

# NAVIGATION



W E B   S I T E      G R A P H I C S

# NAVIGATION

ROCKPORT  
PUBLISHERS

THE BEST WORK FROM THE WEB

Jeff Carlson | Toby Malina | Glenn Fleishman

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First published in the United States of America by:  
Rockport Publishers, Inc.  
33 Commercial Street  
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930-5089  
Telephone: (978) 282-9590  
Facsimile: (978) 283-2742

Distributed to the book trade and art trade in the  
United States by:  
North Light Books, an imprint of  
F & W Publications  
1507 Dana Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207  
Telephone: (800) 289-0963

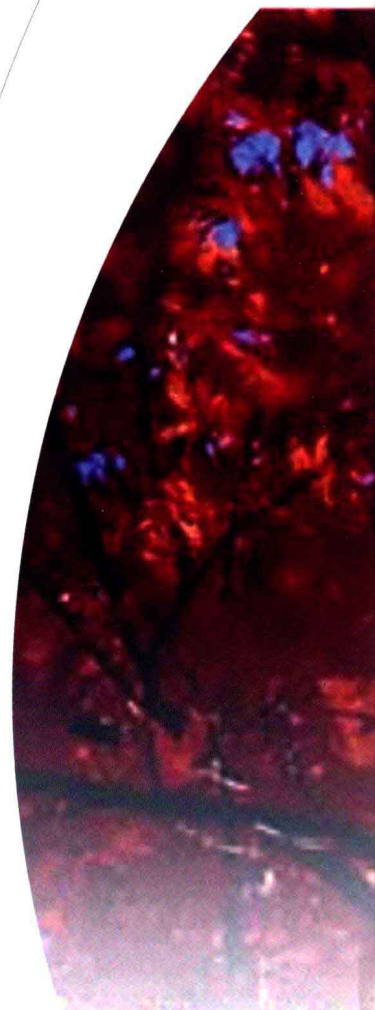
Other distribution by:  
Rockport Publishers, Inc.  
Gloucester, Massachusetts 01930-5089

ISBN 1-56496-518-X

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

Designer: The Design Company  
Cover Image: StudioMotiv, p. 73

Printed in China



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# ICULAR COMPUTIN

pals | projects | venture fund | workshops | sit

# introduction

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Developments in browsers and Web-publishing tools notwithstanding, the one constant in most Web sites appears to be the colored navigation bar running down the left side of the page.

We set out with this book to unshackle ourselves from this standard by finding examples of sites that were both richly navigable and (as often as possible) used other techniques to lead the user through the site. There's nothing wrong with the left-side, colored navigation bar per se, but with countless pages to look at already—starting with c|net's mustard yellow—we thought we'd break with this new “tradition.”

The left-side navigation bar became a feature of the Web landscape because of the idea that every page should, by its nature, lead you to every other page on a site. It's a common desire on the part of marketing folks who want to make sure that the valuable investment made in the Web site isn't lost on the user.

But most designers featured in this book have chosen a different tack, using context to provide navigational aids. In some cases, sites are deliberately unnavigable—but it's still useful to learn from these positive examples of

contrary design. Some of the most obscurely engineered sites, like Eye Candy and Funny Garbage, are incredibly compelling—much more so than expensive commercial sites where you would rarely venture deeper than the home page.

What might seem contradictory, however, is that many of our favorite sites include excellent site maps, a number of which you'll find here. Good site design should make navigation seem self-evident. However, assuming the principle that every page doesn't necessarily lead you to every other, a site map can, in the best cases we present here, short-circuit the clicking process, propelling you in a hyperspace leap from deep in one part of the site, through the site map, to the depths of a different level.

