Chapter 24

Designing an eCommerce web site

With design guidelines from Murach's *HTML5 and CSS3*

A web site that is easy to use

What web site users want

- To find what they're looking for as quickly and easily as possible

- To get the information or do the task that they want to do as quickly and easily as possible

How web site users use a web page

- They scan the page to find what they're looking for or a link to what they're looking for, and they don't like to scroll. If they get frustrated, they leave.

- They often click on links and buttons with the hope of finding what they're looking for, and they frequently click on the Back button when they don't find it.

Three guidelines for improving usability

- Present all of the critical information "above the fold" so the user doesn't have to scroll.

- Group related items into separate components, and limit the number of components on each page.

- Adhere to the current conventions for web site usability.

A web page that illustrates some of the current web site conventions
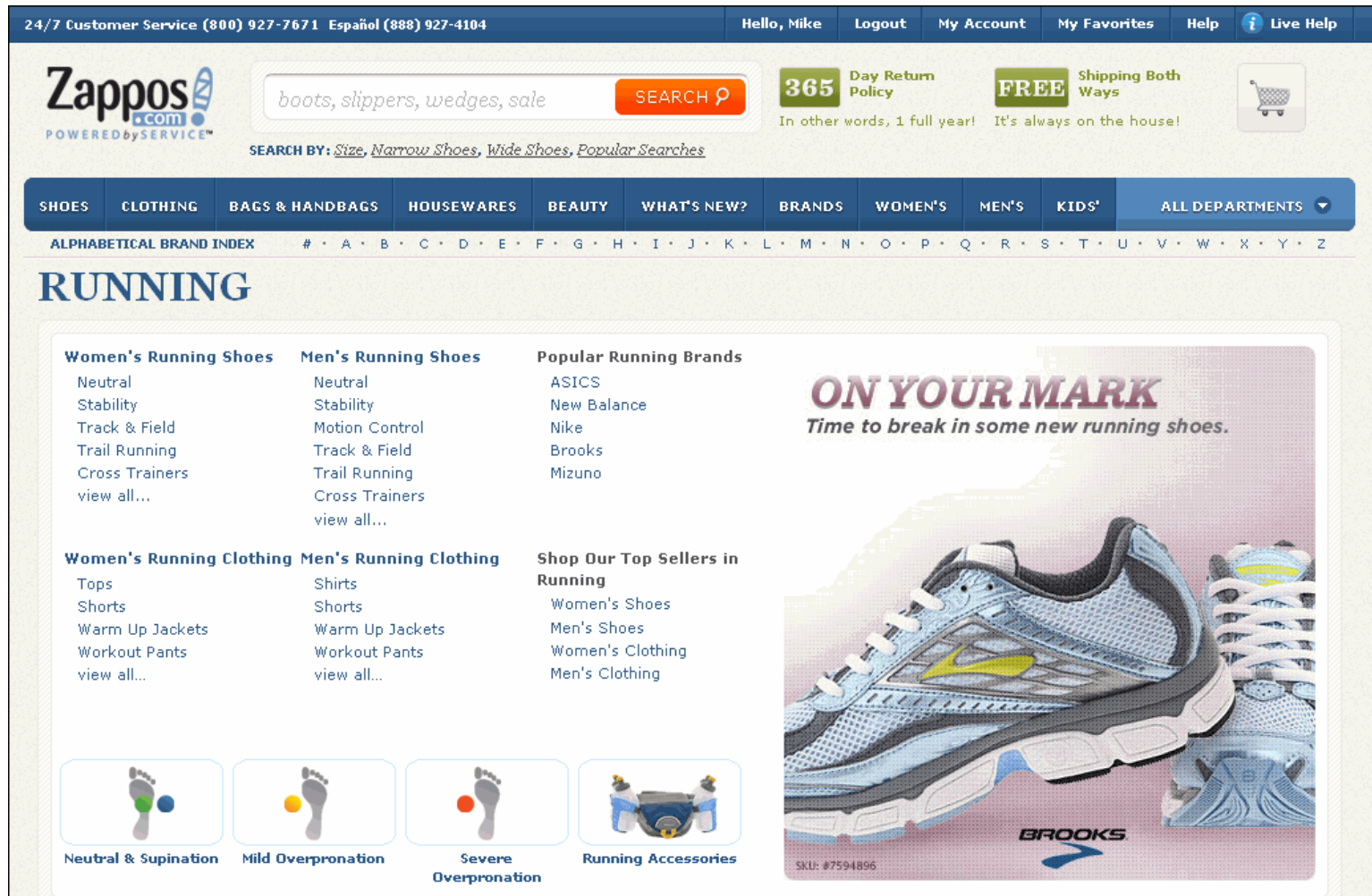
Header conventions

- The header consists of a logo, tag line, utilities, and a navigation bar.

- The tag line identifies what's unique about the web site.

- The navigation bar provides links that divide the site into sections.

- The utilities consist of links to useful but not primary information.

- If your site requires a search function, it should be in the header, and it should consist of a large text box for the text followed by a button that's labeled either "Go" or "Search."

Navigation conventions

- Underlined text is always a link.

- Images that are close to short text phrases are clickable.

- A small symbol in front of a text phrase is clickable.

- Clickable buttons should look like they're 3D.

- Short text phrases in columns are clickable.

- If you click on a cart symbol, you go to your shopping cart.

- If you click on the logo in the header, you go to the home page.

A home page that tries to sell the site

10 guidelines for an effective home page

1. Emphasize what your site offers that's valuable and how your site differs from competing sites.

2. Emphasize the highest priority tasks of your site so users have a clear idea of what they can do.

3. Don't welcome users to your site because that's a waste of space.

4. Group items in the navigation areas so similar items are next to each other, and don't provide multiple navigation areas for the same types of links.

5. Only use icons for navigation if the users will readily recognize them.

6. Use drop-down menus sparingly, especially if the items aren't self-explanatory.

10 guidelines for an effective home page (cont.)

7. Design the home page so it is different from the other pages of the site.

8. Don't include an active link to the home page on the home page.

9. Code the title for the home page as the organization name, followed by a short description, and limit the title to 8 or fewer words and 64 or fewer characters.

