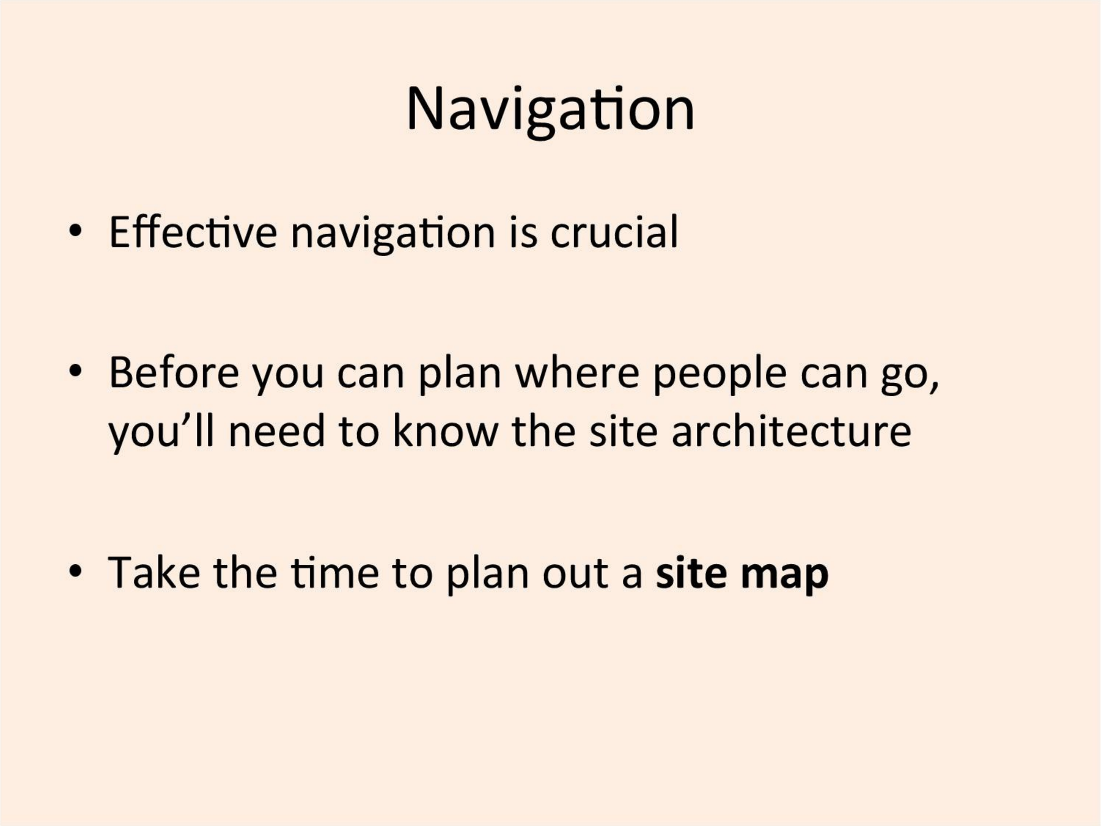


Navigation

- Effective navigation is crucial
- Before you can plan where people can go, you'll need to know the site architecture
- Take the time to plan out a **site map**

