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BA COMPUTER GAMES DESIGN

USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Information Architecture 2



Information Architecture 2

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- ② **Designing Flow**
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Site Maps

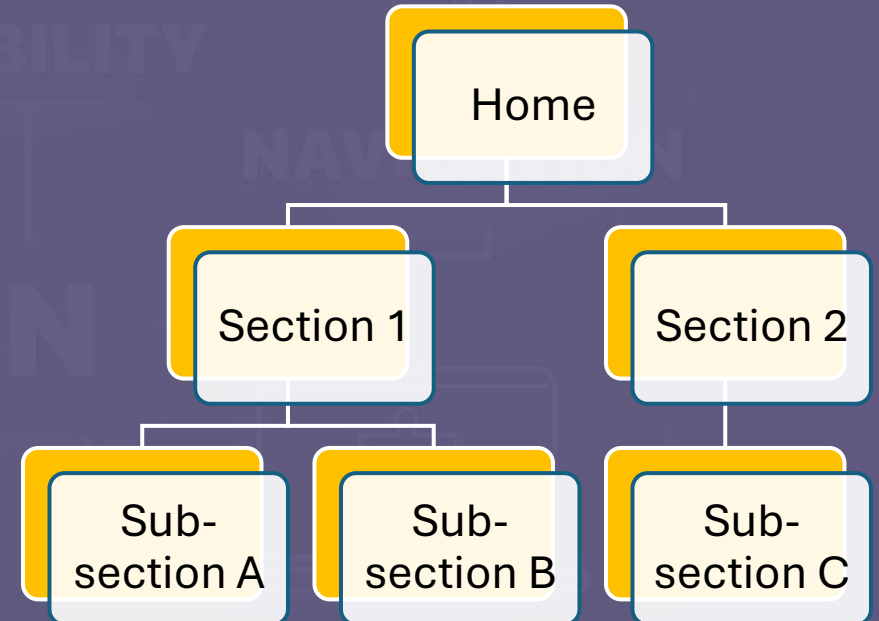


SITE MAPS

Information Architecture is **invisible to the end user**. When designing the IA of a product we need to define a **site map**.

Site Maps are presented in a **hierarchical structure**. This is typically top-to-bottom, with the 'home' page (or product equivalent) at the **top**.

EXAMPLE



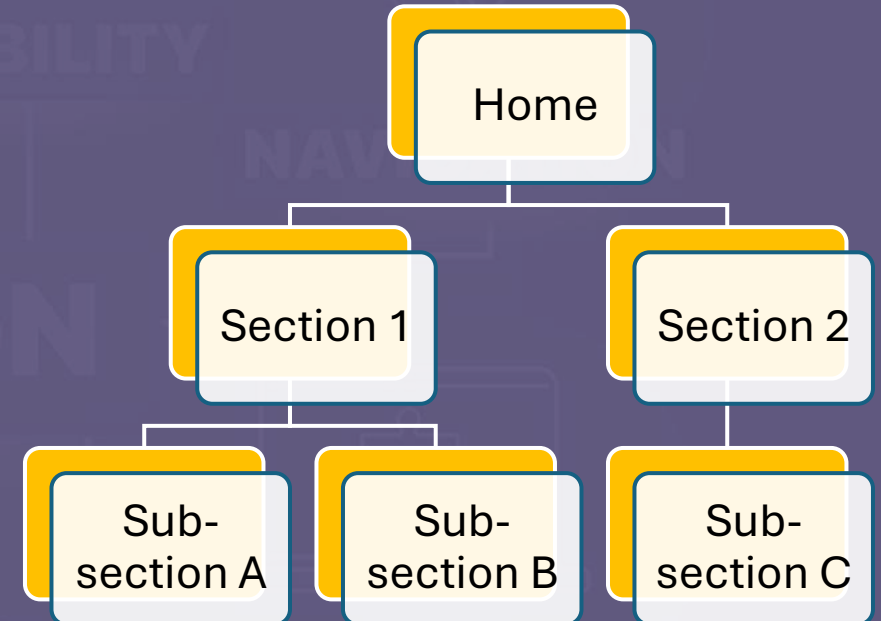


SITE MAPS

Guidelines for drawing a site map:

- Just because it looks clear **doesn't mean it makes sense**
- Site Maps should be created **Top to Bottom**, not **Left to Right**
- Keep it **plain and clear** – it's a **technical document**

EXAMPLE





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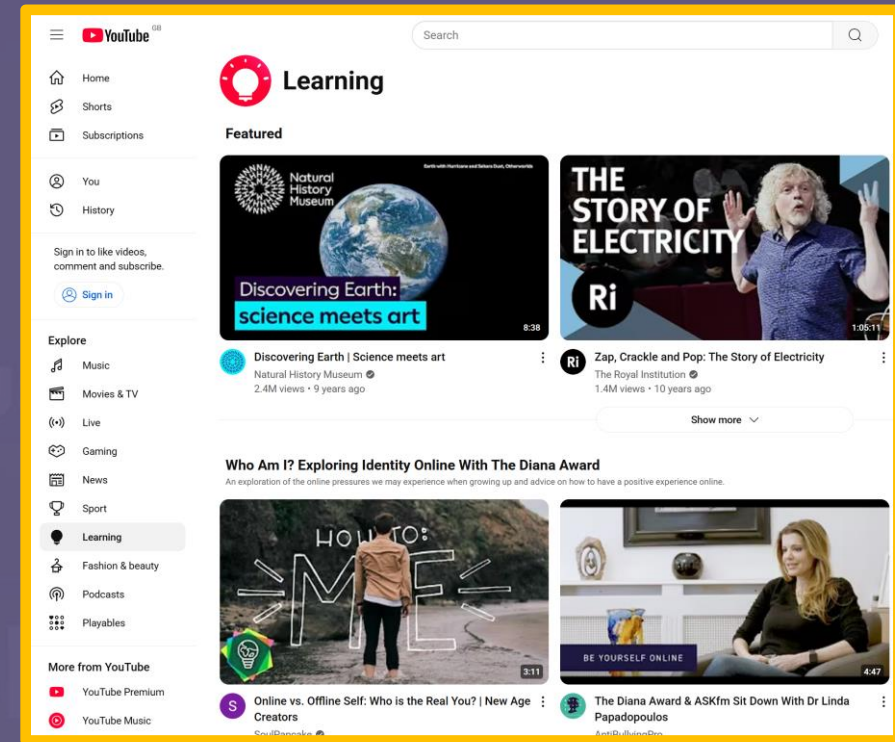
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SITE MAPS

A site map is likely to be either **flat** or **deep**.

