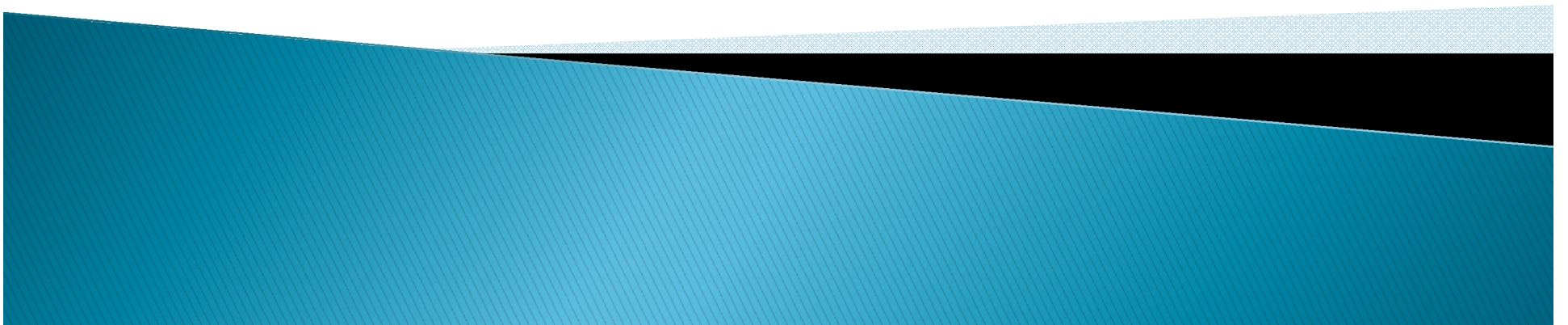
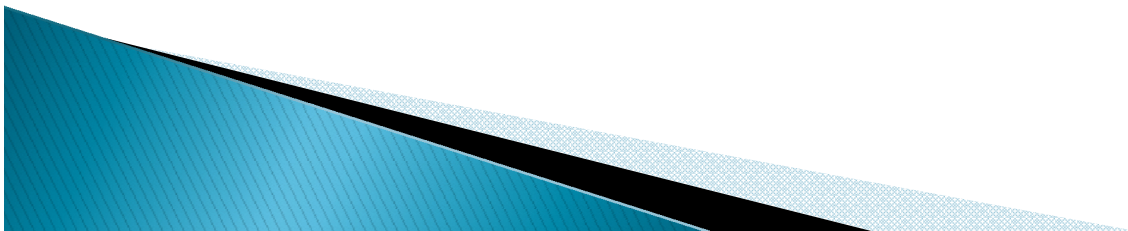


# Searching Systems



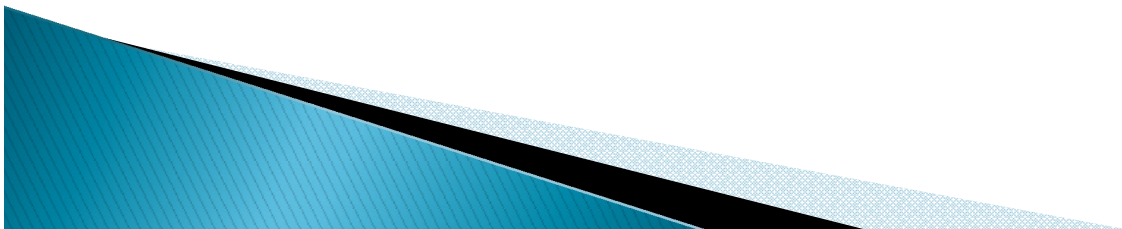
# Searching Systems

- ▶ we need to make a point: think twice before you make your site searchable.
- ▶ While many users want to search a site, some just want to browse it.
- ▶ Also, does your site have enough content to merit the use of a search engine?



