

Information Architecture – Creating “Before” and “After” Sitemaps (CISO.com)

INTRODUCTION

This document presents an approach to creating “before” and “after” information architect sitemaps for the purpose of improving the layout and structure of www.CISO.com (*actual organization's name/URL changed for confidentiality purposes*). Please see the previous document, “Personas and Scenarios for Targeted Website” for an overview of the CISO organization and its website. The personas were used to clearly document the goals of the site's target users. The scenarios were used to formulate some recommendations for improvements to the site based on hypothetical (but plausible) use cases. The recommendations that relate to the sitemap will be communicated visually in this document.

CISO USER GOALS

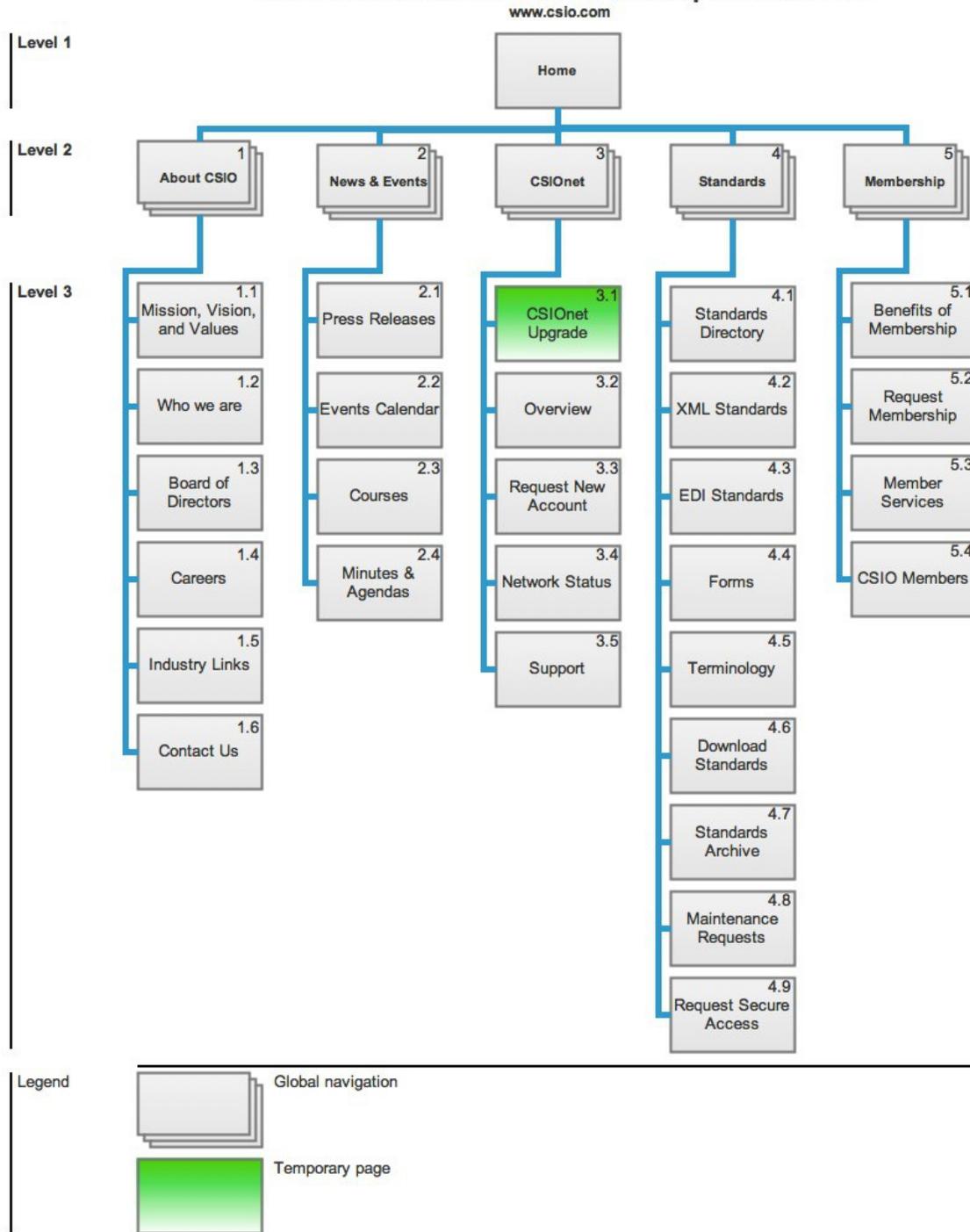
Our primary persona, Martha, represents the main user base on this site – insurance brokers. It was established with Martha that brokers who visit CISO.com are first and foremost looking to access the latest standardized forms. Martha's scenario revealed a number of usability recommendations, including one that is directly relevant to the sitemap: “the Forms page reveals a local nav with many menu items. Why isn't this in the global nav? It should be.”

