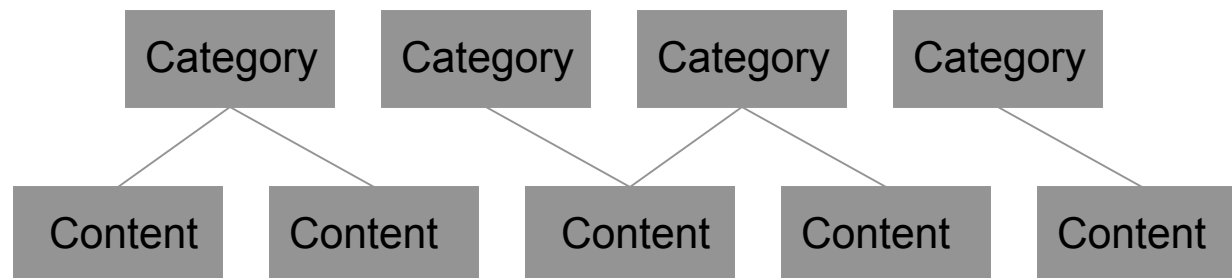
- Make sure there are visible starting points for the users’ questions
- Walk through the path that users would take to get to the answers

User questions
and tasks

Question

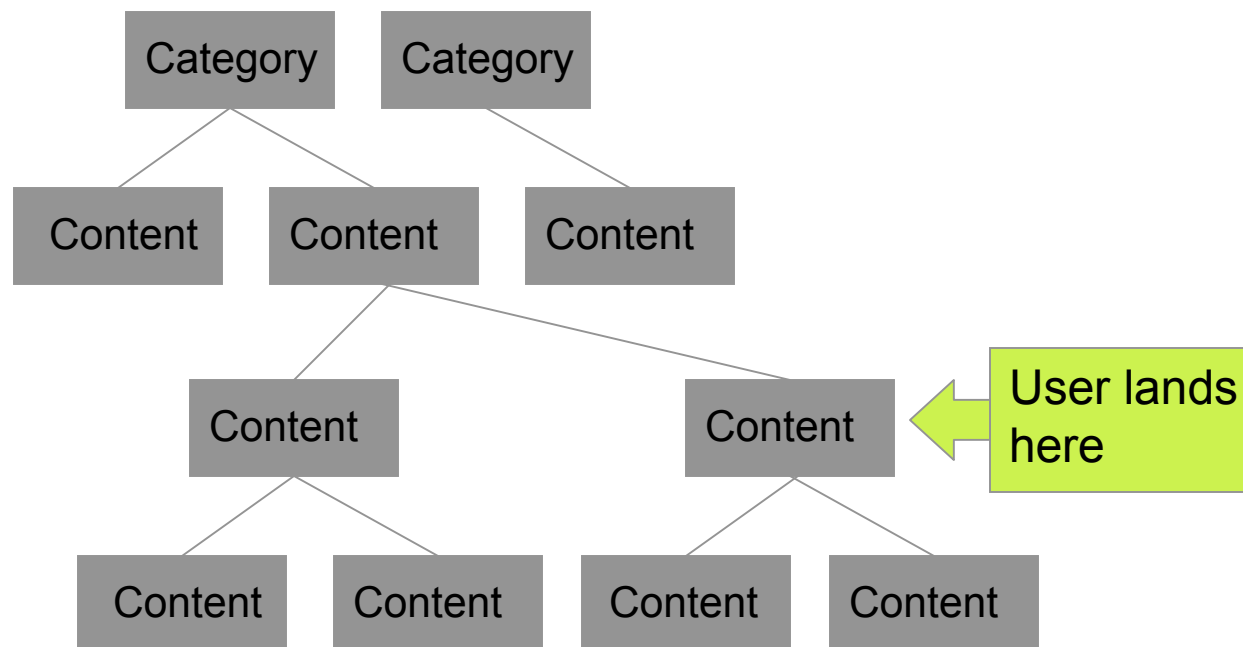
```
graph TD; Q[Question] --> C1[Category]; Q --> C2[Category]; Q --> C3[Category]; Q --> C4[Category]; C1 --> C1_1[Content]; C1 --> C1_2[Content]; C2 --> C2_1[Content]; C2 --> C2_2[Content]; C3 --> C3_1[Content]; C3 --> C3_2[Content]; C4 --> C4_1[Content]; C4 --> C4_2[Content];
```

Your content



7) Match “Top Down” and “Bottom Up”

- If the user arrives at a lower level page from a search:
 - “Where am I?”
 - “Where can I go from here?”





