

Reorganizing Information Architecture

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Introduction

The purpose of this document is to offer an analysis of the organization scheme and structure of kk.org/cooltools, explicit recommendations for how to better organize and structure the site, and justification of the recommendations.

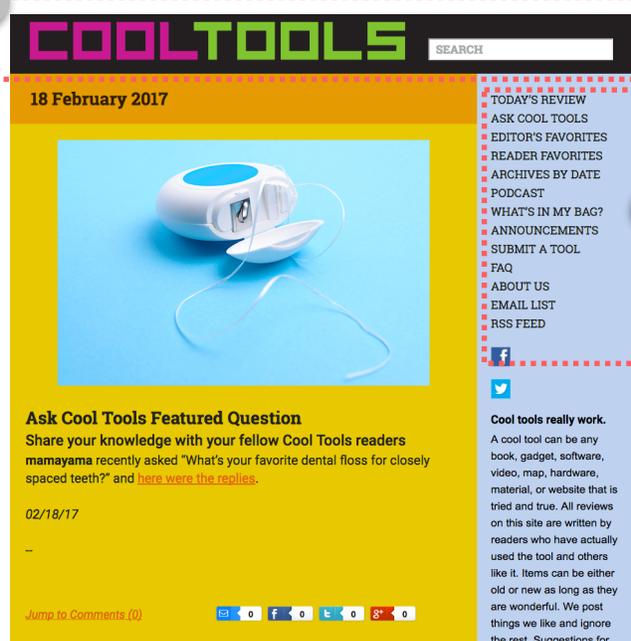
Contents

- **Identifying Organization Schemes**
An identification of different organization schemes throughout the Cool Tools site
- **Identifying Organization Structure**
The predominant organization structure, or structures, found on Cool Tools
- **Re-organizing Cool Tools**
Recommendations for how the organization of Cool Tools could be improved
- **Justification of Recommendations**
Justification and prioritization of recommendations for Cool Tools

Editor's note: Text *italicized and highlighted in gray* are terms found in chapters 6-8 of "Information Architecture For the Web and Beyond."

Identifying Organization Schemes

1



COOLTOOLS SEARCH

18 February 2017

Ask Cool Tools Featured Question
Share your knowledge with your fellow Cool Tools readers [mamayama](#) recently asked "What's your favorite dental floss for closely spaced teeth?" and [here were the replies](#).

02/18/17

Jump to Comments (0)

TODAY'S REVIEW
ASK COOL TOOLS
EDITOR'S FAVORITES
READER FAVORITES
ARCHIVES BY DATE
PODCAST
WHAT'S IN MY BAG?
ANNOUNCEMENTS
SUBMIT A TOOL
FAQ
ABOUT US
EMAIL LIST
RSS FEED

2

Cool tools really work.
A cool tool can be any book, gadget, software, video, map, hardware, material, or website that is tried and true. All reviews on this site are written by readers who have actually used the tool and others like it. Items can be either old or new as long as they are wonderful. We post things we like and ignore the rest. Suggestions for

17 February 2017

3

BuildTak Spatula
Remove objects from a 3D printer build surface
I love my BuildTak Spatula, I bought it from them at a 3D printing expo, and it was a great investment of twenty bucks. The spatula is designed to remove prints from a 3D printer build surface. I have a stable of 3D printers in my classroom, and the newest printer is big enough for me to lean inside of

4

6

Six-Ounce Pyrex Custard Cups
Glass cups safe in freezer and microwave
Glass custard cups do not seem like a cool tool you would use all the time, but once you have them I bet you will. A lot of the Pyrex custard cups I own were hand-me-downs or bought at the flea market. They can be microwaved, placed in the oven (even when taken frozen from the freezer), and do all the things you would expect from good Pyrex products. I use them almost daily, as dipping bowls, to hold condiments, receptacles for hot items like bacon grease, small containers to put in the refrigerator for leftovers with a little plastic wrap on top. Glass is very easy to clean and does not stain or retain odors.

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1 The *global navigation* contains a logo which links to the homepage. It's also home to a *search system*. However, there is no organization scheme found within this part of the *global navigation*. This is important to note right off-the-bat for a better understanding of this site's overall organization.