Flat (Example: YouTube)

- **Lots of sections** in the menu
- **Fewer clicks** to reach the bottom





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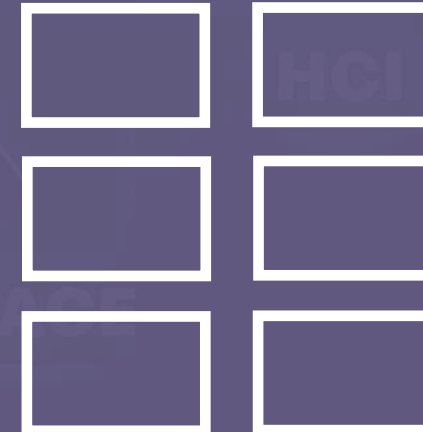
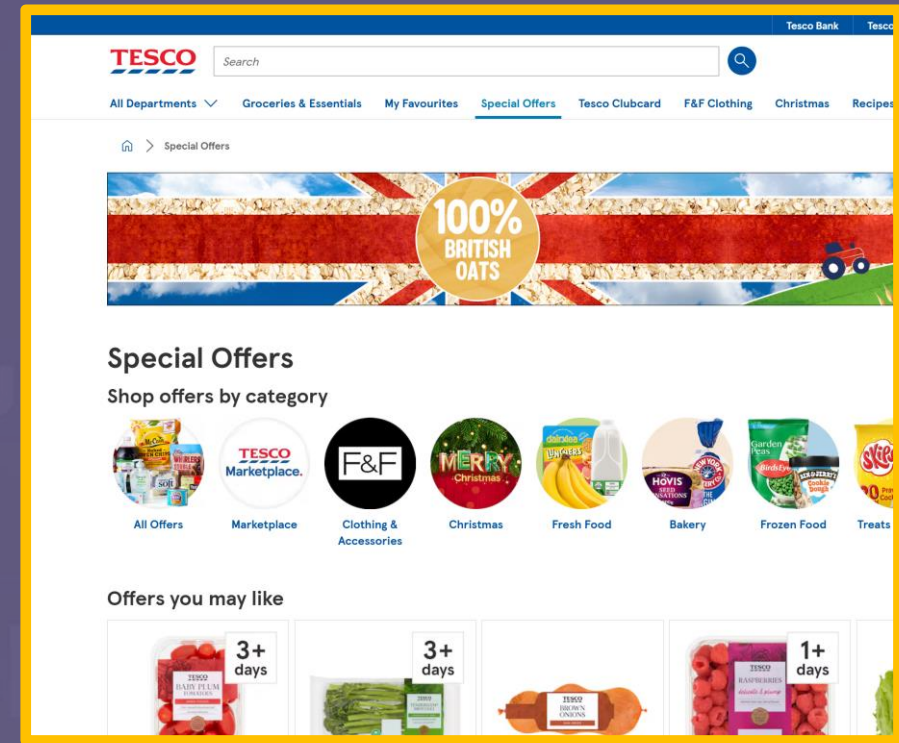
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SITE MAPS

A site map is likely to be either **flat** or **deep**.

Deep (Example: Tesco)

- Simple menus
- **More clicks** to get to any particular page
- Choice depends on **content**
- **3-click rule** no longer applies





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Designing Flow



DESIGNING FLOW

Users normally **don't find what they want** on the home page of a website. They must be **directed** to the page of interest.

The **easier** it is for users to 'flow' through your Information Architecture to where they want to go **the happier they will be**.





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DESIGNING FLOW

Giving users **the right information at the right time** is more important than making sure that every page is available within **three clicks**.

The 3-click rule is a persistent yet unofficial rule that says that **no page should take more than 3 clicks (or taps on a touchscreen) to access**.

Often, designers **apply this rule for website navigation and information-seeking tasks**, but some also invoke it for other types of interactive tasks. [1]



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DESIGNING FLOW

Giving users **the right information at the right time** is more important than making sure that every page is available within **three clicks**.

The 3-click rule assumes that **users will become frustrated and will likely give up on tasks that require more than three total clicks** to be completed.

The big problem with the 3-click rule is that **it has not been supported by data** in any published studies to date. [1]



