

**City of Austin
Website Redesign
Information Architecture Report**

September 16, 2010

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide a general background on Information Architecture (IA) and outline the IA recommendations. Information Architecture covered in this report are navigation, search, wireframes, and taxonomy.

SteelSMBology conducted internal and external research to determine who used the current website, how they used it, and what sections were the most commonly used. The information collected in this research was combined with IA best practices and special considerations unique to the City of Austin in order to make IA recommendations.

Research found that 70% of the website users were residents, 20% were city employees, 3% were developers, and 3% were other businesses. Many of the most commonly used pages on the website part of the library system.

The current City of Austin website contains over 8,400 pages (excluding the library and airport websites). The recommendations in this report tailor website content and organization to each of the major user groups to make the vast number of pages easier to locate based on their unique needs.

Background

What is Information Architecture (IA)?

Information Architecture is the art and science of structuring and organizing information systems to help people achieve their goals. It organizes content and designs navigation systems to help people easily find and manage information they are looking for.

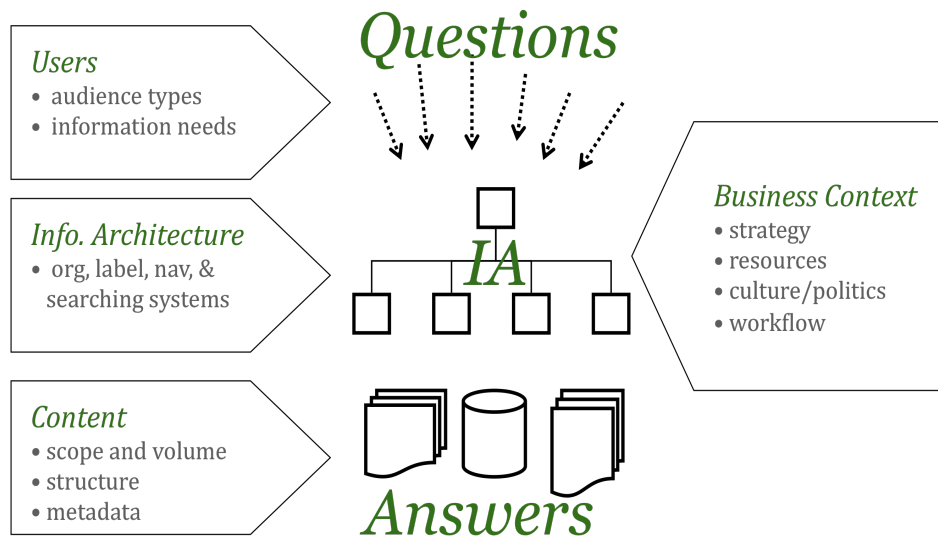


Figure 1: Visual illustration of IA in practice

Why is IA Difficult?

Information Architecture for large enterprises, such as the City of Austin, can be difficult to plan, implement and manage for several reasons.

1. **Departmental Organization Structure** – Large enterprises break the entire organization into smaller groups in order to clearly distinguish objectives and responsibilities. While sharing many similar business needs, each group will have its own needs that are unique and require special consideration to be handled effectively.
2. **Multiple Cultures and Languages** – Large organizations employ and serve people from a variety of cultures through multiple languages. Each requiring its own considerations in order to properly service those individuals.
3. **Overlapping Responsibilities** – Roles across departments will overlap and multiple departments can be responsible for managing content on the website. Ownership can be unclear at times.
4. **Centralized and Decentralized Responsibilities** – It can be difficult to balance the ownership and oversight between centralized and decentralized content management privileges. An overly centralized structure can prevent a website from evolving at a reasonable pace, while an overly decentralized structure can lead to a confusing and inconsistent user experience.

Major Components of IA

Information Architecture is comprised of several major components. The components include:

1. Navigation Systems
2. Taxonomy
3. Search
4. Wireframes

This report will cover, in detail, each of the above components and make recommended solutions for the City of Austin Information Architecture.

Navigation Systems

Navigation Systems aid users in locating content easily. The goals for all Navigation Systems are to:

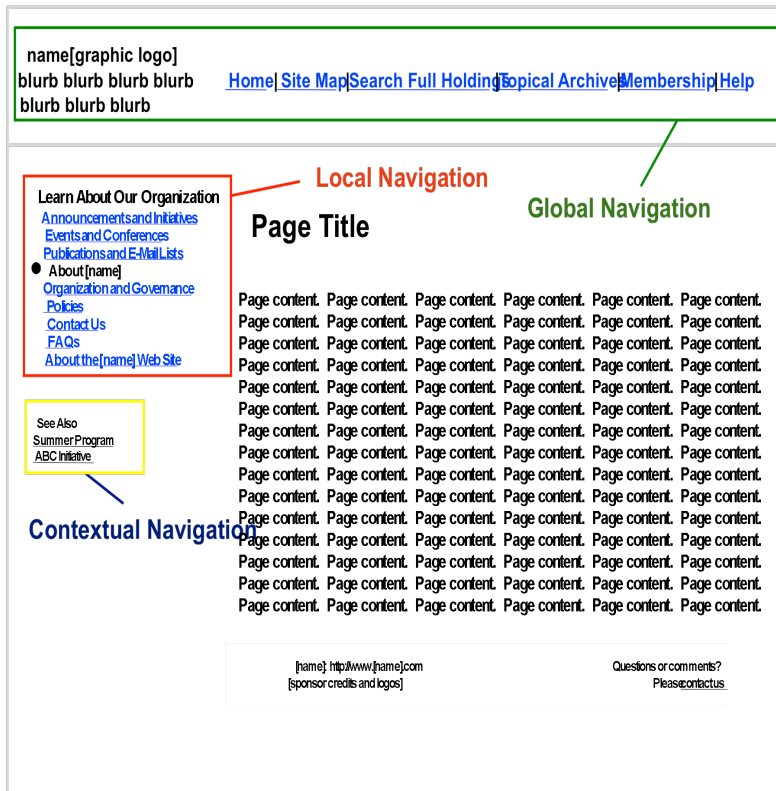
- Provide context. (Where am I?)
- Provide flexibility (Where can I go?)
- Make sense (Separate global and local systems)
- Avoid competing with content

There are five types of Navigation Systems that can be implemented on a website project:

- **Primary Navigation Systems** – Top-level website navigation.
- **Secondary Navigation Systems** – Sub-level specific navigation.
- **Utility Navigation Systems** – Site-wide navigation that are present no matter what page a user is on.
- **Contextual Navigation Systems** – Page-level specific navigation.
- **Supplementary Navigation Systems** – Navigation that supports either the site as a whole or page specific content (ex. Related Links, Quick Links, Also See, etc.).

It is important to note that the purpose of a Navigation System defines its type, not where on the page it is located.





Taxonomy

There are three basic characteristics of a Taxonomy for knowledge management, and to function properly, it needs to fulfill all three functions:

1. A Taxonomy is a form of classification scheme

The Taxonomy should be designed to group related items together, so if a user finds one item within a category, it is easy to find other related items in that same category. The organization can be done informally and ad hoc (e.g. organizing a CD collection by genre) or more formally (e.g. Dewey decimal system)

2. Taxonomies are semantic

The Taxonomy should provide a fixed vocabulary to describe their knowledge and information assets. The vocabulary needs to be meaningful and transparent to ordinary users. For example, the vocabulary “Project kickoff” should be clear to users what type of documents can be found in that category. Each label in the Taxonomy should be carefully considered, and ambiguous or less precise terms should be excluded. A governance/guidelines document should be created for the Taxonomy to be created and maintained in a consistent manner. The taxonomy should be semantic, in the sense that it expresses the relationships between terms in the taxonomy. For example, CAR : STEERING WHEEL would imply the relationship “is a part of” between STEERING WHEEL and CAR.

3. A Taxonomy is a kind of knowledge map

Any user of the taxonomy should immediately have a grasp of the overall structure of the knowledge domain covered by the taxonomy and be able to accurately anticipate what resources she might find.

Although a “tree” or hierarchy of content topics are one way to organize Taxonomies it is not the only way to organize, nor is it always the optimal approach . There are two primary types of Taxonomy; Pre-coordinated Taxonomy and Post-coordinated Taxonomy. Pre-Coordinated Taxonomy is a tree-like structure of pre-defined terms. They are usually very complex and restrictive in how content managers can associate content to them (Figure 2).