2 Here is a *hybrid organization scheme* of a *topical organization scheme* and a *task-oriented scheme* found in what is another *global navigation* system. Users can select from an apparently random list of sections and resources on the site, including specific topics and categories such as "Podcast" and tasks such as "Submit a Tool." This hybrid scheme also includes a *metaphor-driven scheme* item such as "What's in My Bag?"

3 Further down the homepage, and specific tool pages, is an example of another *global navigation* section with an *alphabetical index organization scheme* labeled "categories." This allows users to browse the tools by category in alphabetical order.

4 Here is another *global navigation* system found even further down the homepage, and specific tool pages. It's labeled "Kevin Kelly Sites" and offers users another apparently random *topical organization scheme* of Kelly's sites.

TOOL REVIEWS

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<p>02/13/17</p> <p>Bluetooth Receiver Streambot Bluetooth adapter plugs into any powered sound system or earbuds</p>	<p>02/12/17</p> <p>Negotiation Academy/The Expanse/Jewelry cleaning hacks Recomendo: issue no. 29</p>	<p>02/10/17</p> <p>What's in My Bag? – Dominic Duncombe An on-location photographer opens up his bag</p>
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5 Here is an example of a *chronological scheme* which displays tool reviews in order of publication date.

ASK COOL TOOLS

6

Recent Questions

	Answers Given	Answers Favorited
<p>02/17/17</p> <p>reporting problems</p> <p>How does one report a problem with CT? I recently provided an answer to the dental floss question, and another ...</p>	1	0
<p>02/8/17</p> <p>What's your favorite dental floss for closely spaced teeth?</p> <p>Some of my teeth are very close together, and there are fillings between them, so they shred floss like crazy, ...</p>	7	0

6 This another *chronological scheme*, this time displaying "recent questions" in order of publication date.

Podcast

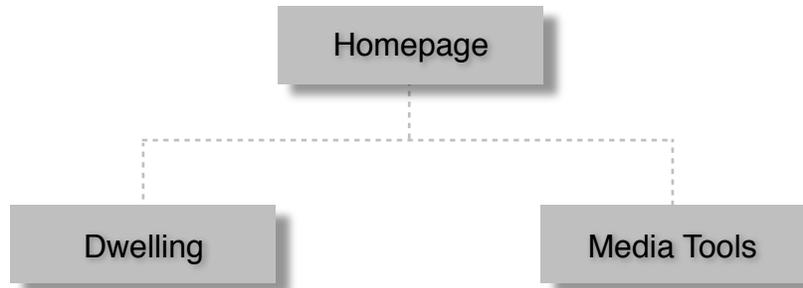
7

<p>02/7/17</p> <p>Cool Tools Show 071: Robyn Miller</p> <p>Picks and shownotes</p>
<p>01/19/17</p> <p>Cool Tools Show 070: Eric Moore</p> <p>Picks and shownotes</p>
<p>12/29/16</p> <p>Cool Tools Show 069: Danny Haeg</p> <p>Picks and shownotes</p>

7 Another example of a *chronological scheme* is the "Cool Tools Show Podcast" module found on the homepage, and subsequently the organization of the podcasts on the podcast page, as shown in the screenshot.

Identifying Organization Structure

The Cools Tools site's predominant organization structure can be described as mostly a *top-down approach*, such as this:



This figure shows the top two levels of the website's hierarchy with only two categories of tools. After these two levels — which include every topic, category and task found in the global navigation — things get a bit confusing.

Take a look at the following screenshot of the “Dwelling” category page. It is displaying a *chronological organization* scheme of products tagged with the “dwelling” category. However, it's not clear to the user where this page lives within the hierarchy of the website. In fact, the only hint to where this page is located within the overall site organization is the URL string — <http://kk.org/cooltools/category/dwelling/>.

Q: Where am I?

A: The dwelling category page.

Q: But where is this page within the site organization structure?

A: Unclear.

