

User Interface Patterns

Software Design Patterns

- Reusable and flexible design
- Hard to get right first time
- Experience leads to good design
- Experiences designers have developed large knowledge based over time
- Knowledge communicated through *patterns*

Software Design Patterns

- Don't solve problems from first principles
- Reuse good ideas, good designs
- Provide a common vocabulary

What is a design pattern?

- Christopher Alexander
- October 4th 1936 –
- Architect for built environment
- Produced pattern language designed to “**empower any human being to design and build at any scale**”



Timeless Way of Building

“There is one timeless way of building. It is a thousand years old, and the same today as it has ever been. The great traditional buildings of the past, the villages and tents and temples in which man feels at home, have always been made by people who were very close to the center of this way. It is not possible to make great buildings, or great towns, beautiful places, places where you feel yourself, places where you feel alive, except by following this way. And, as you will see, this way will lead anyone who looks for it to buildings which are themselves as ancient in their form, as the trees and hills, and as our faces are.”

— Christopher Alexander, *The Timeless Way of Building*, 1979

Alexander's Patterns

“Each pattern describes a problem which occurs over and over again in our environment, and then describes the core of the solution to that problem, in such a way that you can use this solution a million times over, without ever doing it the same way twice”

Software Design Patterns

- The elements of a pattern:
 - Name
 - Problem
 - Solution
 - Rationale

Pattern Name

- Contributes to our vocabulary
- Facilitates design at a higher level of abstraction
- Makes it easier to think about designs and communicate them and their trade-offs to others
- Good names extremely important

Problem

- Describes when to apply the pattern
- Explains the problem and the context
- Might describe conditions that must be true before pattern should be applied

Solution

- Describes the elements that make up the design, their relationships and collaborations
- Doesn't describe a particular concrete design or implementation, more like an abstract description that can be applied to many different situations

Rationale

- Results and trade-offs of applying the pattern
- Critical for evaluating design alternatives and for understanding costs and benefits
- May address
 - Space, time, implementation issues, language dependencies
 - Impact on flexibility, extensibility, portability

User Interface Pattern Library

<http://ui-patterns.com/>

Pattern Categories

- Getting Input
- Navigation
- Dealing with Data
- Social
- Persuasion

Getting Input

Getting the user to input data is a task that should be tailored to the context of use.

Forms

- Password Strength Meter
- WYSIWYG
- Input Feedback
- Input Prompt
- Captcha
- In-place Editor
- Calendar Picker
- Live Preview
- Forgiving Format
- Fill In The Blanks
- Good Defaults
- Structured Format

Explaining the process

- Wizard
- Inline Help Box
- Blank Slate
- Tour
- Steps Left

Community driven

- Vote To Promote
- Account Registration
- Lazy Registration
- Rate Content
- Wiki
- Pay To Promote

Navigation

The user needs to locate specific features and content and needs navigation to accomplish this.

Tabs

- Module Tabs
- Navigation Tabs

Jumping in hierarchy

- Breadcrumbs
- Home Link
- Shortcut Dropdown
- Fat Footer

Menus

- Horizontal Dropdown Menu
- Vertical Dropdown Menu
- Accordion Menu

Content

- Carousel
- Thumbnail
- Archive
- Continuous Scrolling
- Tag Cloud
- Tag
- Pagination
- Event calendar
- Article list

Dealing with Data

Data can be searched, formatted, overviewed, and browsed in a variety of ways.

Tables

- Sort By Column
- Alternating Row Colors

Search

- Autocomplete
- Live Filter
- Table Filter

Images

- Slideshow
- Gallery
- Image Zoom

Formatting data

- Copy Box

Social

Allow the user to associate, communicate, and interact with other people online.

Ego

- Completeness meter
- Collectible Achievements

Persuasion

Perception and Memory

- Reduction
- Tunnelling
- Chunking
- Recognition over recall
- Anchoring

Game Mechanics

- Fundamentals of rewards
- Fixed rewards
- Variable rewards
- Gameplay rewards
- Completion
- Praise
- Prolonged play
- Unlock features
- Powers

Cognition

- Cognition
- Loss Aversion
- Status-quo bias
- Negativity bias
- Endowment effect
- Illusion of control
- Need for closure
- Peak-end rule
- Scarcity
- Limited duration

Feedback

- Kairos
- Feedback loops

Design Pattern: Module Tabs [I]

- **Problem:** The user needs to browse through a series of tabs without refreshing the page



Design Pattern: Module Tabs [II]

- Usage
 - Use when there is not enough space on the website to show all of the content inside all tabs – or if such a listing is irrelevant.
 - Use when there are more than 2 sections
 - Use when there less than 8-10 sections depending on the length of each section name.
 - Use when section names are relatively short
 - Use when the content of each tab can be viewed separate from each other, and not in context of each other.
 - Use when the content for each tab has similar structure
 - Use when you need to show what tab is currently being viewed
 - Do not use when the content inside each pane would function just as well in its own separate page.