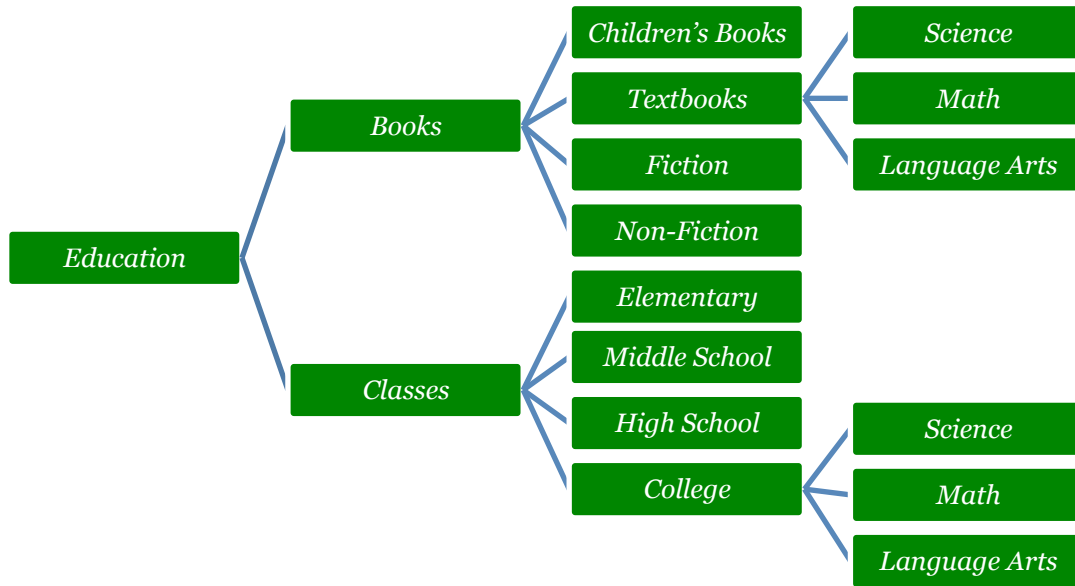


Figure 2: Example of Pre-Coordinated Taxonomy

Post-Coordinated Taxonomy is often referred to as ‘Faceted Taxonomy’. This type of Taxonomy defines major categories and attributes of controlled vocabulary so that the content managers can assign content using a combination of terms. This type of Taxonomy is best for large and complex organizations because it is easy to navigate, use and maintain while without having to pre-determine how and where every piece of content will fit into the structure (Figure 3).

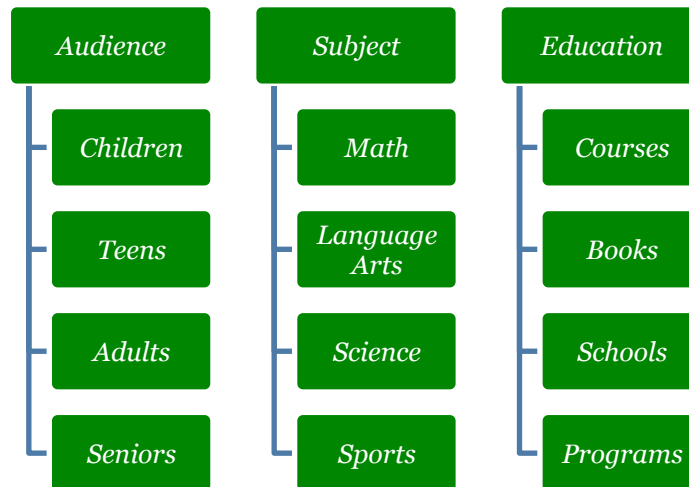


Figure 3: Example of a Post-Coordinated Taxonomy

Search

Search is a major component to Information Architecture. While Navigation Systems focus on how to make it easy for users to browse content, Search makes it easy for users to directly access content without browsing. Search draws heavily on Taxonomy, as it provides high-level definition and association with other content. Below are examples of search bars using keywords alone or keywords and a category for narrowing the search results to the most relevant (Figure 4).

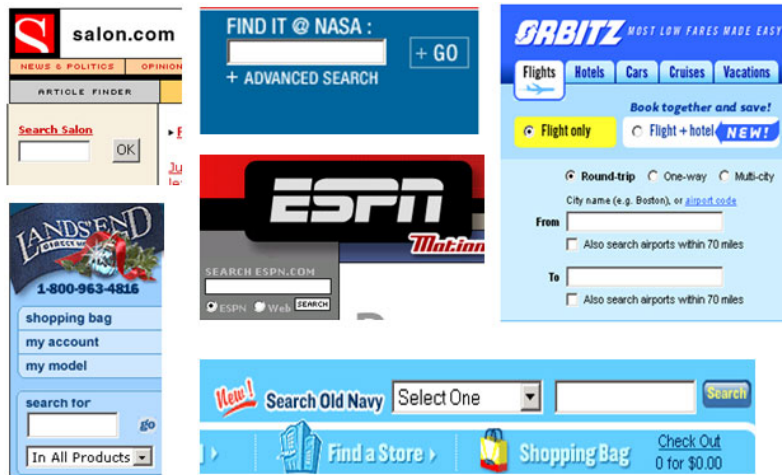


Figure 4: Examples of Search Bars

Faceted Search allows users to filter in or filter out results using a list of content attributes. This type of search is common on complex websites and eCommerce websites such as Amazon.com (Figure 5). The facets can be drawn from content specific attributes and Taxonomy.

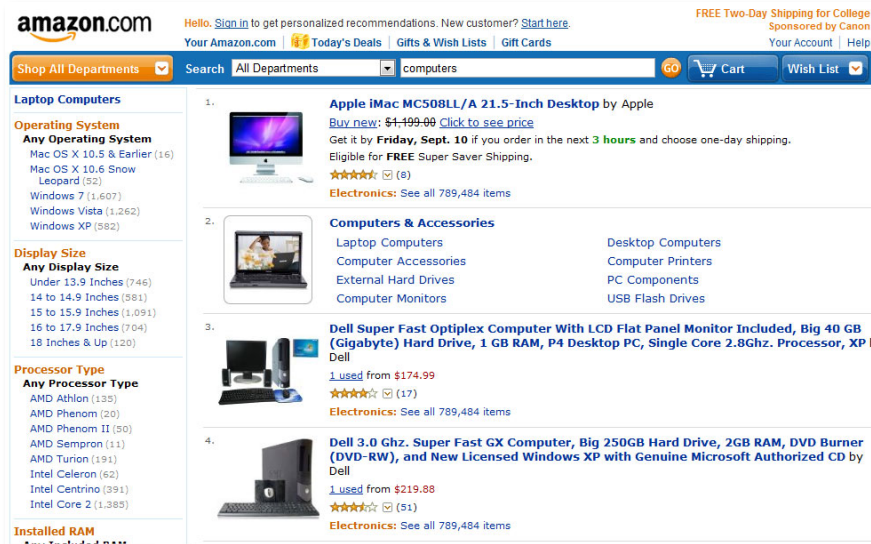


Figure 5: Example of Amazon's Faceted Search (on the left)

Wireframes

Wireframes are simple page layouts that indicate what elements will appear on a given page, or template, and where they will appear.

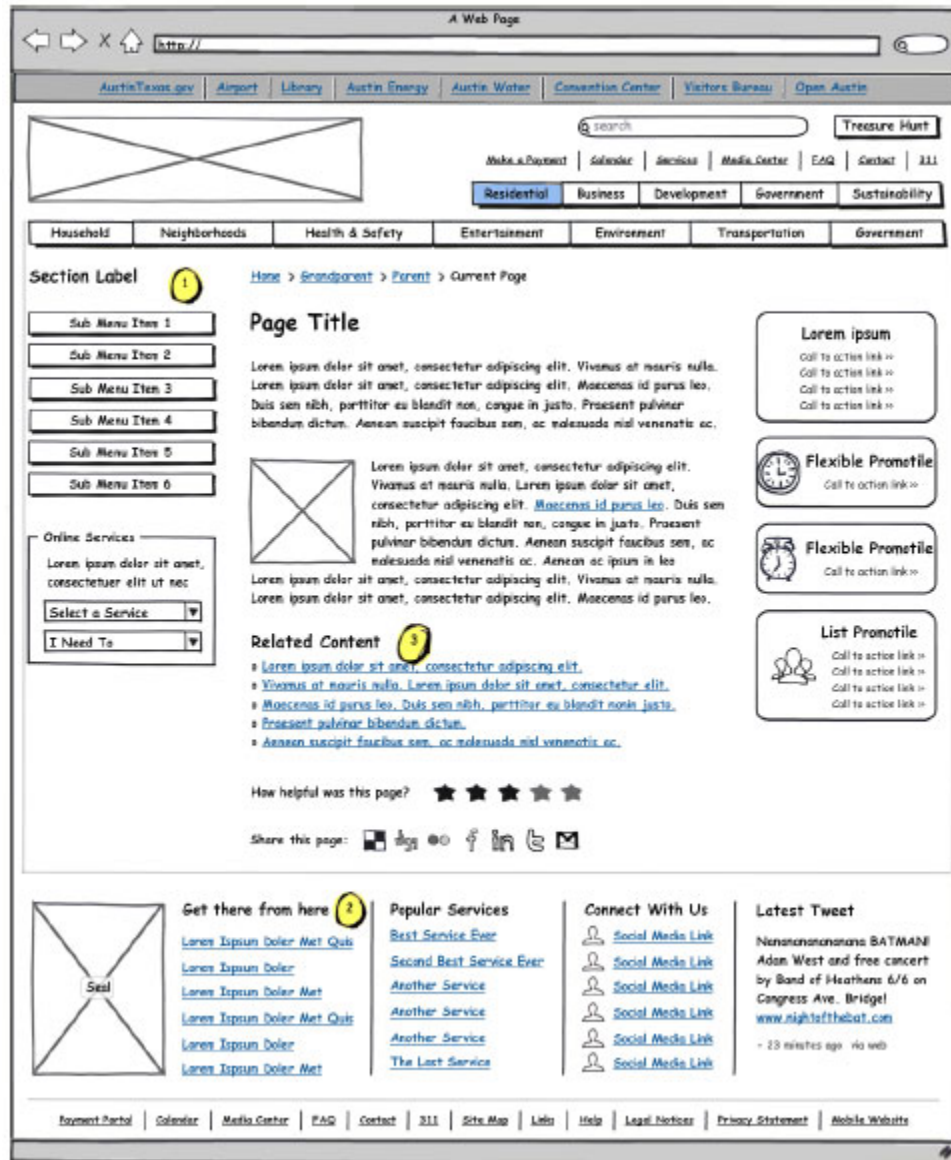


Figure 6: Example Wireframe

Wireframes are simple in appearance but strategically thought out. The location of page elements is critical. A page with helpful information but poorly organized can frustrate and turn away users. Good Wireframes consider who will be using the page and how they will be using the it.