The screenshot shows the CoolTools website interface. At the top, there is a search bar and a navigation menu. The 'Dwelling' category is highlighted in the navigation bar. Below the navigation bar, there are three product listings: 'Dog poop rake and pan' (dated 01/26/17), 'LED Candles with Timer and Remote' (dated 01/10/17), and 'Heavy Duty Entry Mat' (dated 01/4/17). A sidebar on the right contains a list of links including 'TODAY'S REVIEW', 'ASK COOL TOOLS', 'EDITOR'S FAVORITES', 'READER FAVORITES', 'ARCHIVES BY DATE', 'PODCAST', 'WHAT'S IN MY BAG?', 'ANNOUNCEMENTS', 'SUBMIT A TOOL', 'FAQ', 'ABOUT US', 'EMAIL LIST', and 'RSS FEED'.

Users go even deeper in the hierarchical structure of the site when they choose to navigate to another page within the category chronological organization scheme. There is a navigation tool shown in the screenshot below which allows users to do such. Again, the only way to know for sure where these pages live within the site hierarchy is by the URL string — example: <http://kk.org/cooltools/category/dwelling/page/10/>

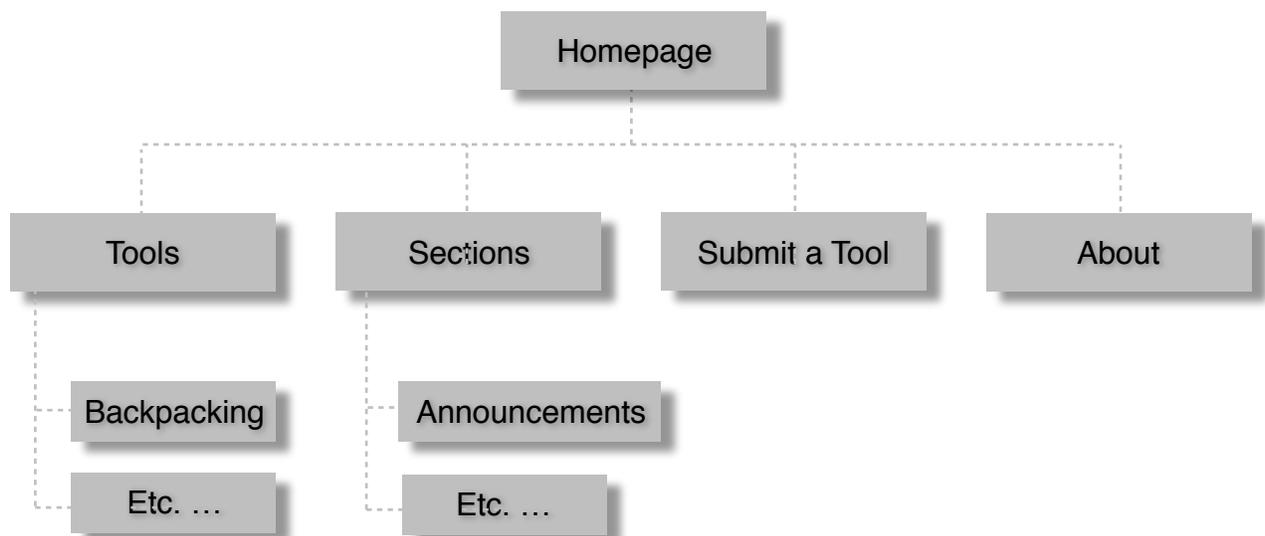
Re-organizing Cool Tools

There is a lot of *hypertext* organization being used on the Cool Tools site. A *bottom-up approach* to the organization structure is necessary to organize the categories of tools and products. The top-down hierarchy described in the previous section does allow for users to filter content, but what's missing from this site is a clear organizational scheme in the global navigation and a clear structure to the user as he or she dives deeper into the site.

Here's one way to redo the global navigation so that it offers a clearer organizational scheme:



The **top-level global navigation menu** could be used to help users sort through the available topics, sections and tasks. For instance, all of the categories found down the right side of the site structure could be moved under "Tools" for convenience. The organization scheme can remain the same — an alphabetical index. This offers a clearer vision of the site organization hierarchy:



This will allow for the "categories" to be split up between "tools" and "sections." User research is needed before any decisions can be made about what items should go into this global navigation.

For instance, it may be more important to users to have "What's in My Bag" or "My Bag" in this top-level navigation menu than "Submit a Tool." One cannot know this without knowing the users and their tendencies/needs.