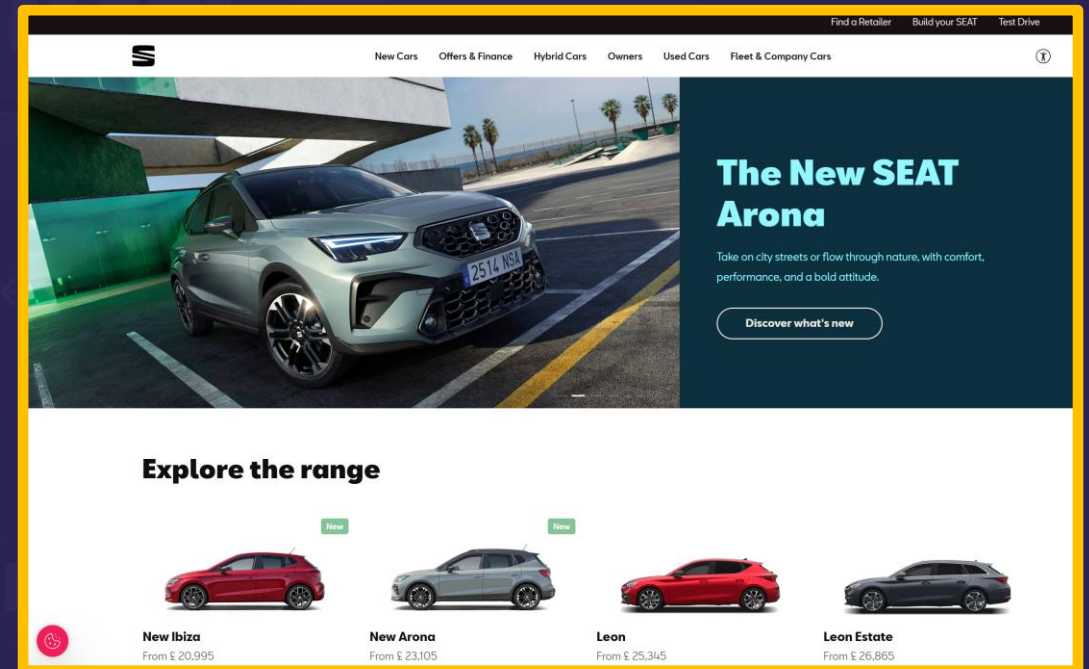
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DESIGNING FLOW

If you give users too many choices on a page they can get **confused and frustrated**.

Make sure that the **next step is always obvious**!





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DESIGNING FLOW

- Users **do not** read pages carefully
- Users click on the first control that looks as if it might do **what they want**
- If it doesn't do what they want then **they might click 'Back'**
 - 'Back' clicks can therefore mean that the user **doesn't know what to do next**
 - **Include "Return to ..." options** rather than relying on the 'Back' button
- Always give the user a way to **move forward**
- Design interactions in **loops**
- **Don't make users think!**



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IA Navigation



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IA NAVIGATION

Information Architecture is the **backbone** of any system. Without IA it is **very difficult to design effective ways** to get users where they want to go.

Well-designed IA allows the UX designer to **predict popular paths** through a product. This influences the User Interface design by defining what **navigational elements** are needed.



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IA NAVIGATION

It can also allow the designer to **manipulate users into taking a certain path** through a product, or to perform **particular actions** while engaging with it.

**Good Information Architecture is essential
if you want to design user behaviours!**



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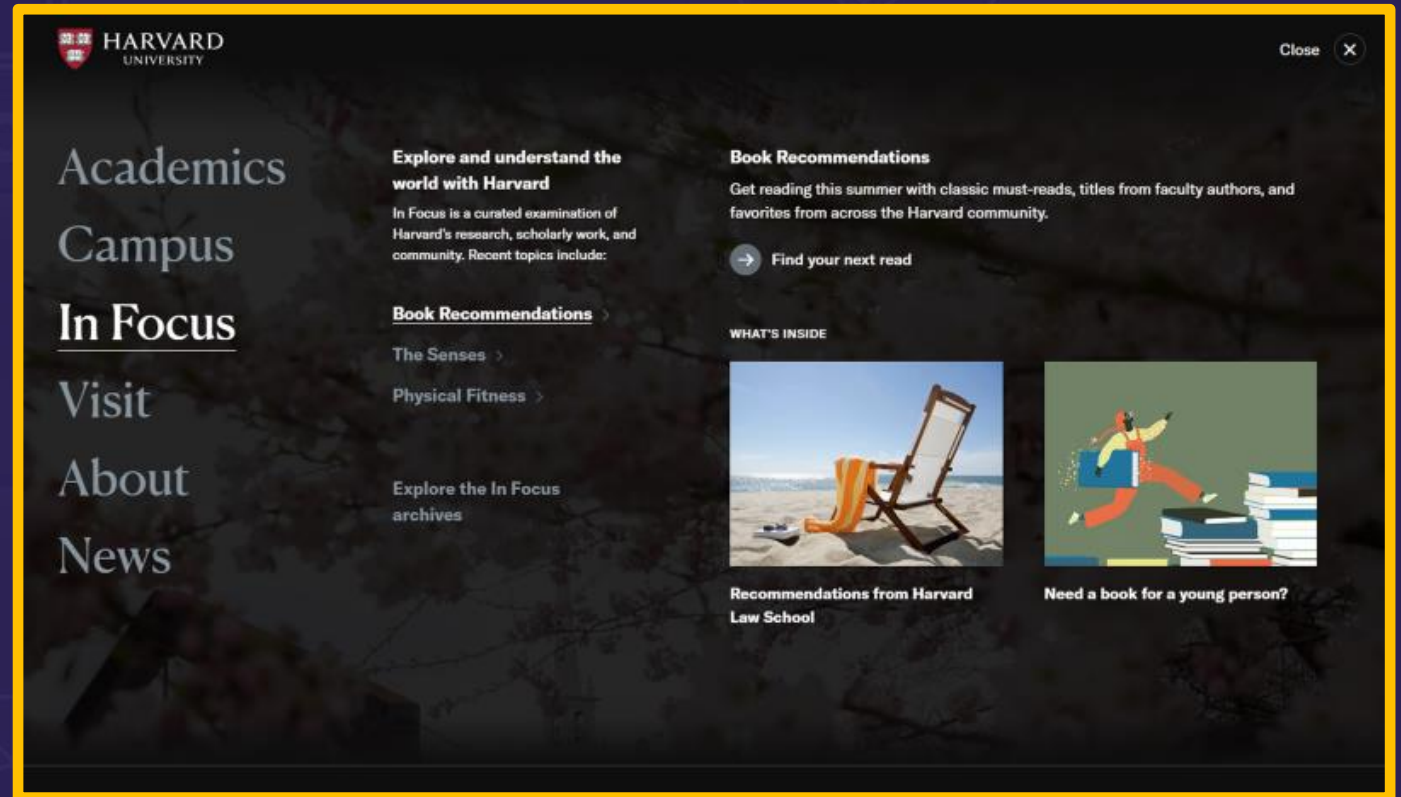
IA NAVIGATION

Example: Harvard University

Harvard University's IA is **well-structured, simple and clear**.