Research

Activity on Current Website

The City currently monitors website usage using Google Analytics. A custom report for a six month window of time was taken for analysis. The results found:

- 8,463 pages indexed having one or more unique hit
- 70% of 8,199,019 unique hits occur on the top 231 pages of the current website (excluding library and airport)
- The most popular pages include:
 - Homepage
 - Human Resources
 - Departments Portal
 - Organization Chart
 - Zilker Tree Holiday Festival
 - Help
 - Animal Services
 - Parks
 - Contact Us
 - Development
 - Pay a Fine

SteelSMBology conducted a Site-Intercept study to identify the end users visiting the website by purpose of visit, understand what kinds of users frequent the website, and to categorize those users into segments to provide direction to the redesign. Initial profiling resulted in a logical clustering of four primary groups: Residents (71%), Business (7%), Government Employees (which includes City employees and a small number of non-City government employees) (17%), and Tourists (5%). The Residents and Business groups were further segmented into demographic/psychographic groups and personas were created to provide target audience direction. More detail can be found in the *Site Intercept Research Report & Customer Profiles Identification* document.

Further research was conducted with external end users and internal end users (COA staff) to understand the informational content, functionality, and features that are important to each of those groups.

Commonalities among the internal and external users was feedback on navigational structure. Both identified needs of a user-friendly navigation structure that focuses on the website user, and both suggested organization by user role. Related to navigation, both groups also identified a need for a prominent and functional search feature on the site. For more information please see the *End User Needs Analysis* report

SteelSMBology also conducted a Information Architecture work session with all of the members of the COA Web Team to discuss initial navigational recommendations and requirements and to brainstorm site organizational approaches.

Aspirational Peer Websites

The City of Austin identified a select list of aspirational peer websites. These websites were reviewed to help identify trends in government websites, competitive analysis and other key comparisons. These peer sites are:

San Francisco, California

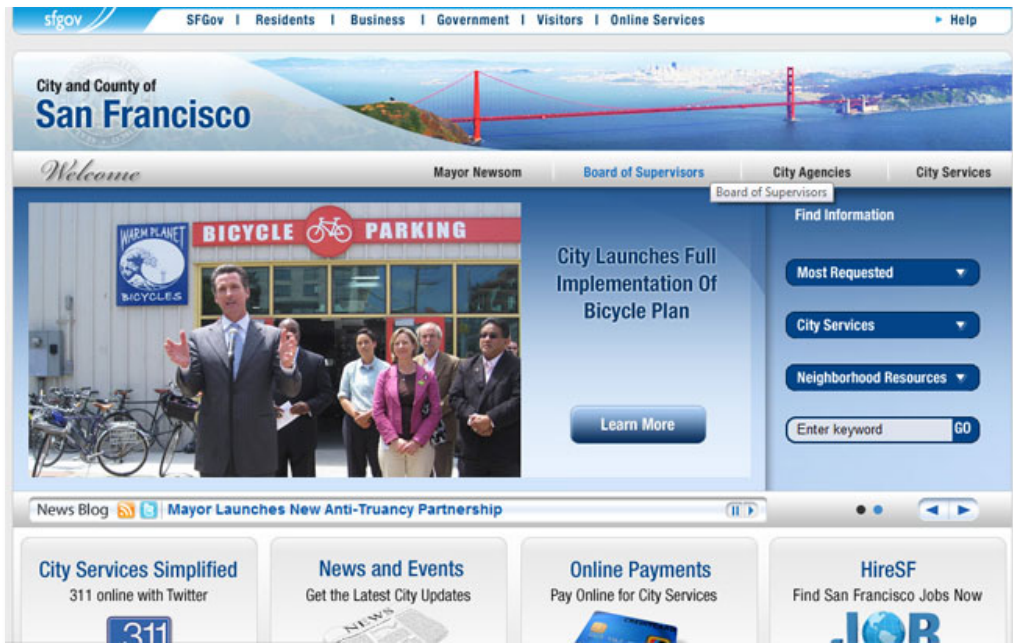


Figure 7: sfgov.org

Boston, Massachusetts



Figure 8: boston.gov

Washington DD

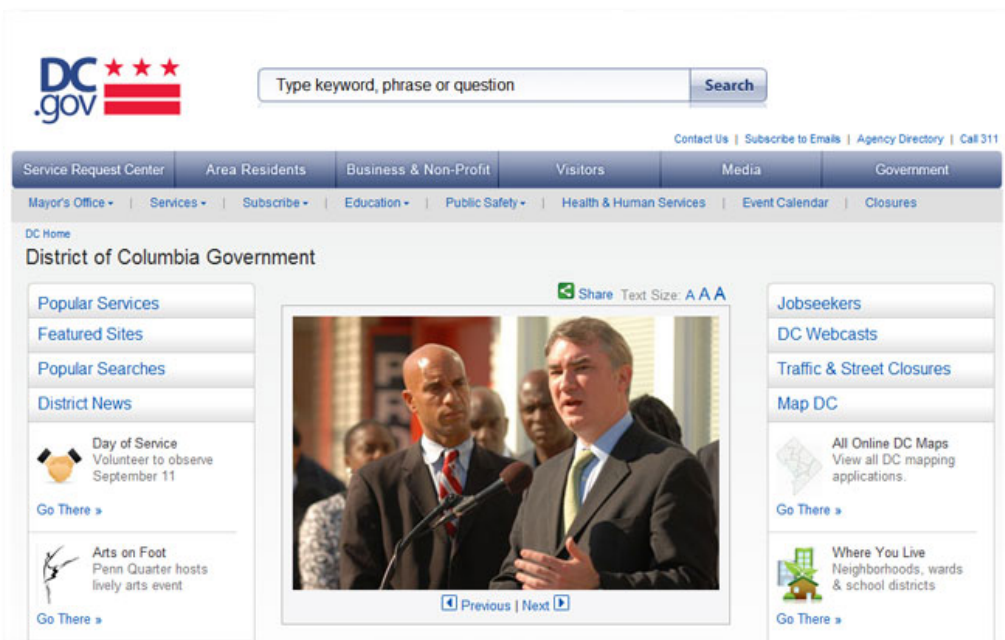


Figure 9: dc.gov

Kansas City, Missouri



Figure 10: kcmo.gov

Houston, Texas



Figure 11: houstontx.gov

New Orleans, Louisiana



Figure 12: cityofno.com

Navigation Research

SteelSMBology's approach to the Navigation research was to compile findings from existing studies within the Government space. The National Policy Research Council, examined 11,227 official state and local government websites. Each assessed on seven categories: usability, citizen responsiveness, accessibility for disabled visitors, information tools, online procurement, job opportunities, and interactive permits and payments. The top city websites (with a population over 250,000) based on this research were:

- Tampa, Florida
- Houston, Texas
- Fresno, California
- District of Colombia
- New Orleans, Louisiana

This list was combined with the Aspiration Peer Websites list to define the websites that would be evaluated for navigation trends and best practices.

Primary Navigation Trends

The primary navigation for each website was evaluated for organizational trends. The common trend in primary navigation among the websites was to organize the site into the following role-based sections:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Government
- Visitors

The exception was Tampa which has a very long and unorganized primary navigation.



Figure 13: Examples of Primary Navigation

Secondary Navigation Trends

Secondary navigation for each of the common items in the primary navigation was evaluated. There were two dominant approaches in how links in the secondary navigation were organized under Residents, a condensed topical grouping (ex. DC)) or a Long list of all links (ex. Tampa)

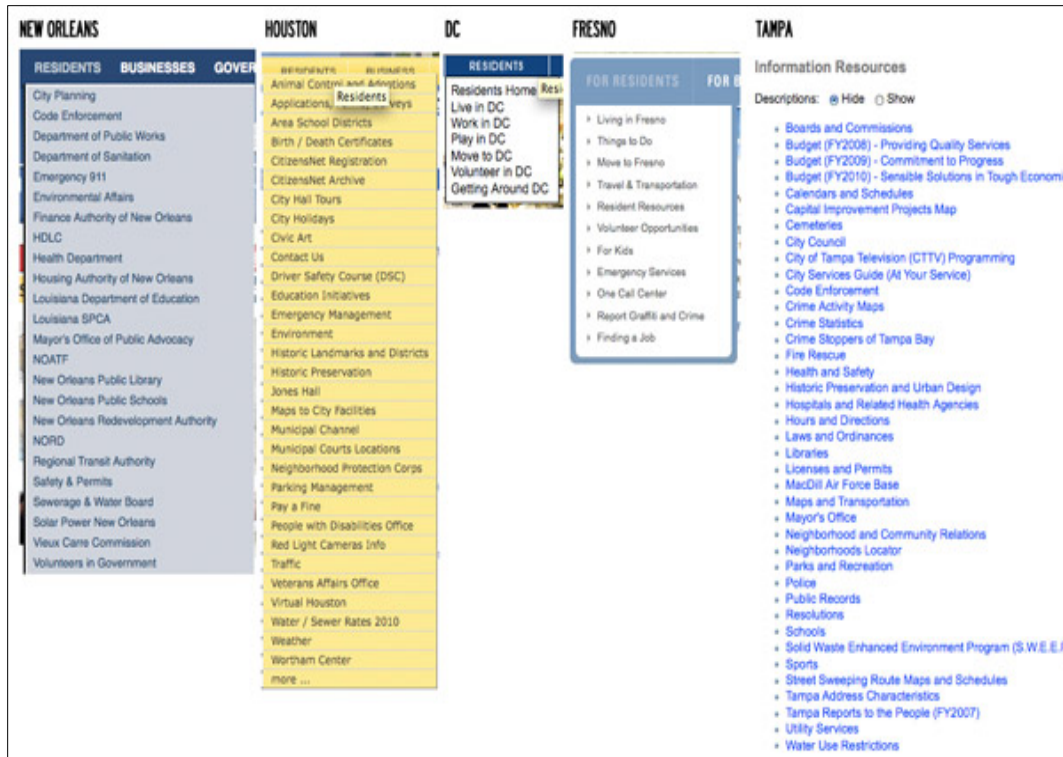


Figure 14: Examples of Resident's Secondary Navigation

Some common links in the secondary navigation for Residents include:

- Code Enforcement
- Emergency Management/Services
- Environment
- Public Records
- Kids/Youth
- Volunteer
- Mayor’s Office
- Schools and Education

The Business sections typically include development and some cities call out specific verticals that are of strategic interest to that city’s economy, such as Non Profits or Film and Video.

