

# Information Architecture

COGS 187A

Winter 2012

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Our hardest design decision was the location of the sub-navigational side bar. At first we decided to put the main navigational elements on the very top, spanning the full width of the entire container of the page. This is to contrast the original ULL site's thin and non-eye-catching navigational top bar, and to make a point to have a very obvious, defined, and easy-to-see navigational area.

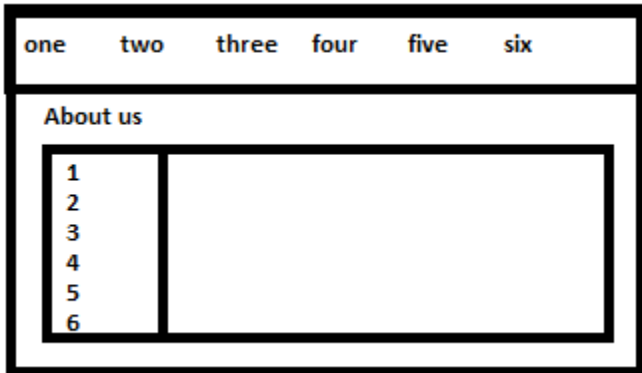
Since we decided to make our top navigational bar in this manner, the difficult question would be where to put the sub-category navigational buttons. We first thought about putting it horizontally right under the main-navigation, but realized that some second-level navigations have a lot of items in it, and thus it is difficult to try to fit so many elements horizontally across the page. That led us to our decision for a vertical sidebar somewhere on the page. However, we also thought that sticking a sidebar right under the left/right of the main navigation was not sound because:

- 1) It would conflict with the main-nav buttons, especially if we later decide to have drop downs on the main-nav buttons.
- 2) Labeling the second-level pages would be tricky, because if we have the labels "About us" or "Admissions" on the right side of the side-bar (demonstrated by the following figure),

one	two	three	four	five	six
1 2 3 4 5 6	about us				

Then it might mislead the users to think that it's the label for a page within sub-category (1~6), when it is in fact the label for a main category (one~six)

This is how we came to the current design of the second-level navigational layout.



Instead of having the side bar sticking to the top-edge/left-edge of the content area, we padded it AWAY from the edge and made it look like it was attached to the category's content instead of part of the main-nav's layout. Benefits to this decision are as follows:

- 1) It does not collide with the main nav buttons.
- 2) Now the title of the category can be placed above the side-bar instead of placed on the right. This also makes it clear that the items inside the side bar are sub-categories under the main category of "About us" etc.
- 3) We now have room to even sneak the breadcrumb into our second level pages.