



# First Things First: IA and CSS

Due to advances in web development technologies, we must reexamine and modernize the practice of information architecture.

# Presented by

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- Elegant Hack; Boxes and Arrows

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- Yahoo!, Inc

# Background & Context

- An IA and a Webdev both arrived at this conclusion
- Need is pressing in big companies like Yahoo!
  - Internal need for speed and efficiency
  - Discreet teams and specializations
- Makes sense for individuals too
  - Probably already doing it...



# Where We've Been

Web Development

# Meaningless Translations

- Tag soup is bad. Semantic HTML has been used for presentation, presentational HTML has been used for meaning. To get by, we've been translating designs into a rats nest of **meaningless** markup.
- All **relationships**, precise **specifications**, and **semantic meaning** are lost in this destructive translation process.



## Headline

- Bullet Point One
- Bullet Point Two
- Bullet Point Three
- Bullet Point Four

# Meaningless Translations

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```
<h4>Header</h4>
<ul>
  <li><a href="">list contents</a></li>
  <li><a href="">list contents</a></li>
</ul>
```

# Meaningless Translations

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```
<table cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 border=0>
  <tr>
    <td colspan=2>Module Header</td>
  </tr>
  <tr>
    <td colspan=2>
      <table cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 border=0>
        <tr>
          <td>&#149;<!-- list bullet --></td>
          <td><a href="url">list contents, that wrap pretty</a></td>
        </tr>
        <tr>
          <td>&#149;<!-- list bullet --></td>
          <td><a href="url">list contents, that wrap pretty</a></td>
        </tr>
      </table>
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

# Abusing, Hacking and Confusing HTML

- Aggressive optimization makes documents unreadable

```
<a
href="/q?s=^IXIC&d=c&k=c4&t=ld"></a></td></tr><tr align=right><td align=left nowrap><a
href="/q?d=t&s=^DJI"><small> <nobr>Dow</nobr></small></a></td><td
nowrap><small>10,208.80</small></td><td nowrap><small><font
color=ff0020>-38.79</font></small></td><td nowrap><small><font
color=ff0020>(-0.38%)</font></small></td></tr><tr align=right><td align=left nowrap><a
href="/q?d=t&s=^IXIC"><small><nobr>Nasdaq</nobr></small></a></td><td
nowrap><small>1,914.88</small></td><td nowrap><small><font
color=ff0020>-16.78</font></small></td><td nowrap><small><font
color=ff0020>(-0.87%)</font></small></td></tr><tr align=right><td align=left nowrap><a
href="/q?d=t&s=^GSPC"><small><nobr>S&amp;P 500</nobr></small></a></td><td
nowrap><small>1,111.47</small></td><td nowrap><small><font
color=ff0020>-3.67</font></small></td><td nowrap><small><font
color=ff0020>(-0.33%)</font></small></td></tr><tr align=right><td align=left nowrap><a
href="/q?d=t&s=^TNX"><small>10-Yr Bond</small></a></td><td
nowrap><small>4.484%</small></td><td nowrap><small>+0.005</small></td><td></td></tr><tr
align=right><td align=left colspan=2 nowrap><a href="/q?d=t&s=^TV.N"><small>NYSE
Volume</small></a></td><td colspan=2 nowrap><small>1,458,671,000</small></td></tr><tr
align=right><td align=left colspan=2 nowrap><a href="/q?d=t&s=^TV.O"><small>Nasdaq
Volume</small></a></td><td colspan=2 nowrap><small>2,116,805,000</small></td></tr><tr><td
align=center colspan=4><font face=arial size=-2>Quote data provided by
Reuters</font></td></tr><tr><td align=center colspan=4 width=100%><font face=arial
size=-2><b>Brokers:</b></td></tr>
```



# Abusing, Hacking and Confusing HTML

- Aggressive optimization makes documents unreadable
- Pixel-Precise, “Canvas Based” Design
  - Locks content into single device / purpose / visualization

```
<hr size=1 noshade width=175></TD>
<TD WIDTH=10></TD><TD><center><a
href="http://us.rd.yahoo.com/auctions/frontpage/northnorth/*http://user.auctions.shopping.y
ahoo.com/showcase/99noreserve04"><IMG
SRC="http://a708.g.a.yimg.com/7/708/499/000/auctions.yimg.com/phtml/auc/us/images/akamai5/s
ummer_sale325.gif" WIDTH=325 HEIGHT=90 BORDER=0 alt="Summer Sale Showcase"></a></center>
<center>
<table cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 border=0><tr><td>
<table cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 border=0><tr><td
height=15></td></tr></table></td></tr></table>
<table cellpadding=2 cellspacing=0 border=0 width="375" class=yaucbgc4>
<tr><td align=center><small><b>Autos Spotlight</b></small></td></tr></table>
<table cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 border=0 width="375" class=yaucc4>
<tr><td height=1><table cellpadding=0 cellspacing=0 border=0><tr><td
height=1></td></tr></table></td></tr></table>
<TABLE WIDTH="325" BORDER=0 CELLPADDING=2 CELLSPACING=2>
<tr><TD VALIGN=TOP align=center width="33%"><A
href="http://us.rd.yahoo.com/auctions/frontpage/north3spots/motorcycles/*http://list.auctio
ns.shopping.yahoo.com/26308-category-leaf.html"><IMG border="1" alt="Motorcycles" height=75
```

# Abusing, Hacking and Confusing HTML

- Aggressive optimization makes documents unreadable
- Pixel-Precise, “Canvas Based” Design
  - Locks content into single device / purpose / visualization
- Results in a relatively useless and unimportant specialization.
  - Web Dev’s make it work, but don’t add understanding or even preserve meaning

# Pointless Collaboration

- Since
  - Webdev's and IA's were not neighbors in the process
  - Webdev's work was mysterious alchemy
  - Webdev's work carried/preserved no IA meaning
- There hasn't been a pressing need for collaborative deliverables or coordinated/co-informed work
- Until now...



# Where We Are

Web Development

# Standards-Based Web Development

- Separation of Structure, Presentation and Behavior
- “Layered Semantic Markup” with “Graded Browser Support”
- Progressive Enhancement – build upon meaningful **roots**  
(Champeon and Finck)
- Semantics now play central and crucial role, allowing HTML to be **explicit** and **relational**
- It’s now possible for **context**, **meaning** and **intent** to survive the entire development process

# Modular Development

The image displays a car dealership website with several modular components overlaid to illustrate modular development. The main site features a navigation bar with links for Home, New Cars, Used Cars, Research, Finance, Insurance, Maintenance, and My Autos. Below the navigation bar are sections for New Cars and Used Cars, each with a 'View' link. A sidebar on the left contains search filters for Make, Model, Category, and Price Range, along with a 'Need help choosing?' section. A 'New Model Showcase' section is also visible. Overlaid on the main site are two smaller versions of the New Cars and Used Cars sections, each with a 'View' link. A list of file names and their descriptions is provided on the right side of the image.

**NEW CARS [ View ]**

**USED CARS [ View ]**

**AD: 180PX X 150PX [ View ]**

**ADVERTISMENT**

**NEW MODEL SHOWCASE [ View ]**

- [MySI](#) - This is the Sign In for My Autos
- [MySelling](#) - This file defines the Selling section of the My Auto Center page.
- [MyTop](#) - This file defines the Top portion of the My Auto Center page.
- [MyTrackHistory](#) - This is the text for the History module on the My Autos, Track Performance Page.
- [MyTrackSummary](#) - This is the text for the Summary module on the My Autos, Track Performance Page.
- [MyTrackTop](#) - This is the text for the top of the My Autos, Track Performance Page.
- [MyTrackWeek](#) - This is the text for the Performance this Week module on the My Autos, Track Performance Page.
- [MyVehicle](#) - [[MODULE\_DESCRIPTION]]
- [MyVehicleTop](#) -
- [NewBrowseFeatured](#) - This file describes the New Cars Category Browse Type Featured Article module.
- [NewCarBuy](#) - This is the Splash Page for the New Car Buy
- [NewCarBuyersGuide](#) - Defines the Buyer's Guide
- [NewCarFind](#) - Defines several blocks of lists for finding new cars
- [NewCarFindCategory](#) - This file defines the New Cars: Find a Car: Browse by Category module.
- [NewCarFindHead](#) - This file defines the New Cars: Find a Car: Header module.
- [NewCarFindMake](#) - This file defines the New Cars: Find a Car: Browse by Make module.
- [NewCarFindMostPopular](#) - This file defines the New Cars: Find a Car: Most Popular New Vehicles module.
- [NewCarFindMy](#) - This file defines the New Cars: Find a Car: Membership/My Recent module.

# Rich Meaning Within Each Module

Used Cars

Find cars near you in

Select Make

ZIP Code:

[Sell your car - KBB](#)

[Lemon check - Mo](#)

[Certified Pre Ov](#)

[New Model Show](#)

## Used Cars

Find cars near you in

Select Make

ZIP Code:

[Sell your car - KBB](#)

[Lemon check - More](#)

[Certified Pre Ov](#)

Discover the value of

[New Model Show](#)