Design Pattern: Module Tabs [III]

- Solution
 - Present the content of one tab inside a box (content area)
 - Place a horizontal bar on top of the content area with links representing tabs
 - Refrain from having more than one line of links in the top horizontal tab bar
 - Use color coding or other visual support to indicate what tab is currently being viewed
 - Present the content of each tab in the same content area
 - Only one content area should be visible at a time
 - Maintain the same structure of the top horizontal tab bar after a new tab has been clicked
 - Only the content area of the tabs and the horizontal tab bar should be changed when a user clicks a new tab
 - If possible, the page is not refreshed when a tab is clicked.
 - A new page is not loaded when a tab is clicked

Design Pattern: Module Tabs [IV]

- Rationale
 - Navigation tabs lends itself from the physical metaphor of a folders in a file-cabinet and is thus familiar to the user.
 - Module Tabs provide an easy way to show large amounts of similar structured data parted by categories
 - Tabs place the content area of the tabs into a context as the selected tab has been highlighted.

Design Pattern: Navigation Tabs [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to navigate among sections of a website and while having clear indication of what section the user is currently looking at.



Design Pattern: Navigation Tabs [II]

- Usage
 - Use when there are more than 2 sections
 - Use when there less than 8-10 sections depending on the length of each section name.
 - Use when section names are relatively short
 - Use when you want the navigation to fill the entire width of a page
 - Use when you want to provide a list of the highest available sections/subsections of the website
 - Do not use when wanting to show content-specific data. For instance for showing latest articles
 - Do not use when there is no need to single-out the currently selected option
 - Do not use when the list of sections or categories call for a “more...” link. Then consider another navigation pattern.

Design Pattern: Navigation Tabs [III]

- Solution
 - A horizontal bar contains the different sections or categories of your website.
 - Each section or category is represented by a tab that resembles a button. This is why the whole button should be clickable, and not just the text that labels the section.
 - Optionally, a bar below the top bar can contain subsections of the currently selected item in the top bar
 - The same navigation tab is used on all pages that is linked from the navigation tab.
 - The same structure (order) of the navigation tabs should be maintained from page to page, so that the user can relate the navigation of the different pages to each other.
 - The current selected tab should visually stand out compared the the not selected tabs.
 - If subsections are used (a second horizontal bar below the top bar) there should be a clear visual connection between the currently selected top tab and the bar below showing subsections.

Design Pattern: Navigation Tabs [IV]

- Rationale
 - Navigation tabs lends itself from the physical metaphor of a folders in a file-cabinet and is thus familiar to the user.
 - Navigation tabs provide a clear visual indication of what content can be found on a website and places the current location in context by highlighting it.

Design Pattern: Breadcrumbs [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to know his location in the website's hierarchical structure in order to possibly browse back to a higher level in the hierarchy.

[Design patterns](#) » [Techniques](#) » Module CSS Tabs

Design Pattern: Breadcrumbs [II]

- Usage
 - Use when the structure of the website follows a strict hierarchical structure of similar formatted content.
 - Use when the structure of the site is parted in to sections which can be divided into more subsections and so on
 - Use when the user is most likely to have landed on the page from an external source (another site deep linking to the web page in question). For instance from a blog or a search engine.
 - Use when the page in question is placed fairly deep into the hierarchy of pages and when no other form of visual navigation can show the details of the same deep level.
 - Use together with some sort of main navigation.
 - Do not use on the topmost level of the hierarchy (typically the welcome page)
 - Do not use alone as the main navigation of the website.

Design Pattern: Breadcrumbs [III]

- Solution
 - Show the labels of the sections in the hierarchical path that leads to the viewed page.
 - Each label of the higher level subsections have links that lead to the respective section of the site.
 - The label of the current page is at the end of the breadcrumb and is not linked.
 - Each label is parted with a separating character. Popular characters are » (») or >.
 - The separating characters and the spaces between the links and the labels are not linked.
 - The labels of each section preferably match the titles of that section.

Design Pattern: Breadcrumbs [IV]

- Rationale
 - Breadcrumbs show the user where he is now in relation to the site's hierarchy: how information is structured.
 - The structure of the website is more easily understood when it is layed out in a breadcrumb than if it is put into a menu, why the learning to navigate the site comes natural.
 - Breadcrumbs take up minimal space and even though not all users use them, they still hint the structure of the website and the current location of the page in question.
 - The term 'breadcrumb' is wrong, as it implies the history of how the user got to that page. A more correct term would describe the current location's place in the hierarchy of the website.

Design Pattern: Home Link [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to go back to a safe start location of the site.



Design Pattern: Home Link [II]

- Usage
 - Use when the user often enters the website through a page other than the start site. The user needs to be able to easily find his way to the starting point or front page of the website.