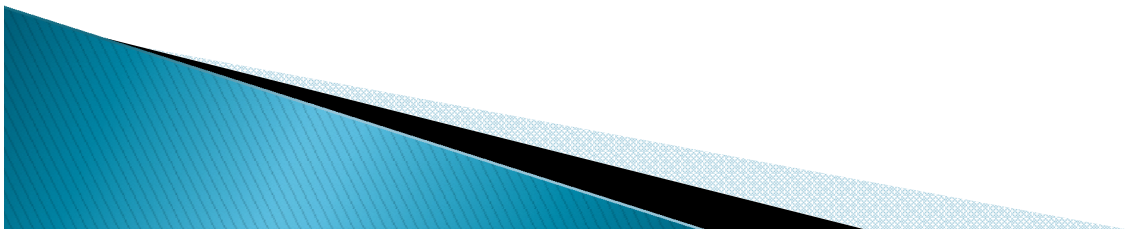
# Understanding How user's search

- ▶ searching systems can and should vary as much as browsing systems or any other components of web sites do, because all users aren't alike, and information retrieval is much harder than most people realize
- ▶ users don't want the same kinds of information delivered in the same ways
- ▶ Users' needs and expectations vary widely, and so the information systems that serve them must recognize, distinguish, and accommodate these different needs.



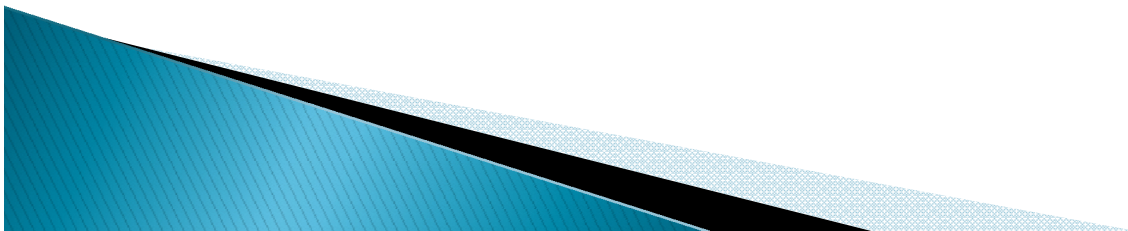
# Designing the Search Interface

- ▶ The level of searching expertise users have: Are they comfortable with Boolean operators, or do they prefer natural language?
- ▶ The kind of information the user wants: Do they want just a taste, or are they doing comprehensive research?
- ▶ The type of information being searched: Is it made up of structured fields or full text? Is it navigation pages, destination pages, or both? HTML or other formats?
- ▶ How much information is being searched: Will users be overwhelmed by the number of documents retrieved?



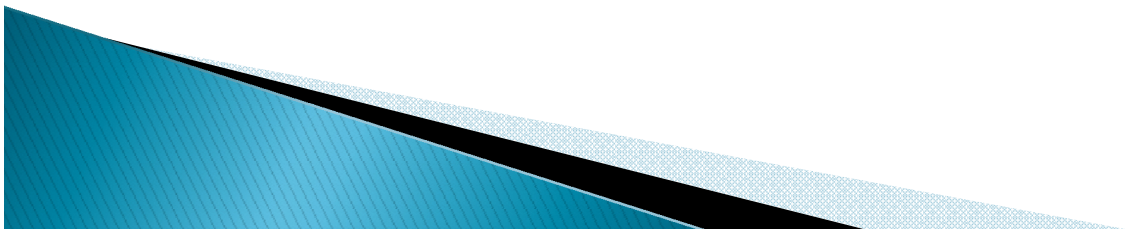
# Indexing the right stuff

- ▶ Searching only works well when the stuff that's being searched is the same as the stuff that users want. This means you may not want to index the entire site.
- ▶ Search engines are frequently used to index an entire site without regard for the content and how it might vary—every word of every page, whether it contains real content or help information, advertising, navigation menus, and so on. But this does not lead to fruitful results.
- ▶ searching works much better when the information space is defined narrowly and contains homogeneous content