Common links for Business include:

- Safety, Licenses, Permits
- Bids and RFPs
- Boards and Commissions
- Tax Services
- Economic Development
- Doing Business with the City

Each city addresses the Government section differently; ranging from listing some prominent departments to having a collapsed list of choices.

Common links for the Government secondary navigation include:

- Mayor's Office
- City Council
- Departments
- Courts
- State and County Links

The cities all tend to take a fairly similar approach to the Visitors section. Most provide a 'things to do' menu item in the Residents section, and the content can also be accessed from the Visitor's section. This was one of the few examples of co-location of content.

Common links for the Visitor's secondary navigation include:

- Airport
- Travel and Transportation
- Accommodations
- Museums
- Parks and Recreation
- Where to Stay
- City History
- Convention Center

There were some additional observations that were common across all the websites evaluated.

- Most IA concepts neglect police, safety, health, money for the poor, and disability needs of citizens which should be easy to find without confusion
- Websites that strive for parallel structure in language sacrifice direct communication
- Most websites do not currently plan for the co-location of content

Taxonomy Research

SteelSMBology researched Taxonomy best practices and found relevant example Taxonomies for the basis of the Taxonomy recommendation, which will be covered later in this report. Two government entities published their Taxonomy, or at least pieces of it. Those entities were Utah.gov and Firstgov.gov.

Utah.gov

This is a government Taxonomy on the state level. It is more comprehensive than the needs of the City of Austin but still provides excellent guidance as there are many areas of overlap. The Utah Taxonomy is a collection of independent controlled vocabulary terms. It is divided into discrete, mutually exclusive facets (i.e., node labels) with smaller controlled vocabularies. Each facet has “labels.” The labels are the names used within facets and these are organized into sub-hierarchies. Multiple facet labels are assigned to items in the collection.

The facets used in Utah.gov Taxonomy are:

- **Topic:** The content of what the publication is “about.”
- **Agency:** The simplified name of the governmental agency publishing the resource or making it available on the Web. Values reference, but do not use, Library of Congress name authorities.
- **Type:** The nature or genre of the publication’s content.
- **Place:** A geographic political jurisdiction that the publication is “about.”
- **Audience:** The specific community sector for whom the publication or resource is intended.
- **Format:** The digital Internet Media Type (IMT) of the publication.
- **Language:** The language of the publication.
- **Decade:** The decade when a publication was issued.
- **Collection:** The larger physical or logical entity encompassing individual publications (e.g., state publication).
- **Service:** A system that provides the function for the end-user.

The Utah.gov Taxonomy can be browsed at <http://utahgov.net/utahtaxonomy/>

Firstgov.gov

This Taxonomy for this website is very in-depth since it covers content on a national scale. The Taxonomy can be browsed by the following methods:

- By Search
- By Organization
- By Topic
- By Audience
- By Location
- By Top Requests
- By Online Service