```
<div id="yat_used_cars">
  <div class="head">
    <a href="/used_cars/">Find cars near you in
  </div>
  <div class="body">
    <div>
      <select name="make">
    </div>
    <div>
      <small>ZIP Code:</small>
      <input name="zip" si
      <input class="yat_bu
    </div>
    <p>
      <b class="yatclr"><a
    </p>
  </div>
  <div class="body">
    Discover the value of CP
  </div>
</div>
```

```

  padding: 10px;
}

.head {
  background-color: #A0AD99;
  padding: 0px 10px 4px 10px;
}

.head {
  margin: 0;
}

.head {
  text-decoration: none;
}

.body {
  padding: 5px 10px 7px 10px;
  background-color: #DBE0D9;
}
}
```

# Answered the Call

- We have answered the call to “**properly separate the components** [so we can] **enable different strategies**”
- There are now multiple components and layers, yet certain [semantic] information persists.
- Persistent elements should be identified as early as possible in the process
- Enter: Information Architecture...

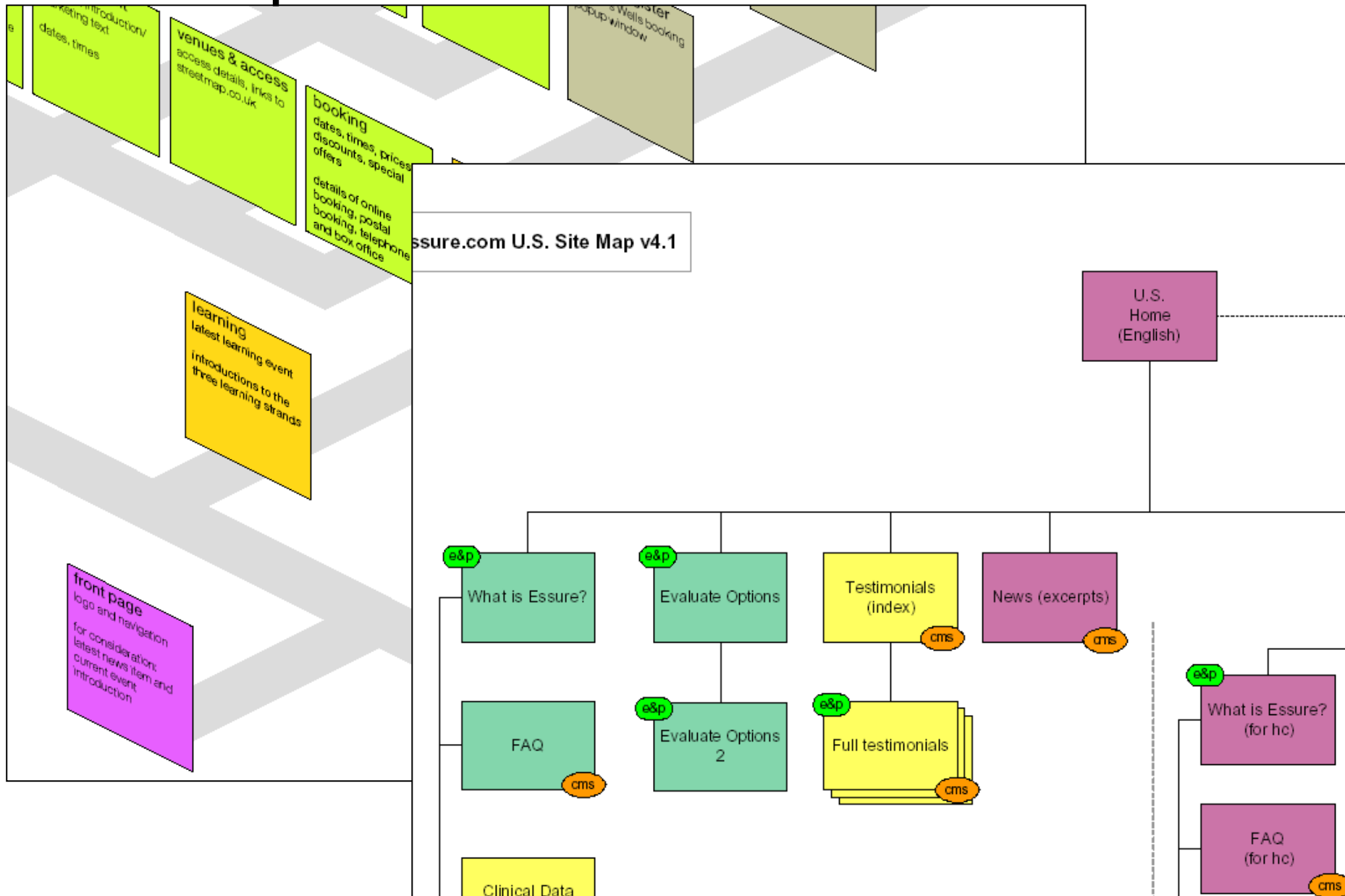




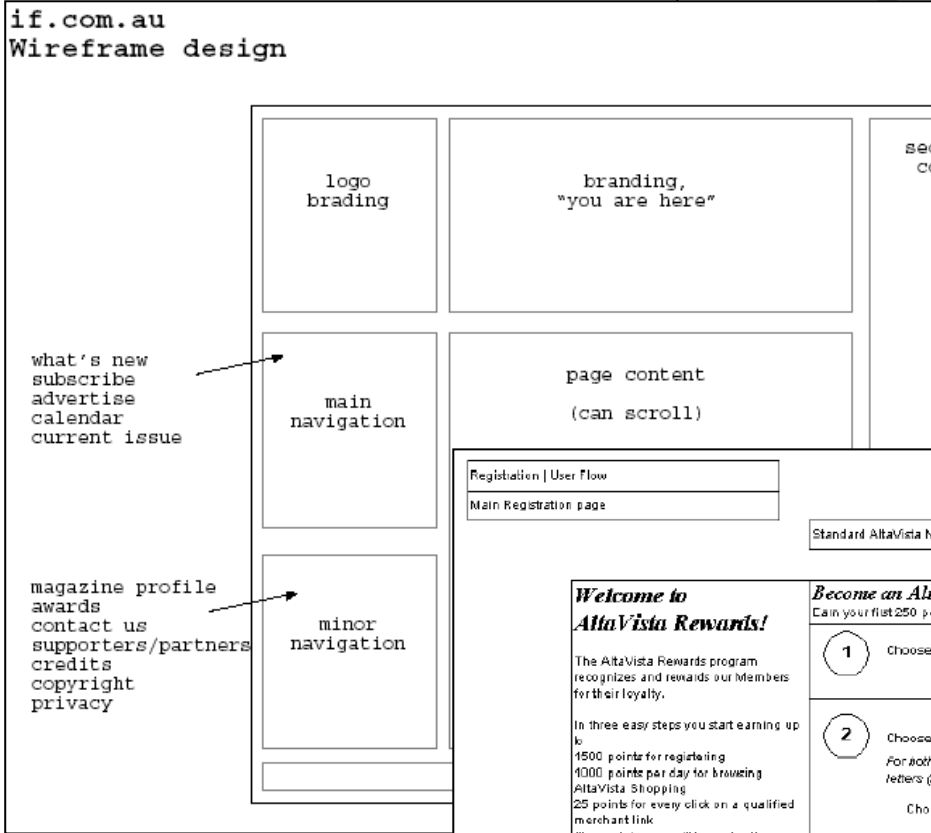
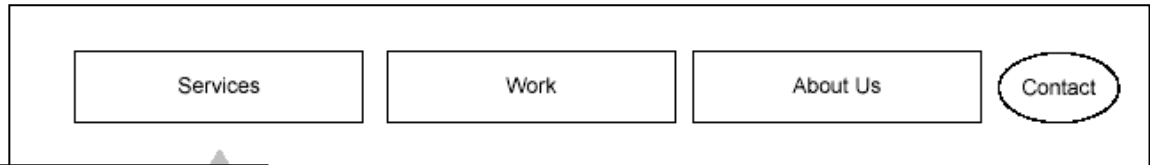
# Where We've Been

Information Architecture

# Site Maps

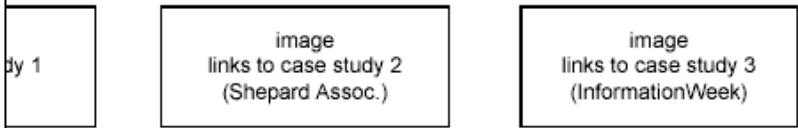


# Wireframes



To get the most from your online business, you have to start at the beginning: What do users want? Studio Sungo can help define those needs, and then design the experience that makes your audience happy, makes your brand stronger, and makes your web investment pay off.

[What can we do for you?](#)



Registration | User Flow  
Main Registration page

Standard AltaVista Navigation - Network Nav

**Welcome to AltaVista Rewards!**

The AltaVista Rewards program recognizes and rewards our Members for their loyalty.

In three easy steps you start earning up to:

- 1500 points for registering
- 1000 points per day for browsing AltaVista Shopping
- 25 points for every click on a qualified merchant link
- 40 points for every \$1 spent with a qualified merchant

Your AltaVista membership also entitles you to:

- Free Internet access
- Free Email
- A personalized Startup page on My Live!
- Automatic alerts about stock or news events
- Real time stock quotes
- And much more!

**Privacy Policy**

AltaVista will never sell or distribute personally identifiable information to anyone without your consent. For more

**Become an AltaVista Rewards Member Today!**  
Earn your first 250 points by completing sections 1, 2 & 3