8) Get Quick and Easy User Feedback

*Quick
& Easy*

- “Where would you go to find...” exercise

Where would you go to find...?	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
The requirements for becoming a community health center	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
Contact information for community health center clinics in Wyoming	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
A list of job openings at Wyoming clinics	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
A community health center in your state	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
Steps for how to start a community health center	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
The location of this year's National Farmworkers Health Conference	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources
A phone number for the director of the Wyoming Primary Care Association	About Us	Member Services	Community Development	Events	Publications/ Resources





8) Get Quick and Easy User Feedback

*Quick
& Easy*

- “Where would you go to find...” exercise with screen shots

Where would you go to find...?

1) The requirements for becoming a community health center

2) A list of job openings at clinics in your state



*Example of results***Where would you go to find... ?**

	<i>About ABC</i>	<i>Human Resources</i>	<i>Workplace Resources</i>	<i>Business Development</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Information about library research services			P1, P2, P3, P4		
History of the company	P1, P2, P3, P4				Two people took a moment to scan the About ABC page before they saw it
Marketing brochures				P2, P3, P4	P1 has never needed a marketing brochure
Information about disability benefits for employees	P1	P2, P3	P4		
An ABC employee's phone number and email address					All four participants correctly said they would type the name of the employee in the Employee Search box
Instructions for changing your telephone's voicemail message			P1, P2, P3, P4		
Employee handbook		P1, P2, P3, P4			
Information about the ABC office in London				P2, P3, P4	P2 might click on it in the clock on home page

● ● ● | 9) Map Content to Page Styles

- Define page styles or templates for consistency
- Decide where the different types of navigation should go:
 - Global navigation (site-wide)
 - Local navigation (within the current section)
 - Related links (cross references between related content areas)
- Illustrate the items from the content outline on some sample wireframes, to show what it will look like

9) Map Content to Page Styles

ABC Welcome: [Carol Smith](#) Forms | Contact Lists | Index
 Logout Employee Search go Intranet Search go

Home Inside ABC Human Resources Workplace Resources Business Development

You are here: [Inside ABC](#)

Inside ABC

What We Do
 Who We Are
 Locations
 News
 Glossary

My Links
[My Division](#)
[My Line of Business](#)
[My Location](#)

ABC's Mission
 Provide blurb with nice graphical appearance describing the organization's mission and goals.

Featured Location, Project, or Employee

Photo
 Description of featured item goes here.
 Description of featured item goes here.
 Description of featured item goes here.
 Description of featured item goes here.

Caption for photo

ABC Divisions

[Energy Division \(ED\)](#)
 A brief statement of what this division area does is shown here. Hover over the name of the division, or provide another link, to see its lines of business.

[Transportation Division \(TD\)](#)
 A brief statement of what this division area does is shown here. Hover over the name of the division, or provide another link, to see its lines of business.

[Security Division \(SD\)](#)
 A brief statement of what this division area does is shown here. Hover over the name of the division, or provide another link, to see its lines of business.

[Enterprise Services Division \(ESD\)](#)
 A brief statement of what this division area does is shown here. Hover over the name of the division, or provide another link, to see its lines of business.

This is a Level 2 page in the IA

Clicking on a left nav link takes you to a Level 3 page

9) Map Content to Page Styles

ABC | Welcome: Carol Smith | Forms | Contact Lists | Index
 Logout | Employee Search go | Intranet Search go

Home | **Inside ABC** | Human Resources | Workplace Resources | Business Development

You are here: [Inside ABC](#) > [Locations](#)

Locations

ABC has xx employees working in its xx regional offices throughout the US, and xx international offices in Europe and Asia. In addition, xx employees who work on client sites.