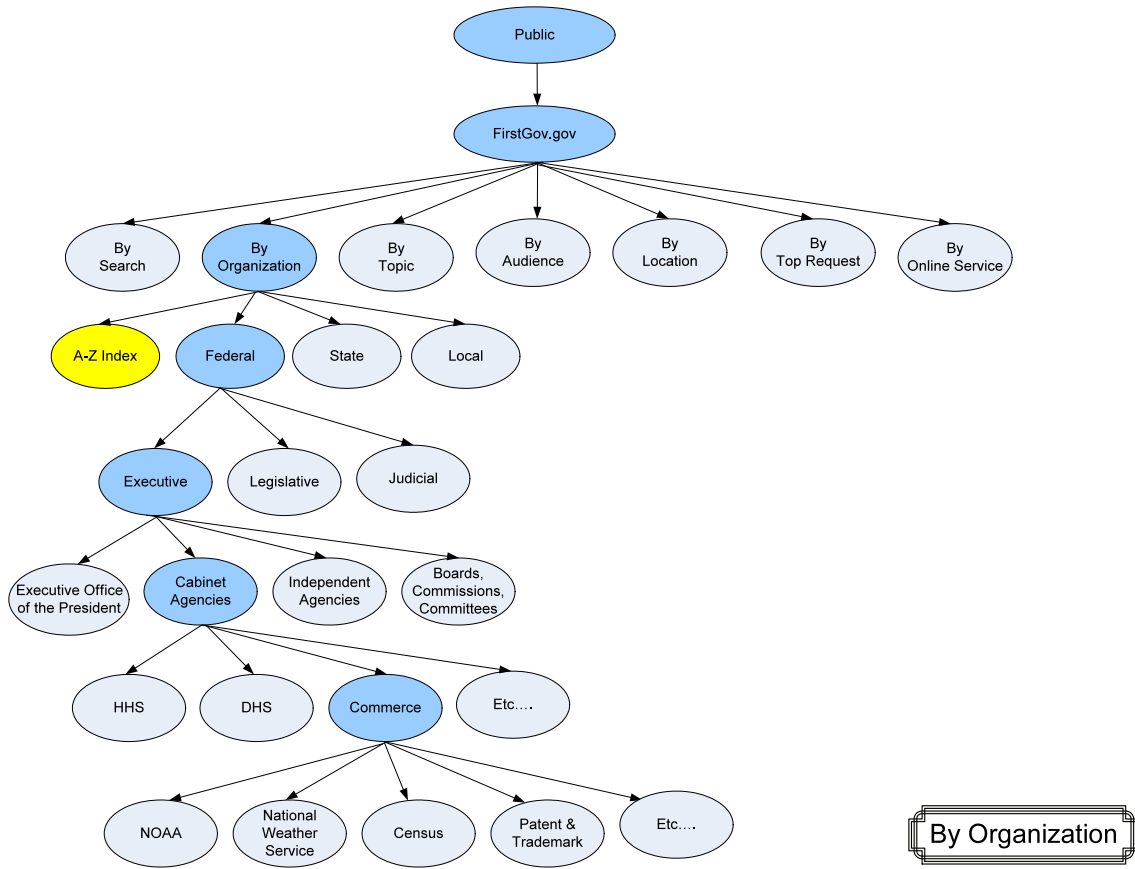


Figure 15: Firstgov.gov View By Organization

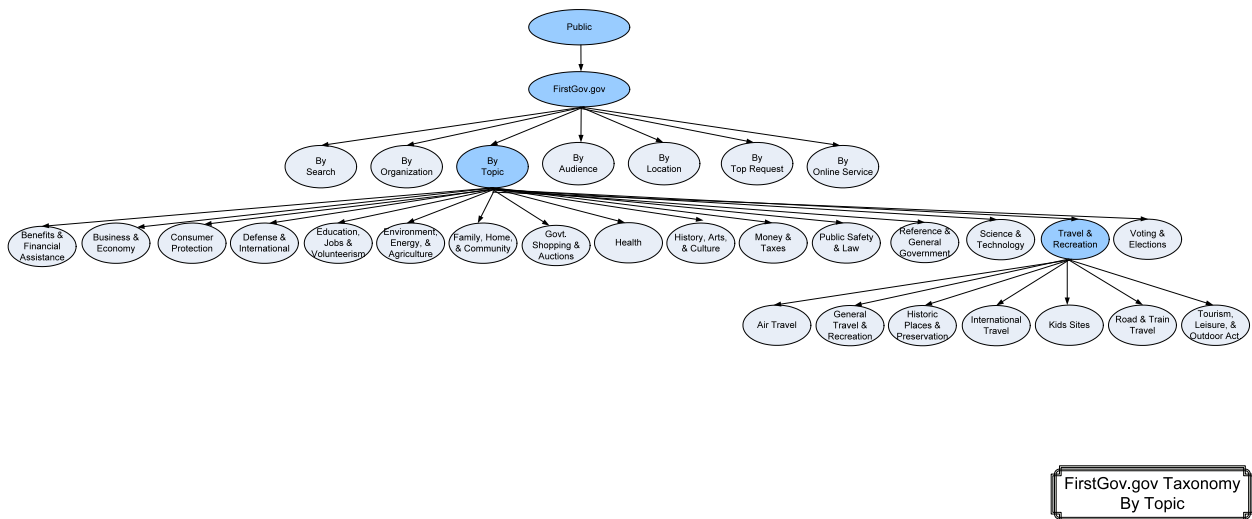


Figure 16: Firstgov.gov View By Topic

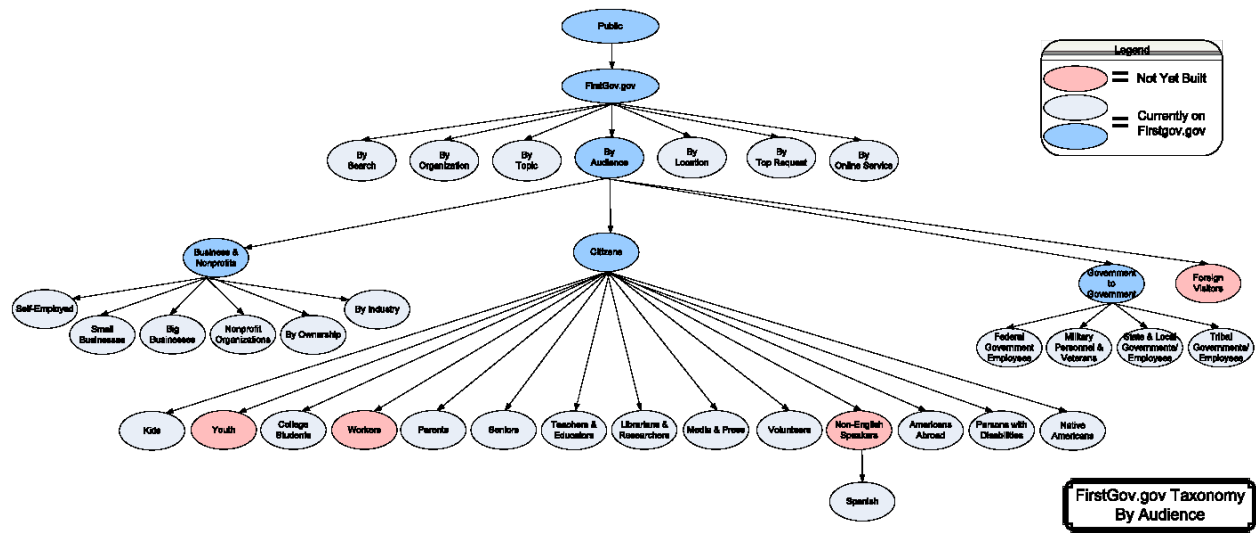


Figure 17: Firstgov.gov View By Audience

Recommendations

Based on the research above and industry best practices SteelSMBology makes the following recommendations for the City of Austin’s website Information Architecture.

Navigation Recommendations

The City’s website offers a large amount of information to multiple user groups, each with very different needs. In order to best accommodate these user groups and improve the online experience, SteelSMBology recommends that the website include the following types of navigation:

- Brand Bar
- Utility Navigation
- Primary Navigation
- Secondary Navigation (Dynamic submenu in each section)
- Breadcrumbs
- Footer Navigation

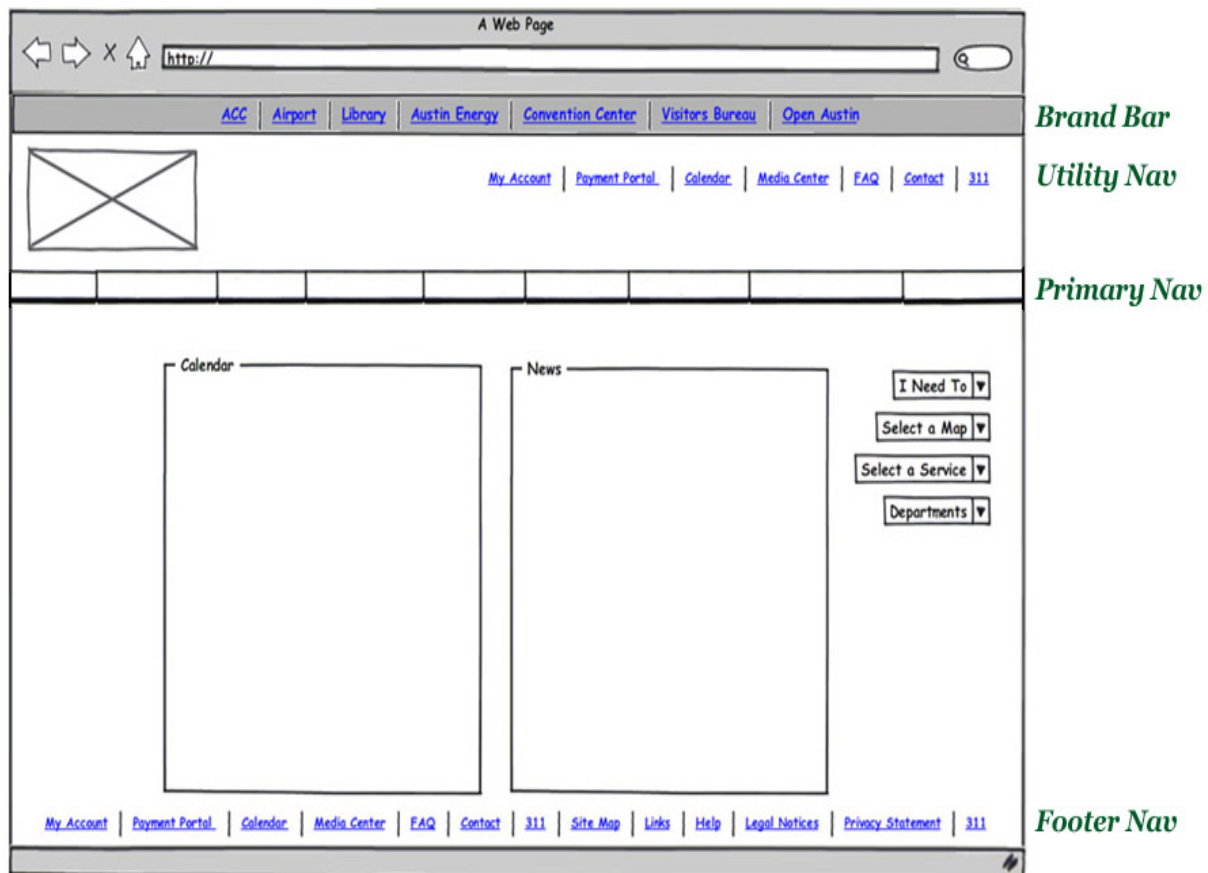


Figure 18: Sample Wireframe Illustrating the Multiple Types of Navigation

Brand Bar

Used by many enterprise sized organizations, the Brand Bar would include websites that serve Austinites as a team but are seen as unique self-contained sources, creating a ‘Family of Sites’ concept. The Brand Bar should be subtle and non-intrusive to the user experience and constant on all pages of the website and partner websites included in the Brand Bar.

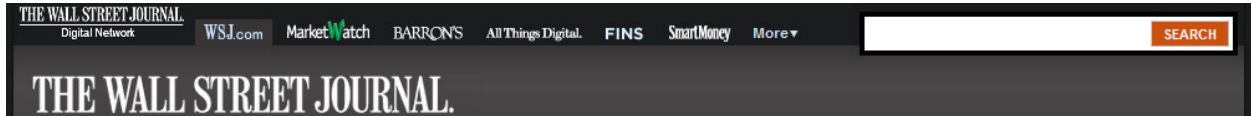


Figure 19: Example of the Brand Bar for the Wall Street Journal

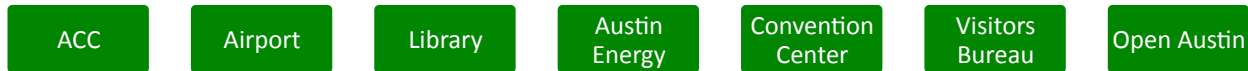


Figure 20: Recommended Brand Bar

Role-based Portal Navigation

- Organizes site into major role based portals for each major user group.
- Default view into Residential because they account for 70% of traffic.
- Saves the majority of users a click in locating content
- Step towards custom view without having to keep information on users
- Most IA concepts neglect police, safety, health, money for the poor and disability needs of citizens; should be easy to find without confusion
- Can bookmark own homepage with relevant content
- Allows more top level navigation elements in the area of health, safety and basic services



Figure 21: Recommended Role-based Navigation

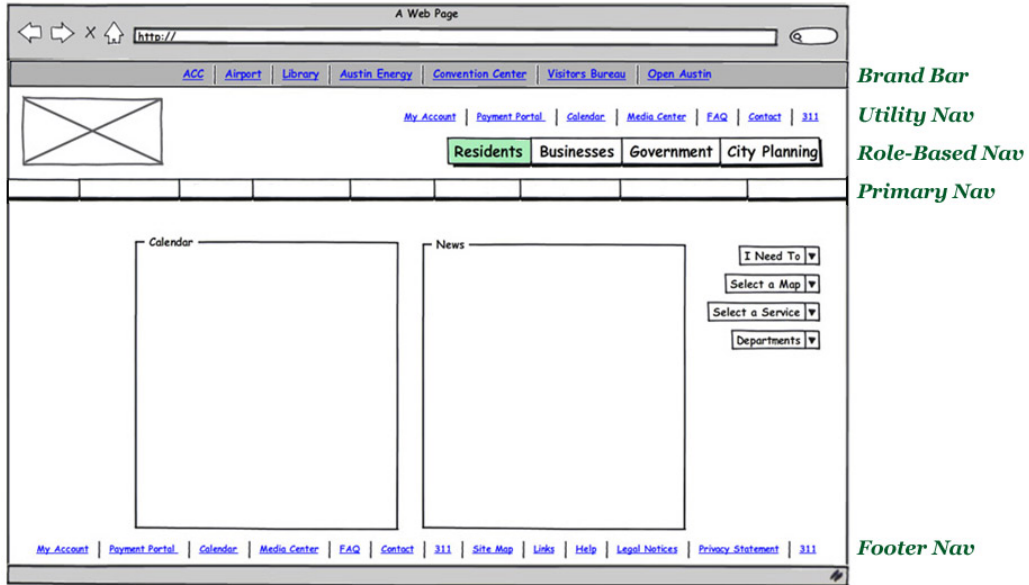


Figure 22: Sample Wireframe with Role-based Navigation

Utility Navigation

- Collection of tools and helpful pages that content which draws from all areas of the website or is always relevant
- Constant on all pages of the website