- Choose The Country You Live In  
United States International Restrictions
- Choose your AltaVista Member ID and Password  
For both MemberID and password, begin with a letter and include only letters (a-z), numbers (0-9), and the underscore (\_). Do not include any spaces.

Choose A Member ID example: bigdaw\_24

Password

Confirm Password

If you forget your password, we'll ask you to answer one of the questions below

Password Reminder Question - select one -

Password Reminder Answer example: Power

And we'll send your password to the email address indicated here.

Current Email Address

If you don't have an Email address, you can set one up now

Yes, activate an AltaVista email address.  
Your Email address will be [AltaVista Member Name]@atavista.com

[ion Week](#)  
little buckets hold content?

@studiosungo.com

- Customize Your AltaVista

# Good, but not quite right...

- Too precise for Visual Designers
  - Communicate / influence decisions that Visual Designers are tasked with.
- Too vague for Web Developers
  - Don't effectively specify hierarchy, semantics, grouping or relationships.


# Dan Brown's Wireframes – Getting Close!

- Much better at communicating hierarchy and relationship
- But still not communicating the modern info that today's Web Developers need!

**1**


**LOOK-UP SCHEDULE/FARES**

The Check Flights function provides a gateway into the Travability booking engine. Customers supply an origin, a destination, a departure and a return time. The engine returns a list of relevant flights. The form requesting this information appears on the home page. The form might look like this:




**LOG INTO DIVIDEND MILES ACCOUNT**

A small form allows Dividend Miles customers to log into their account. The form requests the account number and pin. This area of the page also includes a link to the Dividend Miles enrollment form, and a link to information about the Dividend Miles program. The form might look something like this:



**LOOK-UP FLIGHT STATUS (FLIFO)**

Customers supply a flight number, and the system returns the current flight status. To help customers understand "flight status," the form includes the verbiage "arrival time" and "departure time." The form might look like this:



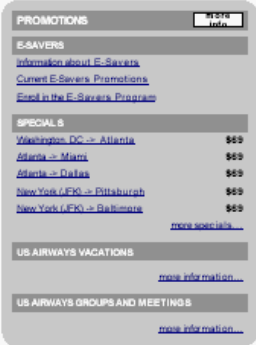