10. If your site provides shopping, include a link to the shopping cart on your home page.

A product page with the active links highlighted

Be sure that users know where they are

Breadcrumbs: another way to let users know where they are
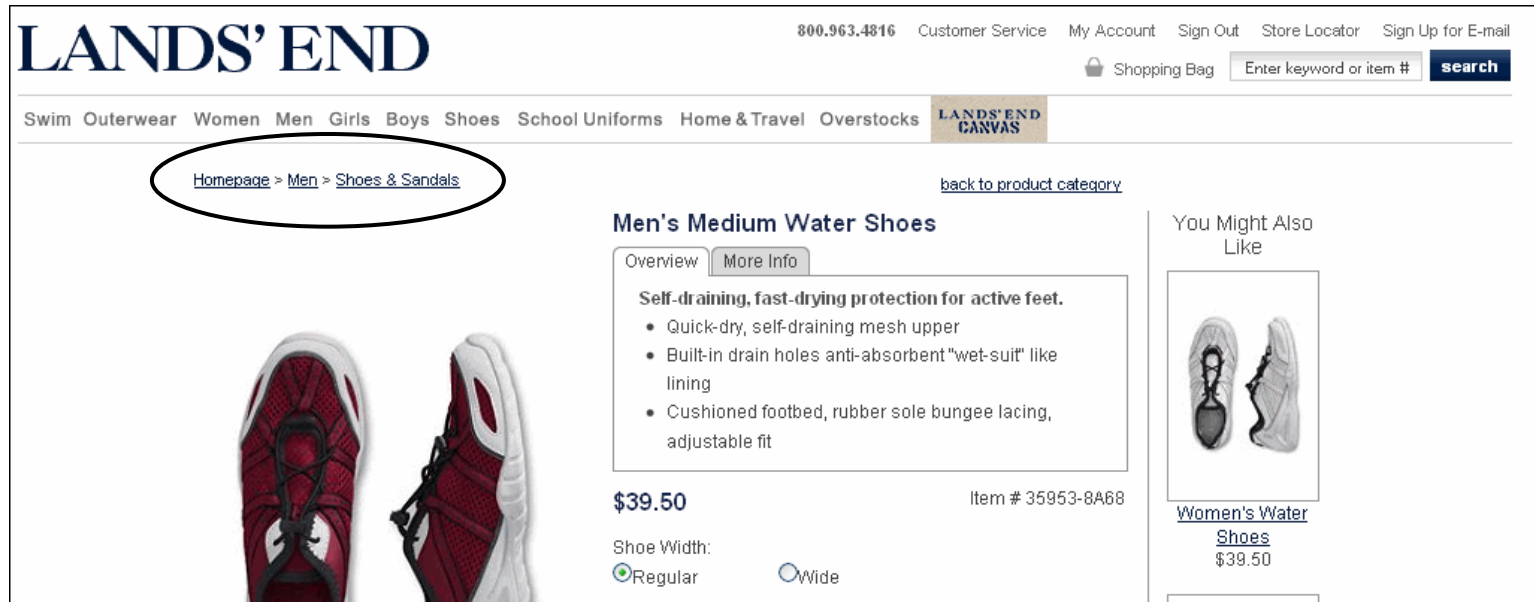
Wasted space on a primary page
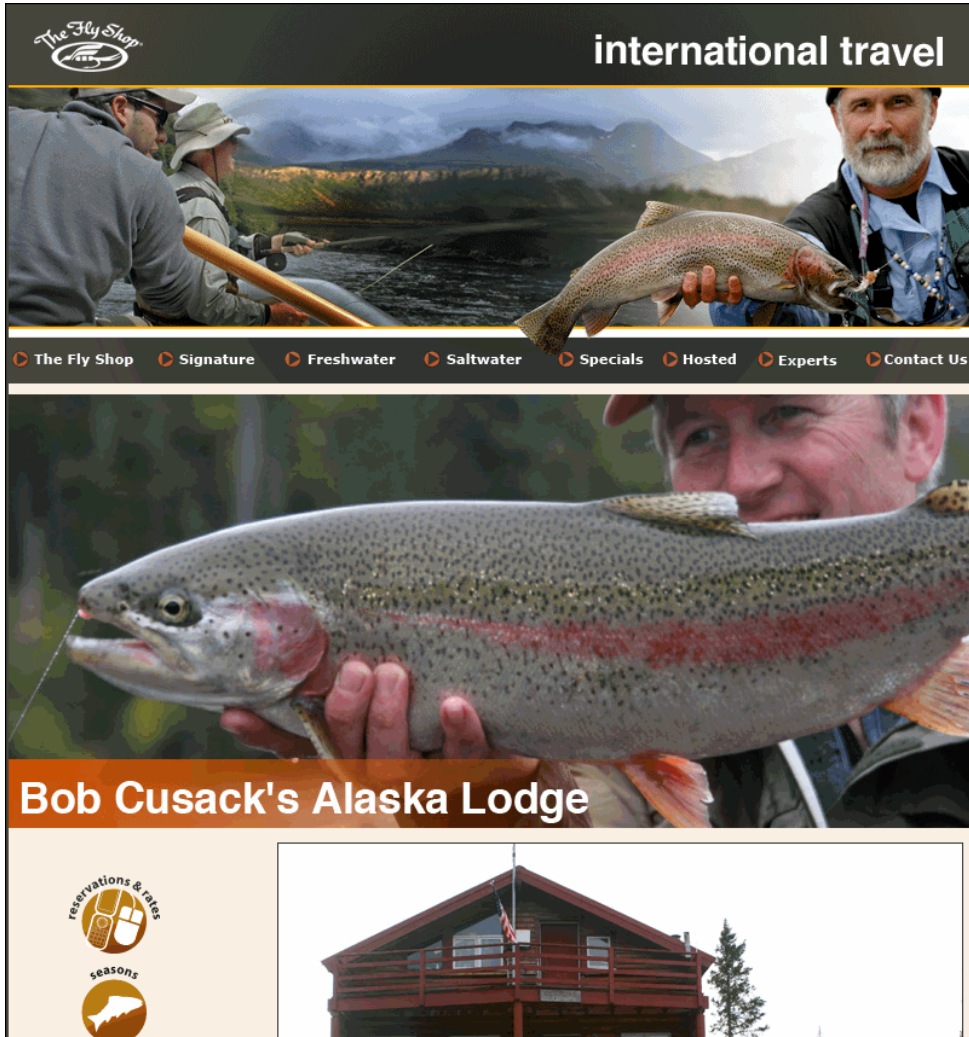
Guidelines for the effective use of space

- Keep the header relatively small.