Design Pattern: Home Link [III]

- Solution
 - Create a link to the starting point or front page of the website on the site's logo on every single page on the website.
 - If the site does not have a logo, then link the to the front page of the website with the text 'Home'.
 - The link and/or linked images should always be in the same location on all pages.
 - If the website has more than one home, then be sure to make the distinction in linking between the root home and the local home.

Design Pattern: Home Link [IV]

- Rationale
 - It has become a standard in webdesign, that the site's logo is always linked to a safe start location for the user. Normally, this is the front page of the site, but it could also be the front page of a section in the site, or some other safe start location for the user.

Design Pattern: Shortcut Dropdown [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user needs to access a specific section or functionality of a website in a quick way regardless of hierarchy.



Design Pattern: Shortcut Dropdown [II]

- Usage
 - Use to shortcut an otherwise hierarchical structure of a website.
 - Use when there are specific functionality or pages that are more frequently used than other parts of the website. Use the shortcut box to show these choices in order to shorten the path for the users.
 - Use when you want shortcuts to pages that are possibly on different hierarchical levels of the page.
 - Can also be used as navigation when short on space, although it is not advised.

Design Pattern: Shortcut Dropdown [III]

- Solution
 - Add a combobox (a `<select>` box in HTML) to list a number of fixed locations (URLS) on one or more pages. When the form is submitted, the user is redirected to the chosen page.
 - An alternate version is to redirect to the chosen page as soon as the user selects an item from the combobox and not when he submits the form.

Design Pattern: Shortcut Dropdown [IV]

- Rationale
 - The often hierarchical structure of a website can at times impede the path to specific functionality of a website. By adding a shortcut to the most frequently used functionality, the path can be shortened: the number of clicks can be lessened and the confusion decreased.

Design Pattern: Fat Footer [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to access a specific section or functionality of a site in a quick way regardless of hierarchy.



Design Pattern: Fat Footer [II]

- Usage
 - Use as a secondary navigation – never as the main navigation of a website.
 - Use to shortcut an otherwise hierarchical structure of a website.
 - Use when you have many sections of your website with possibly long section names.
 - Use when you want the secondary navigation to fill the entire width of the page.
 - Use to show functionality that is important to all users regardless on what page they are visiting.
 - Use to link to parts of a website that are more frequently used than others, but does not follow the hierarchical structure of the main navigation.
 - Visually anchor the content of each page with a base consistent, substantial design element.

Design Pattern: Fat Footer [III]

- Solution
 - Add the same footer on all pages of a website – with the same layout in the footer on all pages.
 - Add links to frequently used section of your website, relevant links, recent news, signup forms to newsletters, links to RSS feeds, or the likes.
 - Add functionality that is vital to the concept of your website.

Design Pattern: Fat Footer [IV]

- Rationale
 - The footer appears on all pages of your website. By adding the functionality that is vital to the concept of your website directly in the footer, you first and foremost give your users easy access to this functionality. You also mould the usage pattern of your users, by placing shortcuts to the most important functionality of your site in a spot that is always the same.

Design Pattern:

Horizontal Dropdown Menu [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to navigate among sections of a website, but space to show such navigation is limited.



Design Pattern:

Horizontal Dropdown Menu [II]

- Usage
 - Use when there are more than 2 main sections of a site
 - Use when there less than 8-10 sections depending on the length of each section name.
 - Use when your functionality resembles one of a desktop application. Imitate the metaphor.

Design Pattern:

Horizontal Dropdown Menu [III]

- Solution
 - A list of main sections is listed on the same vertical line. Once the user has his mouse cursor over one of the list items, a box with related sub-list items (sub-options for the given main list-item) are shown on the right side of the list item hovered (mouse over) on.
 - The user can then follow the now horizontally extended list item down, to select the menu item he wants to click.
 - Once the user removes the cursor from the box of drop-down'ed options, the box disappears. He can then put his mouse cursor over another list item, whereafter the process starts over.

Design Pattern:

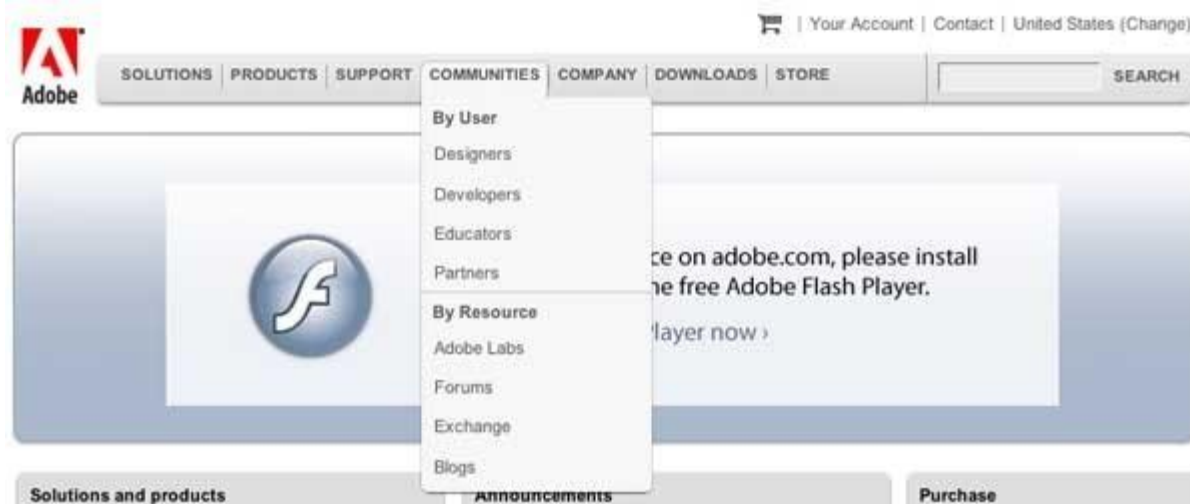
Horizontal Dropdown Menu [IV]

