DRAFT - ICT Project Guidance

Design:   
Technical -   
Search and Navigation

Version:

0.2

Author:

Sky Sigal, Solution Architect

## Purpose

The purpose of this document is to reduce project risk by improving the discoverability of capabilities and resources managed within a system.

## Synopsis

While providing Context information is still required, Universal Search is largely displacing the need to provide Navigation controls in modern service client interfaces.

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## Context

For decades interface design on desktops followed a Windows Interface Mouse & Pointer (WIMP) based approach.

As dynamic web page development became the accepted norm, the management of nested Windows was largely dropped[[1]](#footnote-2), but Menus and Pointers were still used to varying levels.

Touchscreen mobile phone and tablets highlighted further deficiencies -- Mobile phones were too small, and touch screens proved an impractical way of emulating mouse-down sliding activities required to open nestable menus – and the rest of WIMP was dropped.

In its place, Universal Search became the defector solution for discovery of capabilities and resources. Implementing it was less complex and more reliable on the client side, took up less space, and worked on all platforms. As cloud based search became an easily accessessed commodity services, it made implementation easier on the

Traditional Search

In a WIMP interface, the menu was developed as nestable button controls, with no space reserved for a search text field.

Menu buttons navigated users to distinct areas of the system (Dashboard, User Settings, Business, etc.)

As a result, each section of the program had to re-implement its own List, View, Edit, and Delete confirmation solution. An outcome was that each List view proposed its own filtering controls.

Universal Search

Universal Search is the practice of providing a single Search input, that returns a collection of SearchSummaryItems.

A SearchSummaryItem is an Item that summaries the contents of a target resource.

The key point is that Search, instead of returning the found Record -- or even a Record type specific summary of the Record – is return a common Search Summary for each resource found.

It has a display Title and Description, maybe a display TypeImage to indicate what kind of record was found (Contact, Company, etc.) and optionally one or two fields for key values found in the target record.

This permits users to not know what they are searching for, or even where to look for it – but just simply find it.

To permit misspellings the whole process first employs a Search token service (any cloud provider’s will do) returning references to tables and row identifiers that are then used to find records in the database,

The advantages of the approach are:

* Single input area, reducing the amount of code that can go wrong.

Appendices

Appendix A - Document Information

### Versions

* 1. Initial Draft

### Images

[Figure 1: TODO Image 2](#_Toc144995112)

### Tables

[Table 1: TODO Table 3](#_Toc145048484)

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### References

**There are no sources in the current document.**

### Review Distribution

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### Audience

The document is technical in nature, but parts are expected to be read and/or validated by a non-technical audience.

### Structure

Where possible, the document structure is guided by either ISO-\* standards or best practice.

### Diagrams

Diagrams are developed for a wide audience. Unless specifically for a technical audience, where the use of industry standard diagram types (ArchiMate, UML, C4), is appropriate, diagrams are developed as simple “box & line” monochrome diagrams.

### Terms

Refer to the project’s Glossary.

##### IT

: acronym for Information, using Technology to automate and facilitate its management.

##### ICT

: acronym for Information & Communication Technology, the domain of defining Information elements and using technology to automate their communication between entities. IT is a subset of ICT.

1. Some portal platform used the interface pattern to make portal elements reorganizable but it remained a fringe pattern that didn’t have get much traction. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)