- Prioritize the components for each page.

- Give the most important components the primary locations.

Writing that isn't for the web

The progressive air services you'll use to reach Cusack's Alaska Lodge are a wonderful reflection of your journey into the wilderness. First, you will fly a major jet service from near your home to Anchorage, Alaska; arriving here, most itineraries will mandate an overnight stay. The next morning you will board a small plane piloted by one of the fine bush pilots of Iliamna Air Taxi (often one of their Pilatus aircraft, a high-flying, very comfortable aircraft), for the transfer between Anchorage and the little village of Iliamna. Upon arriving, Iliamna Air Taxi's Iliamna crew will switch your gear from the mid-sized plane to a smaller, float-equipped Cessna or Beaver, and after a short wait, you will be on the final leg of your adventure, touching down on the lake's surface in front of Bob's lodge a short thirty minutes later. For the remainder of your week, Bob will be your pilot, flying you into amazingly beautiful country in his two small airplanes, giving you a peek into the enormity and grandeur of his corner of Alaska.

The same copy, but written for the web

The three-part flight to Bob Cusack's Alaska Lodge is a fascinating journey into the Alaskan wilderness

1. You take a major jet service from your home to Anchorage, Alaska.

2. From Anchorage, you take the Iliamna Air Taxi to the little village of Iliamna. This flight will be piloted by one of the Air Taxi's fine bush pilots in a comfortable plane like the Pilatus.

3. In Iliamna, the Air Taxi's crew will switch your bags to a smaller, float plane like a Cessna or a Beaver. Then, after a short wait and a 30 minute flight, you will touch down on beautiful Lake Iliamna in front of Bob's lodge.

For the remainder of your week, Bob will be your pilot as he takes you into the beauty and grandeur of his corner of Alaska.

Web writing guidelines

- Use fewer words.

- Write in inverted pyramid style with the most important information first.

- Use headings and subheadings to identify portions of the text.

- Use bulleted lists and numbered lists to make information more accessible.

- Use tables for tabular information.

- Don't use all caps (all capital letters) for headings. Usually, it's best to capitalize only the first letter in a heading, plus any required capitalization.

- Make the text for all links as explicit as possible.

Typographical guidelines

- Limit the line length of paragraphs to 65 characters.

- Use a sans serif font in a size that's large enough for easy reading.

- Show the relationship between a heading and the text that follows by keeping them close.

- Use dark text on a light background, and don't use an image for the background.

- Don't center text and don't justify text.

- If you indent the first lines of paragraphs, you don't need space between the paragraphs.

- Don't use reverse type (white type on a colored background) for text.

A page with chunks of information

About the book
What this book does
Who this book is for
What software you need
Table of contents
Meet the author
Related books

Free downloads
Chapters 2 and 3
The book applications

Courseware
For trainers
For instructors

FAQs and correx
FAQs
Corrections

Our 100% Guarantee
When you buy books from

Murach's JavaScript and DOM Scripting

by Ray Harris
20 chapters, 764 pages, 337 illustrations
ISBN: 978-1-809774-55-4

List price: **$54.50**
Your price: **$38.15** (you save 30%)
Ebook price: **$33.15**
Book and Ebook: **$48.15** (best buy)

What this book does

To present the JavaScript skills in a manageable progression, this book is divided into four sections.

Section 1 gets you off to a fast start

It presents a complete subset of JavaScript that includes basic event handling and elementary DOM scripting. It also shows you how to use the Firebug extension of Firefox to test and debug your applications. When you finish this section, you're ready for rapid progress.

Section 2 presents the rest of the JavaScript essentials

This includes how to use arrays, functions, regular expression, libraries, and your own object types. The last application in this section puts all of the skills

Web designers vs. graphics designers

- *Web designers* participate in all phases of web design.

- *Graphics designers* focus on the graphics that make web pages work better and look more inviting.

A page that with poor graphics design

Four principles of graphics design

- *Alignment* means that related items on the page should line up with each other.

- *Proximity* means that related items should be close together.

- *Repetition* means that you should repeat some elements from page to page to give the pages continuity.

- *Contrast* is what draws your eye to the components on a web page. If everything is the same, nothing stands out.

A large web site that is managed by a team

Typical members of a development team

For design

- Web designers

- Writers

- Marketing specialists

- Graphics designers

For implementation

- HTML and CSS specialists

- Client-side programmers

- Server-side programmers

- Database administrator

- Network administrator

The sketch of a home page

Header	
Navigation bar	

Selling copy	**News items**
Lecture 1 with thumbnail photo and brief intro	
Lecture 2 with thumbnail photo and brief intro	
Lecture 3 with thumbnail photo and brief intro	
Lecture 4 with thumbnail photo and brief intro	
Lecture 5 with thumbnail photo and brief intro	
Lecture 6 with thumbnail photo and brief intro	

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How to make a web site easier to maintain

- Use HTML for the content and CSS for the page layout and formatting.

- Don't use tables for page layout. Only use tables for tabular information.

- Don't use frames (not presented in this book).

- Get the design right in the first place with full knowledge that each page is likely to be changed in the lifecycle of the web site.