It presents the users initially with **just six sections**, making the site feel manageable.

Clicking on a section reveals the next column, and in turn further columns after that, **making deep navigation feel easy**. [2]





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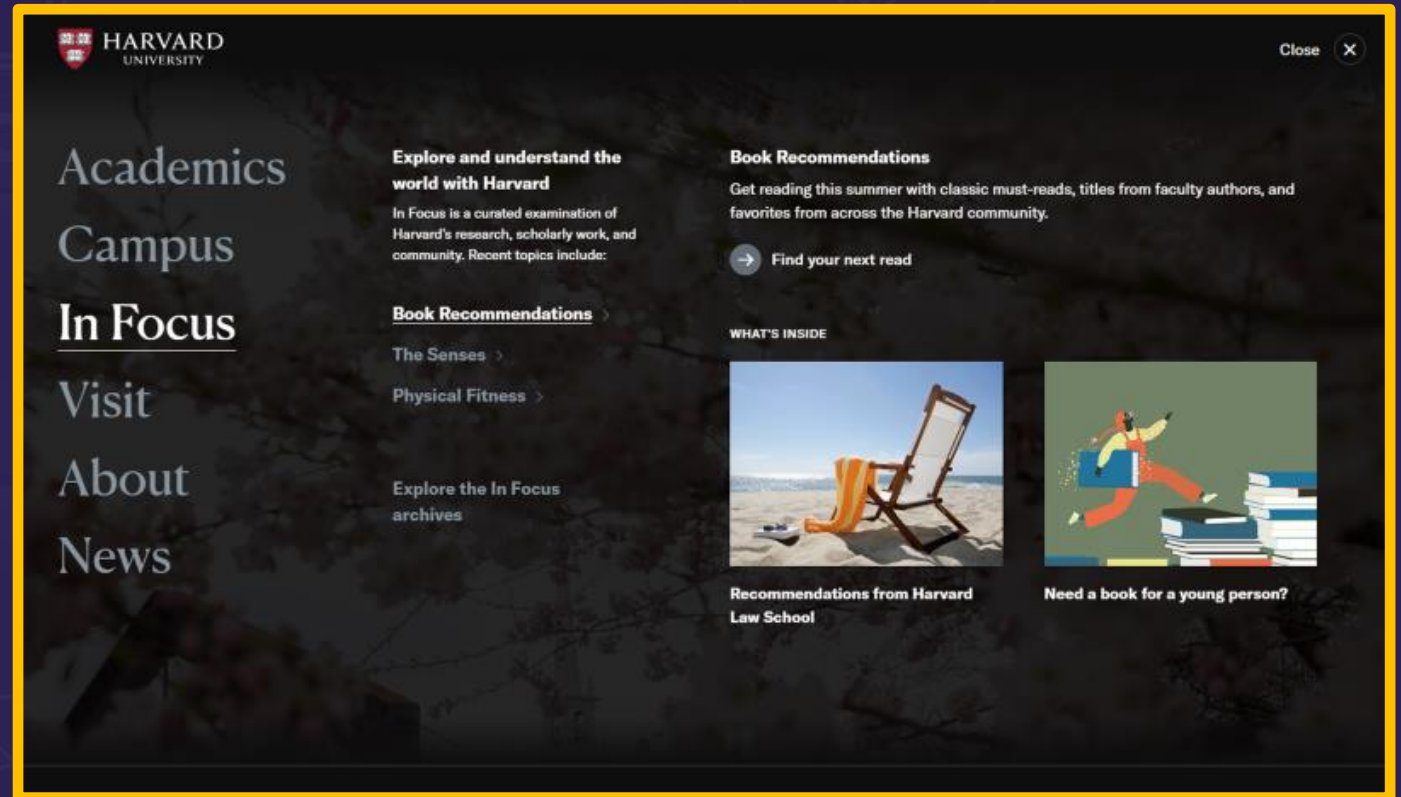
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IA NAVIGATION

Example: Harvard University

This website successfully makes a **huge and complex website** feel far **less daunting**.

Subtle touches like **hover states** make it more pleasurable to use. [2]