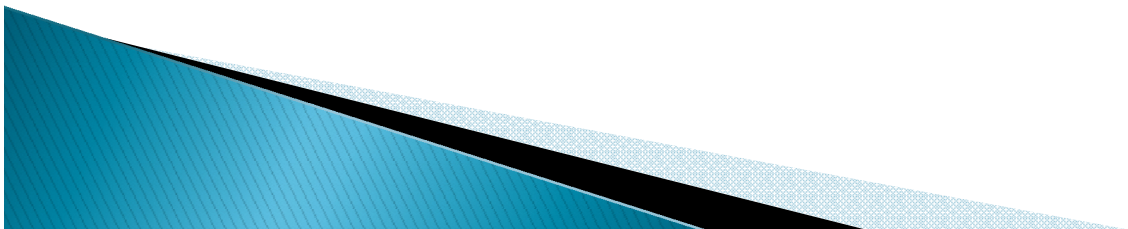
# To Search or not to search

- ▶ Users generally expect searching to be available, certainly in larger sites.
- ▶ Search engines should not work poorly.
- ▶ to understand how users' information needs can vary so much, and to plan and implement your searching system's interface and search zones accordingly.



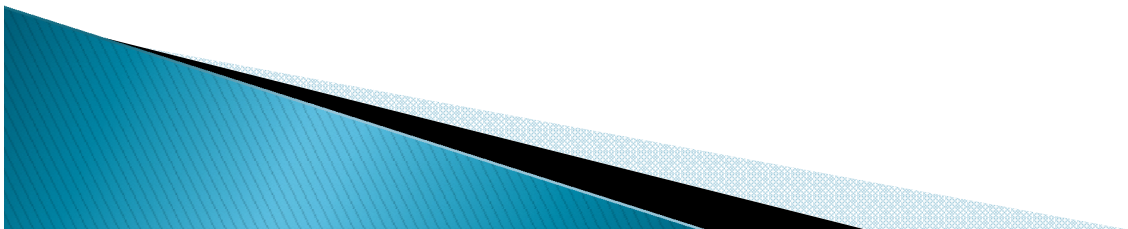
# Grouping Content

- ▶ grouping content into the top-level categories of an information hierarchy is typically the most important and challenging process. It deals with the questions such as
- ▶ How should the content be organized? By audience or format or function?
- ▶ How do users currently navigate this information? How do the clients want users to navigate?
- ▶ Which content items should be included in which major categories?



# Conceptual Design

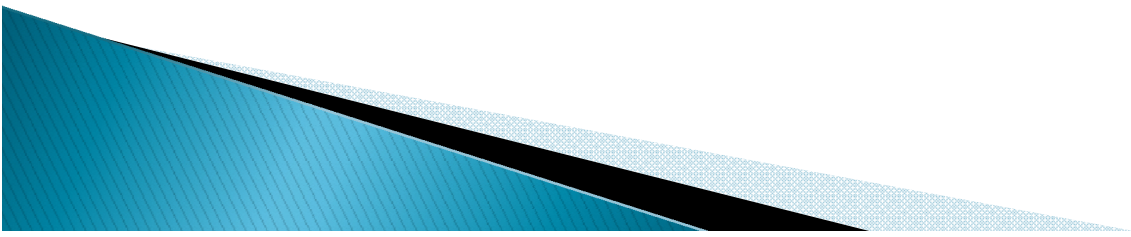
- Based upon information gathered during the research phase, you must now create order
- How should the information be organized and labeled at the highest levels of the hierarchy? What types of navigation systems will be applied? How will searching work?
- White boards and flip charts, high-level architecture blueprints, and scenarios are key tools at this stage
- After the major issues have been worked out, later meetings involve the consideration of more detailed organization, labeling, indexing, and navigation systems. Detailed blueprints and Web-based prototypes will serve you well in these discussions.
- For collaborative purposes, white boards are unparalleled.