A simple procedure for designing a web site

1. Define the audience and set the goals for the web site.

2. Design the home page.

3. Design the primary content pages.

4. Design the other pages.

5. Plan the navigation.

6. Plan the folders for the files of the site.

A prototype for the home page

A prototype for a primary content page

The ticket information page
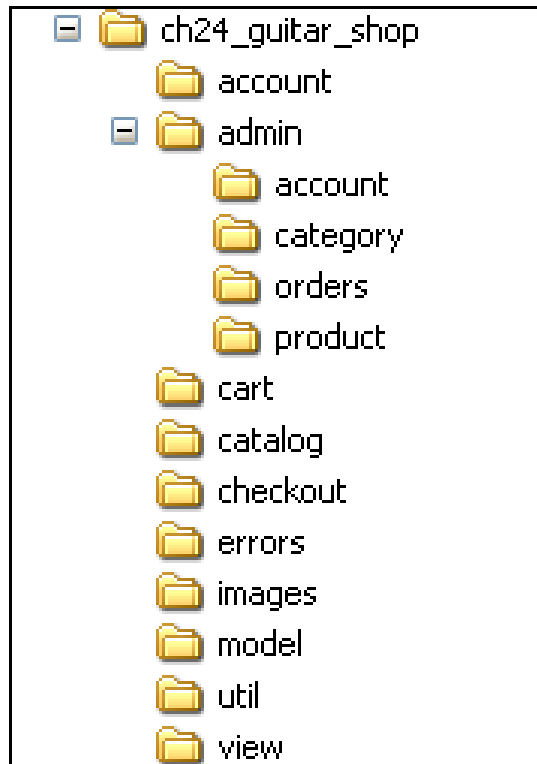
The site plan for the web site
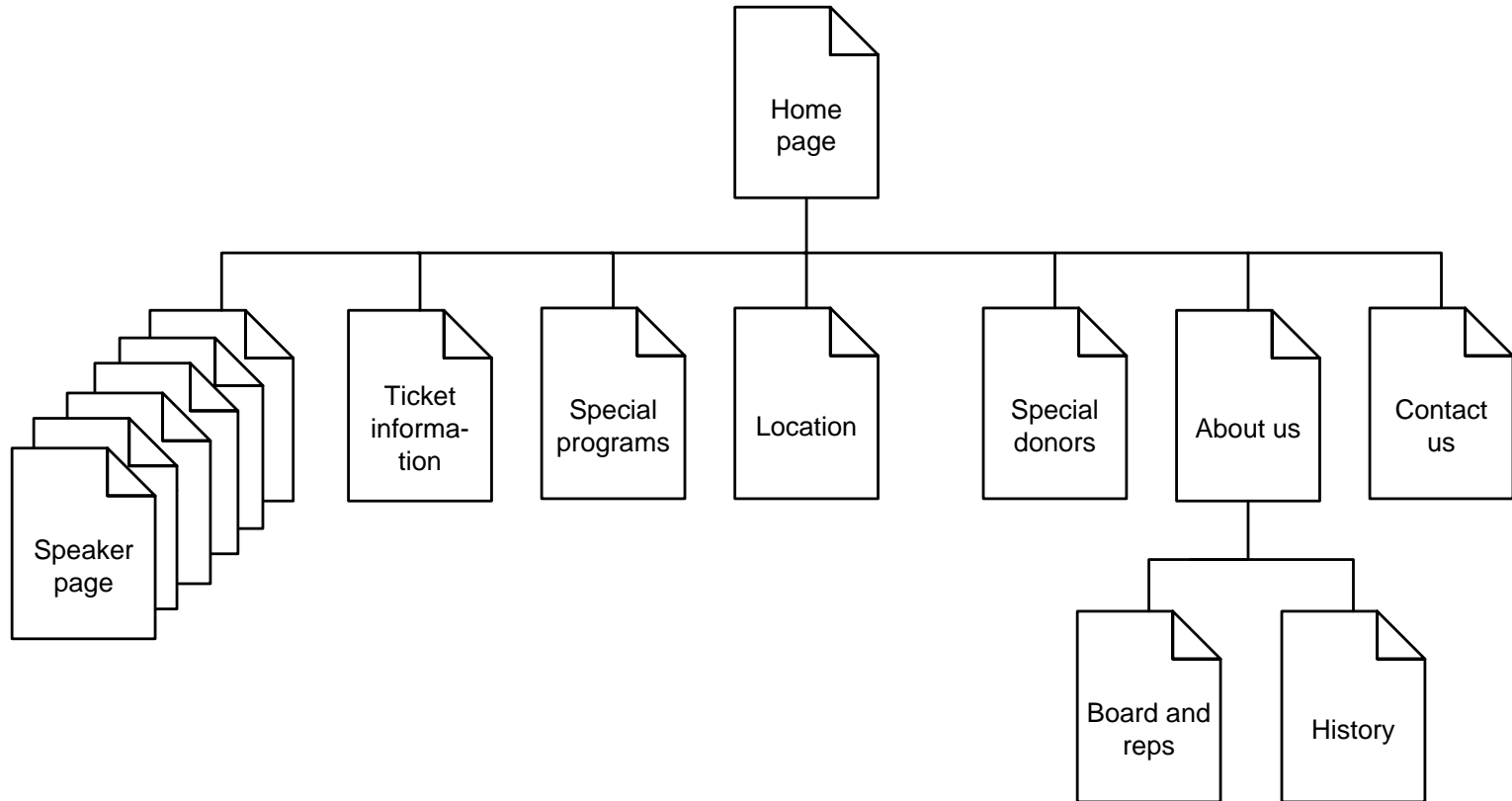
The folders for the web site
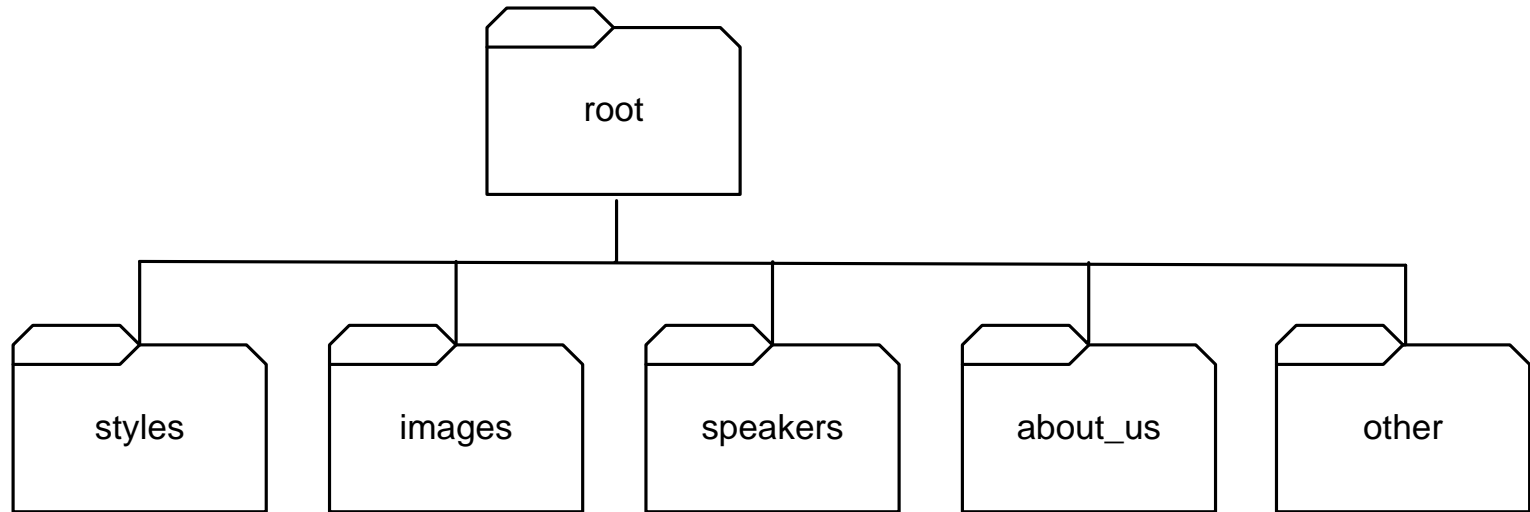
The directory structure of the web site