Our secondary persona, Florian, represents another very important user base on CISO.com – software providers/vendors. It was established with Florian that vendors who visit CISO.com are – in order of importance – looking to access the validation tools (both XML and EDI, but especially EDI) and download standards and forms. Florian's scenario also revealed a number of usability recommendations, including one that is directly relevant to the sitemap: “put the EDI validation tool link on the homepage.”

The initial sitemap will reveal the “as-is” state of the CISO website. The revised sitemap will provide recommendations on how to improve the site and allow users to accomplish their goals more quickly and efficiently.

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"Before" Information Architect Sitemap for CSIO.com



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Relabeled Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Label	Location (“Before” sitemap)	Rationale
Mission, Vision, and Values	Mission	1.1	Mission, vision and values are related closely enough to not require distinction in the nav menu. E.g., it's reasonable to assume that those interested in reading about mission will probably also be interested in reading about vision, values.
Who we are	Who We Are	1.2	Jakob Nielsen's usability heuristic on consistency and standards : “users should not have to wonder whether different words, situations, or actions mean the same thing. Follow platform conventions.” (2005) There is inconsistency in the label capitalization. No words in the nav labels should begin in small caps.
Events Calendar	Upcoming Events	2.2	The “Events Calendar” page doesn't actually have a calendar. It's simply a list of the upcoming events (not in calendar form). Don't give users expectations that are ultimately unmet. The new label is more in line with the reality.
Overview	About CISONet	3.2	New label is more descriptive than the vague “Overview”. Also consistent with label in global nav - “About CISO”.
Request New Account	Request CISONet Account	3.3	New label is more descriptive.
Standards Directory	About CISO Standards	4.1	The page isn't really a directory; it's more of a single list to pages about various CISO standards. The new label is a more accurate description.
Request Secure Access	Request Standards Access	4.9	More accurate label that clearly distinguishes it from the “Request Forms Access” label.

Merged Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Label	Location (“Before” sitemap)	Rationale
Who we are, Board of Directors	Who We Are	1.2 and 1.3	Seems unnecessary to separate 1.2 and 1.3. The board of directors is obviously an important part of “who we are” for CISO. Moreover, the “Who we are” page

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			currently features content about XML and EDI standards that would be better placed in the Standards section (level 2, #4).
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Deleted Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Label	Location (“Before” sitemap)	Rationale
Industry Links	N/A	1.5	CISO web stats for September, 2012 reveal that the page was accessed only 87 times. The page doesn't seem to contribute to the user goals or business objectives of the site, as it merely provides a list of links to external sites. Moreover, most of the links on the page are repeated in the more useful “CISO Members” page (level 3, #5.4).
Board of Directors	N/A	1.3	See “Merged Navigation Elements”.
Support	N/A	3.5	This page only features 2 sentences of content, which are repeated on the more visited “Network Status” page.
Download Standards	N/A	4.6	This page contains three links: XML, AL3 (EDI) and Standards Library Archive. These three pages already have their own links under Standards in the global nav.

Repositioned Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Position	Location (“Before” sitemap)	Rationale
Network Status	4.2	3.4	“Network Status” is the most important page under CISONet because it tells users whether or not they need to contact CISO if they're experiencing issues with CISONet. It is relatively “buried” right now and should be made more prominent. Once “CISONet Upgrade” is taken down, “Network Status” should become top nav element.
Forms	Level 2, #3	4.4	7 ± 2 heuristic... too much depth in Standards (level 2, #4)... too little breadth in