- Rationale
 - Drop-down menus save space. This is the main reason for using them. Otherwise, drop-down menus are not regarded as a technique that increases usability, as they can often be difficult to use.
 - Flyout menus allow for only showing top levels of the page's hierarchy permanently, while still giving the option to show deeper levels on mouse over.

Design Pattern:

Vertical Dropdown Menu [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to navigate among sections of a website, but space to show such navigation is limited.



Design Pattern:

Vertical Dropdown Menu [II]

- Usage
 - Use when there are more than 2 main sections of a site
 - Use when there less than 8-10 sections depending on the length of each section name.
 - Use when your functionality resembles one of a desktop application. Imitate the metaphor.
 - Do not use when there is a need to single out the location of the current section of the site. Then use the Navigation Tabs.

Design Pattern:

Vertical Dropdown Menu [III]

- Solution
 - A list of main sections is listed on the same horizontal line. Once the user has his mouse cursor over one of the list items, a drop-down list of new options is shown below the list item the mouse cursor is pointing at.
 - The user can then follow the now vertically extended list item down, to select the menu item he wants to click.
 - Once the user removes the cursor from the box of drop-down'ed options, the box disappears. He can then put his mouse cursor over another list item, whereafter the process starts over.

Design Pattern:

Vertical Dropdown Menu [IV]

- Rationale
 - Drop-down menus save space. This is the main reason for using them. Otherwise, drop-down menus are not regarded as a technique that increases usability, as they can often be difficult to use.
 - Flyout menus allow for only showing top levels of the page's hierarchy permanently, while still giving the option to show deeper levels on mouse over.

Design Pattern: Accordion Menu [I]

- **Problem summary:** User needs to navigate among a website's main sections while still being able to quickly browse to the subsection of another.



Design Pattern: Accordion Menu [II]

- Usage
 - Use when you want the benefits of a normal sidebar menu, but do not have the space to list all options.
 - Use when there are more than 2 main sections on a website each with 2 or more subsections.
 - Use when you have less than 10 main sections
 - Use when you only have two levels to show in the main navigation.

Design Pattern: Accordion Menu [III]

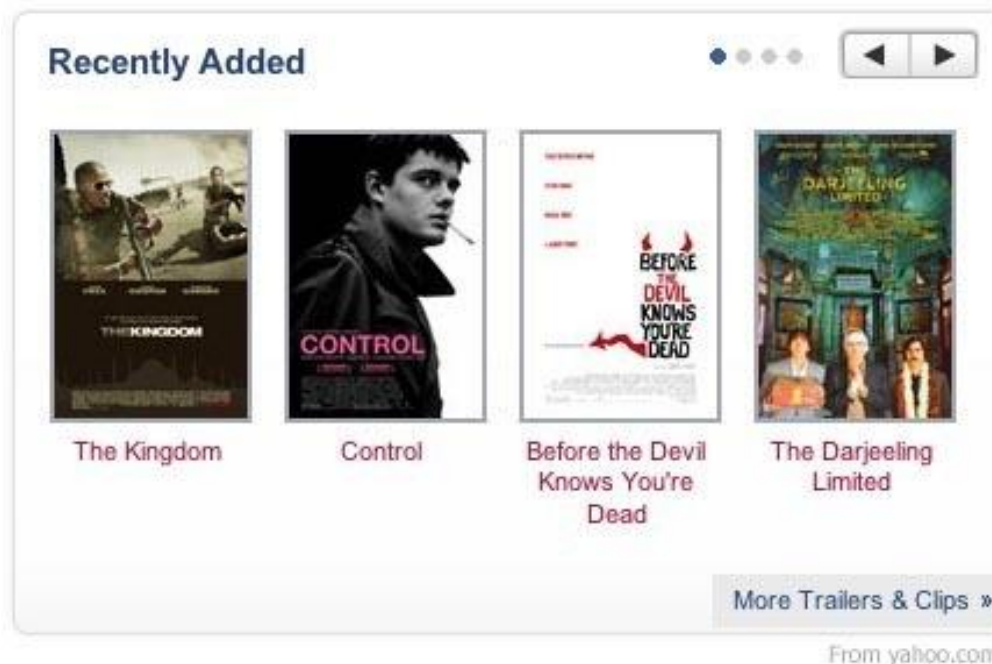
- Solution
 - Each headline / section has a panel, which upon clicking can be expanded either vertically or horizontally into showing its subsections. Vertical Accordion menus are the most frequently used.
 - The transition from showing no options of a headline to showing a headline's list of options can be done either with a page refresh or with a javascript DHTML animation.
 - When one panel is clicked it is expanded, while other panels are collapsed.