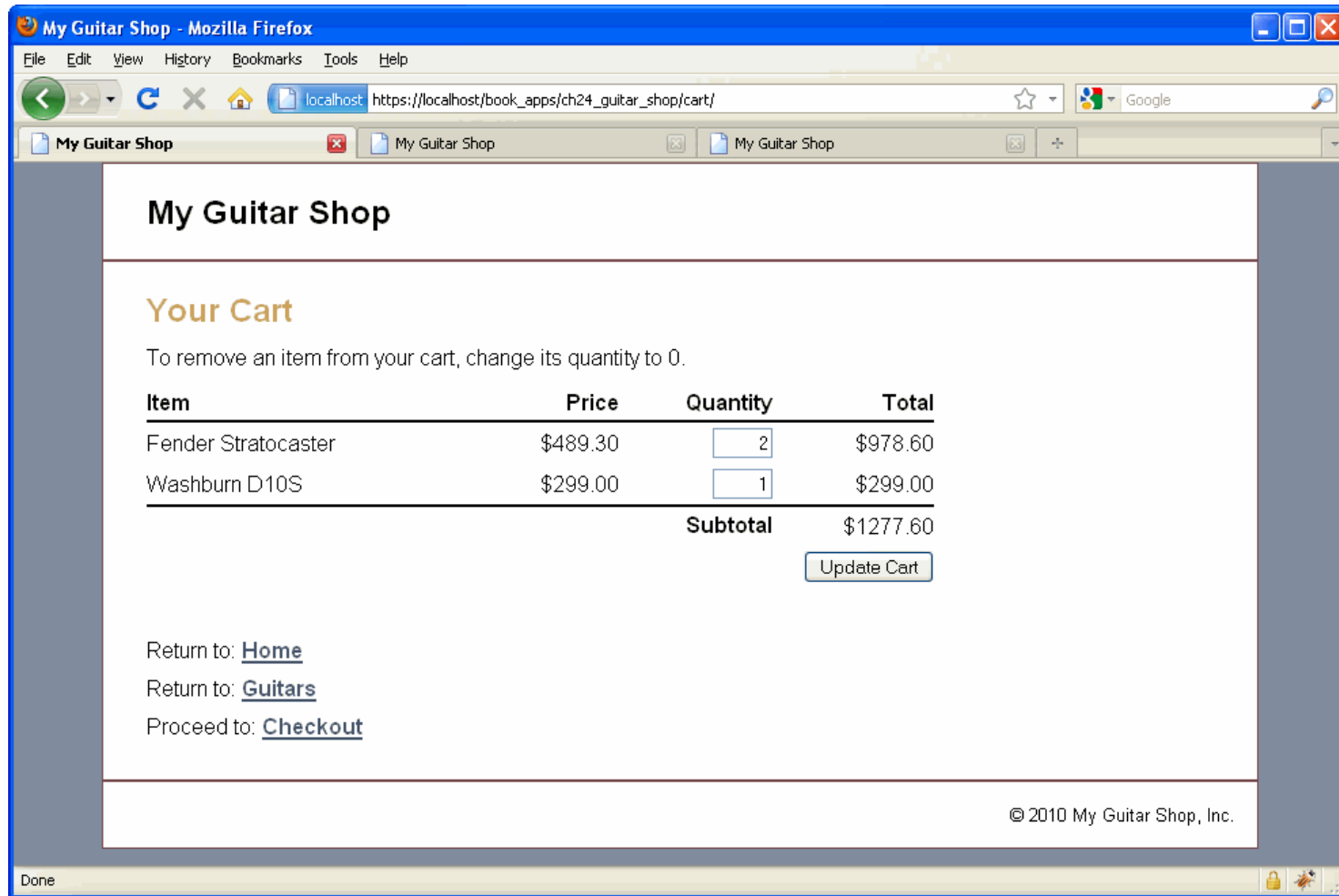## The files in the application root directory

```
home_view.php
index.php
main.css
```

```
ch24_guitar_shop
    account
    admin
        account