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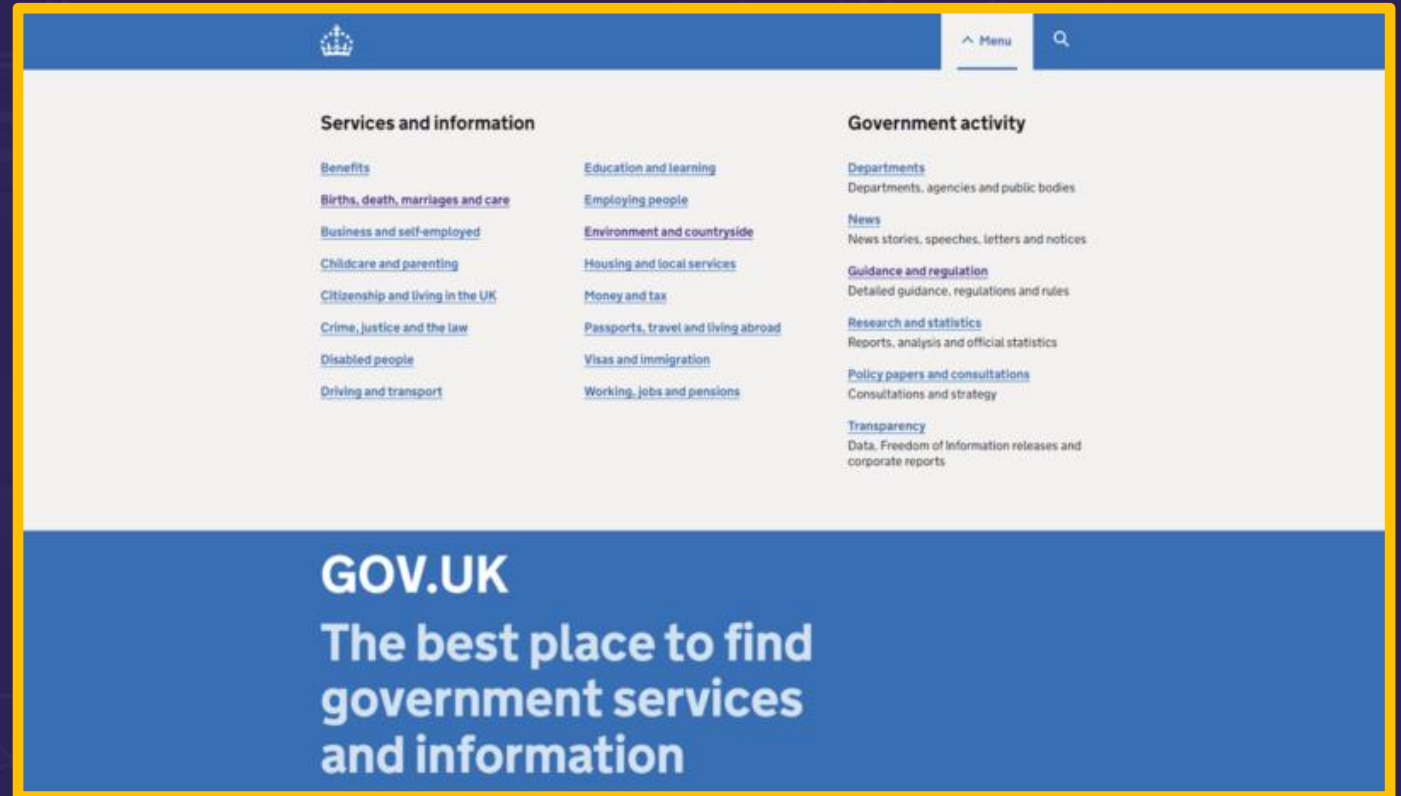
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IA NAVIGATION

Example: GOV.UK

Gov.uk's IA manages to organise **a vast amount of information** clearly and effectively.

With over 150,000 pages providing a **wide range of services** and information to 66 million people, it's a **major challenge from an information architecture perspective**. [2]





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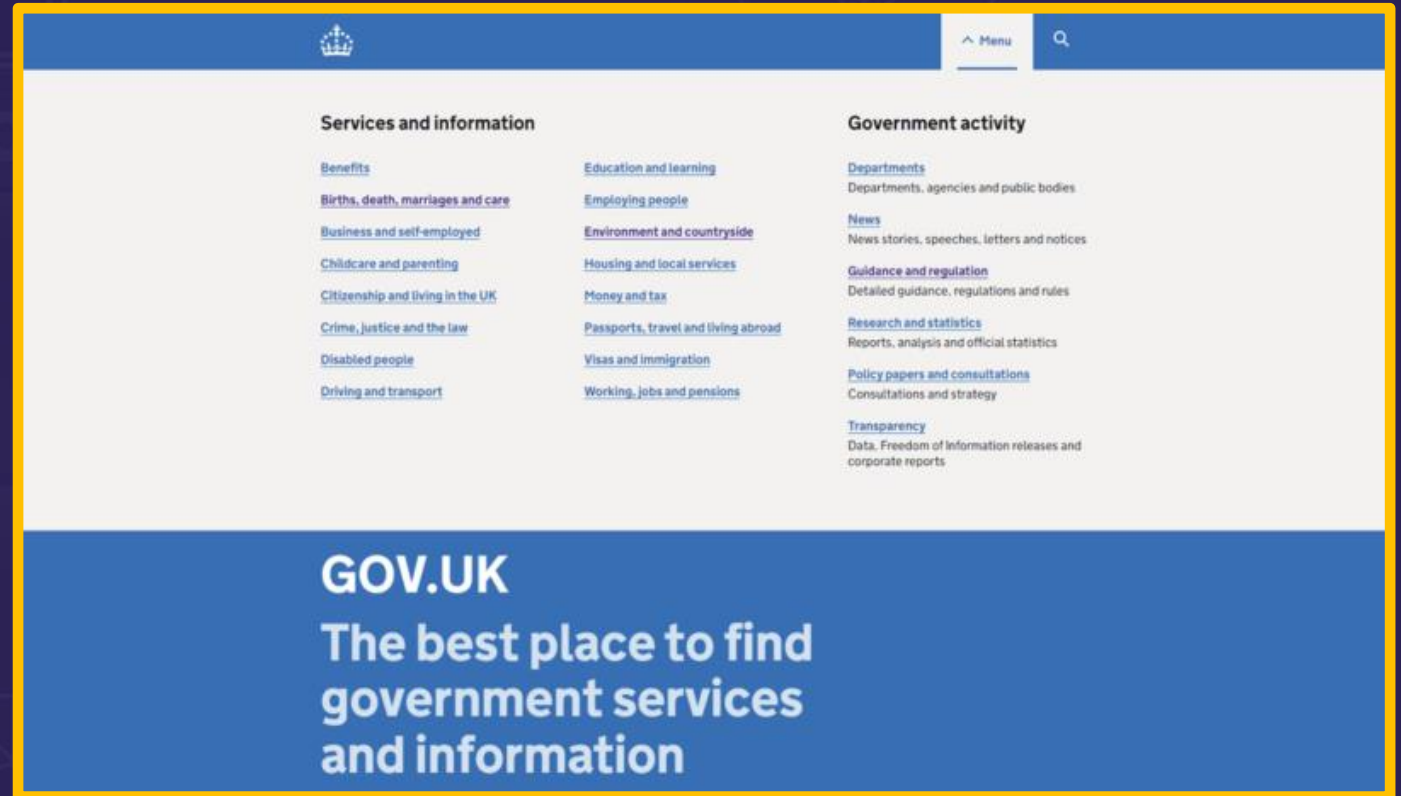
IA NAVIGATION

Example: GOV.UK

Organising **parts of the navigation alphabetically** is useful when breaking down such a large site, as it means you can **find the section you need quickly**.