**LINK TO BOOKING ENGINE**

The home page must also include a link to the booking engine. In the future, depending on the technology, we could eliminate the link from the home page. Customers would move to the booking engine from the schedule and fare look-up applications.

**2**

**PROMOTIONS**

US Airways offers several different kinds of promotions. The home page will allow customers to get more information about all the promotions, get information specifically about E-Savers, or look at other current specials. This area of the page might look like this:



**SERVICES**


We recommend that US Airways spell out value proposition, particularly when services use common words like "express" or "shuttle." The home page must contain some messaging to help customers understand the value US Airways provides in its services. We recommend that US Airways uses no more than six items. This messaging could take the form:

- Economical travel on [MetroJet](#)
- Flexible schedules on [US Airways Express](#)
- Luxurious comfort on [US Airways Shuttle](#)
- Speedy delivery with [CargoWorks](#)

**3**

**GUIDE FOR TRAVELERS**

The Web site contains a lot of important information for travelers, including in-flight entertainment, terminal maps, and weather. This information must be available, but must not overwhelm the user experience. Customers can easily get lost in this information. Making it easy to navigate will make it more valuable to customers. The mechanism for accessing this information from the home page might look like this:



This device may be used throughout the site to give customers a means for accessing travelers guide information.

**CORPORATE INFORMATION**

The home page will include a link to US Airways corporate information.

**GLOBAL NAVIGATION**

- Home
- Customer Service
- Contact Us
- Fares
- Schedules
- Flight Status
- Dividend Miles
- Reservations

Global Navigation must be scalable to accommodate some new tools. We recommend, however, knitting this area to essential items (like Customer Service and Contact Us) and travel tools (like Look Up Schedules).



We've We're Going...

Information Architecture



# Five new things for Information Architecture

- Make all references CSS compatible
- Identify hierarchies
- Catalog similarities and relationships
- Define explicit markup
- Design additional semantics

# 1) Make all references CSS compatible

- Pages, containers, widgets and content should be referenced with smart, CSS-compatible names.
  - **WD**: Use in the structure, presentation and behavior