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			<p>global nav. “With few exceptions, web information architects generally structure website information with the rule of 'seven plus or minus two' in mind. For menu and list design, in particular, application of the rule is generally considered good practice for site usability.” (Moloney, 2010)</p> <p>The local nav elements that are included in the Forms page can now become part of the global nav. The Forms information deserves such a prominent placement because of what we learned in the primary persona (Martha): brokers, first and foremost, want to access the latest forms when they visit CISO. This information should therefore not be buried within the Standards nav.</p>
Standards	Level 2, #2	Level 2, #4	<p>The secondary persona (Florian) revealed that access to Standards information, especially the validation tools, is a key goal. Standards therefore deserves a promotion in the global nav, right next to Forms (Martha's main goal.) Standards should be placed before Forms because of CISO's prioritization of standards (especially XML) over forms in its mission statement.</p>
Terminology	1.4	4.5	<p>Nielsen's heuristic on aesthetic and minimalist design: “dialogues should not contain information which is irrelevant or rarely needed.” The Terminology page simply provides a link to a PDF: “Glossary of EDI Terminology”. The page only received 78 views in September, 2012 and is therefore rarely needed. It's not reasonable to create an entire nav element simply for a PDF file. This file can be placed within the EDI Standards page.</p> <p>However, the web stats for September, 2012 reveal that a similar page called “Glossary” received a fairly significant 645 views: http://www.CISO.com/en/standards/terminology.cfm</p> <p>However, this page is nowhere to be found in the global nav. The page is essentially a glossary with bilingual terms relating to CISO and the insurance industry broadly. Therefore, the Terminology label can be reclassified under About CISO (but with different content).</p>
CISO Members	6.1	5.4	<p>CISO Members (#5.4) – 259 views in September, 2012. Benefits of Membership (#5.1) – 119 views in September, 2012. CISO Members receives significantly more visits than any other child under Membership, despite being the last child in the navigation. This seems to be a clear indication of the importance and popularity of this page to users. It therefore deserves a promotion to first child and</p>

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			should receive even more hits with this positioning.
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Recoloured Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Label	Location (“Before” sitemap)	Rationale
CISOnet Upgrade	N/A	3.1	As this is a temporary page, should distinguish it from the permanent navigation elements by colouring it differently. E.g., give it a green background.

Citations:

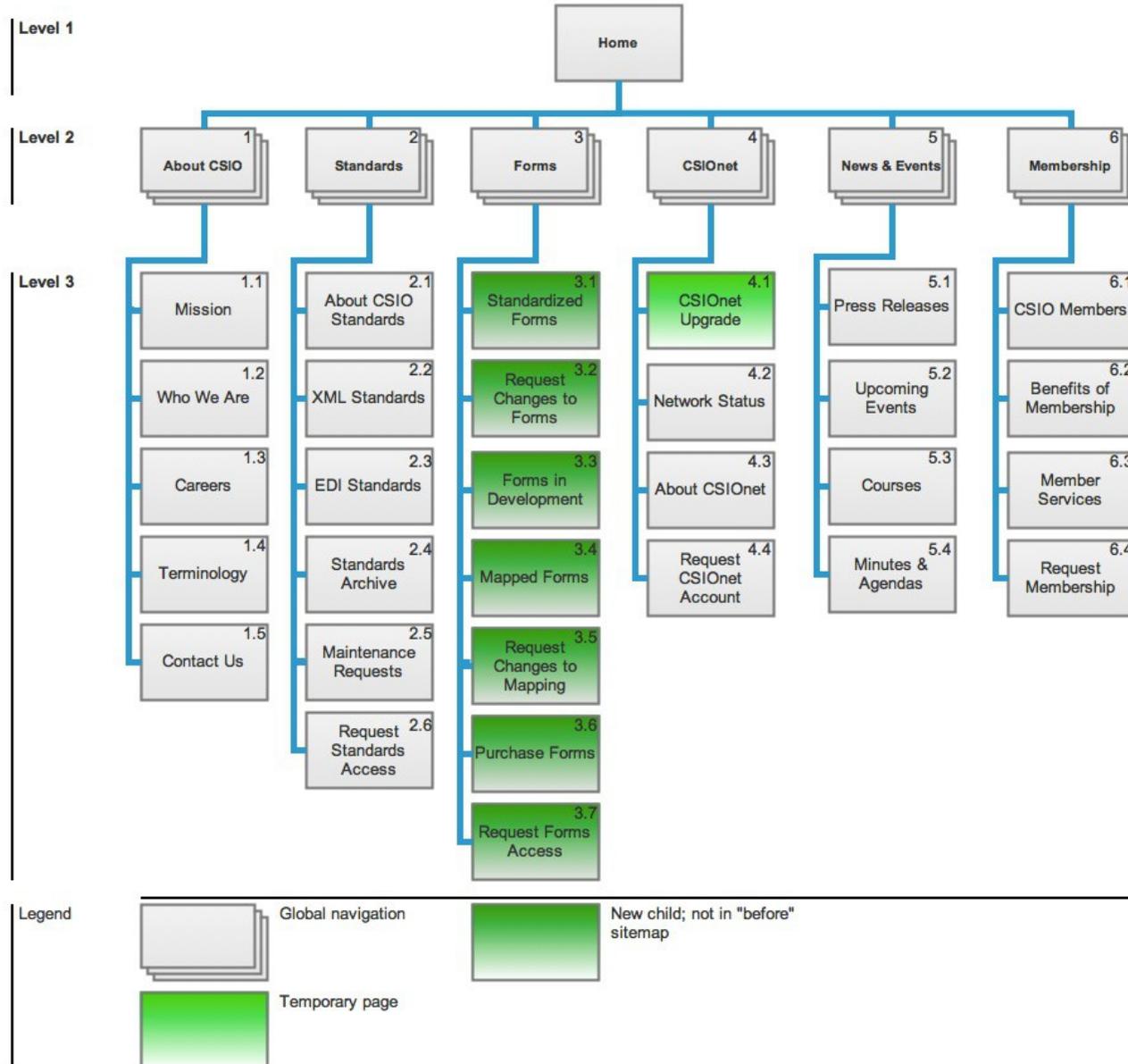
Nielsen, J. (2005). http://www.useit.com/papers/heuristic/heuristic_list.html

