

Syllabus

Modules 1-8

Online NS Tutorial

*Assisting Information Architects and Others to Learn about
Information Architecture and Navigational Systems;
Promoting Professionalism and Standardization of Information Architecture*



IA Design & Usability

Topic: The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

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Online Navigational Systems Tutorial

http://www.stevenheitman-ia.com/html/module_NS_1.html

Appendix C

The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

2

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Introduction: Online NS Tutorial

This online tutorial is for learners to learn and explore online about Navigational Systems (NS) and Information Architecture (IA). Modules 1-8 comprise this tutorial about The Navigational Systems Model (The NS Model).

What are Navigational Systems?

Websites on the World Wide Web provide instant access of information to the end user (provided that the end user has instant Internet access). Since the point of having documentation online is for “immediate informational gratification,” the end user must be able to retrieve the information from Websites. This is accomplished, if the design of the Navigational Systems are done correctly, that means that they help the end user to navigate effectively through Websites in cyberspace.

Navigational Systems are designed within Websites and Web pages or other digital design products to provide end users with congruent navigational systems enabling successful navigation. The NS Model is comprised of seven (7) components (see matrix below):

**The Navigational Systems Model—
The NS Model**

1. Hierarchical Navigational Systems
2. Global Navigational Systems
3. Local Navigational Systems
4. Integrated Navigational Systems
5. Remote Navigational Systems
6. Ad Hoc Navigational Systems
7. Search Engines in Websites

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

3

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

What is Information Architecture?

The Information Architecture Institute (<http://iainstitute.org/en>) gives this definition for **Information Architecture** as:

1. The structural design of shared information environments.
2. The art and science of organizing and labeling Websites, Intranets, online communities and software—to support usability and findability.
3. An emerging community of practice focused on bringing principles of design and architecture to the digital landscape.

The term **Information Architecture** describes a specialized skill set, which relates to the interpretation of information and expression of distinctions between signs and systems of signs. It has some degree of origin in the library sciences. Many library schools [and graphic design schools] teach **Information Architecture**.

What do these terms mean?

The NS Model provides a systematic approach for doing specific Information Architecture design research regarding Navigational Systems, and it helps in an iterative design process to communicate to others and do high-quality work. If a good model and systematic approach is followed, then it provides a solid framework for every person on the team. In addition, using a model is an excellent way to communicate and document conceptual ideas. It enables researchers to do brainstorming and create good designs. The Online NS Tutorial is provided for learners that desire to explore and learn more about IA, NS and using The NS Model.

Current Trends—Information Architecture & Navigational Systems

The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

4

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Prerequisites for Online NS Tutorial

For Modules 1-8, there are no prerequisites. You should have a desire to learn about Information Architecture and Navigational Systems. Modules 1-8 are not meant to replace traditional educational programs at a university. These modules are designed to supplement a learner's knowledge base about Information Architecture. The target audiences for this online NS tutorial are: Information Architects, Instructional Designers, or any other person desiring to learn more about NS. Many books are now available to supplement a learner's knowledge based (see my annotated bibliography for further details).

In addition, perhaps you desire to learn more about IA, NS to figure out if you would like to take more courses in it. For this online NS tutorial, there are no prerequisites. However, familiarity with current computing technologies software programs and computers helps a learner in being able to use this online tutorial, and using Web browsers, downloading PDFs, surfing online. Assignments are typed and word processed using MS Word for typing and word processing assignments. If you desire to explore and learn more about IA, NS, these modules may be helpful and useful to you.

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The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

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Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

5

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Navigating through Modules 1-8 and Accessibility

You can always find resources for each module on the left-hand side of the Web page.

- Glossary.pdf (terms and definitions for Information Architecture used in the Internet industry)
- Annotated Bibliography.pdf (informative discussion about Information Architecture books)
- IA MAIA Thesis.pdf (subject matter: Information Architecture, Navigational Systems)
- IA MAEd Thesis.pdf (subject matter: Information Architecture, Usability Testing)
- Guidelines.pdf (guidelines in PDF for download, review, and study)
- Email (for questions or delivery of assignments as necessary or required)
- Site Map (site map of entire Website)
- When documents are in PDF format, PDF is indicated.
- You can use the pull-down menu to get from one module to the next module.
- Instructions are included within each module for learners.

Instructional Method, Recommended IA, NS Books and Guidelines

Modules 1-8 are online, including online resources for exploration. All of the modules are done at a learner's own pace—as you have time to do them and complete assignments. Learners are self-regulated and participate at your own pace; assignments, exploration, online surfing are done when you have time to do them.



The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

6

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Recommended books to supplement your learning, professional development, and knowledge base about Information Architecture, Navigational Systems, and Usability Testing are:

Fleming, J. (1998). *Web Navigation Designing the User Experience*. Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.

