
Information Architecture Report on the Sothebys.com

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Mission Statement

Sothebys.com will be the best online auction web site. Sotheby's is a well-known auction house in the world and has a great number of people have already been trading since Samuel Baker founded it in 1744. Sothebys.com will help to gain and help more people to trade any product. In addition, the site will continue advertising live sales and satisfy existing customers' needs. The primary focus of the site is to provide more people with opportunity and security to trade valuable or important things such as paintings, jewels and antiques from anywhere in the world. Sothebys.com employs technology that effectively leverages personalization and customization of content, and that allows us to meet user demands during trading. The site also employs well-educated customer service agents to answer customers' questions before and during auctions, so that they will be comfortable bidding online.

Executive Summary

Sothebys.com is an online auction site where people all over the countries can trade their important paintings, jewels and antiques at record-breaking prices. The goal of our site is to attract all customers with a reputation for selling and buying anything on the earth by providing them with a highly functional website.

We plan to attract three types of users to our site: Property owners who want to sell products through Sotheby's "consigned". (Consignment means legal transferring a property to an agent for sale on the owner's behalf.) Potential bidders who want to buy products through the site, and dealers who want to sell products on the site.

Consequently, our strategic recommendations are the following:

- Develop a solid architecture that attracts and keeps users bidding. In order to attract the users, we should create a site that is user friendly and to provide the necessary information that users want quickly and reliably.

Below are recommendations that will enhance the site for users and to please better browsing experiences.

- Improving personalization features --- providing customization options will help the users to find what they want. Once the users become members of the site, they will get their own accounts, get e-mails and contact information about dealers.
- Improving navigation systems --- designing clear navigations and links will allow users to access to all the information they need quickly.
- Building and enhancing distribution opportunities --- expanding the user population base by distributing the site content to relevant external sources.

By using these recommendations in this report, Sothebys.com will be able to help users find what they need more easily, attract a growing population of users and keep them returning to the site. The site will satisfy users' need and provide them with an excellent experience.

Target Your Audience

Who is the primary audience for the website?

The primary audience for the website would range from age 21 and older. Our site would consist of valuable items such as paintings, jewels and antiques from anywhere in the world. This will enable a wide range of people from different walks of life to come together and share the common love of giving values, trading and bidding on painting, jewels and antiques. Users with low to high income ranges can browse, get information about live auctions, buy catalogues and bid online. Users who are not experts PC or Mac users can easily navigate their tasks.

What do you want the audience to think or do after having visited your site?

First of all, we would like our users to come back to our site. Thus, we need to focus on functionality and clarity. One of our main goals is that users can easily find the items that they want, so labelings and navigations must be clear and as easy as possible for them. Another goal is to make users feel comfortable with bidding on any item they want. We need to show that our site is secure and legal, so they could feel comfortable with dearing any item. It is also important that our site is updated everyday with relevant news, events, bidding information, e-mails for questions and chat rooms for discussion, so users can keep coming back to our site with their interests. E-mails and chat rooms would be helpful for us to know what kind of problems they are having with the site.

What IA related strategies will you use to achieve your goals?

We already have had a great bottom-up solution to approach our goals since we have metadata. By tagging documents and other information objects with controlled vocabulary metadata, we enable searching and browsing. IA administration continues evaluating, improving and changing documents of IA. By adding technologies to develop or manage the IA, we can provide better search engine and personalization for users. Thus, we will keep up with the solution.

Moreover, since Sothebys.com is already well-known as an auction site, we can focus on improving the site as a functional bidding site. It means that the context does not have to be fancy, well-informing or long but clear and usefull. Our site is simply organized by product, task and information. Thus, we hope to get users familiar with our organization and navigation systems, so they can get what they need easily and quickly.

How will you measure the success of your site?

We will measure the success of our site by the number of bidders and dealers signing up, attending auctions. Also, how much profit we make from the auctions.

