

Panlogic

Digital Engineering

Web | Mobile | Applications

Our approach to

user
centric
navigation



What's the best way to organise digital content?

Access to relevant content (be that static or interactive content) is an essential requirement of most digital services.

Making sure your service is easily navigable, well presented and user-friendly requires information to be sorted and filtered effectively.

The content needs to be sorted according to known user-journeys, user-types and user scenarios so that it is directly relevant and does not over-burden.

In short, to be effective and meet organisational goals digital services rely on well-organised content to be useful. So, how is this achieved?

Organising content to user needs

Everyone gets frustrated when they cannot find what they require from a digital service. The problem for the service owner is working-out how to make the relevant information available to those who need it, when they need it.

The starting point is to consider the service users. Key questions are: who are the user? What information will they require? How they might interact with the content? Building up a picture of users is essential to get into the mindset of their needs. Commonly pen-portraits or personas are developed to bring the user to life. These are then validated by a working group and adjusted as necessary. The next requirement is to prioritise the types of users. Is, for instance, the media a key user group, are industry professionals more/less important etc? The prioritisation begins to define the structure and hierarchy of the website.

All of this work is carried out by an information architect or consultant running stakeholder workshops and one-one interviews. The information architect normally works alongside a solutions architect who is considering the technical implications of what is being heard.

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How does Information Architecture work?

Information Architecture specifies the structure, navigation, labelling, content types and sections and layout for the whole service and for all of its pages. This work also supports search functionality across the whole service.

The aim of the architecture is to provide a smooth, intuitive environment which allows all users to:

- Know where they are at all times
- Understand what is 'on offer' on each page
- Understand how to get to further information
- Find what they need quickly and efficiently
- Have a means to get 'back' to where they were easily

These are all fundamental to developing a user-friendly site. An additional aim of the architecture is to provide a flexible structure which can maximise the potential to accommodate future requirements.

The classification of webpages into different groups, also known as a taxonomy, is developed through structured exercises such as card-sorting. In turn, this leads to the service map. This looks like a family tree and represents the links from one page/screen to another. It identifies the content labels for each of the various levels.

Panlogic's approach is to develop the service map within a prototyping tool. This visual approach aids understanding and also gives a sense of how the service will function. (See Panlogic's '[Benefits of prototypes and proofs of concept](#)' factsheet for more detail on prototyping and proofs of concept.)

Wireframes (a visual impression of a service page, typically without full design and branding) are then extracted from the developed prototype and provided to the service-build company as a core input to their work.

Using such an approach, the service links between the pages and screens are designed and built to reflect the users' own logic. It ensures that the service is constructed according to their needs and according to their expectations – a truly user-centred approach.

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Conclusions

Independent expertise is required to bring together and synthesise what are often conflicting organisational requirements. Taking user-centricity as the starting point, a Consultant will take a structured approach to build up user persona profiles and from these develop a prioritisation and hierarchy of need. Using a visual and flexible prototype, stakeholders can be brought along the journey of the service development ensuring buy-in and agreement before build commences.

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About Panlogic

Established in 1999, Panlogic is an independent, dedicated digital agency offering a full range of services, from idea through to execution.

Digital consultancy

Our consultancy offer provides independent scoping and definition services for digital (web/mobile/tablet) devices for applications/websites etc.

Digital support

Our second core offer provides long term, SLA backed hosting/support and maintenance contracts across a wide and certified set of technologies which we run up to 24x7x365 for clients.