        category
        orders
        product
    cart
    catalog
    checkout
    errors
    images
    model
    util
    view
```
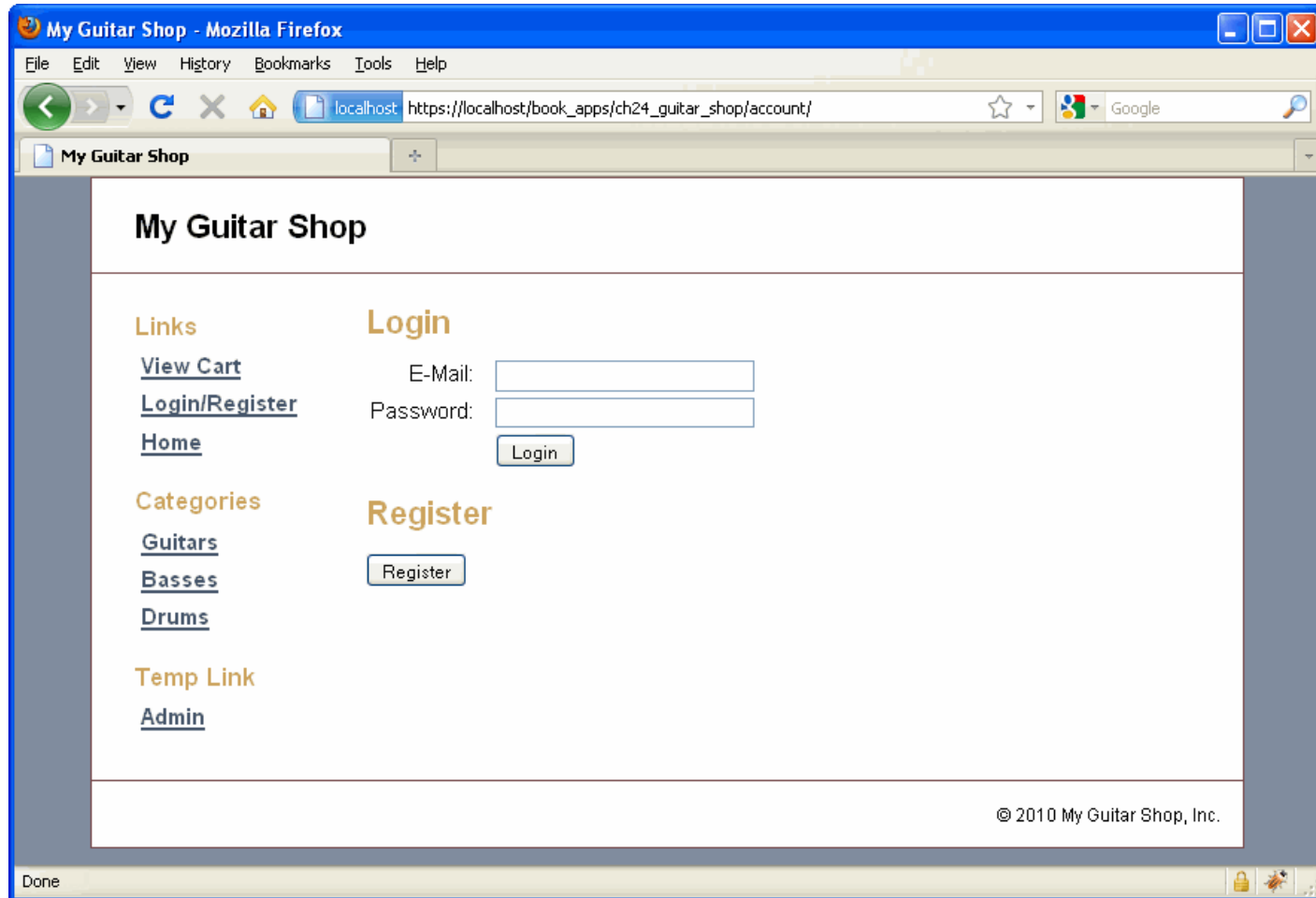