It's a great example of **prioritising simplicity and usability**, delivering an accessible and effective solution.

This particular site is **not visually exciting**, but it does the job it's there to do perfectly. [2]



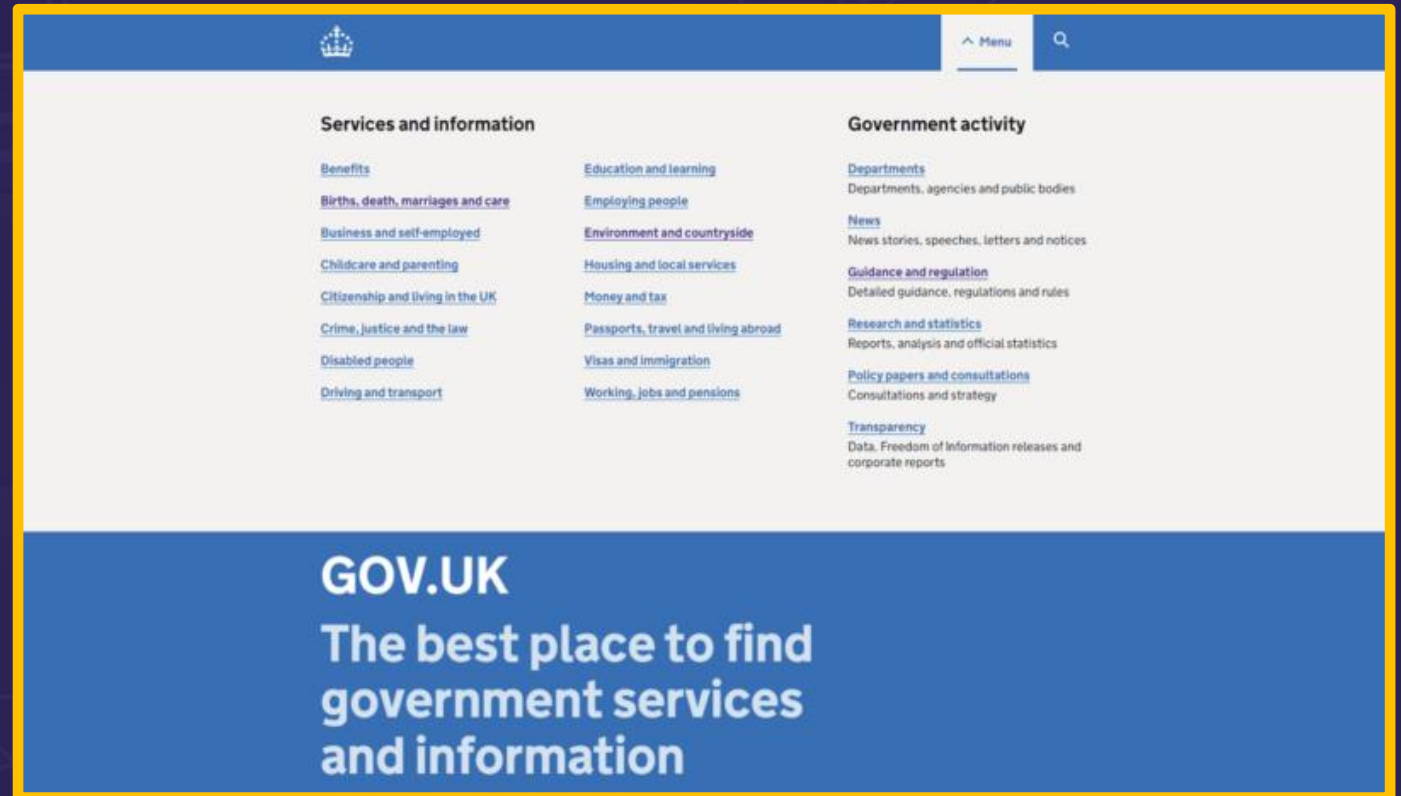


IA NAVIGATION

Example: GOV.UK

It's also helpful to think about **user psychology**. **People don't visit gov.uk for fun reasons**; they might have a **complicated issue** that needs resolving or may be in a **stressed headspace** while accessing it.

The **clear content groupings** take this into account and don't complicate things more than necessary. [2]