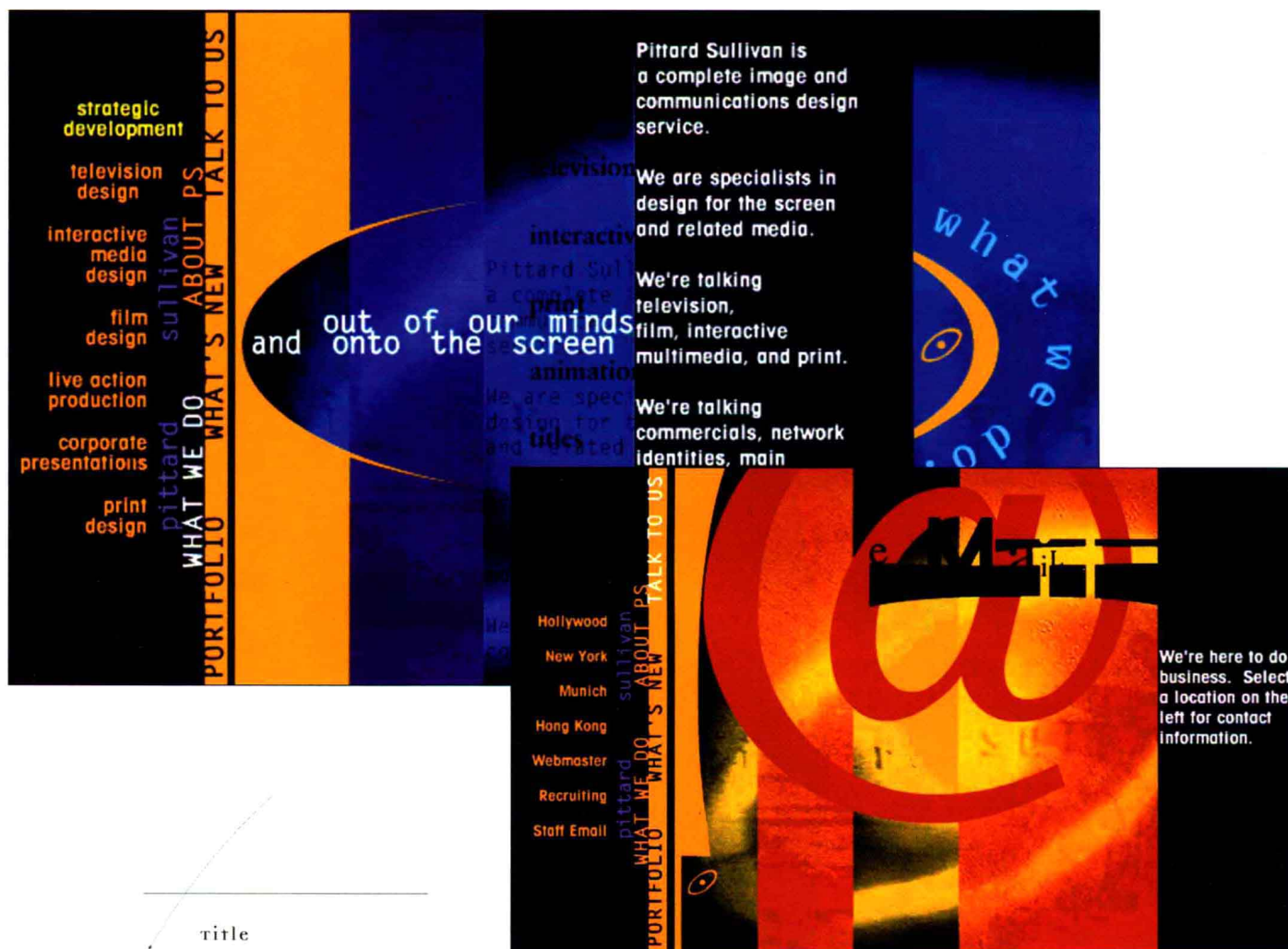
This is thinking both inside and outside of the box: the structure is still hierarchical and navigable through navigation bars, text links, or other elements (inside the box), but the site map jumps you into a super-observer position (outside the box) where you can decide exactly where you want to go today.

Navigation is not just a set of links: it is a way of thinking about and structuring a site so that information, illustrations, or documents always feel like they are within reach, not buried far away or impossible to find. Even when you may have to click four or five times, a good design keeps you interested while you're navigating, and keeps the prize (the page you're trying to get to) within your grasp.



“most designers featured in this book have chosen a different tack, using context to provide navigational aids. In some cases, sites are deliberately unnavigable—but it’s still useful to learn from these positive examples of contrary design.”

