

Breadcrumb (navigation)

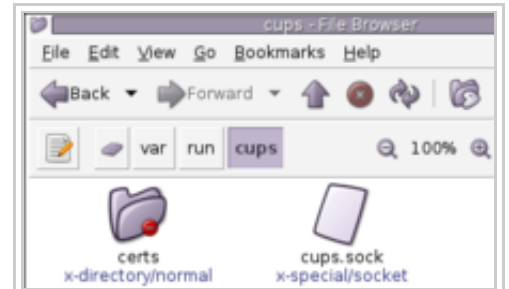
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"Breadcrumb trail" redirects here. For the album by The Frames, see Breadcrumb Trail.

Breadcrumbs or **breadcrumb trail** is a navigation aid used in user interfaces. It allows users to keep track of their locations within programs or documents. The term comes from the trail of breadcrumbs left by Hansel and Gretel in the popular fairytale.

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Nautilus, demonstrating its implementation of location-based **breadcrumb navigation**.



Websites

Breadcrumbs typically appear horizontally across the top of a web page, usually below title bars or headers. They provide links back to each previous page the user navigated through to get to the current page or—in hierarchical site structures—the parent pages of the current one. Breadcrumbs provide a trail for the user to follow back to the starting or entry point. A greater-than sign (>) often serves as hierarchy separator, although designers may use other glyphs (such as » or ›), as well as various graphical treatments.

Typical breadcrumbs look like this:

Home page > Section page > Subsection page or **Home page >> Section page >> Subsection page**

Types of breadcrumbs

There are three types of web breadcrumbs:

- **Path**: path breadcrumbs are dynamic and show the path that the user has taken to arrive at a page.
- **Location**: location breadcrumbs are static and show where the page is located in the website hierarchy.
- **Attribute**: attribute breadcrumbs give information that categorizes the current page.

Usability

Some commentators^[1] criticize Path-style breadcrumbs because they duplicate functionality that properly subsists in the browser; namely, the 'Back' button and browsing history.

Location breadcrumbs are not necessarily appropriate for sites whose content is so rich that single

categories do not fully describe a particular piece of content.

Cookie crumb

Some commentators and programmers alternatively use the term "cookie crumb" (or some variant) as a synonym to describe the previously mentioned navigation technique. Cookies are pieces of data stored in a web browser machine by the visiting websites in a HTTP cookie file. However, cookie crumb is rarely or ever referred to as this token of data. This is another technology used on the web that is different from the navigational method.^[2]

Global Positioning System (GPS)

Advanced GPS tools may keep track of the motion of a GPS device bearer by recording the positions of the traveller at specified time moments and presenting them at a GPS display as a "breadcrumb trail" of position markers.

Operating systems

Current file managers like Nautilus, Dolphin, Thunar, Finder, SnowBird and Windows Explorer (on Windows Vista/7) allow breadcrumbs navigation, often replacing or extending an address bar.

Notes

1. ^ Breadcrumb navigation increasingly useful (<http://www.useit.com/alertbox/breadcrumbs.html>)
2. ^ see e.g., *Managing Windows With Vbscript and Wmi* By Don Jones Published 2004 Addison-Wesley Professional ISBN 0-321-21334-3

External links

- *Breadcrumb Navigation: Further Investigation of Usage* (<http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/52/breadcrumb.htm>) by Bonnie Lida Rogers and Barbara Chaparro, 2003
- *Influence of Training and Exposure on the Usage of Breadcrumb Navigation* (<http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/61/breadcrumb.htm>) by Spring S. Hull, 2004
- *A Breadcrumb method for wordpress* (<http://www.serdarb.com/wordpress/breadcrumbs-navigation-for-wordpress/>)

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