  - **AII**: Reference throughout progress tracking, QA testing, customer care, and more...
- Therefore, IAs should identify and use them on **sitemaps, content inventories, wireframes, and functional specs,...**



# 1 → Incompatibility is inefficient

- References like “10.1.7” or “*account registration page*”, since it can’t be sustained, are inefficient and result in detrimental translation
- If you’re making up a name, make it something we can all use

# 1 → Compatible names are:

- A single word
  - Consider CamelCase for legibility
    - AccountRegistrationPage instead of accountregistrationpage
- About the *content*
  - About meaning, not presentation or placement
    - “promoHeader” not “rightsideBlueHeader”
- May not begin with a numeral
  - CSS technical constraint
    - “teaser3” not “3teaser”

## 2) Identify hierarchies (two types)

- Define the Source Order

- In what order is the pure content (without its presentation)?

- Think about how it will be read without presentation. You have to think: How is a person moving thru this page? What's the task analysis of the page? How should it look on my cell phone or sound in my screen reader?

- Define the order of Headers (h1, h2,...h6)

- (Don't need to be in order in the source, nor sequential)

## 2 → Sometimes this uncovers issues

- What are there two H1 tags that say the same thing?

The image is a screenshot of a Yahoo! News page from 2004. The browser's address bar shows "Yahoo! My Yahoo! Finance Launch edit". The page header includes a search bar, a "powered by hp" logo, and a "Welcome, triz\_n" message with links for "Sign Out" and "My Account". A banner for Fender guitars is visible, with the text "click here to play your own Fender" and the HP logo with the slogan "everything is possible". Below the banner is a navigation bar with "Personalize News Home Page" and "Sign Out" links. The main content area shows the date "15, 2004" and a search bar set to "All News". The primary headline is "U.S. National - Reuters" followed by "Senate Poised to Pass Historic Tobacco Bill". The article is dated "2 hours, 14 minutes ago" and is by "Joanne Kenen". The text of the article begins with "WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Key U.S. senators touted a landmark tobacco deal on Thursday to give the Food and Drug Administration (news - web sites) long-sought power to regulate cigarettes and give tobacco farmers". A sidebar on the