# High Level Architecture Blueprints

- a blueprint is the very act of shaping ideas into the more formal structure
- During the conceptual design phase, high-level blueprints are most useful for exploring primary organization schemes and approaches
- High-level blueprints are great for stimulating discussions focused on the organization and management of content as well as the desired access pathways for users.
- These blueprints can be created by hand, but we prefer to use diagramming software such as Visio or NetObjects Fusion. These products not only help you to quickly layout your architecture blueprints, but can also help with site production and maintenance.
- 



Information Architecture  
Top Level v1.1

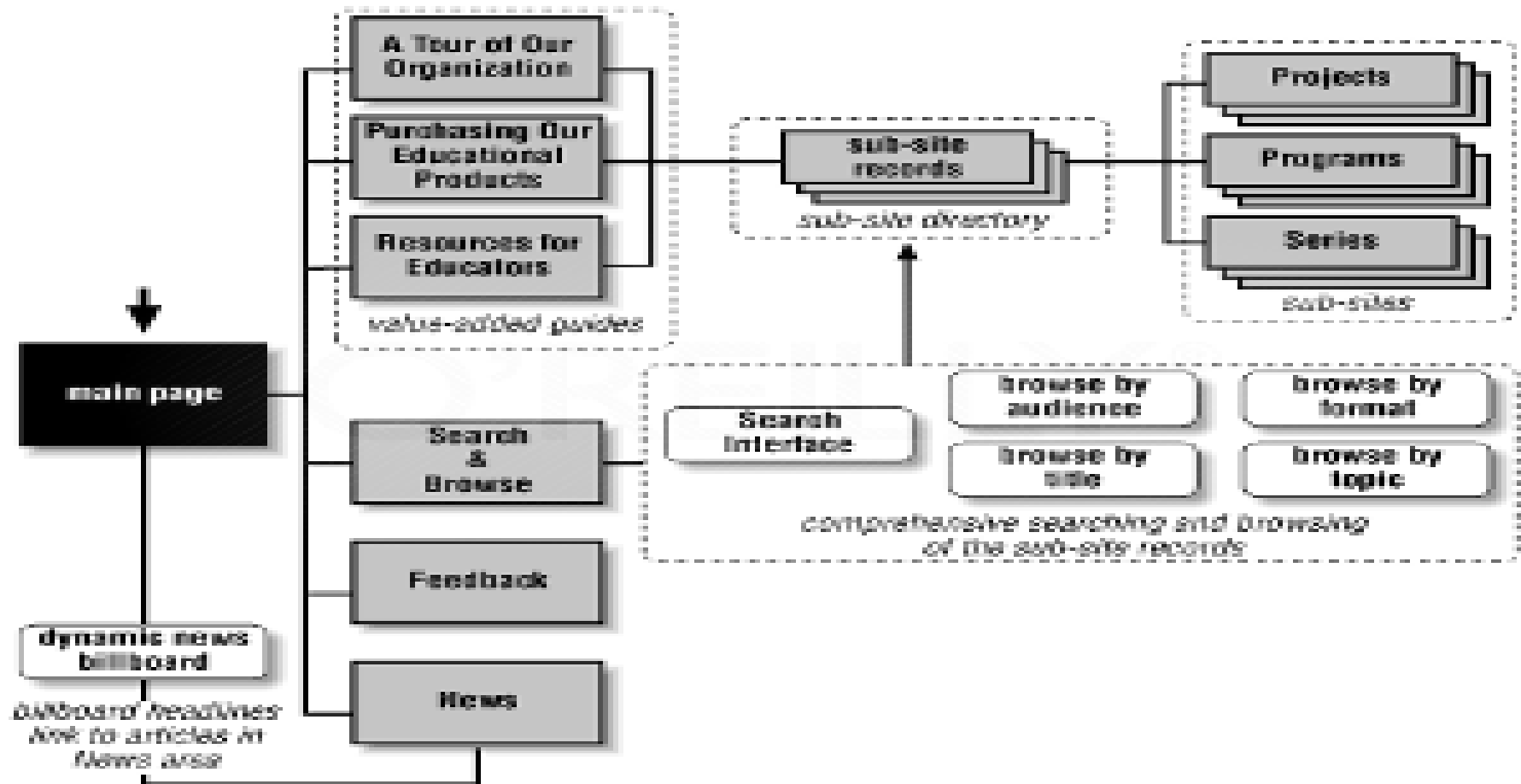
**NOTES:**

Guides are narratives or stories that introduce new users to the organization and to the web site.

Search & Browse indices allow fast, direct access to the contents of the web site.

The Directory of the Sub-Site Records serves as a 'card catalog' and provides access to the sub-sites themselves.

Sub-sites contain the actual content of the web site. There are 3 major types of sub-site. Each sub-site might be created and maintained by a different department.



**Legend**



Gateway to the site  
Relationships between pages and/or components



Page components (content or application that appears on a page)



Page



Pages to be created



Groups of related pages



Groups of similar pages



Groups of similar pages

# Detailed Blueprints

- This involves communicating detailed organization, labeling, and navigation decisions to your colleagues on the site development team.

Purpose:

- They must map out the entire site so that the production team can implement your plans to the letter without requiring your physical presence during production.
- The blueprints must present the complete information hierarchy from the main page to the destination pages.
- They must also detail the labeling and navigation systems to be implemented in each area of the site.