Design Pattern: Accordion Menu [IV]

- Rationale
 - Accordion menus are often used as a website's main navigation. In this way, it acts much like Navigation Tabs, as menu items are collapsed when a new panel is clicked. Where the Navigation Tabs are most often used horizontally, Accordion menus are most often used vertically.
 - Accordion menus can however also function quite well as sub-navigation for a specific section of a website.

Design Pattern: Carousel [I]

- **Problem Summary:** The user needs to browse through a set of items and possibly select one of them



Design Pattern: Carousel [II]

- Usage
 - Use when you have a large set of items to show, but want to let the user concentrate his or her attention only on a select few items at a time
 - Use when you want to tease the user by letting him or her know that there are more items available than what is currently shown.
 - Use when you do not have enough space to show all items at once.
 - Use when you have highly visual items to represent such as movie posters, album covers, products etc.
 - Do not use when the items are non-visual such as links to text articles, PDF documents etc.
 - Do not use when the content linked to cannot be immediately identified by an image.

Design Pattern: Carousel [III]

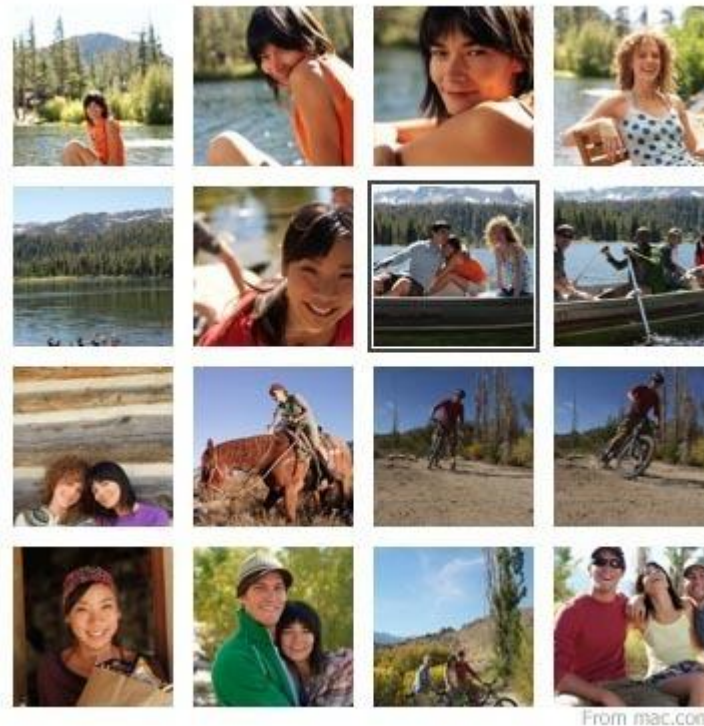
- Solution
 - Arrange a set of items on a horizontal line where each item preferably has an thumbnail image attached (or the item is only represented by the image).
 - Even though the list of items is long, only 3-8 images are shown at the same time.
 - If the user wants to view the rest of the items on the list, he or she must click one of the arrows pointing either left/right or up/down.
 - Once one of the arrow is clicked, the next “view” of images is shown and an animation scrolls the current items to the side and at the same times replaces them with new images.
 - The user can in this way browse the list of items back and forth. Once the end of the list is reached it is he starting items that scrolls in once the arrow is clicked – hence the name Carousel.

Design Pattern: Carousel [IV]

- Rationale
 - The carousel only takes up small space on the screen, why it allows you to let the user scroll through many list items without scrolling up or down.
 - As the two arrows indicate that there are more items than what is shown now available, the user has a tendency to keep exploring while he or she has browsed through all the images. This carousel pattern can in this way be used as an extra incentive for the user to browse through all items of the list, as we as humans do not feel comfortable by not being aware of the “full picture”.
 - As the carousel is circular, the start of the list will be shown after the user has reached the end. This behaviour gives the user a great opportunity to browse through all list items an extra time.

Design Pattern: Thumbnail [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user needs to get an overview of multiple pictures without having to download each of the full size images.



From mac.com

Design Pattern: Thumbnail [II]

- Usage
 - Use when you have a collection of images that you want to present to the user.
 - Use when downloading full-size versions of all of the images you want to present to the user will both take up much bandwidth but will also take a long time for the user to download.
 - Use when you want to allow the user to browse quickly through a collection of images.
 - Use when you want to give the user an impression of an image, movie or page before he or she decides to download the original.