Moloney, P. (2010). <http://www.wiliam.com.au/wiliam-blog/seven-plus-or-minus-2-helping-people-process-your-website>

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“After” Information Architect Sitemap for CSIO.com

www.csio.com



software credit: Axure RP Pro 6.5

**Information Architecture – Creating “Before” and “After” Sitemaps (CISO.com)
“Forms” Global Navigation Parent**

With the “after” sitemap, I have moved Forms into the global navigation. The Forms page already contains a number of local navigation elements (which can now become children in the global nav). I have documented the changes that I think should be made to these children below:

Relabeled Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Label	Location (“After” sitemap)	Rationale
Standard Forms	Standardized Forms	3.1	“Standardized forms” is the term used on the redesigned homepage and in a number of CISO's marketing materials. Should be consistent.
Purchasing CISO Forms	Purchase Forms	3.6	“Purchase” is more consistent with the tense used in other links, e.g. “Request Changes to...” Also, “CISO” can be removed because it's already assumed that these are CISO forms.
Request Secure Access	Request Forms Access	3.7	More accurate label that clearly distinguishes it from the “Request Standards Access” label.

Deleted Navigation Elements

Original Label	New Label	Location (“After” sitemap)	Rationale
Where to Get Paper Forms	N/A	N/A	This page received 56 views in September, 2012. Paper forms are no longer in sufficient demand to justify an entire navigation element of their own. Also, the page only contains contact details of suppliers. This could be included under the “Purchase Forms” child (#3.6).

CONCLUSION

The “after” sitemap substantially improves the information architecture of CISO.com by better meeting the needs of its primary and secondary personas – Martha and Florian (see the “Personas and Scenarios for Targeted Website” document). Martha's goal of accessing CISO standardized forms as quickly as possible has been taken into account by moving Forms from being merely a child page under Standards to having its own place in the global navigation. Florian's goals of using the EDI validation tool and downloading standards have been addressed by promoting Standards to second place in the global navigation.

The “after” sitemap is much cleaner and more efficient than the “before” sitemap. Superfluous pages were identified and either deleted altogether (e.g., Support, Download Standards) or merged into other pages where it made sense to do so (e.g., Who we are, Board of Directors). Jakob Nielsen's usability heuristics were used as a guideline for making many of these amendments (see “Rationale” in above tables).

The labels have been improved to be more specific, descriptive and consistent. E.g., Request Standards Access 2.6, Request Forms Access 3.7, Request CISONet Account 4.4 and Request Membership 6.4 are all now appropriately distinguished from each other in the global nav. Navigation elements have also been repositioned to better reflect user needs and desires, e.g. CISO Members 6.1. The usability of the site would also be improved by implementing recommendations such as distinguishing temporary pages with colour, e.g. CISONet Upgrade 4.1. By implementing the “after” sitemap, CISO.com users will accomplish their goals more quickly and efficiently.