left contains a "News Home" section with links to "Top Stories", "U.S. National", "Business", "World", "Entertainment", "Sports", "Technology", "Politics", and "Science". An "ADVERTISEMENT" placeholder is visible on the right side of the page. Two blue ovals are drawn on the page: one over the "Welcome, triz\_n" message and another over the "15, 2004" date, likely highlighting specific elements related to the issue mentioned in the text.

# 3) Catalog similarities and relationships

- What can be reused? What characteristics are shared?
  - Each container is unique (News before Marketplace)
  - Yet each are similar, because they're all module headers
  - Another tool to articulate meaning; currently Webdev task

The screenshot shows a Yahoo! homepage with several modules. Two blue ovals highlight specific areas: one above the 'Sizzlin' Summer Sounds' module and another above the 'Web Site Directory' module.

**Sizzlin' Summer Sounds**  
Watch these hot music videos

- [Brandy](#)
- [Usher](#)
- [Black Eyed Peas](#)
- [Nina Sky](#)
- [Mase](#)
- [Jessica Simpson](#)
- [Avril Lavigne](#)
- [More...](#)

Radio: [Summertime Sounds](#), [The Big Hits](#) & [more](#)

**Yahoo! Business Services**

- [Web Hosting](#)
- [Sell Online](#)
- [Get a Domain](#)
- [Market Online](#)

**Yahoo! Premium Services**

- [SBC Yahoo! DSL](#)
- [Fantasy Football](#)
- [Personals](#)
- [PC Games](#)

**Web Site Directory** - Sites organized by subject [Suggest your site](#)

**Business & Economy**  
[B2B](#), [Finance](#), [Shopping](#), [Jobs...](#)

**Computers & Internet**  
[Internet](#), [WWW](#), [Software](#), [Games...](#)

**News & Media**  
[Newspapers](#), [TV](#), [Radio...](#)

**Entertainment**

**Regional**  
[Countries](#), [Regions](#), [US States...](#)

**Society & Culture**  
[People](#), [Environment](#), [Religion...](#)

**Education**  
[College and University](#), [K-12...](#)

**Arts & Humanities**

4:28pm, Thu Jul 15

- [Report: Radical Zargawi planted sleeper cells](#)
- [Senate set to pass historic tobacco bill](#)
- [California teachers earn most; S.D. least](#)
- [Outrage grows in Austria church porn case](#)
- [Wildfire rages out of control in Nevada](#)
- [Unfinished copy of new U2 album missing](#)
- [Tour de France](#) · [British Open](#) · [Olympics](#)

[Sports](#) - [Stocks](#) - [Weather](#)

Accredited colleges and universities [Associate](#), [Bachelor's](#), [Master's](#), [Postgrad](#) and more.