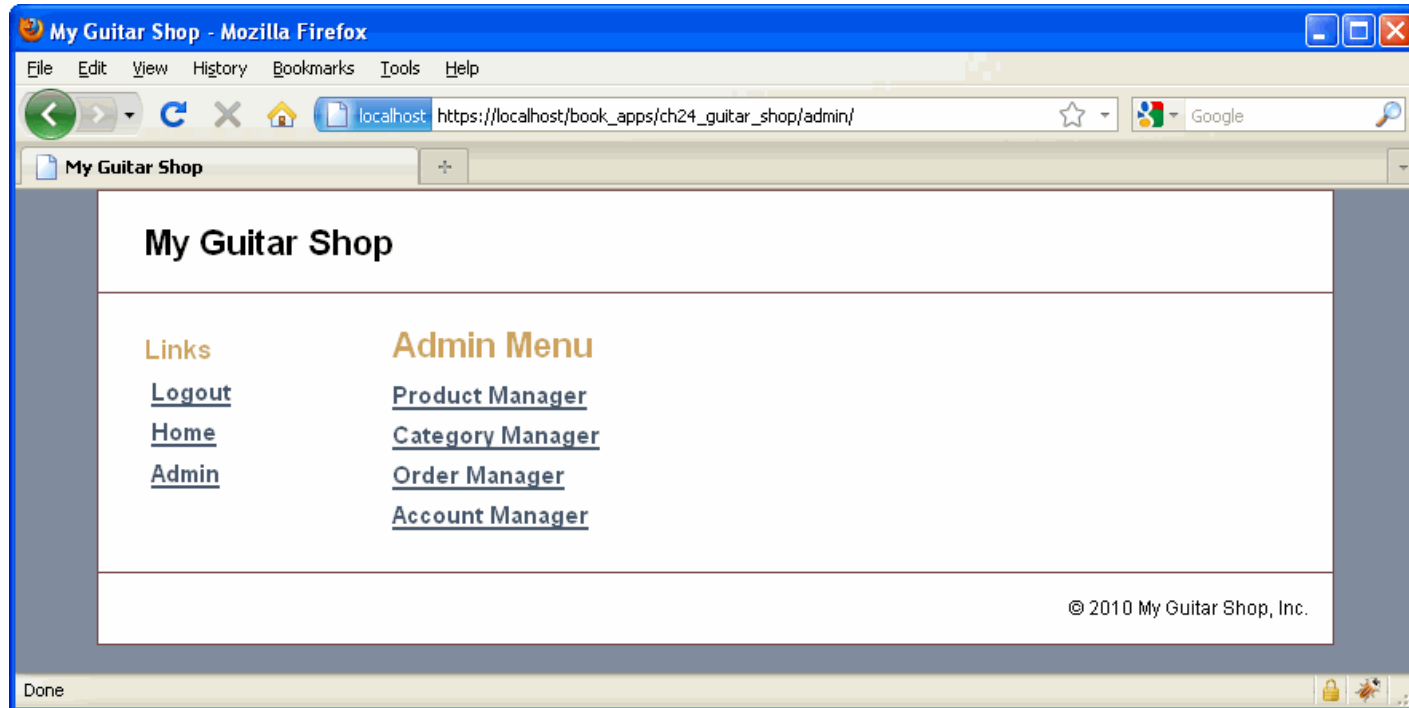
The catalog/category_view.php page
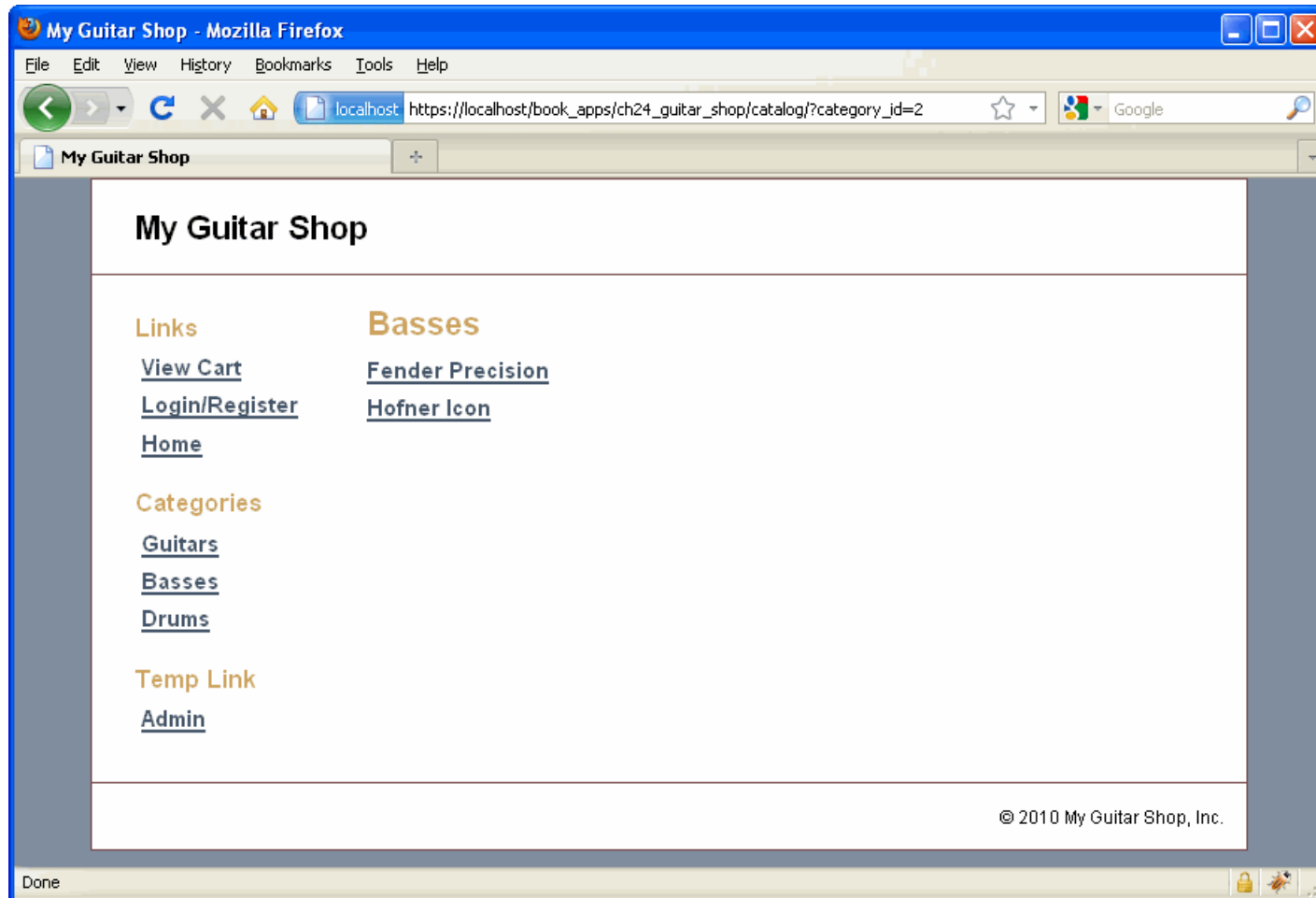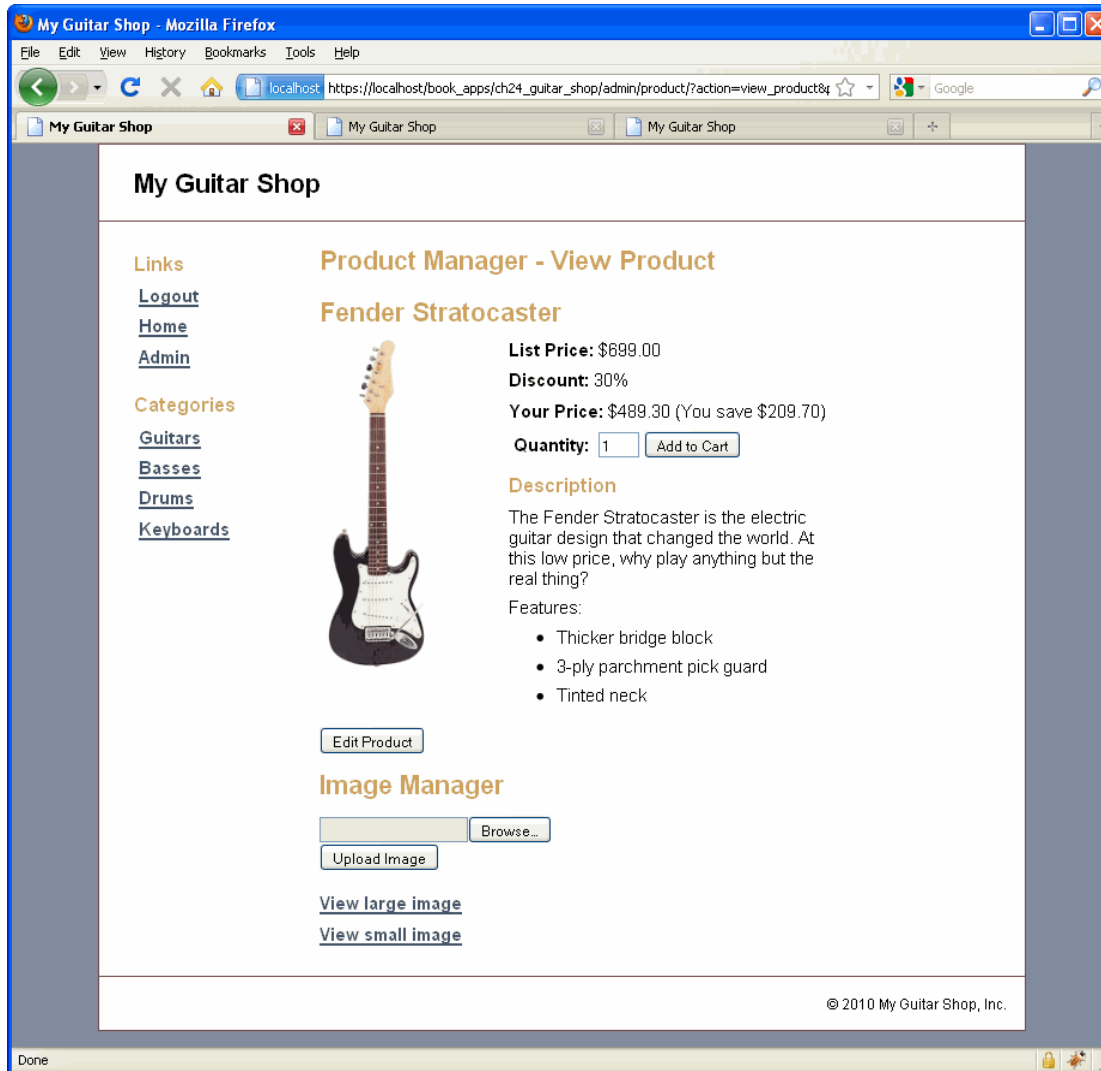
The cart/cart_view.php page