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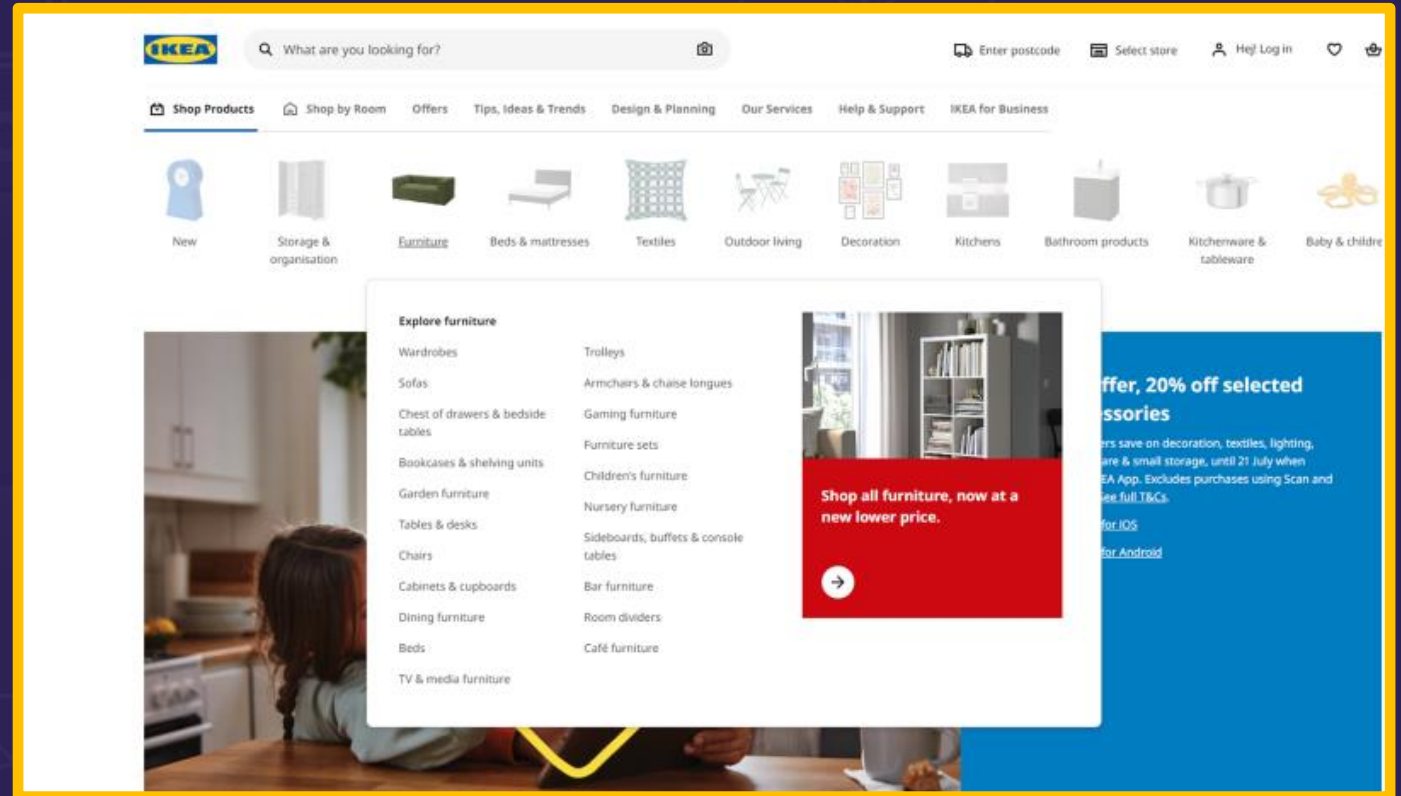
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IA NAVIGATION

Example: IKEA

IKEA's huge range spans a **wide range of products**, and their IA does a great job of presenting what they offer effectively.

The IA provides **different navigation option filters** (search by room, or by product) to serve users who either **know the product they are looking for**, or need inspiration for what to do with their room. [2]





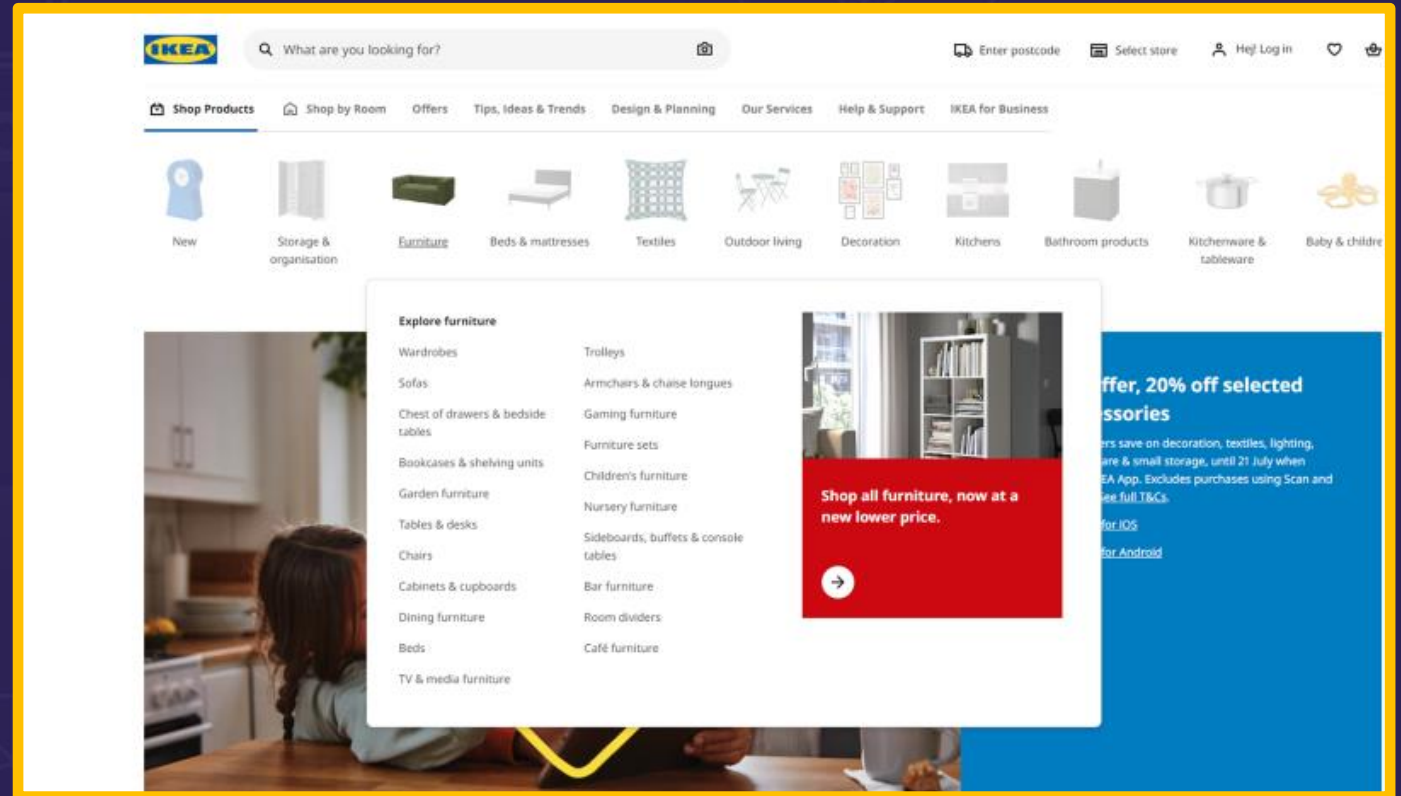
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IA NAVIGATION