- [Free digital camera](#) - With select new Dell Home PCs - [Details](#)
- [Ultra-thin digital camera](#) - Only \$49.99 after \$20 mail-in rebate.
- \$100 allowance toward digital cable with HD

# 3 → Relationships

- The life of a scoreboard

- #nba .scoreboard, #nfl .scoreboard, #nhl .scoreboard

- We can target things on the page not just thru uniqueness and classification, but also thru relationship.

- Also consider medium and device

- Which class of things stay for the Print version?

MLB	Today	
<b>My Teams - Jul 15</b> <a href="#">Edit</a>		
<a href="#">Chi White Sox</a> at	2	<a href="#">Top</a>
<a href="#">Oakland</a>	4	<a href="#">9th</a>
Outs 2: Runner on 2nd		
<a href="#">San Francisco</a> at	7	<a href="#">Bot</a>
<a href="#">Colorado</a>	4	<a href="#">9th</a>
Outs 1: Runner on 1st		

NBA Draft	Round 1	Round 2
<b>Jun 24</b>		<a href="#">All picks</a>
Pk	Tm	Player
1	<a href="#">Orl</a>	<a href="#">Dwight Howard</a> (PF)
2	<a href="#">Cha</a>	<a href="#">Emeka Okafor</a> (PF)
3	<a href="#">Chi</a>	<a href="#">Ben Gordon</a> (PG)
4	<a href="#">LAC</a>	<a href="#">Shaun Livingston</a> (PG)

NFL
<b>My Teams</b> <a href="#">Edit</a>
<i>No games this week</i>
<b>Thursday, Jul 15</b>
<i>No games this week</i>
<a href="#">Full scoreboard</a> All Times Eastern

## 4) Define explicit markup

- Don't be afraid... only about 30 tags
- Markup is just a way to explicitly define content
  - **Lists:** UL, OL, DL
  - **Phrase elements:** EM, STRONG, DFN, CODE, SAMP, KBD, VAR, CITE, ABBR, & ACRONYM
  - **Forms:** Radio button or Checkbox
  - **Headers:** H1...H6

# 5) Design additional semantics

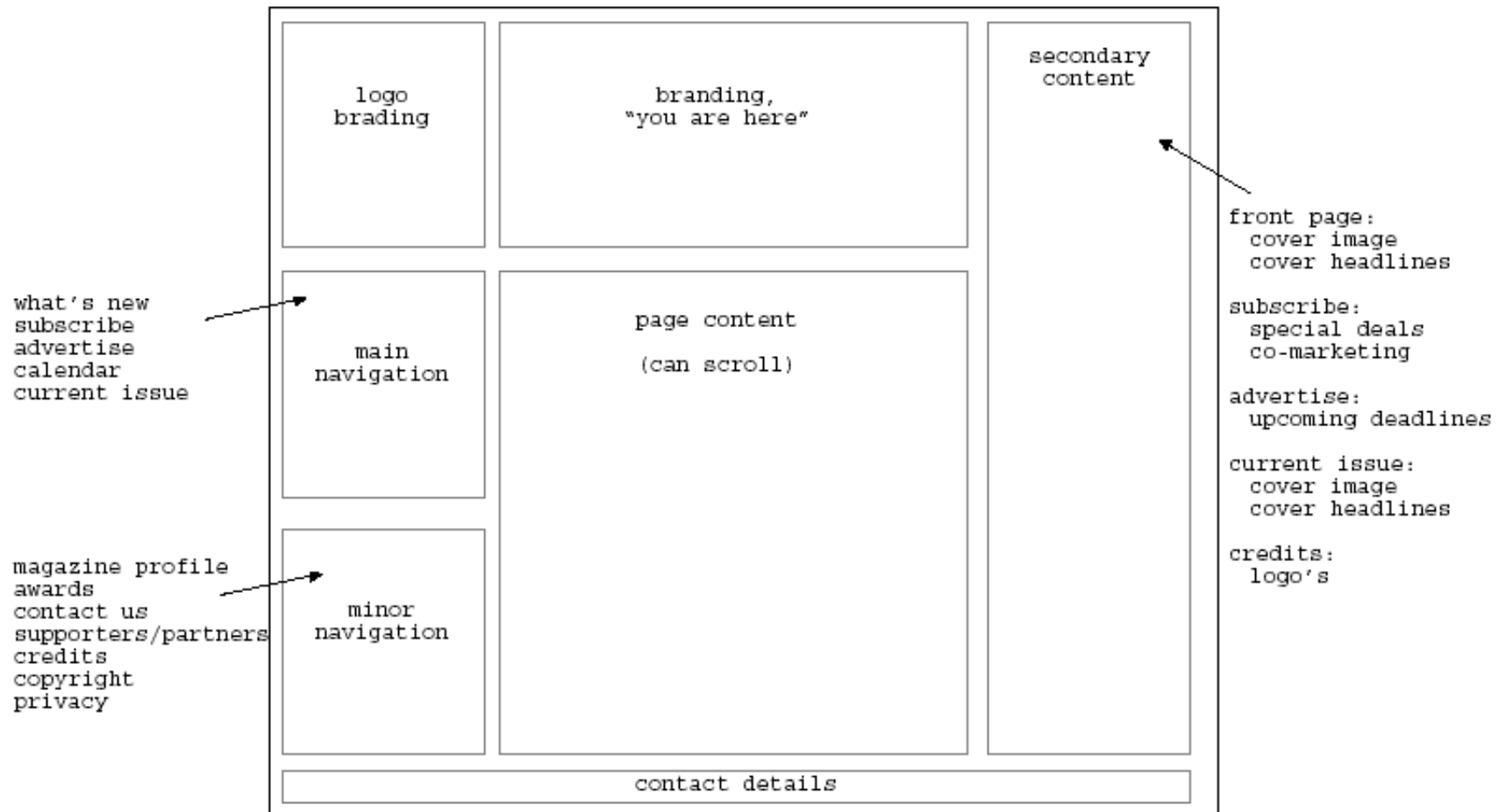
- Squeezing semantic meaning from HTML is a good start, but a richer vocabulary is useful.
  - Content types and meta info
    - HTML's **cite** tag only gets us so far, we need “author”, “publisher”, “date”, “source”
  - States (for navigation)
    - selected, default, disabled, active
  - Position (within lists)
    - first, last
  - Relationships
    - parent, child, sibling
  - “glue” (from Movable Type)
- Consistent use “grants” semantic meaning
- XML still isn't primetime; it must be represented in HTML



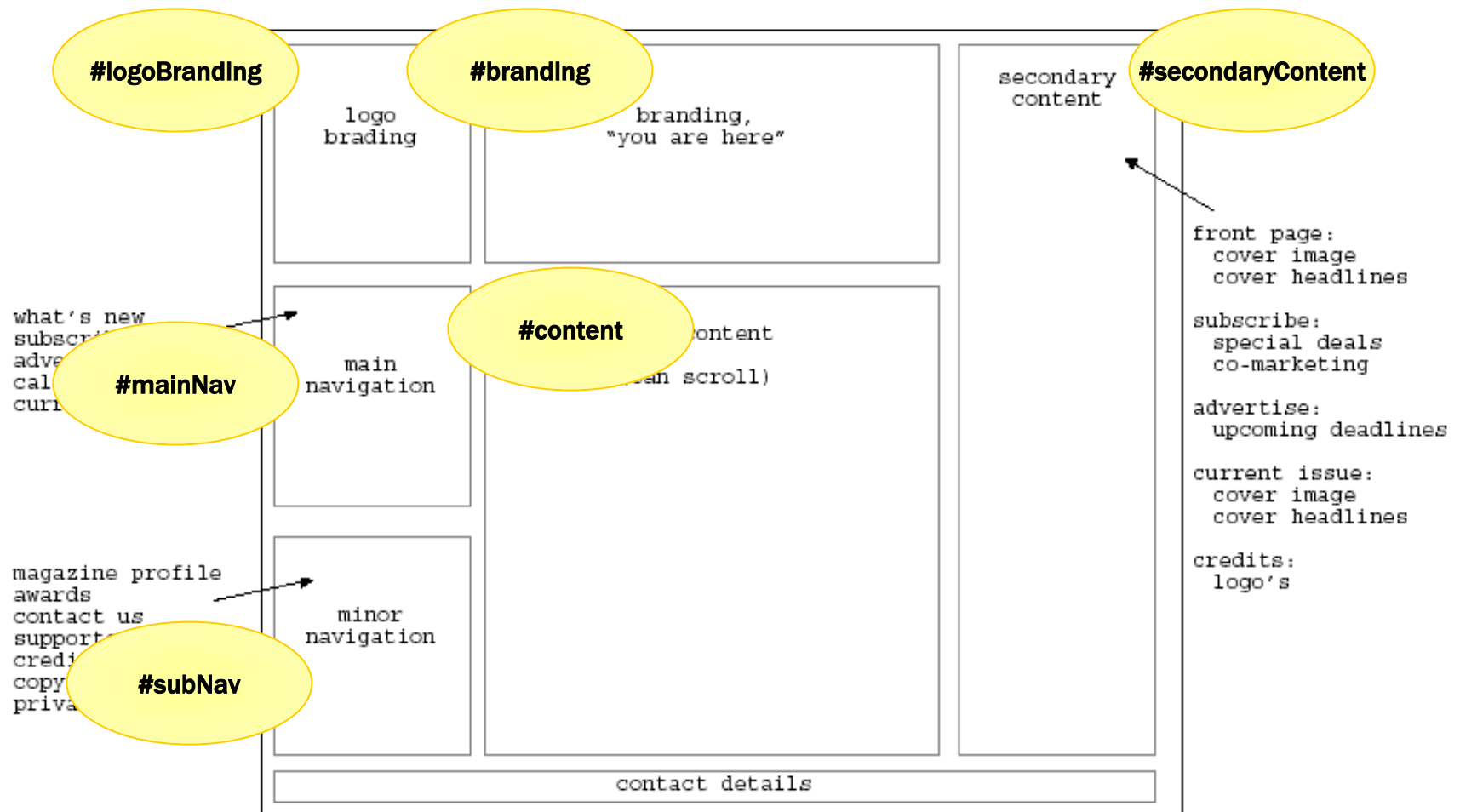
# So what does this mean: Wireframes

if.com.au

Wireframe design

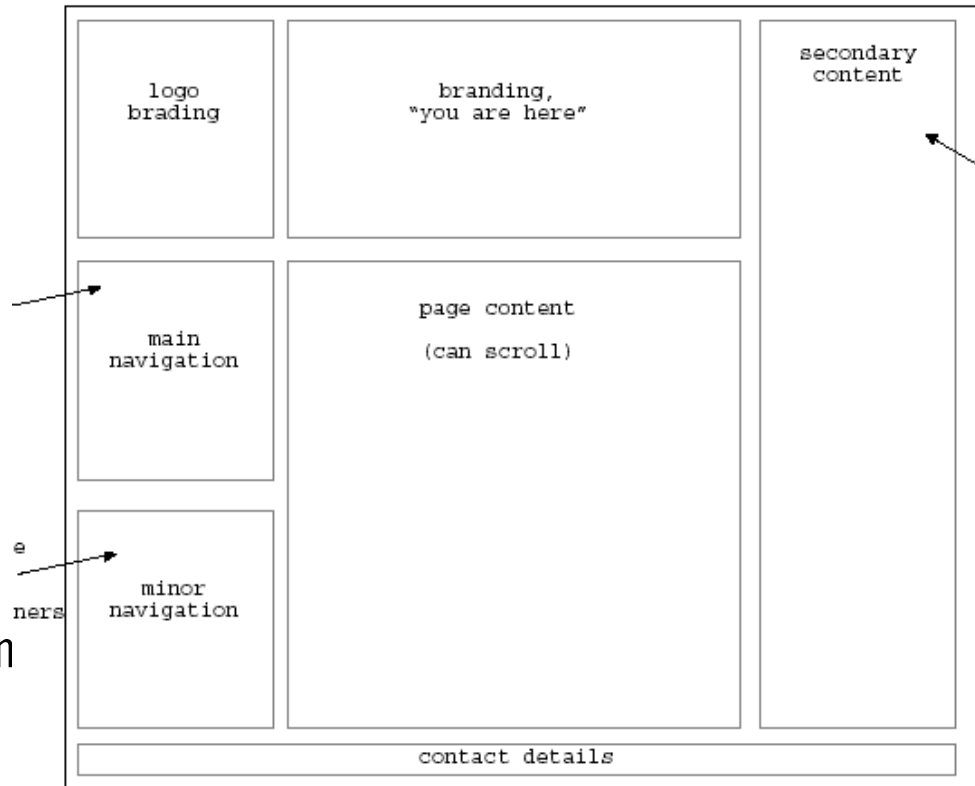


# New additions → Compatible Names

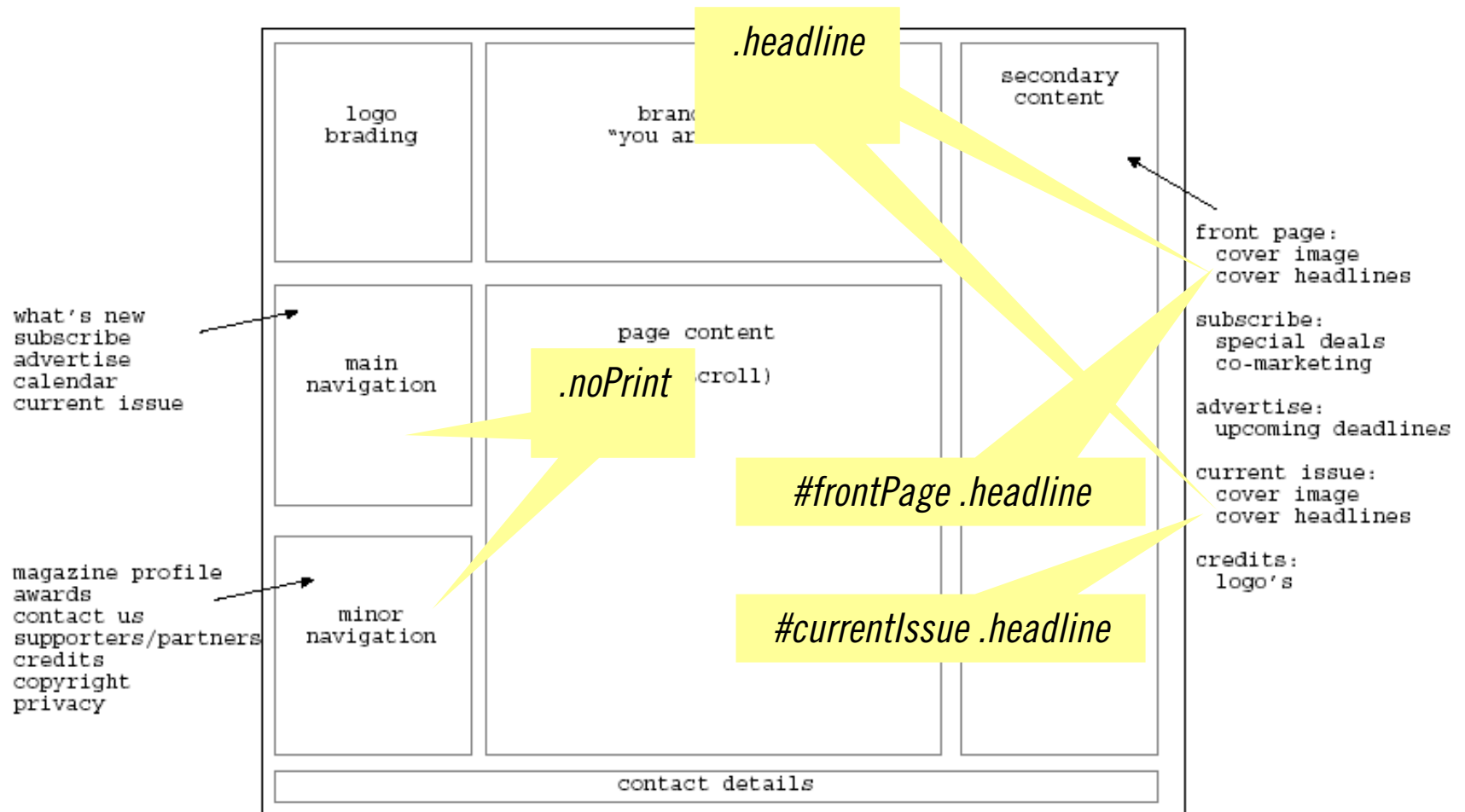