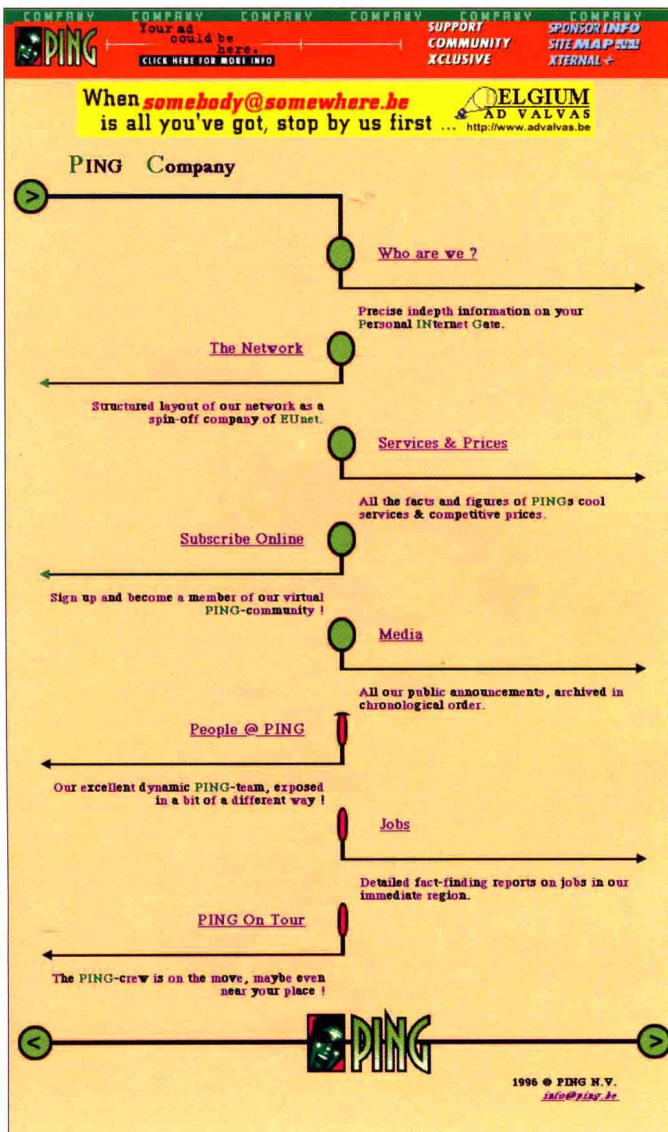




title  
 pittard sullivan  
 URL  
<http://www.pittardsullivan.com/>  
 design firm  
 pittard sullivan  
 designers  
 Aaron King, soo chyun, Ron Romero  
 programmers  
 Bryan Keeling, Marvin Price

Many Web sites direct visitors the way cities direct cars: via a series of icons and symbols. The Pittard Sullivan site, however, directs visitors like a tour guide. Here, text links are not an alternative navigation system, they are the primary methods of getting around. Since the site relies on text for its visual design as well, getting around is pretty easy.





#### Title

ping belgium

#### URL

<http://www.ping.be/>

design firm

ping belgium

designers

dirk zurngenter, peter van hees,

bernard gillbrecht

illustrator

bart de neve

photographer

peter van hees

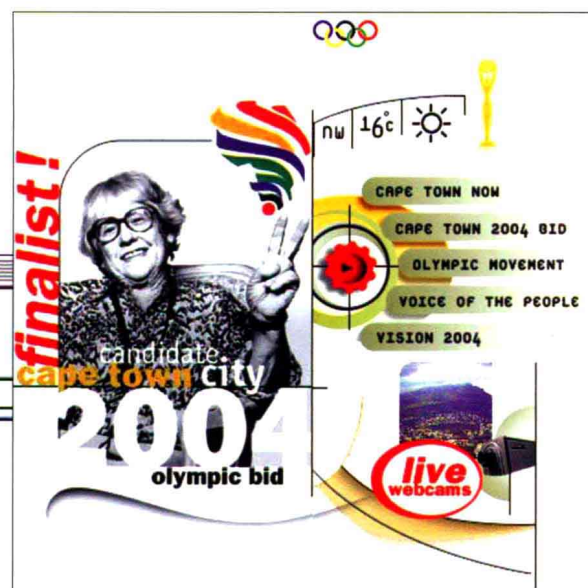
programmers

mark van hamme, peter van hees,

marchteet garrels

One of the main difficulties in site navigation is expressing many directions in a compressed, easy-to-understand format. The designers at Ping chose to use frames to build trees of subdirectories that are always on screen; going back a level does not require reloading and redrawing a page.





#### title

Internet underground music archive

#### URL

http://www.iuma.com/

#### designers

brandee selck, david beach

#### programmer

jeff patterson

Although it can be tempting to devise new and intricate navigation methods, sometimes you just need a few links to do the trick. To spice things up a bit, the IUMA designers chose to create a number of different button bars that reflect the character of a particular page's content. Changing the look is easy—if you use the same file names for the new images, you may not have to adjust each page's HTML code.

#### title

cape town 2004

#### URL

http://www.oct2004.com/

#### design firm

electric ocean

#### designer/illustrator

nicholas wittenberg

#### programmer

stephen garratt

In its bid to secure Cape Town as the home of the 2004 Olympics, the designers managed to pack a great deal of information into a small space by using a circular navigation system keyed-in by a knob similar to one found on a household stove. Using JavaScript, the selections are highlighted when the arrow on the knob points at the correct direction.