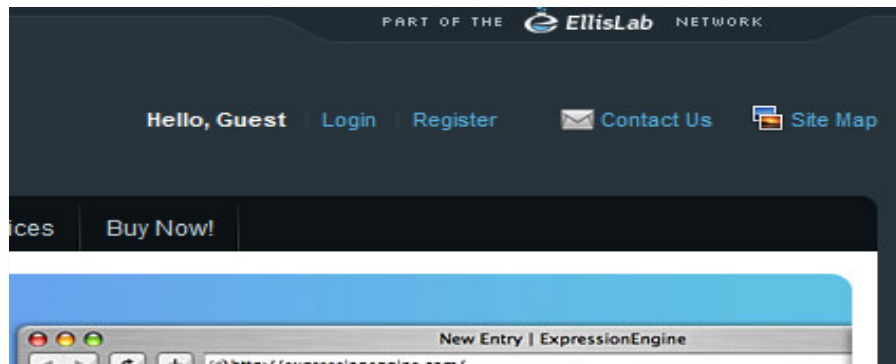


Figure 23: Example Utility Navigation



Figure 24: Recommended Utility Navigation

Breadcrumbs

- This type of navigation creates a trail that users can follow back to the homepage. For example:
 - Home > Category 1 > Bucket A > Bucket B > Bucket C.
- Breadcrumbs are used in conjunction with regular navigation and do not replace it
- Should always be HTML text links and in a smaller font
- Few city websites in the peer set are effectively using breadcrumbs because their sites splinter off at the departmental level
 - Opportunity: Unlike other city websites, a ground up rebuild will plan for co-location of content, making breadcrumbs possible.

Footer Navigation

- It's important to give users a quick way to the home page or key pages.
- Use of text-only links that are redundant to the other navigations, so your user doesn't have to scroll back up to the top of the page.
- Supplying this added convenience also allows another chance for you to use those important keywords.
- Use of a site map so users and search engines can quickly see the entire site



Figure 25: Recommended Footer Navigation

Primary and Secondary Navigation

Inside of each of the role-based navigation items there will be a unique primary and secondary navigation. The complete navigations can be found in Appendix A.

Taxonomy Recommendations

The Taxonomy is will evolve over time as the needs of the website change. In order for the Taxonomy to stay consistent and remain helpful over time there will need to be some business processes created for how and when the Taxonomy is updated. This process will for the most part be manual. Some Content Management Systems (CMS) have built-in or add-on features to help automate some of the Taxonomy management. Depending on the City of Austin's final choice for a CMS it would be impossible to recommend an automated process. It is suggested that the initial Taxonomy implemented for the website's launch be left alone for a period of time to get an accurate measure of how well the Taxonomy performs.

Taxonomy Business Processes

The first step in developing a business process for managing the Taxonomy will be to create a Taxonomy Leadership Team. This team will need to be responsible for maintaining the Taxonomy. Their duties will include, but not be limited to:

- Report to the center of excellence committee
- Manage the relationship between the users of the taxonomy
- Identify new opportunities for use of the taxonomy
- Maintain a change log of the taxonomy as it evolves
- Promote awareness and use of the taxonomy

A considerations document, or process, will need to be developed as a guideline for when changes are requested to the Taxonomy. This document or process should address the following key topics:

- Is the term relevant to the information maintained on the website?
- Does the term belong in an existing category or does it require a new category?
- Do any related, conflicting or existing terms already exist in the taxonomy?
- What costs are associated with adding the term?
- Does the term add value to search or how content is found on the website?
- Has the term been up for consideration before? Was it denied, if so, why?

When changes are made to the Taxonomy they need to be done in a consistent way so that it is easy to use and supports end users in their search for content. An Editorial Guidelines document is recommended to provide clear regulations to provide this consistency.

Issues commonly addressed in the Editorial Guidelines are:

- Abbreviations
- Ampersands
- Capitalization
- Continuations (More... or Other...)
- Duplicate Terms
- Languages and Character Sets
- Length Limits
- "Other" – Allowed or Forbidden?
- Plural vs. Singular Forms
- Relation Types and Limits
- Scope Notes
- Serial Comma

- Spaces
- Synonyms and Acronyms
- Term Order (Alphabetic or ...)
- Address what to do when rules conflict

<i>Rule Name</i>	<i>Example Editorial Rule</i>
Ampersands	The character '&' is preferred to the word 'and'. Example: Use “Manuals & Forms”, not “Manuals and Forms”.
Serial Comma	If a category name includes more than two items, separate the items by commas. The last item is separated by the character '&' which IS NOT preceded by a comma. Example: “Education, Learning & Employment”, not “Education, Learning, & Employment”.
Capitalization	Use title case (where all words except articles are capitalized). Example: “Education, Learning & Employment” NOT “Education, learning & employment” NOT “EDUCATION, LEARNING & EMPLOYMENT” NOT “education, learning & employment”

Figure 26: Example Items in the Editorial Guidelines

Taxonomy Recommendation

The Taxonomy recommendation can be viewed in Appendix B.

Search Recommendations

The Search functionality is highly dependent on the website’s Content Management System and search tool that has yet to be selected for the new website. The search recommendation will be outlined in detail in the Technology Report. On a high level, SteelSMBology recommends that the technology selected support a faceted search so that the Taxonomy can be leveraged to better serve the website users.

SteelSMBology recommends that the following features be considered in making a final search technology decision:

- Filtered results
- Advanced search
- ‘Did you mean’ feature for typos and similar results
- Search within results
- Similar or related searches/results

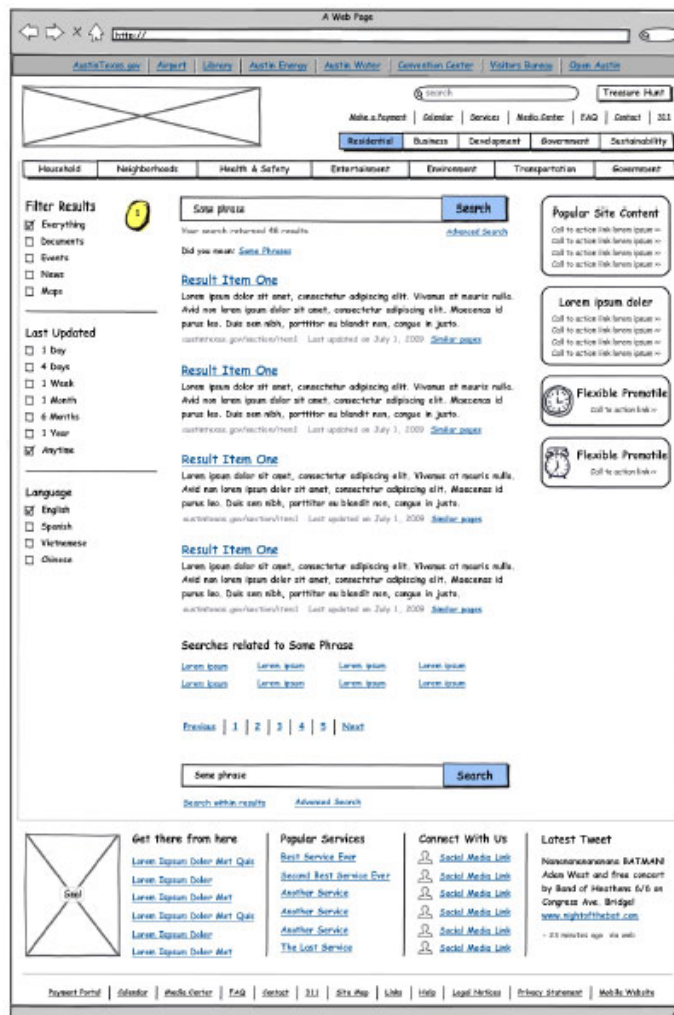


Figure 27: Wireframe of Search Results

Wireframe Recommendations

SteelSMBology created various wireframes for the City of Austin website. These wireframes include general page templates, as well as, page specific templates for the standard and mobile view of the website.

The list of wireframes included are:

- Homepage
- Basic 2 Column
- Basic 3 Column
- Portal
- Calendar
- Online Form
- Search Results
- Video
- Department
- Neighborhoods
- Blog: Category
- Blog: Entry
- List: Summary
- Directory
- Social Media Center
- Mobile: List View
- Mobile: Content View

These wireframes can be viewed in Appendix C.