Design Pattern: Thumbnail [III]

- Solution
 - A thumbnail is a miniature version of a larger picture. The thumbnail can illustrate anything graphical: a picture, movie or even a screenshot of a webpage.
 - The dimensions (width and height) of multiple thumbnails appearing next to each other are the exact same. In order to preserve the same proportions in the thumbnail image as were found in the original image, both resizing and cropping is part of the image manipulation process.

Design Pattern: Thumbnail [IV]

- Rationale
 - Using thumbnails provides the user with an overview of several images or movies in the space of one web page.
 - Thumbnails further save bandwidth as the user does not have to click through all images to find the one he or she is looking for, but can be guided by the teasers provided by the thumbnails.

Design Pattern: Archive [I]

- **Problem**

Summary: The user wants to search for an article of interest by chronological order

October 2007

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Design Pattern: Archive [II]

- Usage
 - Use when you have more than 10 to 20 items to display
 - Use when you have a data set that spans over a long time frame and want to let the user browse the items in the dataset by chronological order.
 - Use when displaying all items in a dataset confuses the user rather than giving an overview
 - Use when it makes sense to order items in a dataset by dates
 - Use when you want to provide an easy way to browse your entire database of articles.

Design Pattern: Archive [III]

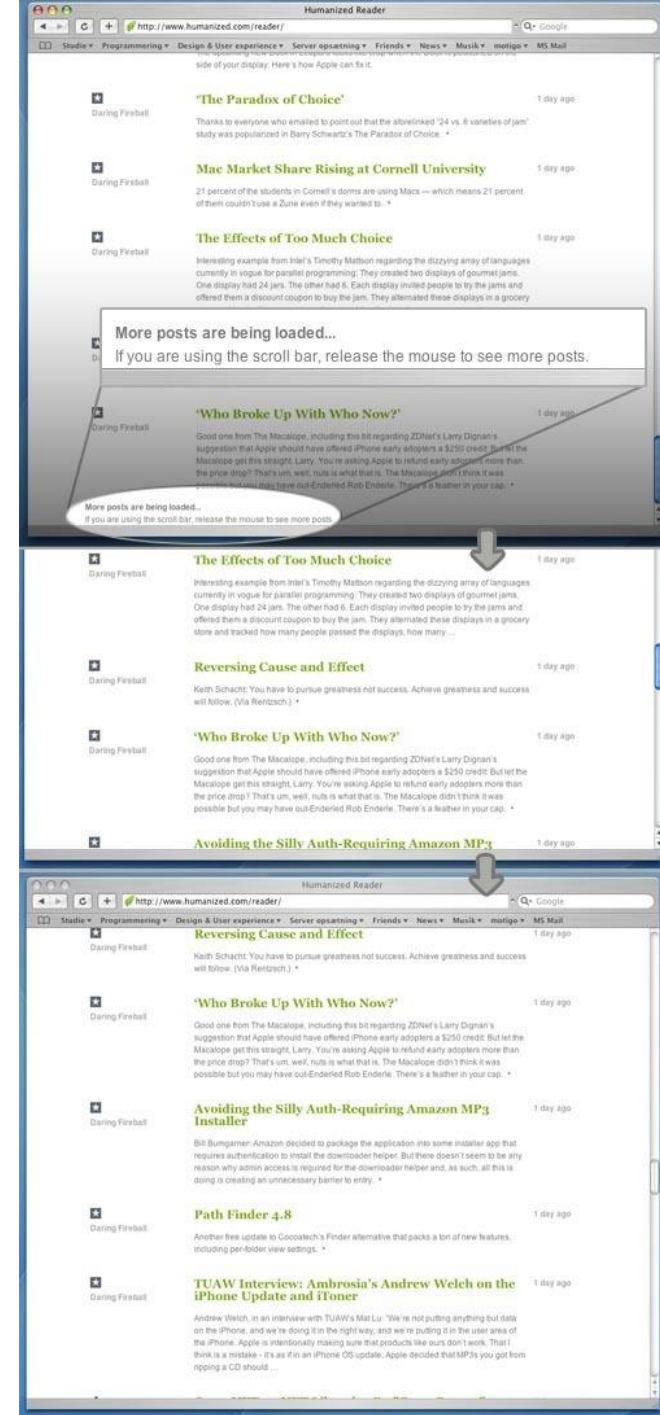
- Solution
 - List the items in your dataset in chronological order and provide suitable headlines to match the amount of items. If you for instance have 10 items per year, it does not make much sense to part these 10 items into months. If you have 100 items a year, but also have months without any items, it might not make sense to list all months.
 - Either you can provide links to pages that shows all items per time period, or simply make a list of links to each item directly on the main archive page.

Design Pattern: Archive [IV]

- Rationale
 - Use the archive pattern when it makes sense to list items in chronological order. List items in an archive format, makes it easy for the user to explore how the website of interest has evolved over time and what has influenced today's items.