A **breadcrumb system** also would be helpful to users to allow he or she to understand where certain pages live within the site organization, helping them navigate — here's an example breadcrumb:

The screenshot shows the CoolTools website header with the logo in pink and green, a search bar, and a navigation menu with 'Tools', 'Sections', 'Submit a Tool', and 'About'. Below the header is a breadcrumb trail: 'Kitchen > Home > Tools > Kitchen > Kitchen Page 5'. The main content area features three tool cards on a yellow background:

- OXO Good Grips Smooth Edge Can Opener** (01/21/16): Cuts lids from the side, not the top, eliminating jagged edges.
- 22-Ounce Soup Mug** (01/20/16): Microwaveable plastic containers holds a large can of soup.
- KitchenAid 4.5-Qt. Classic Plus Stand Mixer** (01/19/16): 10 speeds to mix, knead and whip.

On the right side, there is a blue sidebar with a list of links: TODAY'S REVIEW, ASK COOL TOOLS, EDITOR'S FAVORITES, READER FAVORITES, ARCHIVES BY DATE, PODCAST, WHAT'S IN MY BAG?, ANNOUNCEMENTS, SUBMIT A TOOL, FAQ, ABOUT US, EMAIL LIST, and RSS FEED. At the bottom of the sidebar are social media icons for Facebook and Twitter.

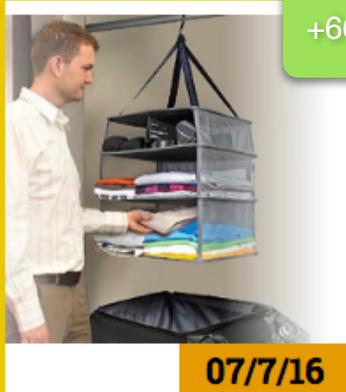
The menu and the breadcrumbs are subtle ways to help both the content producers and the users be aware of the site organization structure. Let's be clear: These are navigation pieces which offer organization schemes.

Social Classification

The "Readers Favorites" section leads the user to believe there is a section displaying the top-rated tools based on reader reviews or votes. However, the "Reader Favorites" page has no apparent organization scheme other than chronological organization scheme by date published. Cool Tools needs to give users some sort of indication for how popular these items are and why. Is it based on the number of reviews it has received? User ratings? User comments?

A *social classification* organization scheme may appear as small icons showing the number of times an item has been "upvoted" or reviewed. It can be something very simple which allows the user to understand its importance to other users — take a look at this next figure:

Tag: Reader Favorites



+66

07/7/16

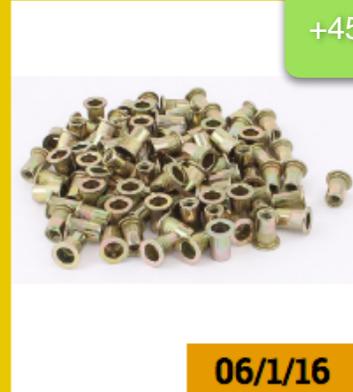
**Valet Luggage
Compression Shelves**



+56

06/29/16

Nail Punch for Trim
Long nose allows easy



+45

06/1/16

Rivnuts
Blind threaded insert

This is just an example of what a clearer, more obvious social classification organization structure might look like on Cool Tools. At least the users are able to see why these tools are being labeled “reader favorites.” Readers must be voting or leaving good reviews, indicated by the green box number.

Justification of Recommendations

- A top-level menu in the global navigation allows users to access specific content more efficiently. This is the most important of all the recommendations being made because it also offers a clear view of the site organization. Users will be given a better understanding of what this site is about and what it has to offer.
- A breadcrumbs system is necessary because users need a better understanding of where they are within the site organization at all times. This is a quick way to allow them a view of the site hierarchy and how to navigate through it.
- A social classification organization scheme for certain items of content adds to the overall experience, but it’s not as crucial as the other two organization recommendations because it is not crucial to the overall site organization structure. It does, however, validate the labeling of these content pieces as “read favorites.” Otherwise, users are left to guess why these items are being labeled as such. There needs to be evidence to support this labeling.