Additional Recommendations

Austin-Bergstrom International Airport

In the interviews conducted by SteelSMBology Austin-Bergstrom International Airport expressed interest in raising the presentation of the airport to world-class profile for national and international travel. SteelSMBology compared Austin-Bergstrom International Airport website to websites of the top international airports classified by Skytrax

Websites rated average of 4 or 5 stars. The rankings were based on:

- Ease of Use
- Language Options
- Flight Information
- Site Design and Layout
- Parking/Transportation Information
- Transit/Local Hotel Details
- Terminal Guide/Plans

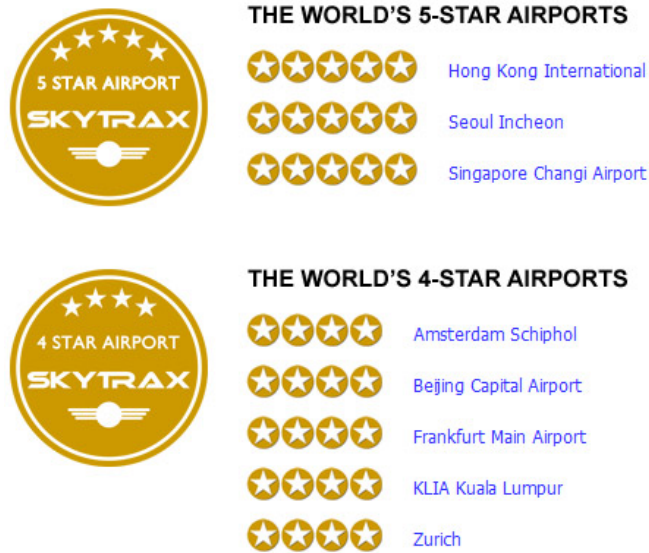


Figure 28: Sky Trax Star Ratings

Common Trends

The websites identified in the Skytrax report were used as competitive set for review. Several common trends emerged from reviewing each airport website.

- Websites brought commonly used features to the homepage
 - Flight information
 - Airport/Travel guide links
 - Incorporate search bar into header
- Common navigation links include:
 - Flight information
 - Airport/Passenger guide

- Shopping and dining
- About the airport

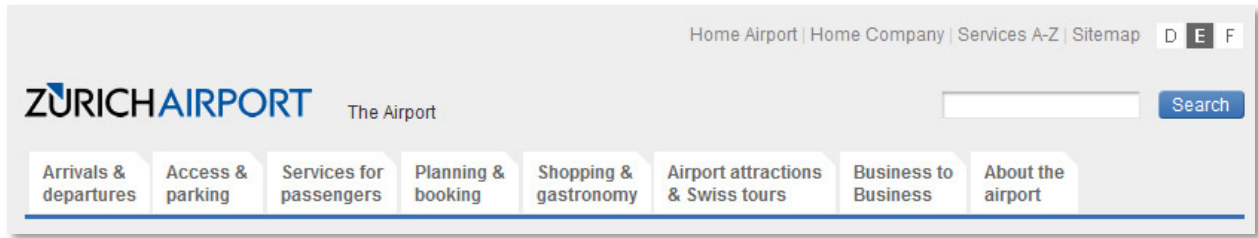


Figure 29: Website Header for the Zurich Airport

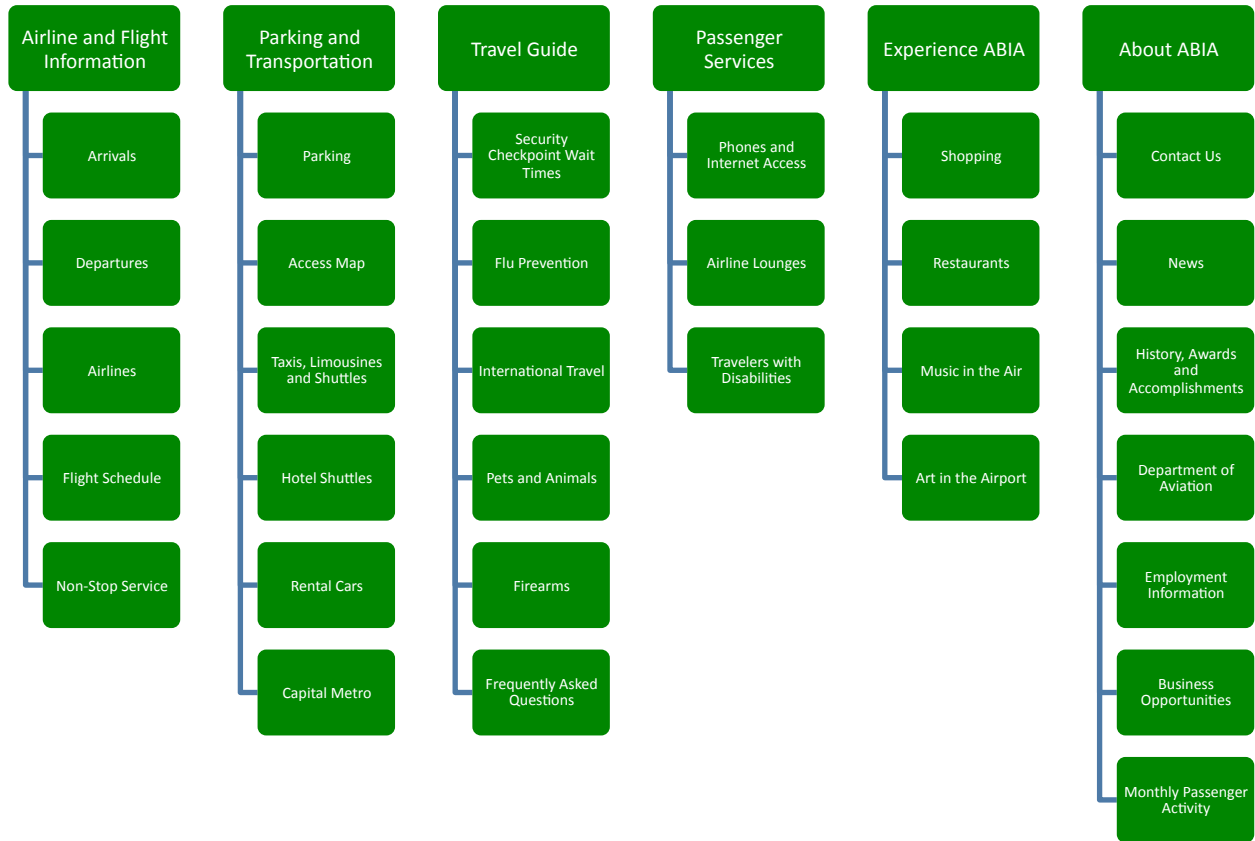
In addition to evaluating the competitive set of websites, SteelSMBology also evaluated the Google Analytics (for a six month period) of the current Austin-Bergstrom International Airport website to see what pages and information was commonly used by visitors. The analysis showed 476 pages indexed over a six month period using Google Analytics and that 89% of unique hits occur on the top 20 pages of the airport website.

The top 20 pages on the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport website are:

- Airlines
- Transportation
- Maps
- Parking
- Non Stop Flights
- Parking Rates
- Travel Tips
- Contact ABIA
- About ABIA
- Parking Map
- Jobs
- Sitemap
- Business Opportunities
- Concourse Map
- News Releases
- FAQ
- Parking Lots
- Airline Map
- Around Austin
- Fast Facts

Recommended Primary Navigation

By combining usage of the current website, analysis from the competitive set, and following best practices SteelSMBology recommends the following primary navigation for the Austin-Bergstrom International Airport website. The recommendation also showcases some uniquely Austin features to create a memorable impression.



Austin Library

SteelSMBology reviewed the Google Analytics on the Library website over a six month period to see what the popular pages were. In addition, trend research was gathered from assessing successful library website redesign projects.

Successful Re-Design Projects

To view cached pages of a website's previous look, visit: [WayBack Machine](#)

[Cecil County Public Library](#) - Complete redesign which showcases Web 2.0 functionalities and customizable content, engages patron participation, features an easy to use navigational structure with prominent displays of library events, materials and resources, and offers a wealth of new content.

[Salinas Public Library, Salinas, California](#) - Complete re-design which incorporated new content, navigation structure, and usability.

Lessons learned: [aadl.org 3.0](#) - overview of what it took to get a successful overhaul implemented.

[UAA/APU Consortium Library '05 Re-Design](#) - overview of process.

Allan Bean Centre Library: <http://www.burwood.org.nz/library.asp>. A special library in New Zealand for people with spinal injury, brain injury, strokes etc and their families.

[University of Washington Libraries 2004 redesign](#) - overview of process

[Johnson County Library \(KS\)](#) - Timeframe for redevelopment, usability studies, and results reporting 2007

[DeKalb County Public Library, GA](#) - complete re-design, launched on July 15, 2008. Previous design looked like [this](#)

[Ventura County Library, CA](#) - complete re-design launched 12-2009 of original 2001 public library website. Previous design looked like: [this](#).

[Bloomfield Township Public Library, MI](#) - complete re-design on Drupal launched in June 2009.