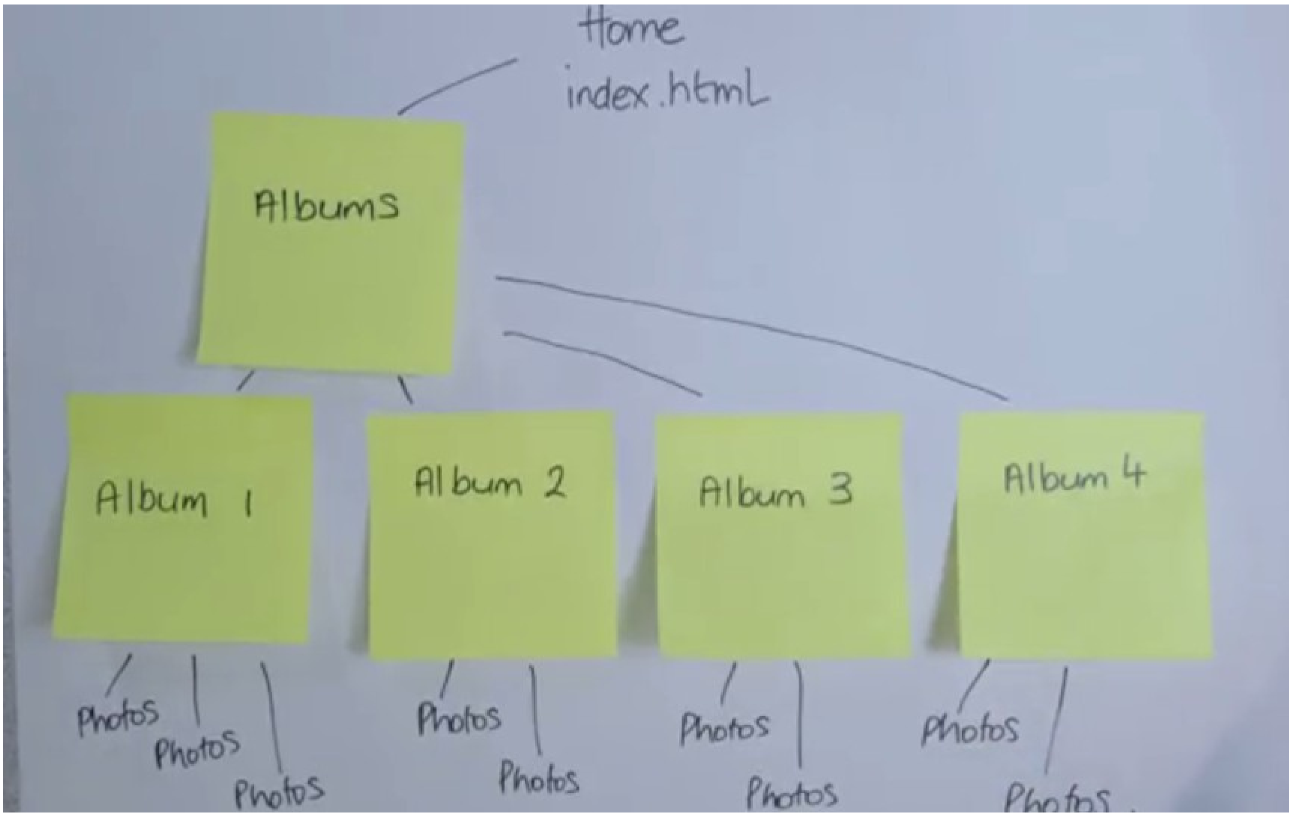
This section is looking at navigation. Where can I go? Navigation is really important to websites, because if your user doesn't know where they're going to go,they might just give up and wonder off. If you want them to stay on your webpage, you better give them some indication of where they can be.

- So navigation can be **hierarchical.** And this is moving from the very general to the very specific. It's a clear and simple path to all elements and all parts of the website.
- It could be **global**, where you have top level sections on each page. The user can easily go back to one of those if they need to.
- Or it could be **local**, which then occurs within the text of the webpage.

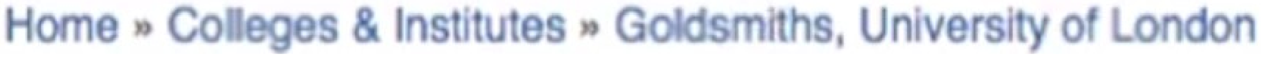
Now different cultures have different ways of navigating. But it's crucial that you pick the right one. And before you can plan where people can go, you need to think about the site architecture. The way to do this is to plan out some kind of site map. Site maps can be done with software, but again it's just pretty easy if you draw it out for yourself. It's not a complicated thing to do.

- But if you start by planning where you want your people to go, and what's available to them, you're gonna save yourself an awful lot of time.

So let's work out how to draw a site map. So, a site map is a way of visualizing your website. It's a way of planning it out, looking for things like navigation links. So, let's keep this really simple and try and draw one. Your hierarchy is always gonna always start on your home page and that's your index.html file. And then after that we know that on our gallery page we're going to have some albums. So we know there's a link to albums. And in those albums we know that we have a number of them. So we have four albums on our site. And the really nice about using Post-it Notes is that you can then just rearrange your site without having to to redraw.



