Breadcrumb Navigation

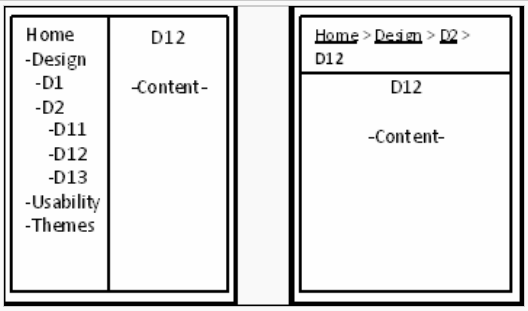
What is Breadcrumb?

A breadcrumb is a user interface navigation mechanism. It shows both the current location and previous location(s) required to get to the current location within the navigation hierarchy.

Advantages

Breadcrumb navigation can provide a very compact mechanism for orienting a user within an app or document set:

- Gives user the knowledge of their current location relative to higher-level concepts.
- One-click navigation to navigate back to higher levels in the hierarchy.



Traditional Navigation / Breadcrumb Navigation

Disadvantages/Limitations

- Lack of proper update, especially on web applications when new pages are added or there is modification in hierarchical structure, can cause inconsistency or broken links.
- Breadcrumb is more useful on a stylus-driven device and not appropriate for scroll and select devices.

When to use ?

- When the application is heavily content driven and has many nested levels a breadcrumb can help locate the user within the document structure
- The user cannot easily navigate through the hierarchy via other local navigation methods.
- When a user might arrive to a page from an external source (e.g., through a search engine) and the user will need a sense of context.

Guidelines while implementing Breadcrumb

- Whenever possible, labels of breadcrumb should match the title of the corresponding form/page of the application.
- Display the title of the current form/page as the last label in the breadcrumb and don't provide hyperlink to it.
- Avoid to hyperlink the symbol (e.g. sign (>>)) that separates the labels.
- Hyperlink color/style of the breadcrumb should be the same irrespective of whether the link was previously visited by user or not.
- Use 'Title Case' for labels in the breadcrumb.
- Avoid using breadcrumbs for single-level hierarchy navigation that have no logical hierarchy or grouping.

Design Tip

Using combination of breadcrumb and fly-out navigation

Combination of breadcrumb and fly-out navigation is helpful in displaying child menus related to each level of the breadcrumb.

Implementing this concept - When a user 'clicks on' or 'hovers over' a breadcrumb link, the link opens a sub-navigation panel that lists additional attributes.

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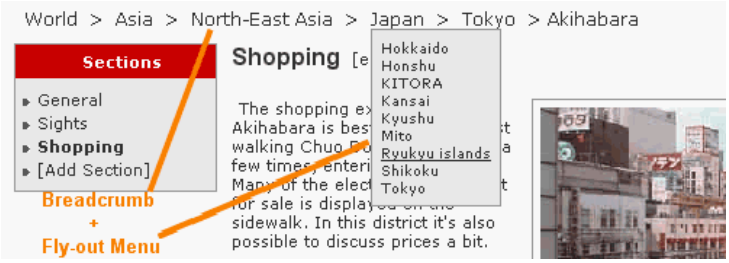

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