Figure 30: Successful Websites Determined by libsucces.org

Common Trends Activity

Common Features:

- Support for users with disabilities
- Multi-language support
- Blog
- Search tool
- 'How do I...?' dropdown menu

Common Navigation:

- My Account
- Catalog (Browse)
- Events
- Youth
- Research

- About Information
- Contact Information
- Good Reads

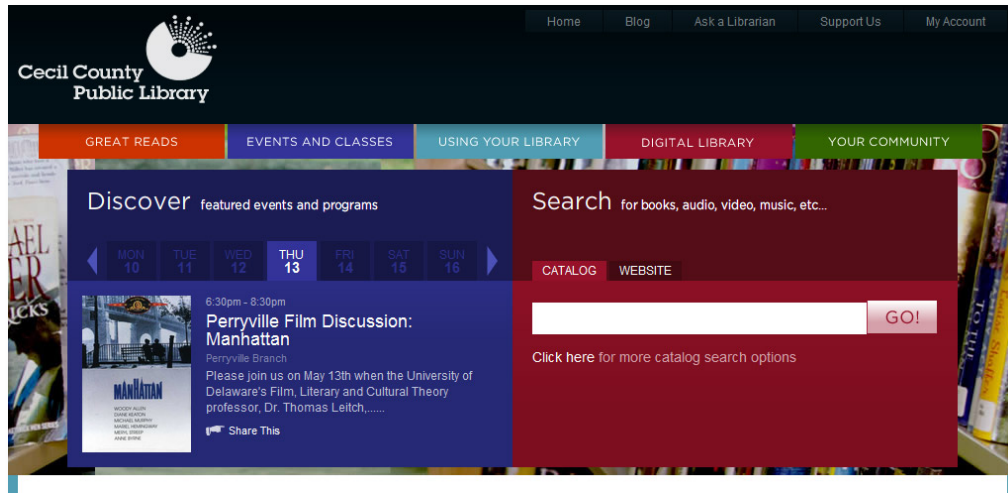


Figure 31: Example Primary Navigation and Utility Navigation for Cecil County Public Library

Activity Trends on Current Site

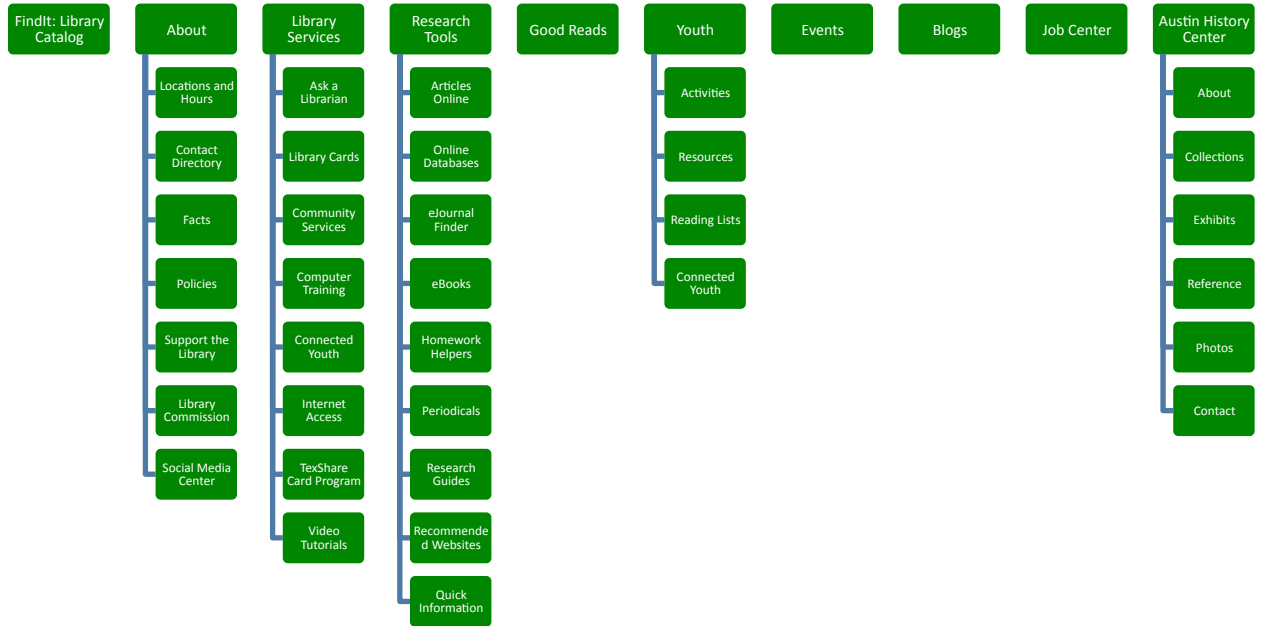
1,659 pages were indexed over a six month period using Google Analytics. 83% of unique hits occur on the top 16 pages of the library website.

The top 16 pages on the Library website are:

- [Hours and Location](#)
- Wireless Access
- Online Databases
- Everything Austin Jobs
- Interlibrary Loan
- Everything Austin
- Free Email and
- Web Pages
- [Library Services](#)
- [FindIt Online Catalog](#)
- Good Reads
- [Youth Programs](#)
- [Research Tools](#)
- [About the Library](#)
- Great Sites for Job Hunting
- [Austin History Center](#)

Note: Items in green are current primary navigation items

Recommended Primary Navigation



Recommended Utility Navigation



Appendix

Links and Additional Reading

- <http://www.utah.gov>
- <http://www.kansas.gov>
- <http://www.dc.gov>
- <http://www.boston.gov>
- <http://www.sfgov.org>
- <http://www.usa.gov/webcontent/technology/search/bestpractices.shtml>
- http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9005371/Report_Card_The_Best_E_Government_Sites
- <http://www.airlinequality.com/AirportRanking/5-Star.htm>
- http://www.libsuccess.org/index.php?title=Website_Design#Successful_Re-Design_Projects
- <http://www.blyberg.net/2005/12/04/lessons-learned-aadlorg-30/>

IA Work Session Notes

- Need to work on what the top navigation is – not just from the home page
- Do people need to get to all of the areas from every page, or once they get into a section, like the library, is it OK that they go back to the home page to go somewhere else?
- Home
- News
- Events
- Departments – depends on the citizen understanding the department structure
- Services
- COA is a family of sites: Toggle between sites at the highest level – then below the universal site navigation of the site that you are in

Brand Bar on the top (microsites):

- Home
- Airport
- Library
- ACC:
 - Arts & Leisure
 - Business
 - Pay
 - Real Estate/Development
- Austin Energy
- Convention Center
- Visitor's Bureau

Outdoors/Entertainment/ Recreation:

- Parks
- Tennis
- Museums
- Concerts
- Lakes
- Cemeteries?
- Festivals
- Biking
- Trails
- Nature Preserves
- Boating
- Programs
- Camps
- Libraries
- Pools
- Restaurants
- EMS

Personalization

- First time you go to the site the top toggle bar has everything, but you can log in and pick what top navigation you want/need
- Home becomes like iGoogle, Home is different than ACC giving that option

Utilities bar:

- Communicate w/ City
- Get Info
- Give Info
- Payment Center
- Events
- Classes & Programs
- Quick links too

Under ACC, with or without the “My”, want it to be a place?

- My Home
- My Business
- My Government
- My Family
- My Neighborhood
- My Environment
- My Entertainment
- My Transportation
- My New Life in Austin
- My Project
- My Bills
- My Records
- My Data
- My Complaint
- My Jobs
- My Interests
- My Safety

Navigation Best Practices

- **Be consistent and consolidate wherever possible.** "Help," "FAQ," and "Instructions" can be all put into one page or one category that makes it easy for users to find that type of information. Break information up inside the category if you need to. In addition, saying "Instructions for filling out such and such form," uses the keywords of what the page is about, helping search engines find the page.
- **Use breadcrumb trails.** This type of navigation literally creates a trail that users can follow back to where they came from. For example: Home > Category 1> Bucket A > Bucket B > Bucket C.
- **Breadcrumbs are used in conjunction with regular navigation.** They don't replace it. They're nearly always text links, in a smaller font. Large sites should have top-of-the-page navigation pointing to the top-level pages and category navigation on the left with breadcrumb navigation on the page itself. Footer navigation should be placed at the bottom of the page.
- **The footer of web pages is also important.** It's important to give your users a quick way to the home page or key pages. The footer is a good place to put text-only links that are redundant to

the top-level navigation, so your user doesn't have to scroll back up to the top of the page. Supplying this added convenience also allows another chance for you to use those important keywords, and helps users who have their graphics turned off.

- **Use keyword phrases within your main content links.** These links may go to the exact same place as top-level navigation links but they're labeled with keywords related to the same topic. For example, a top-level navigation link may be labeled "Local Weather Forecasts," while a text link lower down on the page from inside a paragraph (pointing to the same page) might say "Weather for your Zip Code." Since users and search engines use both terms heavily, you're covering your bases by taking this extra measure.
- **Always use a sitemap.** Search engines love to have a site map through which they can quickly and easily access your site's pages for indexing. When creating a site map for your websites, be sure to put it at the root level (not within any subfolders or directories), link to it from your home page, and name it site_map.html (or .htm, whichever extension you are using for your site). A table of contents is also helpful in some cases.

Why Use Breadcrumbs?

- Great Usability
- Easy to Backtrack
- Eliminate Additional Clicks
- Shows Users Hierarchy
- Visually Pleasing
- Provides Additional Help
- Lower Bounce Rates
- Builds Interest

Source: <http://www.hongkiat.com/blog/breadcrumb-navigation-examined-best-practices-examples>

Appendix Attachment A: primary and secondary navigation recommendations for each of the role-based portals.

Appendix Attachment B: Taxonomy recommendations for the City of Austin website.

Appendix Attachment C: wireframe recommendations for the City of Austin website.