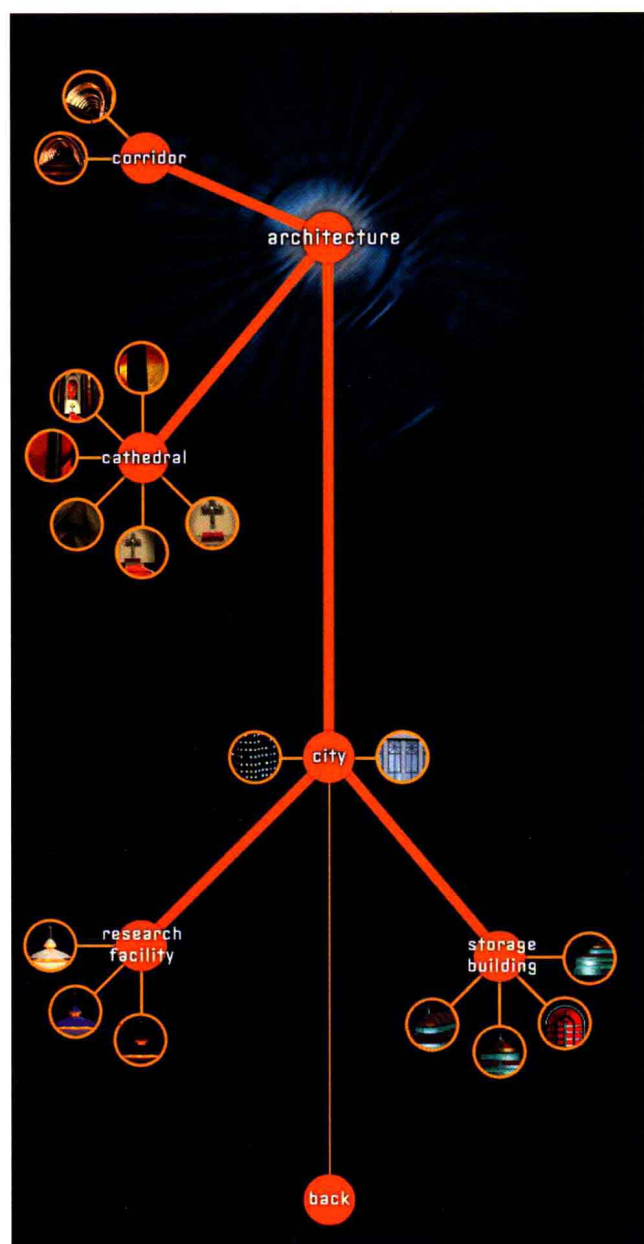
Welcome to the Net's first, free hi-fi music archive.



© 1995 Internet Underground Music Archive · All rights reserved · IUMA 2.0







# title

kjetil vatne graphics + design

## URL

[http://www.prodat.no/personer/kjetil\\_vatne/](http://www.prodat.no/personer/kjetil_vatne/)

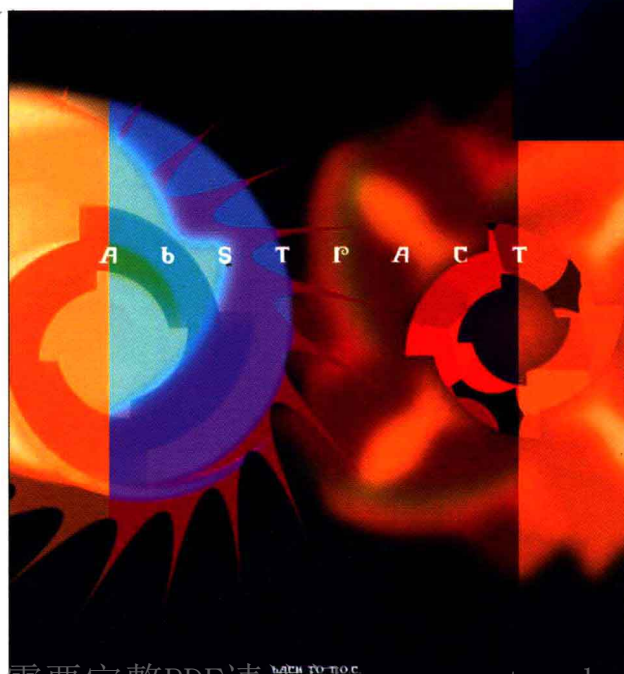
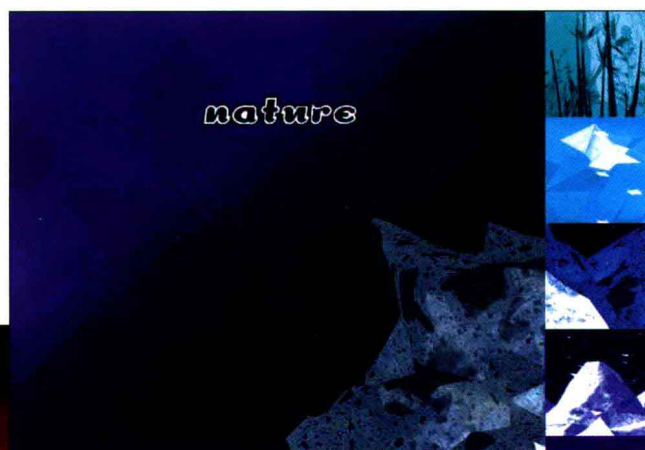
## design firm

kjetil vatne graphics + design

## designer

kjetil vatne

Another circular navigation system, this exploration of a designer's skills and achievements is simple to understand and uses half the space that a traditional list-based navigation would use. A straightforward site map groups the main sections in pods, which makes it easier for the visitor to tell where he is located.







