Analyze a Site: Site Map

Typographic Web Design, Laura Franz, October 2015

Choose one of these two websites:

chosen for their 2015 webby awards for navigation

- http://genelab.nasa.gov/index.html
- https://designmuseum.org/

As you exerience each kind of "page" figure out the navigation.

- Click on every link in the navigation bar(s) if any. Where do they go?
- Click on every link in the text (if any). Where do they go?
- Click on every link in the footer (if any). Where do they go?
- Are there any links that annoy you? Why?
- Are there any pages where the navigation (within the page or between pages/sites) annoys you? Why?
- **NOTE** Draw a simple diagram of the site (a site map). Use a pencil so you can erase.
  Make sure you name each box/page as you draw it (what are things linking to?).
  Using lines and arrows, show us which pages are connected to each other in the site.
  Are there any dead-end pages (need to back up to get out of them)? Is that OK?
  Using a different kinds of arrow, show us which links go to outside sites.
  Feel free to add color as needed.

Example Site Maps (hand drawn is good!)
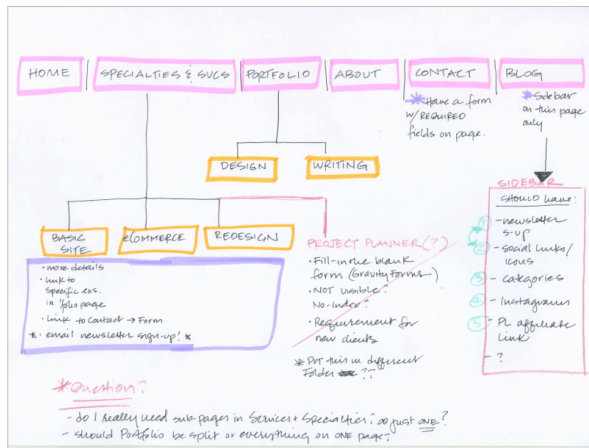
maripfeiffer.com/ready-to-redesign-your-site-draw-a-site-map-first/
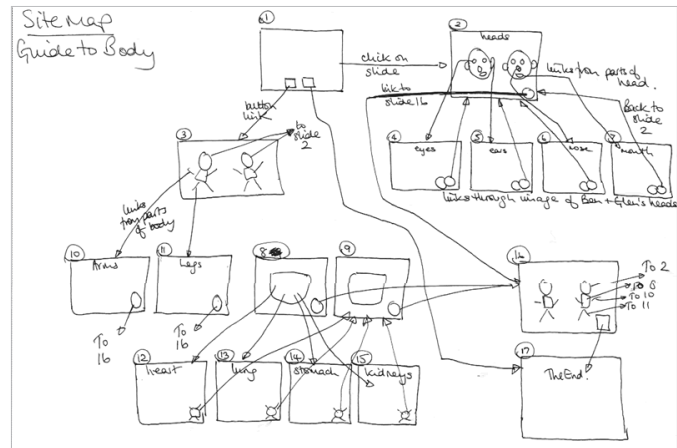
www.greatbarrschool.org.uk/drsmith/ks4/unit4/unit4ao2.html

Analyze Pages: Voice, Typography, Images, Color

Typographic Web Design, Laura Franz, October 2015

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As you exerience each kind of "page" do four things:

1. Identify the "voices" on the page.

- What role does each blurb of text fill (headline, subhead, text, navigation, caption, other)?
- For each voice/role, how do you know that's what it is without reading it?
  What cues did the designer give you to say, "I am the navigation" or "I am a subhead."
  Placement, size, color, style, weight, other?
- As you move through the site, do the voices remain consistent? If not, how does it change?
  Is the change helpful/harmful/neutral? Why?
- Finally, note what voices feel successful to you (why?) and which feel "wrong" to you (why?)
- **NOTE** print out or sketch out each kind of page, then make notes answering these questions.

2. Analyze the typography.

- Does the type tend to be traditional or have traditional elements? If so, what elements are traditional (text to frame, serif fonts, italic and size used for subtle hierarchy, decorations, a quieter typographic page). Do the traditional elements work with the content? Why/not?
- Does the type tend to be modernist or have modernist elements? If so, what elements are modernist (asymetry, white space used as an element, sans serif fonts, weight and size used for stronger hierarchy, a typographic page with contrast of space/weight/size). Do the Modernist elements work with the content? Why/not?
- Finally, note what typographic elements feel successful / "wrong" to you (and why)
- **NOTE** many sites mix and match these two. Look for elements of both.

3. Analyze the images and color.

- Do the images support the content / feeling of the site? Why/not?
- Do the images have any behaviors you like or find annoying? What and why?
- If the images have behaviors, do the support the content / feeling of the site? Why/not?
- Do the text and image interact in such a way that the text is still readable? Why/not?
- What colors is the site using? How many colors in the palette? Where are the colors used?
  Do the colors relate to the images or stand on their own?
  What meaning do the colors have for you (don't google them) if any?
- Does the text use color (instead of black)? If so, what is it? Does it interfere with reading?
- Does a text/background color combination interfere with reading? Explain.

4. Look for an underlying structure.

- A complex website has different kinds of pages. Can you find an underlining structure across pages (e.g., common horizontal / vertical lines, a common placement of certain elements)?
- Sketch out the structure.