Design Pattern: Continuous Scrolling [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user needs to view a subset of data that is not easily displayed on a single page.



Design Pattern: Continuous Scrolling [II]

- Usage
 - Use when there are more data to show than what would fit on a normal page
 - Use when navigating to a second page of data takes away too much attention from the content

Design Pattern: Continuous Scrolling [III]

- Solution
 - In contrast to the Pagination patterns, the Continuous Scrolling pattern has no natural break. When using pagination patterns, a decision to only show a subset of data at a time and then let the user request more data if wanted is chosen. With the Continuous Scrolling, new data is automatically retrieved as the user has scrolled to the bottom of the page. It thus appears as if the page has no end, as more data will be loaded and inserted into the page each time the user scrolls to the bottom of page.

Design Pattern: Continuous Scrolling [IV]

- Rationale
 - The problem with using pagination for browsing between subsets of data is that the user is pulled from the world of content to the world of navigation, as the user is required to click to the next page.
 - The user is then no longer thinking about what they are reading, but about how to get more to read. This breaks the user's train of thought and forces them to stop reading.
 - Using pagination creates a natural pause that lets the user re-evaluate if he or she wants to keep going on or leave the site, which they a lot of the time do.
 - It can be argued that Continuous Scrolling can be frustrating for the user, as there is no natural pause. The user will ask himself: When am I done reading?

Design Pattern: Tag Cloud [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user wants to browse content by popularity or most elaborate topic



.net advertising ajax api apple architecture art article asp.net audio blog blogging blogs books
business c# cms code collaboration community computer cool css culture daily database design
development diy download drupal e-commerce education email english environment fashion finance
firefox flash fonts food framework free fun funny game games google graphics gtd hardware health
history home howto humor illustration imported inspiration internet java javascript jobs
language law library lifehacks linux mac magazine maps marketing math media microsoft mobile mp3
music network news online opensource osx photo photography photos photoshop php
plugin podcast politics portfolio productivity programming python radio rails recipes reference
research resources ruby school science search security seo shop shopping social
socialnetworking software teaching tech technology tips tool tools toread travel tutorial tutorials
tv typography ubuntu uk usability video web web2.0 webdesign webdev wiki windows
wishlist wordpress work writing youtube

Design Pattern: Tag Cloud [II]

- Usage
 - Use when users of your website can add content yourself and possibly also many tags
 - Use when your website has more than 10-20 different tags, each with different weight in post-count.
 - Do not use to show the categories of a strict hierarchical structure

Design Pattern: Tag Cloud [III]

- Solution
 - A tag cloud is a list of tags, where the font size of each tag is larger or bigger depending on its weight. Weight in tag clouds can be represented in three different ways:
 - Size represents the number of times that a tag has been applied to a single item.

This kind of tag cloud can help define the distribution of how the item is categorized.
 - Size represents the number of items to which a tag has been applied

As a presentation of each tag's popularity.
 - Size represents the quantity of content items in that category

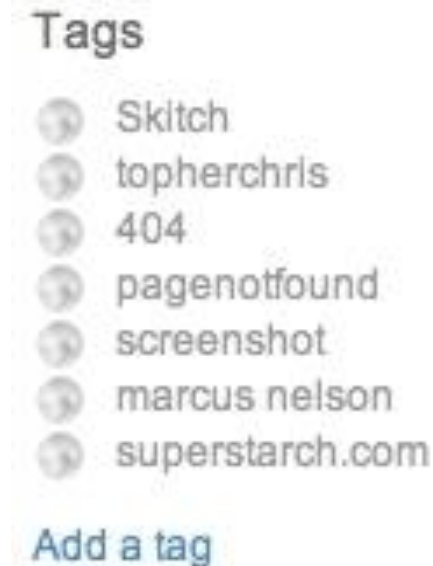
Tags are used as a categorization method for content items

Design Pattern: Tag Cloud [IV]

- Rationale
 - Tag clouds help visualize semantic fields; how some categories have greater importance than others.
 - It can also help give an impression of what content is to be found on a given site. Which categories of content is the site focused on?

Design Pattern: Tag [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user wants to find more data in the same category and/or contribute data in the same category



Design Pattern: Tag [II]

- Usage
 - Use when the content on your website is possibly mapped into multiple categories and does not necessarily only fit into one hierarchical category.
 - Use when you want users to contribute data to your website and let them organize their contributed data themselves.

Design Pattern: Tag [III]

- Solution
 - Let the contributors of information on your website add keywords (tags) to the content they submit.
 - These keywords are then transformed into links that leads to tag pages; listing all other contributions for that tag (category).

Design Pattern: Tag [IV]

- Rationale
 - Tags are relevant keywords associated with or assigned to a piece of information. Tags are often used on social websites, where users can upload their own content.
 - Here, tags are used to let users organize and categorize their own data in the public sphere. In this way, tags can be seen as a bottom-up categorization of data rather than a top-down categorization of data, where the creators of the site define the hierarchy data is submitted to.