#### title

pepsi world

#### url

<http://www.pepsi.com/>

#### design firm

DDB interactive

#### designers

chris hess, frances ko, mike  
gonzales, tricia elliot

#### photographer

jill green

#### programmers

thomas jeffrey, shelly shay,  
sal torneo

List-style and circular navigation styles crop up often on the Web, but it's fairly unusual to find four-corner navigation. The Pepsi World site, which has to incorporate Web sites from other designers in its main "viewer" window, keeps its own set of links at each corner of the screen: easily accessible, yet out of the way.

title

qaswa shockwave hub

URL

<http://www.qaswa.com/shock.html>

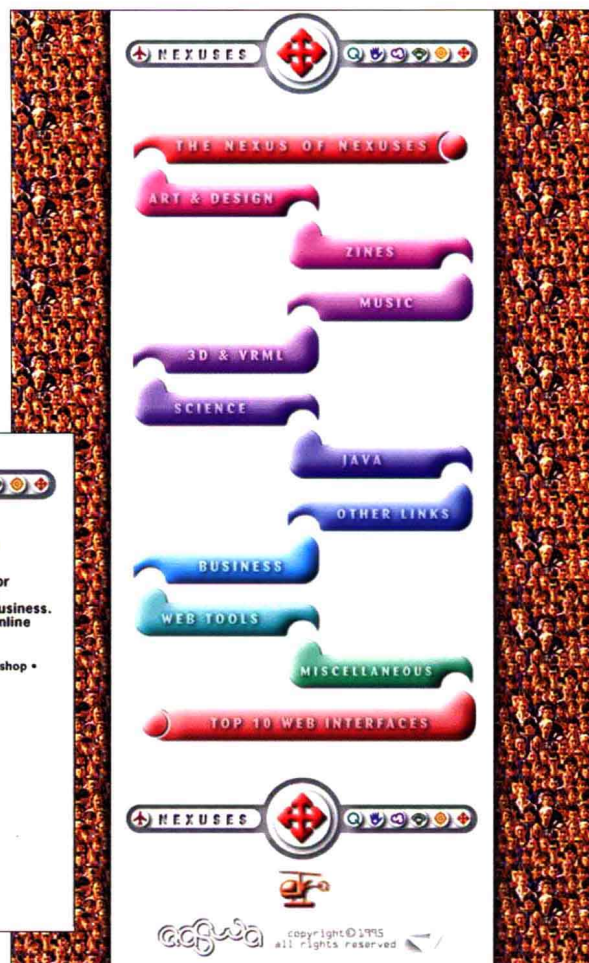
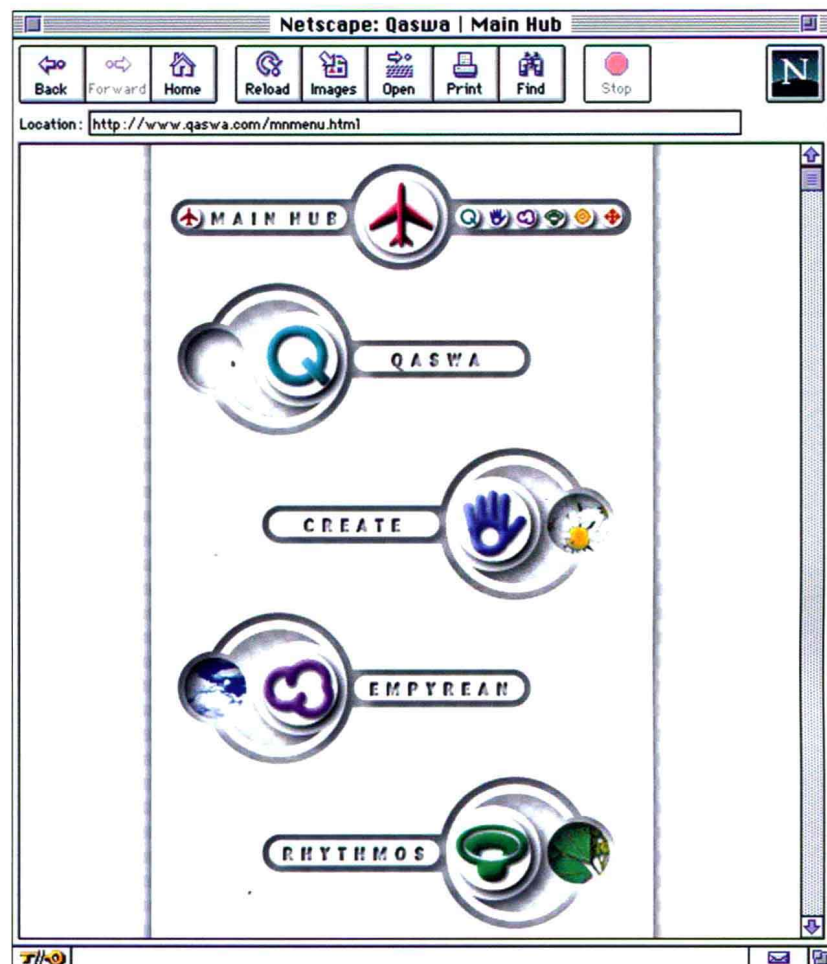
design firm