Example: IKEA

This is a great example of offering a structure **based on what the user needs**, rather than reflecting internal systems. [2]





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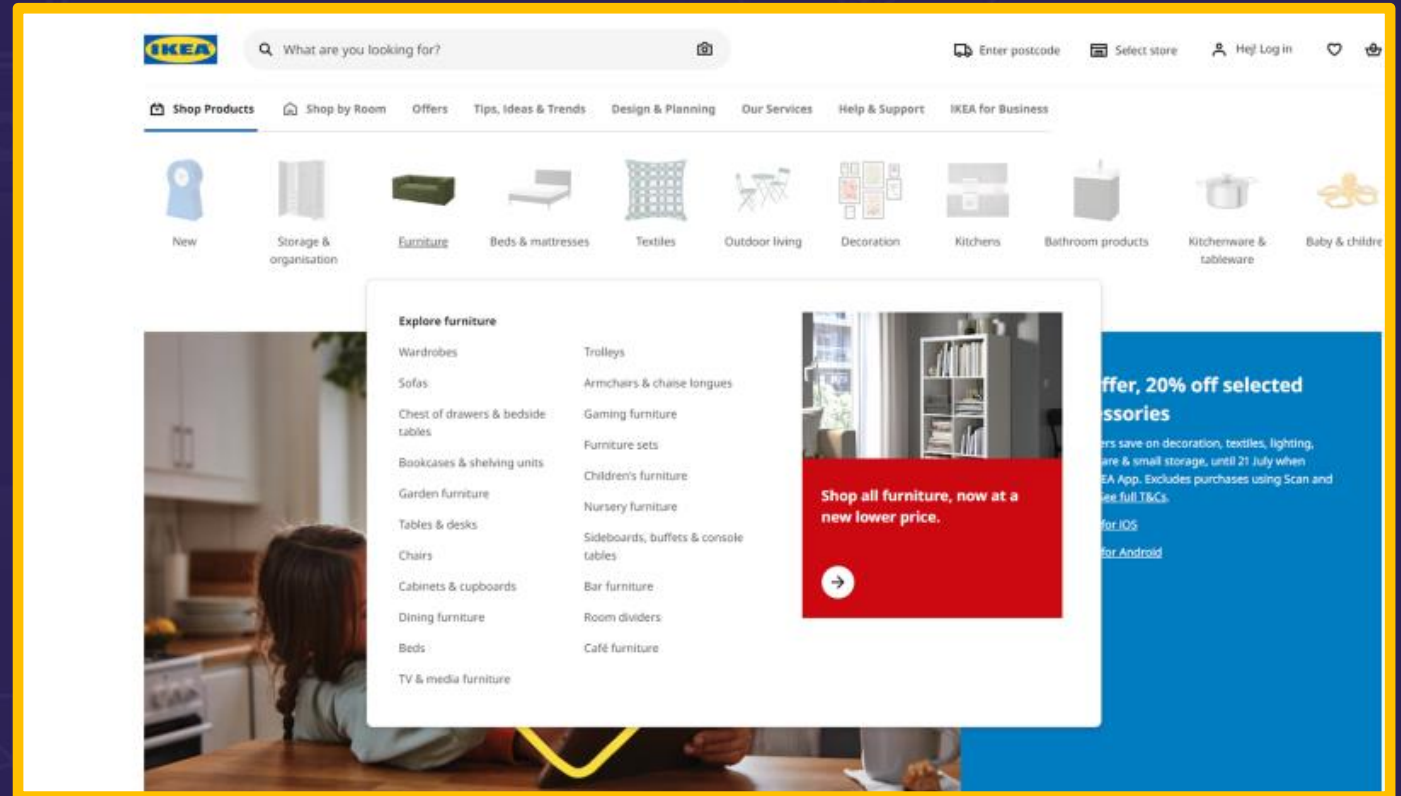
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IA NAVIGATION

Example: IKEA

Bringing imagery into the IA for shopping-related pages also makes it easier to see what you're looking for at a glance.

Clicking these top-level sections opens a secondary menu to go deeper. By splitting up the IA into stages in this way, the large range of options feels far less daunting than if it was presented sooner in the user's journey. [2]





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IA NAVIGATION

Spend some time looking at the examples presented in these slides – **explore the sites** and see where you end up.

EXERCISE:

Pick one example and try to create a Site Map of its contents.

Keep this **rough and simple** – the aim here is not presentation, but to see how the information is **structured**.

This **analysis** may be a useful practice for any **Site Maps you plan to develop** for your project.



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Scenarios (User Stories)



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SCENARIOS (USER STORIES)

Scenarios are a useful source for IA ideas and describe a **flow of actions and user choices**.

User Personas capture **what your users are like**. Scenarios work in a similar way but are more about **how people do things**.

UX designers use scenarios to **describe interactions**. If the action flows are **simple and effective** then you're doing the right thing.



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SCENARIOS (USER STORIES)

An **example scenario** for using Google might go something like this:

- Sam arrives at the main **Google search** page
- She enters a **search query** and submits it with the mouse or keyboard
- The next page **displays a list of search results** with the most relevant results at the top
- Sam reads the list and **clicks on the third link**
- The web browser **takes her from Google to the new URL**





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SCENARIOS (USER STORIES)

Note that the scenario process **does not** provide details about:

- What the UI **looks** like
- What controls are **available**



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SCENARIOS (USER STORIES)

Note that the scenario process **does not** provide details about:

- What the UI **looks** like
- What controls are **available**

Scenarios **do** provide information about:

- What **actions** are possible
- Flows of **information**
- Possible **user choices**
- **Features** and functions



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Summary



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SUMMARY

Good information architecture **greatly impacts the user experience**. The **faster** the users get to their final destination, even if that destination includes multiple options, the **greater their satisfaction**.

Remember that **knowing the users** and their **information seeking behaviours** is the key to success.

Once we **know our users' needs** we can we can prioritize **which architectural components to build** [3].





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