Design Pattern: Pagination [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user needs to view a subset of sorted data that is not easily displayed on one page.



Design Pattern: Pagination [II]

- Usage
 - Use when there is more data than what is comfortably fitted into one screen.
 - Use when the dataset is ordered into amount of interest (that usually means newest first)
 - Do not use when you don't want the user to pause for navigating to the next page.

Design Pattern: Pagination [III]

- Solution
 - Break the complete dataset of items into smaller sequential parts and show these on separate sequential pages.
 - Provide pagination control to browse from page to page. Let the user browse to the previous and next pages by providing links to such actions.
 - Also, provide links to the absolute start and end of the dataset (first and last).
 - If the dataset is of defined quantity, also show a link to the last page. If the dataset to show possibly is of varying size (for instance as a result from a search), do not bother to show a link to the last page.

Design Pattern: Pagination [IV]

- Rationale
 - First and foremost, pagination parts large datasets into smaller bits that are manageable for the user to read and cope with. Secondly, pagination controls conveys information to the user about, how big the dataset is, and how much is left to read or check out and how much have they already checked out.
 - Pagination provides the user with a natural break from reading or scanning the contents of the dataset, and allows them to reevaluate whether they wish to continue looking through more data, or navigate away from the page. This is also why pagination controls are most often placed below the list: to provide the user with an option to continue reading through the larger dataset.

Design Pattern: Event calendar [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user wants to find events of interest happening in a certain period of time.



Design Pattern: Event calendar [II]

- Usage
 - Use when you want to allow your users to navigate between items with its main base in a certain period of time.
 - Do not use if the content of your website does not each have its root in a given period of time or time-stamp.

Design Pattern: Event calendar [III]

- Solution
 - The most common ways to browse an event calendar is either through a text list of events, through a month table, or a combination of both.
 - The text list is great for providing a view of events for a given period of time: for a certain day, week, month, or simply the nearest future. With a packed calendar, it can however be overwhelming to get an overview of everything.
 - The calendar box (month table) is good for browsing between days and for getting an overview of when the action happens. In isolation it however reveals close to no information about the events in the calendar. Furthermore, the boxed calendar renders almost useless without data. If you only have one or two events a month, the usefulness of the calendar box becomes minimal – left to merely showing when the next weekend is up.

Design Pattern: Event calendar [IV]

- Rationale
 - An event calendar is a list of time-based items. Their base in time is a great tool for grouping, filtering, and sorting.

Design Pattern: Article list [I]

- **Problem summary:** The user needs guidance in finding editorial content of interest, which hierarchical navigation alone does not accomplish.



DECEMBER 16, 2008

A website without a content strategy is like a speeding vehicle without a driver. Learn why content matters and how to do it right.

Content-tious Strategy

by **JEFFREY MACINTYRE**

Every website faces two key questions: 1. What content do we have at hand? 2. What content should we produce? Answering those questions is the domain of the content strategist. Alas, real content strategy gets as little respect today as information architecture did in 1995. MacIntyre defines the roles, tools, and value of this emerging user experience specialist.

The Discipline of Content Strategy

by **KRISTINA HALVORSON**

It's time to stop pretending content is somebody else's problem. If content strategy is all that stands between us and the next fix-it-later copy draft or beautifully polished but meaningless site launch, it's time to take up the torch—time to make content matter. Halvorson tells how to understand, learn, practice, and plan for content strategy.

A List Apart explores the design, development, and meaning of web content, with a special focus on web standards and best practices. Explore our [articles](#) or find out more [about us](#).

*AN EVENT APART
coming to a city near you*

*A BOOK APART
coming soon*

EDITOR'S CHOICE
originally ran: July 31, 2007

Better Writing Through Design

by **BRONWYN JONES**

It's one thing to write copy that fits on a website. It's quite another to write copy that fits in with a website. You wouldn't try to force an incongruous visual element into a carefully considered design. Same goes for written content.

Design Pattern: Article list [II]

- Usage
 - Use when you want to guide the user to content that appeals or is interesting to him or her.
 - Use when the content of your site that needs a device for navigation is of temporal nature such as a news article or a seasonal piece such as a story about summer fashion or Christmas cooking.
 - Do not use when the content you want to guide the user to is not suited to be presented as a story.

Design Pattern: Article list [III]

- Solution
 - An article lists is a great means of communicating for inspiration. It allows the user to quickly scan a list of articles that appeals or is interesting to him or her.

Design Pattern: Article list [IV]

- Rationale
 - On a website delivering editorial content, the article teaser is one of the most important design elements besides the design of the article itself. The article teaser is part of an article list, and its main purpose is to lure visitors to keep on browsing.
 - The most pure form of article lists is seen on magazine and news websites, but the convention is also relevant to all other sites trying to tease another click out of the visitor.

Task

- Produce a homepage design of your website
 - Develop a paper prototype