qaswa communications

designer

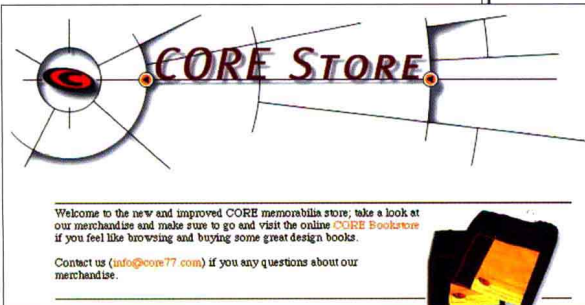
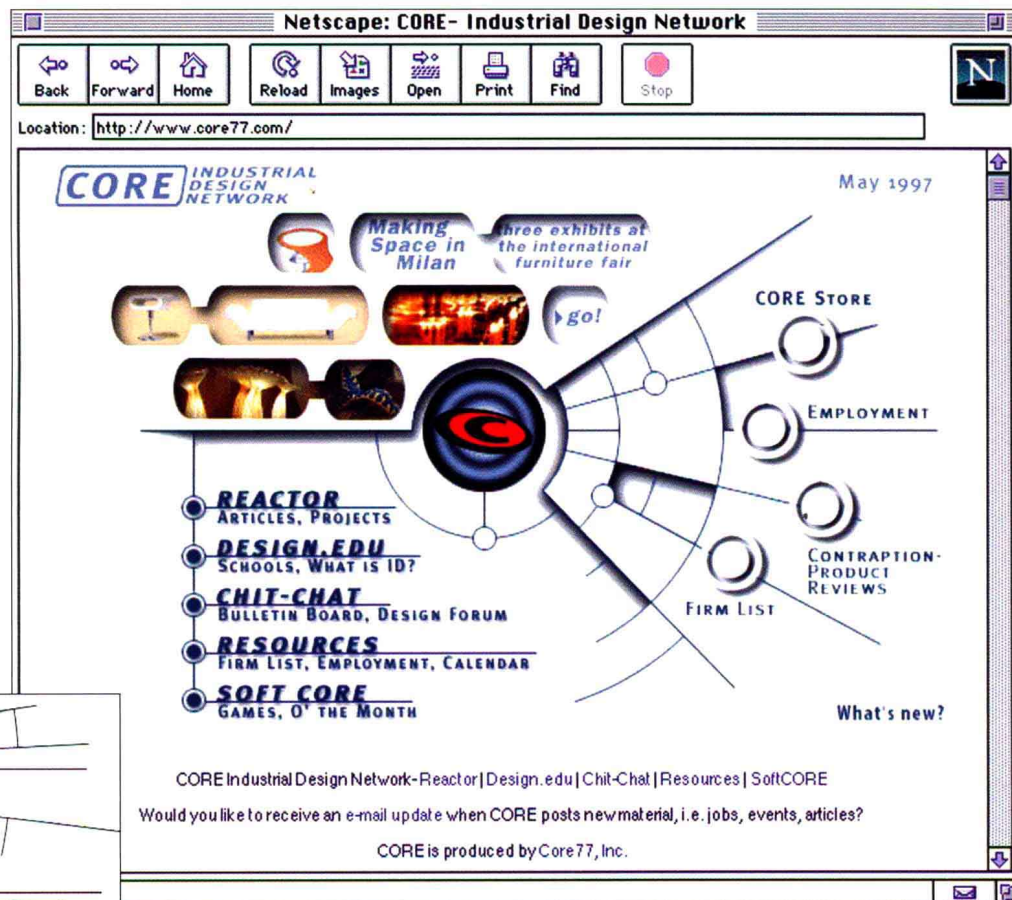
Ammon Haggerty

The circular navigation of the Qaswa Shockwave Hub makes it easy to quickly see where each option will lead to, but the designers added another helpful element. When the cursor passes over an icon, the banners above and below the hub give more information about the current selection.



title  
core77  
URL  
http://www.core77.com/  
Designers  
eric ludlum,  
stuart constantine

Sometimes it's hard enough dealing with one tree of links, but what about when you have two or more? The Core77 site covers industrial-design issues, but also provides resources such as articles, employment resources, and more. The solution for tackling it all was this combination of circular and hierarchical navigation systems.