Headquarters

Street address
 City, State, ZIP
 USA
 Phone: 999-999-9999
 Toll-Free: 800-999-9999
 Fax: 999-999-9999
[More information, maps, and directions >](#)

US Locations

Location	State	Employees	Phone
Albany	NY	25	800-888-8000
Fayetteville	NC	16	800-888-8000
Los Angeles	CA	29	800-888-8000
Orange County	CA	11	800-888-8000

International Locations

Location	Employees	Phone

Related Links

- [Employee directory](#)
- [Location report](#)

This is a Level 3 page in the IA

Left nav links to Level 4 topics

9) Map Content to Page Styles

The screenshot shows an intranet page for 'ABC'. At the top, there is a header with the company name 'ABC', a welcome message 'Welcome: Carol Smith', and a 'Logout' link. There are also search boxes for 'Employee Search' and 'Intranet Search', each with a 'go' button. Below the header is a navigation bar with buttons for 'Home', 'Inside ABC', 'Human Resources', 'Workplace Resources', and 'Business Development'. A breadcrumb trail indicates 'You are here: Inside ABC'.

The main content area is titled 'Inside ABC' and features a 'Featured Location, Project, or Employee' section with a placeholder for a photo and a description. Below this is a section for 'ABC Divisions' with links to 'Energy Division (ED)', 'Transportation Division (TD)', 'Security Division (SD)', and 'Enterprise Services Division (ESD)'. Each division link is followed by a brief statement and a note to hover over the name for more information. The 'Transportation Division (TD)' link is circled in red.

On the left side, there is a sidebar with links for 'What We Do', 'Who We Are', 'Locations', 'News', and 'Glossary'. On the right side, there is a 'My Links' section with links for 'My Division', 'My Line of Business', and 'My Location', and an 'ABC's Mission' section with a blurb about the organization's mission and goals.

From the Level 2 page, there are some deep links that go to lower levels of the IA

9) Map Content to Page Styles

- Level 3 topics
- Level 4 topics
- Level 5 topics

The screenshot shows an intranet interface for 'ABC'. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Inside ABC', 'Human Resources', 'Workplace Resources', and 'Business Development'. The breadcrumb trail is 'You are here: Inside ABC > Who We Are > Divisions > Transportation Division (TD)'. The main content area is titled 'Transportation Division (TD)' and contains sections for 'Senior Vice President', 'About TD', 'TD Announcements', 'New Contracts', and 'Lines of Business'. A sidebar on the left lists navigation options, and a sidebar on the right contains 'About TD', 'TD Intranet', and 'Related Links'. A red circle highlights the link 'Executive Briefing on New Air Travel Department' in the 'Related Links' sidebar.

This is a Level 5 page in the IA

Clicking a Related Link in the sidebar takes you to a page in another section of the IA

9) Map Content to Page Styles

ABC Welcome: Carol Smith Forms | Contact Lists | Index
Logout Employee Search go Intranet Search go

Home Inside ABC Human Resources Workplace Resources Business Development

You are here: [Inside ABC](#) > [News](#) > [Executive Briefings](#) > [2009](#) > Executive Briefing on New Air Travel Department

What We Do
Who We Are
Locations
News
Announcements
Press Releases
Executive Briefings
2009
2008
2007
2006 and earlier
Glossary

Executive Briefing on New Air Travel Department

8/1/2009

Short paragraph describing the key points of the presentation and who was in attendance. Short paragraph describing the key points of the presentation and who was in attendance.

[Download Podcast](#)

Related Links
[Executive Briefing on New Air Travel Department 8/1/2009](#)

Photo or slide from presentation

Subheading

- Sales or revenue (one sentence about last quarter's earnings)
- Awards (who got them)
- Questions (list an interesting question and answer)

Subheading

- Sales or revenue (one sentence about last quarter's earnings)
- Awards (who got them)
- Questions (list an interesting question and answer)

This is a Level 6 page in the IA



10) Clean Up the Content

- Huge pages
 - Break them up into smaller pages
- Pages that cover multiple topics
 - Consider breaking them up to one page per topic
- Pages with lots of paragraphs
 - Cut back the text
 - Convert to bullets or tables
 - Add subheadings, etc.



Summary

- 1) Assess What You Have
- 2) Think "Supply and Demand"
- 3) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to users)
- 4) Organize Content in Familiar Ways (to authors)
- 5) Use Familiar Terminology
- 6) Use Structured Vocabulary (only if you need it)
- 7) Match "Top Down" and "Bottom Up"
- 8) Get Quick and Easy User Feedback
- 9) Map Content to Page Styles
- 10) Clean Up the Content

Next steps:

- Content editing and authoring
- Graphic design
- More detailed wireframes
- Usability testing





Questions & Discussion

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