Lecture 9: Site Navigation

Objectives

- create usable navigation
- design navigation for mobile devices
- use graphics for navigation and linking
- build text-based navigation
- use lists for navigation
- build horizontal/vertical navigation bar
- use background color and grpahics to enhance navigation
- create hover rollovers

Planning Site Navigation

- most modern website use text-based graphics
- keep graphics simple and reuse them consistently

Orienting the User

- let users know what page they are on and what type of content they are viewing and where they are in relation to the rest of the site
- provide alternatives to the browser's *back* button

Designing Navigation for Mobile Devices

- limit information overload
- minimize number of clicks or taps
- use universal navigation symbols
- simply the user's choices
- if using graphics for navigation, use the graphic consistently throughout the site (use alt tags as well)
- always provide text-based navigation for accessibility purposes

Adding Contextual Linking

- allow users to jump to related ideas by clicking the word or item that interests them
- these link can be embedded directly into the flow of content by choosing key terms and concepts you anticipate the users will want to follow

Using Lists for Navigation

- lists provide an easy way to create navigation that can be styled with CSS
- set `ul#navlist{ padding: 0; margin: 0;}`
- remove default bullets from list `list-style-type: none;`

Building Horizontal Navigation Bars

- set `ul#navlist li{ display: inline; }`
- we can add borders, background colors, images, space between buttons
- horizontal bars will wrap the browser, set a width value for the navigation list to prevent this
- to create navigation buttons that are all the same width, change display type to *block*. Float the boxes so they align next to each other

Building Vertical Navigation Bars

- `<a>` elements in the list must be set to a `block` display property value

Using Background Color and Graphics to Enhance Navigation

- use background colors and graphics in a variety of ways to enhance your navigation
- indicate location with graphic or background color
- create interactive hovers that change when the user points to a link

Indicating History

- use link psuedo-classes to show users where they have been
- display a graphic based on the state of a link

Indicating Location

- location can be indicated by a change in text weight, text color, or background color, or with a graphic

Creating Hover Rollovers

- `:hover` psuedo-class lets you add interactivity when users scroll over your navigation links
- change list item text color or background or text-decoration

Summary

- usable navigation is the result of working with the power of hypertext and designing for your users' needs
- work from the user's point of view
- make all areas of your web site quickly accessible
- provide plenty of location cues
- use text-based navigation bars
- use CSS to build attractive horiztontal and vertical navigation bars using simple lists
- use background colors, text colors, and graphics to enhance navigation
- use `:hover` psuedo-class to add interactivity