The account/account_login_register.php page

The admin/index.php page

The admin/products/product_view.php page

The admin/product/product_add_edit.php page

The admin/category/category_list.php page
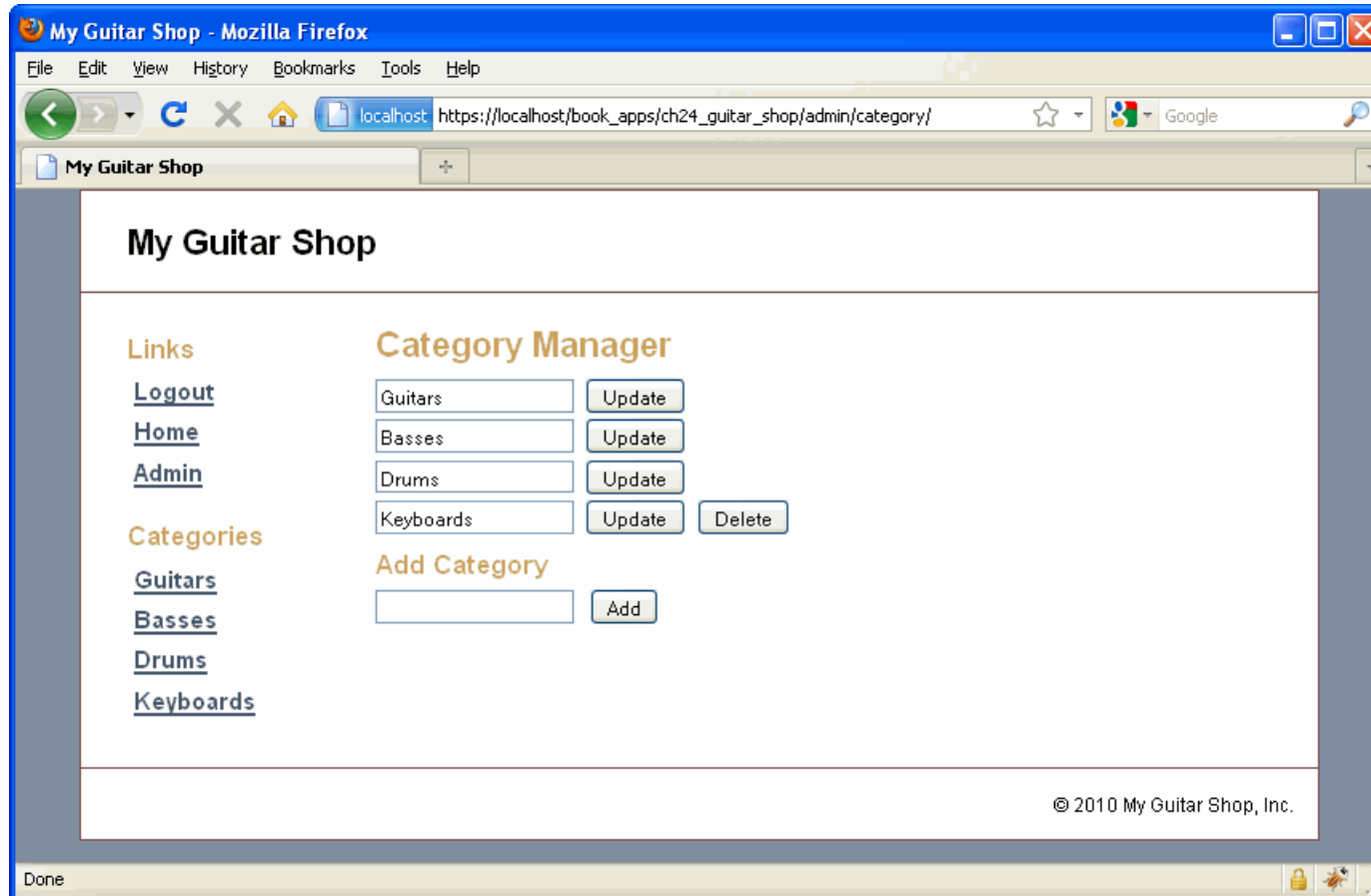
The admin/orders/orders_view.php page

The admin/account/account_view.php page