# title

women's wire

## URL

http://www.women.com/

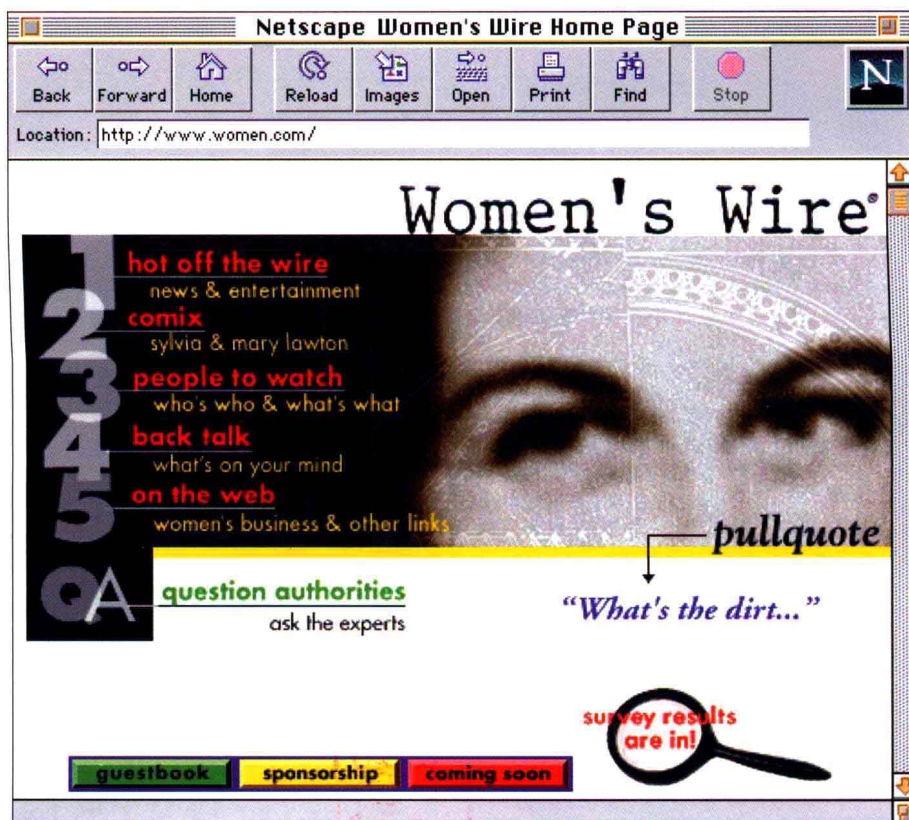
## design firm

Lisa Marie Nielsen Design

## designer

Lisa Marie Nielsen

If you reduce the placement of links on this page to their text-only essentials, the result would not be very exciting. As presented here, however, the numbered, colored sections are given identity without succumbing to the desire to fashion a navigation system around the site's content. Yes, sometimes simple is better.



# title

eyescream interactive, inc.

## URL

http://www.eyescream.com/

## design firm

eyescream interactive, inc.

## designer

mark grimes

## icon illustrator

jeffrey zeldman

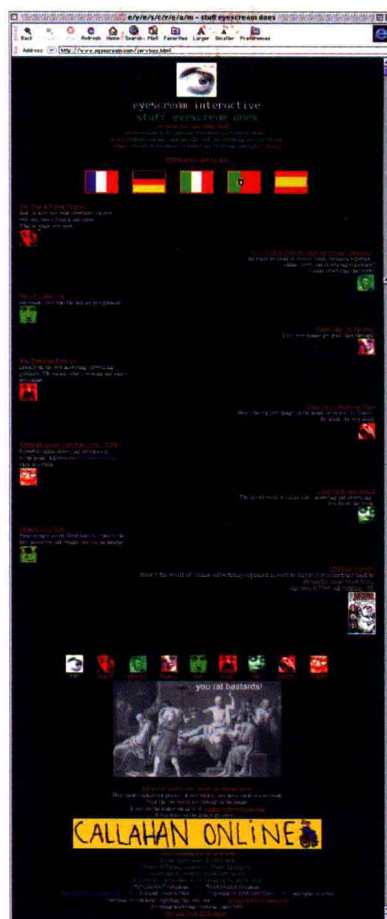
## programmer

eyescream staff

## authoring platform-

pc

A very spare site, it holds interest by emphasizing small type, used for navigation, in the middle of large, color fields. Moving around the site is simple enough: Click a section name, and a new color scheme and large type in the upper right identifies the location. Click a subcategory, like a staffer's name, and the type in the upper right becomes a link to take you back to that section's main page.



title  
JASON project  
URL

[http://www.jasonproject.org/  
expedition.html](http://www.jasonproject.org/expedition.html)

design firm

stolte design (home page); JASON  
foundation (all other pages)  
designers/illustrators/