Relevancy of Navigational Systems to Information Architecture

Per Fleming (1998), effective navigating within Websites is accomplished by designing fully integrated navigational systems when doing wire frame mockups. These systems should be integrated within Websites or other digital design products. According to Fleming in *Web Navigation*, the *ten principles* of good navigation are to:

1. Be easily learned,
2. Remain consistent,
3. Provide feedback,
4. Appear in context,
5. Offer alternatives,
6. Require an economy of action and time,
7. Provide clear visual messages,
8. Use clear and understandable labels,
9. Be appropriate to the site's purpose, and
10. Support users goals and behaviors.

Online Resource: <http://www.amazon.com/Web-Navigation-Designing-User-Experience/dp/1565923510>

The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

7

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Morville, P. & Rosenfeld L. (2006). *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*. (3rd ed.). Sebastopol, CA: O'Reilly Media, Inc.

A relevant and specific book on Information Architecture by Morville & Rosenfeld (2006): speaks directly and concisely about the “complexity” of Websites, Intranets, and why Information Architecture is a necessary component for any designer to use while designing a Website. This is an extremely important knowledge base for an corporate trainer to have in order to produce high-quality Website—they state: “*Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*, Third Edition, shows how to use both aesthetics and mechanics to create distinctive, cohesive Website that work.”

Online Resource: <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/infotecture/>

Goto, K. & Cotler, E. (2005). *Web ReDesign 2.0 Workflow That Works*. (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA: New Riders Publishing.

The Web is constantly evolving and changing. This Core Process applies to all design and redesign projects, from the simplest to the most complex. Use this book as a mutable resource. Adapt it into a methodology that works for you. Call it a plan, call it a roadmap, and call it a guide. We call it *Workflow That Works*, because that's what it is. This Website is the book's accompaniment. It houses many downloadable tools that are presented in the book. This site does not replace the book. There are many additional charts, tables, and helpful lists in the book (source: <http://www.web-redesign.com/>).

Online Resource: <http://www.web-redesign.com/>



The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

8

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Nielsen, J. & Tahir, M. (2002). *Homepage Usability 50 Websites Deconstructed*. Berkeley, CA: New Riders Publishing.

Homepage Usability 50 Websites Deconstructed shows how Web pages and Websites are deconstructed, giving detailed and specific statistical facts.

Online Resource: <http://www.useit.com/homepageusability/>

U.S. Government Printing Office. (2006). “*Research-Based Web Design & Usability Guidelines*.” Retrieved January 1, 2008, from <http://www.usability.gov>.

The U.S. Government Printing Office provides a free Website that contains relevant information on research-based Web design and usability guidelines, including instructional materials for learners and learning. Information Architects and Instructional Designers may find this Website informative.

Online Resource: <http://www.usability.gov>

The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

9

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

Rubin, J. (1994). *Handbook of Usability Testing: How to Plan, Design, and Conduct Effective Tests*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Handbook of Usability Testing: How to Plan, Design, and Conduct Effective Tests is a handbook about doing usability testing, including templates. It is a good book because it is simple to grasp and easy to use—using this book—that it:

- Requires no engineering or human factors training.
- It provides a rigorous, step-by-step approach that saves you months of trial and error.
- It includes real-life examples and case histories taken from a wide range of industries.
- It is packed with extremely usable templates, models, tables, test plans, and other indispensable tools of the trade.

Online Resource: <http://www.amazon.com/Handbook-Usability-Testing-Conduct-Effective/dp/0471594032>

How are these modules structured for learning?

The online NS tutorial is online and Modules 1-8 include:

- Level: Beginner to Intermediate
- Best browser to view modules in: Safari or Firefox
- Approximate time for each module 1-3-plus hours or longer
- What (computing technology and equipment) resources are required for doing modules?
 - A PC or MAC computer and screen
 - High-speed Internet connection
 - Access to the Internet

The Navigational Systems Model—The NS Model

An Online Tutorial for Digital-Media Designers to Learn Web Navigational Systems

Online Navigational Systems Tutorial—Syllabus

10

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8/22/2009 3:34 PM

- PDF reader from Adobe:
<http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>
- Safari browser: <http://www.apple.com/safari/>
- Firefox browser: <http://www.mozilla.com/en-US/firefox/all.html>
- Internet Explorer:
<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/downloads/ie/getitnow.msp>
- Netscape browser: <http://browser.netscape.com/downloads>
- MS Word, InDesign, Photoshop, ImageReady, Illustrator, Visio
- High-quality laser printer
- Binder to keep notes and PDFs in for assignments and downloads
- Eight (8) tab dividers to keep it all organized for each module (Modules 1-8)
- Download of Guidelines.pdf is recommended for learners, printing, and putting it in a binder with tabs for learning and future reference
- Download of PDFs or other items as necessary or required for your binder
- Introductions to each module (in class)
- Online resources (in class)
- Learning by doing assignments (in class)
- Online and classroom quizzes (in class)
- Other assignments or questions are delivered by email to the instructor at heitman@sfsu.edu

If you have any questions or concerns about doing your assignments, please feel free to contact the instructor at heitman@sfsu.edu. In addition, office hours by appointment only—if you need to talk about your questions in person—or get constructive feedback.