# Architectural Page Mockups

## **Disadvantages of Blueprints:**

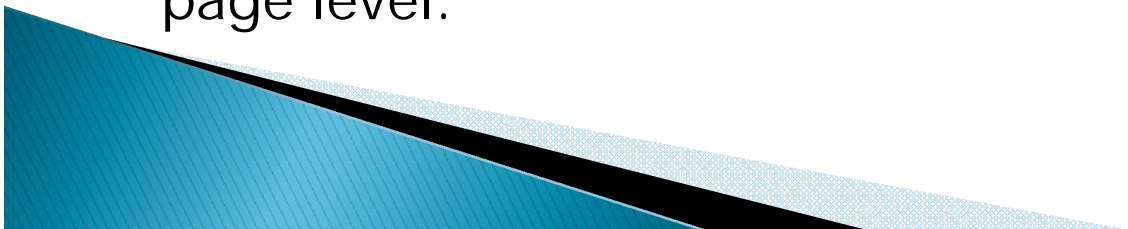
they do not work well for helping people to envision the contents of any particular page.

They are also not straightforward enough for most graphic designers to work from. In fact, no single format does a perfect job of conveying all aspects of an information architecture to all audiences.

Because information architectures are multi-dimensional, it's important to show them in multiple ways.

**For these reasons, architectural page mockups are useful tools during conceptual design for complementing the blueprint view of the site.**

- Mockups are quick and dirty textual documents that show the content and links of major pages on the web site.
- They enable you to clearly (yet inexpensively) communicate the implications of the architecture at the page level.



## Sample Architectural Page Mockup

Search/Browse

**Search**

---

---

sample search would go here

Search tips

**Browse**

by Title

by Subjects/Discipline

by Primary Audience

by Primary Purposes

by Primary Format

*see blueprint #2.1*

# Design Sketches

- In this phase the information architect collaborate with graphic designer to create design sketches on paper of major pages in the web site.
- Design sketches are a great way to pool the collective knowledge of three teams in a first attempt to design interface for the top level pages of the site:
  1. In the research phase, the design team has begun to develop a sense of the desired graphic identity or look and feel.
  2. The technical team has assessed the information technology infrastructure of the organization and the platform limitations of the intended audiences.
  3. the architect has designed the high-level information structure for the site.
- Using the architectural mockups as a guide, the designer begins sketching pages of the site on sheets of paper. As the designer sketches each page, questions arise that must be discussed