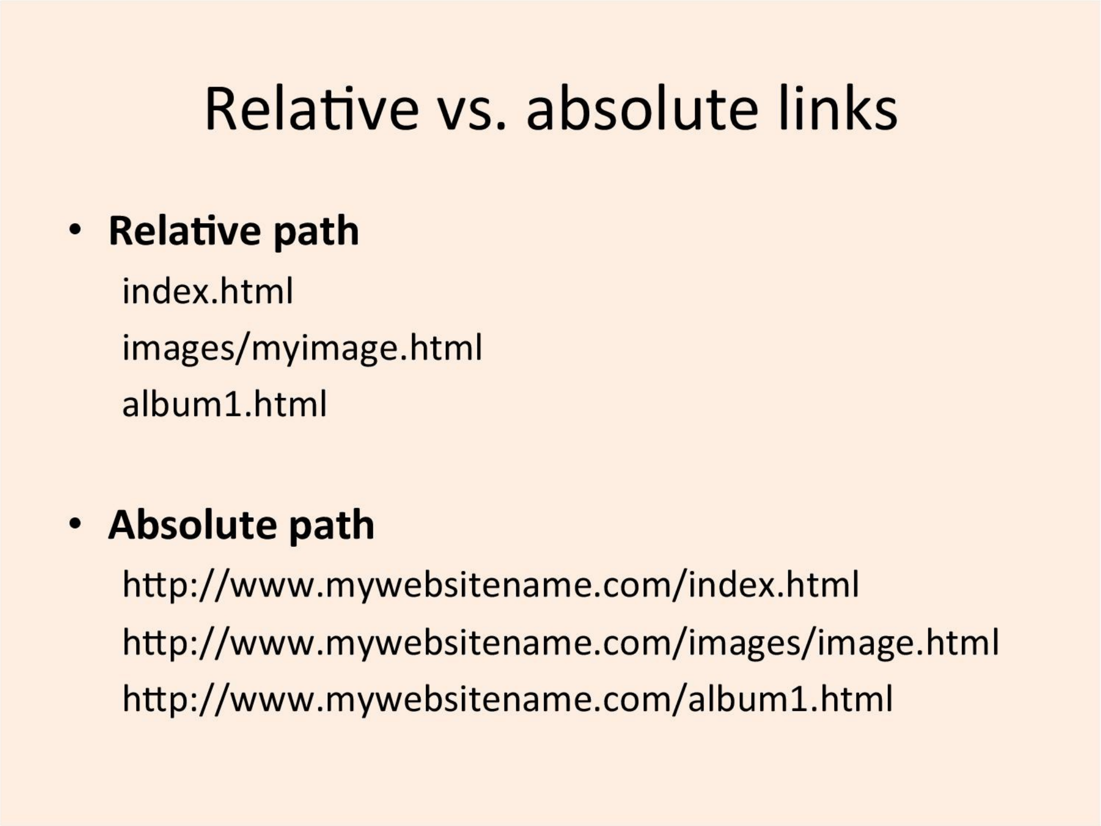
So, very handy, very low tech, but handy piece of kit. So under the albums we can go to four different places. And then under each album, we know that we have photos in that album. And this is just a way of structuring that hierarchy, checking that things are where you expect them to be, so that when you go around and add in files and link to things you've got them all going to the right place. The nice thing about it is, because it's so low tech, it's really, really easy to change. Especially if you're using different components for it, and you can just chop and change as you like. Now that you have an idea of what your site structure's going to be, think about how you're going to let people know how they can find out where they are within that site.


Home » Colleges & Institutes » Goldsmiths, University of London

One of the common ways of doing is using something called breadcrumbs, or a breadcrumb trail. And it gets its name from the fairy tale about Hansel and Gretel, who left a trail of breadcrumbs so they could find their way home again. So here's an example of Breadcrumbs on the University of London website. And you can see here, just under the picture, this is their page about Goldsmiths, which is a college of the University of London, and just underneath the picture from Goldsmiths, you can see a little line of blue text. And those are links. And they are the breadcrumbs, so we can see the top level is Home. Then we've gone down a page, down a level to Colleges and Institutes. Then from that we've selected and gone down another level to Goldsmiths, and that's the page that we're on now. So if we were to click one of these, it would take us to the part of the website that it's named. So for our own website we may have breadcrumbs that look a little bit like this. We could have the Home level, then the level of the albums. Perhaps we have album 1, and then we're down at the level of the photos. So if we want to jump to any particular page on the website we can do so just by clicking on the breadcrumbs.

Once you've decided on structure for your site and you've worked out how best to do your navigation,

- you need to think about the practical issues about whether those links should be absolute or relative.



Relative vs. absolute links

- **Relative path**
  index.html
  images/myimage.html
  album1.html
- **Absolute path**
  http://www.mywebsitename.com/index.html
  http://www.mywebsitename.com/images/image.html
  http://www.mywebsitename.com/album1.html

So you can see here the difference between the two when you just look at the file names. So if you had a relative link, you wanted to link to something within your site, you might just type index.html as your link to the home page. Or if you had an image, your link to the image might be images/myimage.html. Or if you wanted to link to a specific album, it might be album1.html. Now this assumes that you have got, where you are, you have access to all the files in that directory. So you're linking just to another file in the same directory.
If you were to make it an absolute link, then you would give the full domain name for your link. So in this case it would be the www.mywebsitename, whatever that might be, .com/index.html. Again if you had one with images you might do mywebsitename.com/images/image.html. Or for the album, mywebsitename.com/album1.html. So you can see you're specifying an actual URL, an actual web path, even if the file is within your own website.

Now there are debates over whether you should use relative or whether you should use absolute paths and absolute links for your website. The jury's out. I kind of lean towards doing absolute ones because it's easier in terms of search engine indexing. And also it's quite easy to change things and structure of your site if you're gonna do that. Without breaking link pass, so you can move things around in different directories. But it's up to you, but do think about the impact it will have if you change things around when you've done relative versus absolute links.