# New additions → Hierarchies

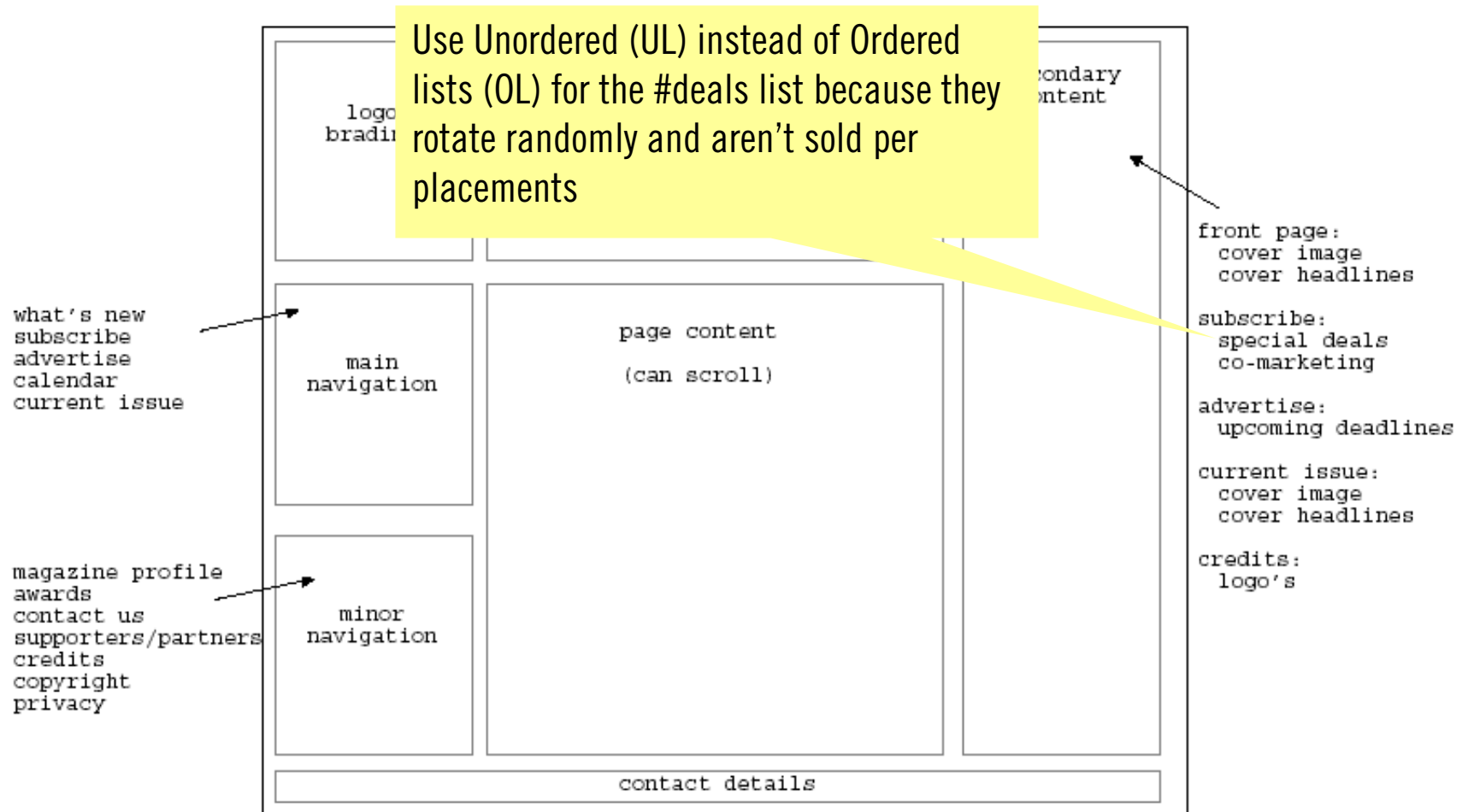
1. Branding (#branding)
  - A. Logo (#logo)
  - B. “You are here” (#place)
2. Main Navigation (#mainNav)
  - A. Minor Navigation (#subNav)
3. Primary Content (#content)
  - A. Secondary Content (#sub content)



# New additions → Similarities & Relationships



# New additions → Explicit Markup



# New additions → Granted Semantics

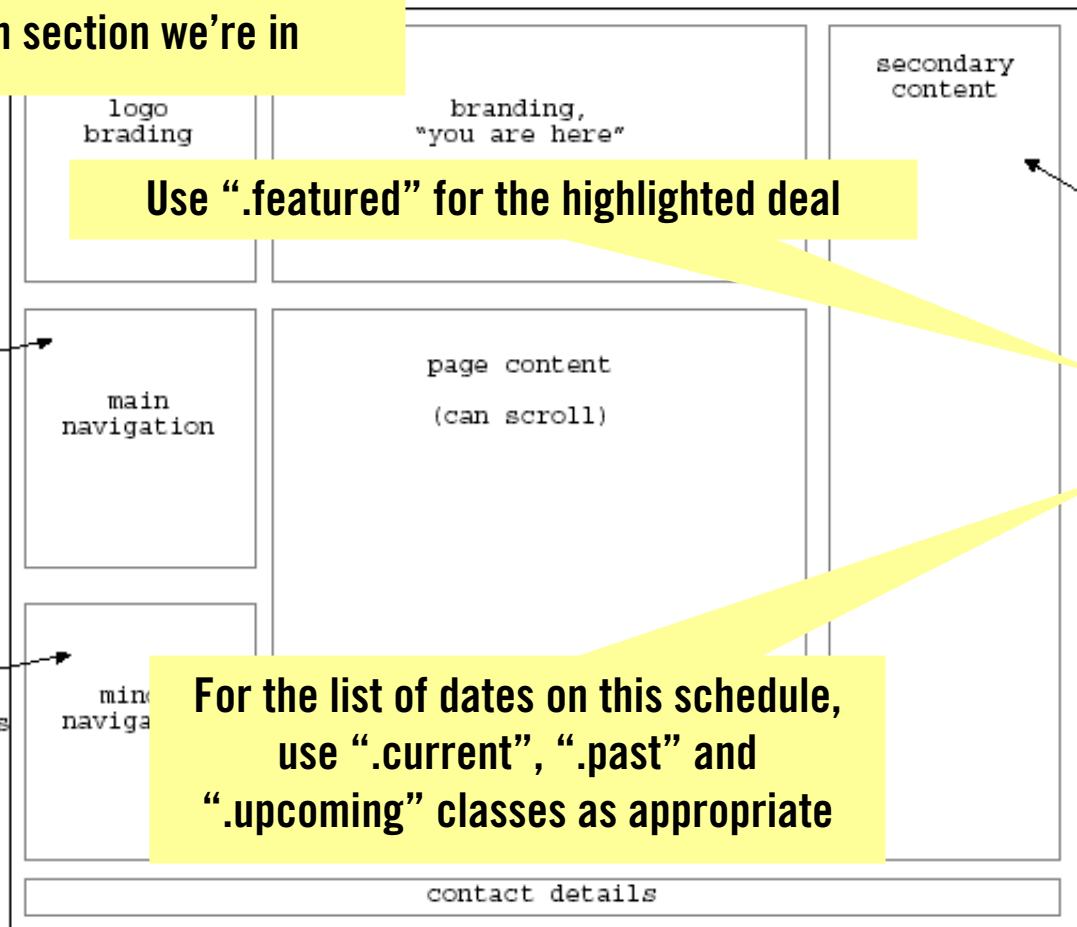
For the navigation, use “.current” to indicate which section we’re in

Use “.featured” for the highlighted deal

For the list of dates on this schedule, use “.current”, “.past” and “.upcoming” classes as appropriate

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current issue:  
cover image  
cover headlines

credits:  
logo's



# Not scary, it's simple

- Basic HTML representing basic IA work identifying priority, classification and meaning.



# A New Process

Can these advances enable an improved design and development process?



# Lost in Translation...

## What is the future of the web?

網の未来は何であるか → Is future of the net what?

未来是网什么? → What future will be net?

그물은 무슨 미래 것인가? → The net future will connect?

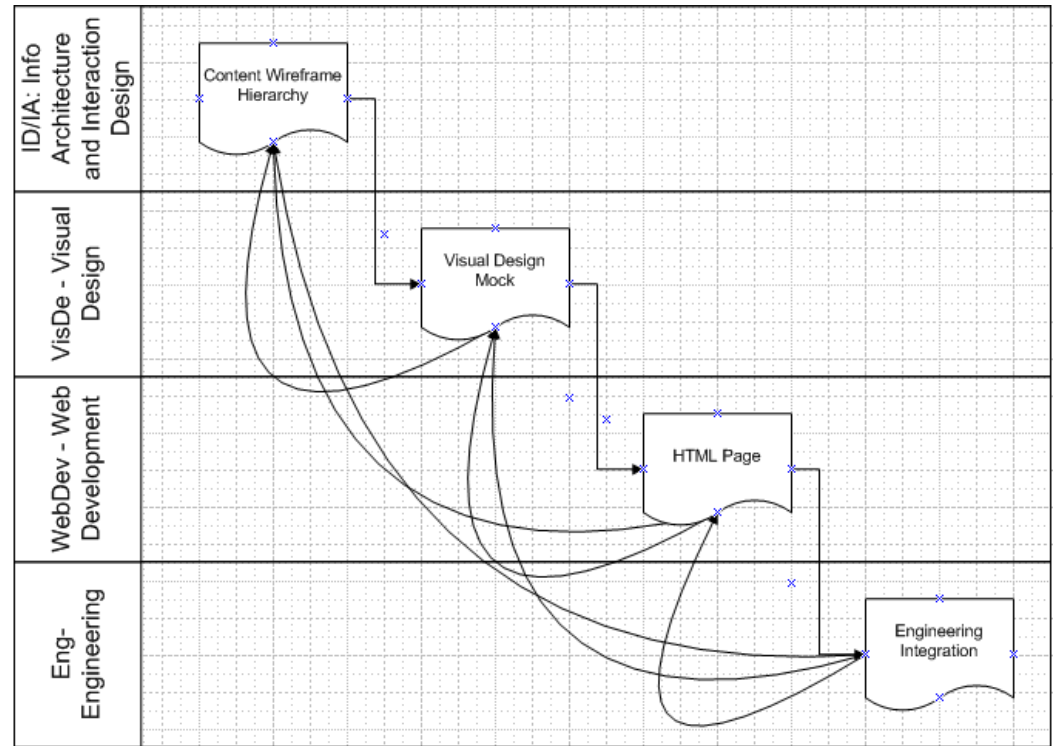
Le futur net se reliera ? → The future Net will be connected?

Das zukünftige Netz angeschlossen? → The future net is attached?

La rete futura è fissata? → **The future net is fixed?**

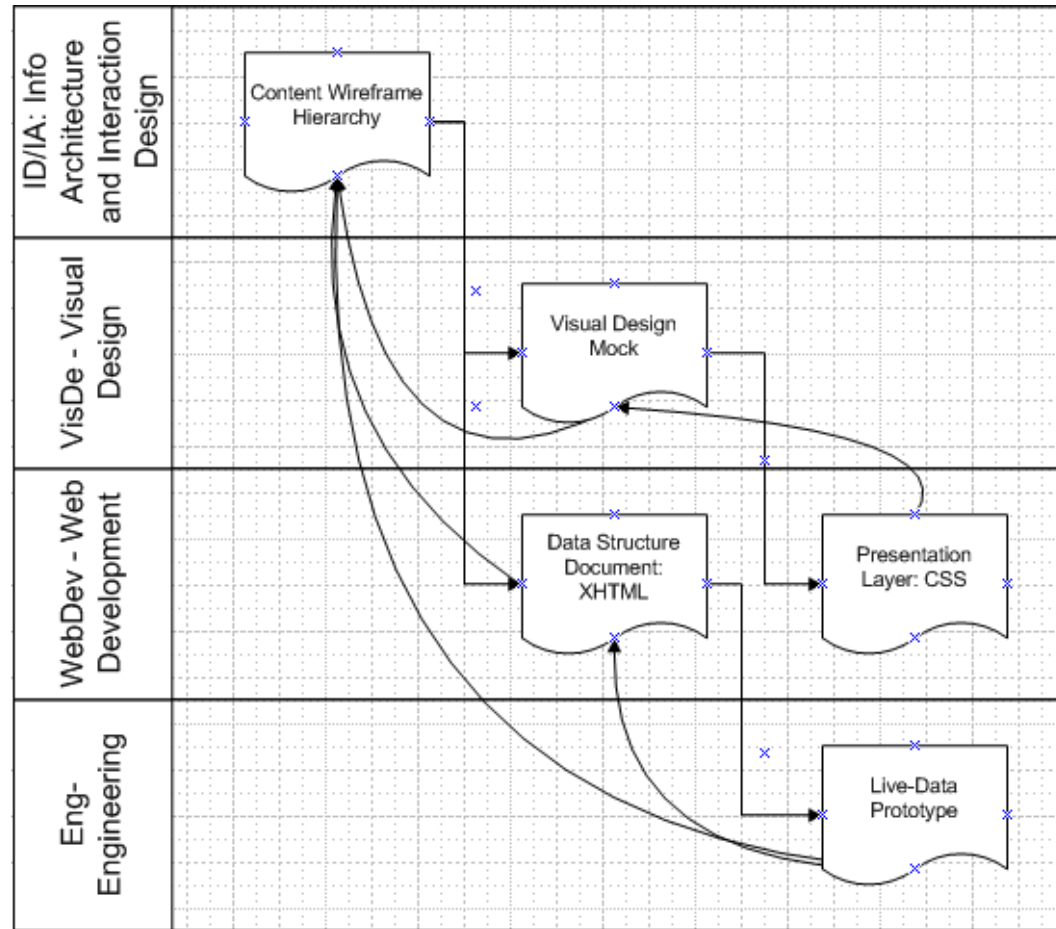
# Waterfall Process

- Silo'd teams
- 4 vertical phases, most of any process
- Costly feedback loops and sluggish iterations
- Sluggish iterations
- He said—she said



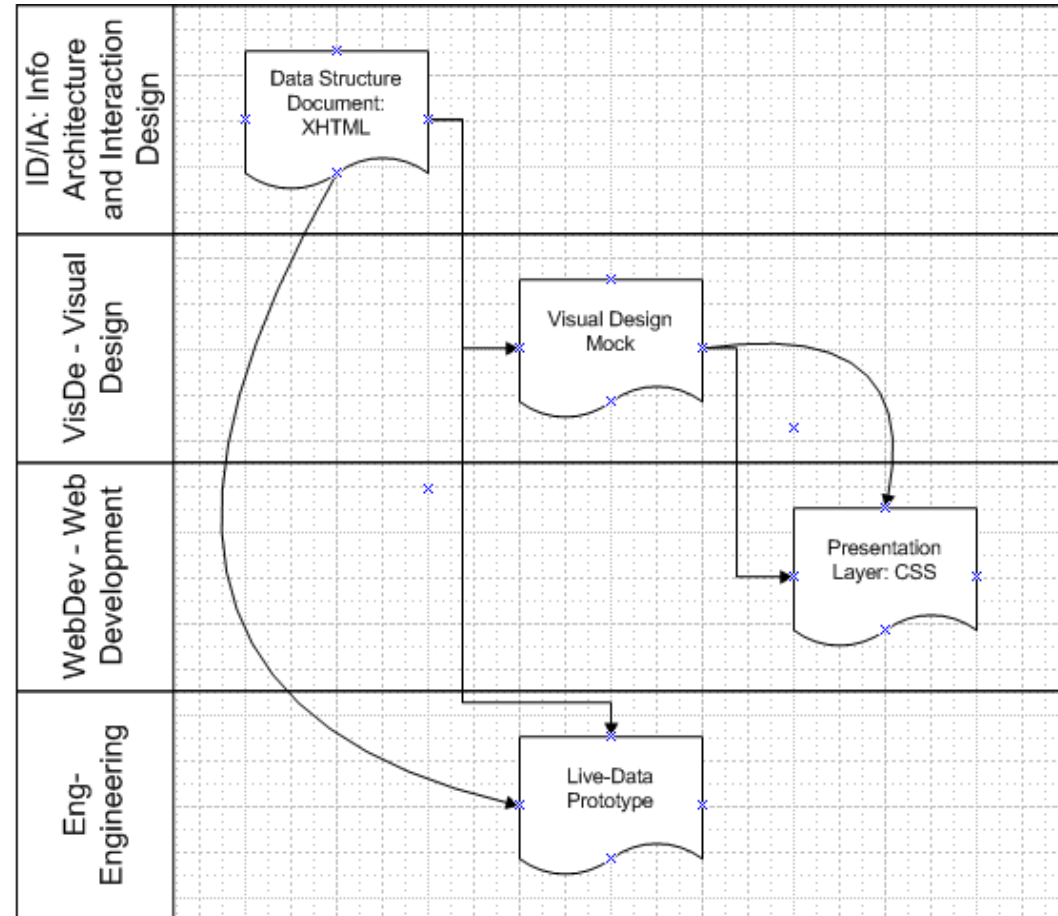
# Better Process

- More efficient (only 3 vertical phases)
- Separation of Content and Presentation
- Allows direct communication and appropriately concurrent work.
- Short and appropriate feedback loops



# Ideal Process?

- Most efficient: 3 vertical phases; only 4 actual stages
- Cleanest feedback loops
- Clearest communication with least waste
- Keep the end in mind when you begin
- Documents what's real
- Always current, always used





# Conclusion



# Conclusion

- Technical hurdles have been removed, meaning can thrive.
- Due to advances in web development technologies we can modernize the practice of information architecture.
- These advances enable an improved process.
- This is our Web Vision.

# Thanks!

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