programmers

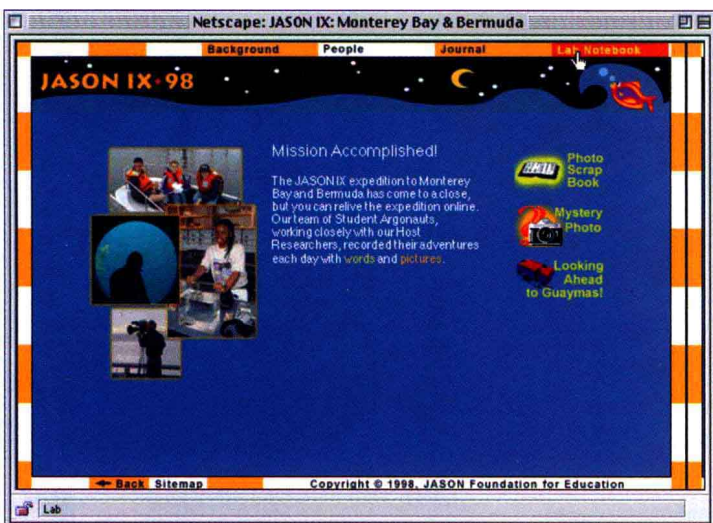
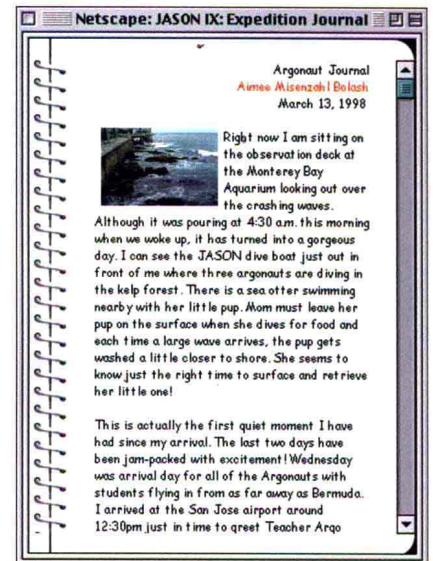
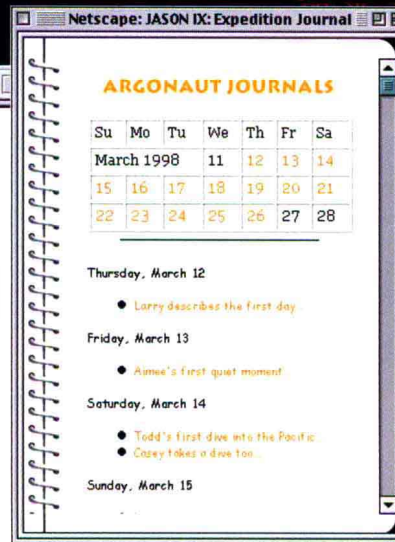
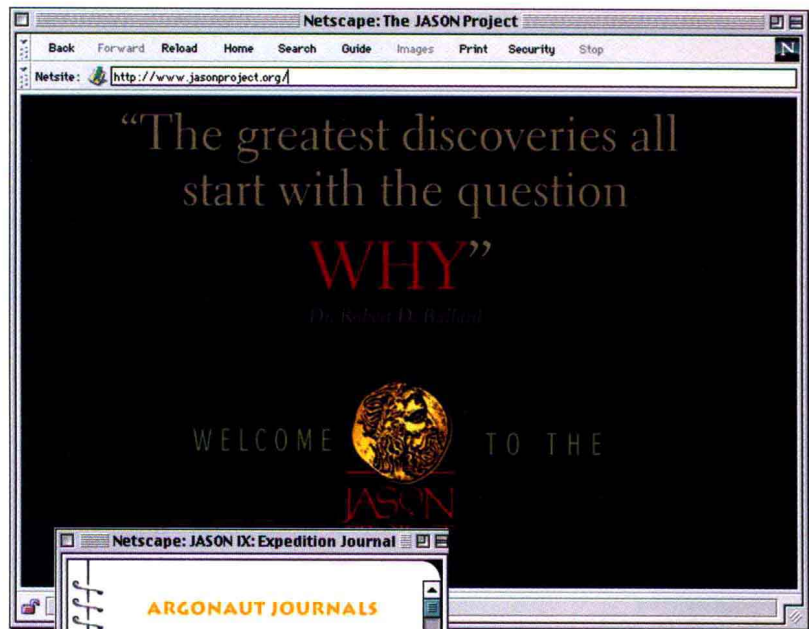
christian stolte (home page);

patrick shea, todd viola (all other  
pages)

authoring platform

pc (all except home page)

One indicator of a good Web-navigation system is how well the directional elements are integrated within the site. Many creative layouts become diluted when the designer tosses a list of text links in a corner of the page. Here, the links are discretely placed around the page's borders. Moving your mouse to one reveals JavaScript rollovers that visually enhance each link with pictures that blend into the background's swelling ocean imagery.





title

AIGA (American Institute of Graphic Arts)

URL

<http://www.aiga.org/>

design firm

graffito/active8

designers

tim thompson, jon majerik

photographer

morton jackson

programmer

jon majerik

You do not have to rely on just one navigation method. Without hogging precious screen real estate, this site uses both circular and block navigation to quickly point visitors deep into the site. The slanted elliptical grouping to the right leads to main categories, while the blocked-out subsection titles are displayed to the left.