Case Scenario 1



Elena Winters

Background

- 38-year-old, married, woman
- Received a master degree in Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning at Yale University
- Lives in New York with her husband
- Goes online four to five times a day

Attributes

- Younger
- Female
- Wealthy
- More Experienced with computers and the Internet
- Inexperienced with auctions

Customers Needs

- Personal Service
- Option to customize
- Fast
- Easy to comprehend

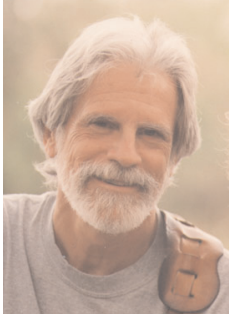
Scenario 1

Elena has known about Sothebys.com and visited the site to see how much people are purchasing on famous paintings, jewels and furnitures. She has thought about attending to live or online auctions one day.

Elena and her husband just bought a house in New Jargy. She now wants to buy some famous paintings for their house. She surfs on the web to look for paintings that she likes. When she was looking at Russian paintings, she found Liuou' Popova's paintings to be very attractive. While she surfs other sites to look for some paintings, she checks Sotheby's site also. Luckily, she found out that Popova's painting will be on an auction at Sothebys.com.

However, she never had experience running to any auctuions, so she started leaning about auctions, and bidding through the site. She really appreciated the site because the site prepared her for the event. She won the bidding and is getting Popova's painting for reasonal price. Her husband now wants to attend auctions and learn about them.

Case Scenario 2



Carl Weyrich

Background

- 55-year-old married male
- Nearing Retirement
- Lives in London with his family
- Goes online when he needs to do some researches

Attributes

- Older
- Male
- Very Wealthy
- Less experienced with computers and the Internet
- Experienced live auctions

Customers Needs

- Personal Service
- Option to back out or customize
- Fast
- Easy to comprehend
- Account Protection

Scenario 2

Weyrich loves to trade valuable things, so he has attended Sothebys' live auctions in London and New York. However, he just had a car accident and got a bad back problem, so he has to stay in his house for a while.

However, he knows Green Burgh's furniture collection will be at the auction soon and wants to get some pieces. He now has to use a computer to attend the bidding. Since he is not comfortable using computers, he is a bit worried about the online auction. Thus, he calls customer services and asks questions, goes to chat rooms to talk with other users and learns about online auctions. He felt very secure and comfortable using the site after while.

Now, he signs up to become a member of the site and even to be a dealer. He is very happy with the site because he can reach much more things from all over the counties and trade them without traveling to live auctions.

Technical Specification

What browsers and operating systems should your site support?

When it comes to browsers, Southebys.com would be supported by Internet Explorer and Netscape version 4 and upwards.

On a PC the site would be able to operate on Windows version 98 and upwards (Windows 2000 and upwards much preferred).

On a MacIntosh the site would be able to operate on Mac OS 9 and upwards (OSX much preferred).

Network bandwidth of average site visitors

Southebys.com would accommodate both internal and external audiences. We mainly want to target the external audience because it is a larger audience and higher bandwidth. The reason why is because we intend to have members of our site where we could e-mail them new information about what they are looking for, notifications about their current biddings and answers to their questions because we want to keep customers always interested in our website. We would know our internal audience by their username and password when they log in to their accounts. We also want an external audience because we also offer live auctions. Customers who are not interested in joining our website community may be able to come to the site and get information about live auctions. The internet has many different types of connections. For example modems, Ethernets and DSL. We at Southebys.com wish to make our site accessible to all these different connections. Cookies could help us track the different connections that our users have and from the information we receive, the website would function under the information we receive.

Dynamic HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) and advanced features?

Our site would consist of programming languages such as Java Script, ASP, PHP and HTML. We also intend to incorporate some browsers plug-ins such as Macromedia Flash, Quicktime and Windows Media Player. We would use Java Script for personalization features (i.e. for the members area. It would be done through the use of cookies and Java Script would create the user interface) and ASP for log-in (i.e. member log-in) and shopping cart features. When the user is accepted to be a member, ASP would take all the necessary information (Name, Address, Credit Card Number) and add it to the database server. ASP would also be incorporated in the search section of the website. When the user types a query in the search field, ASP would take the query information to the database server and bring all the necessary information pertaining to the query back to the user in the front end. For some of the secondary navigation and animation parts of the site, we intend to incorporate Macromedia flash, Quicktime and Windows Media Player to make the site interactive and fun.

We intend to implement high level security and encrypting software onto the website. When the user is ready to make purchase, he/she would be taken to a secure page where he/she can enter his/her private information such as name, address and credit card number. When the order was successful-

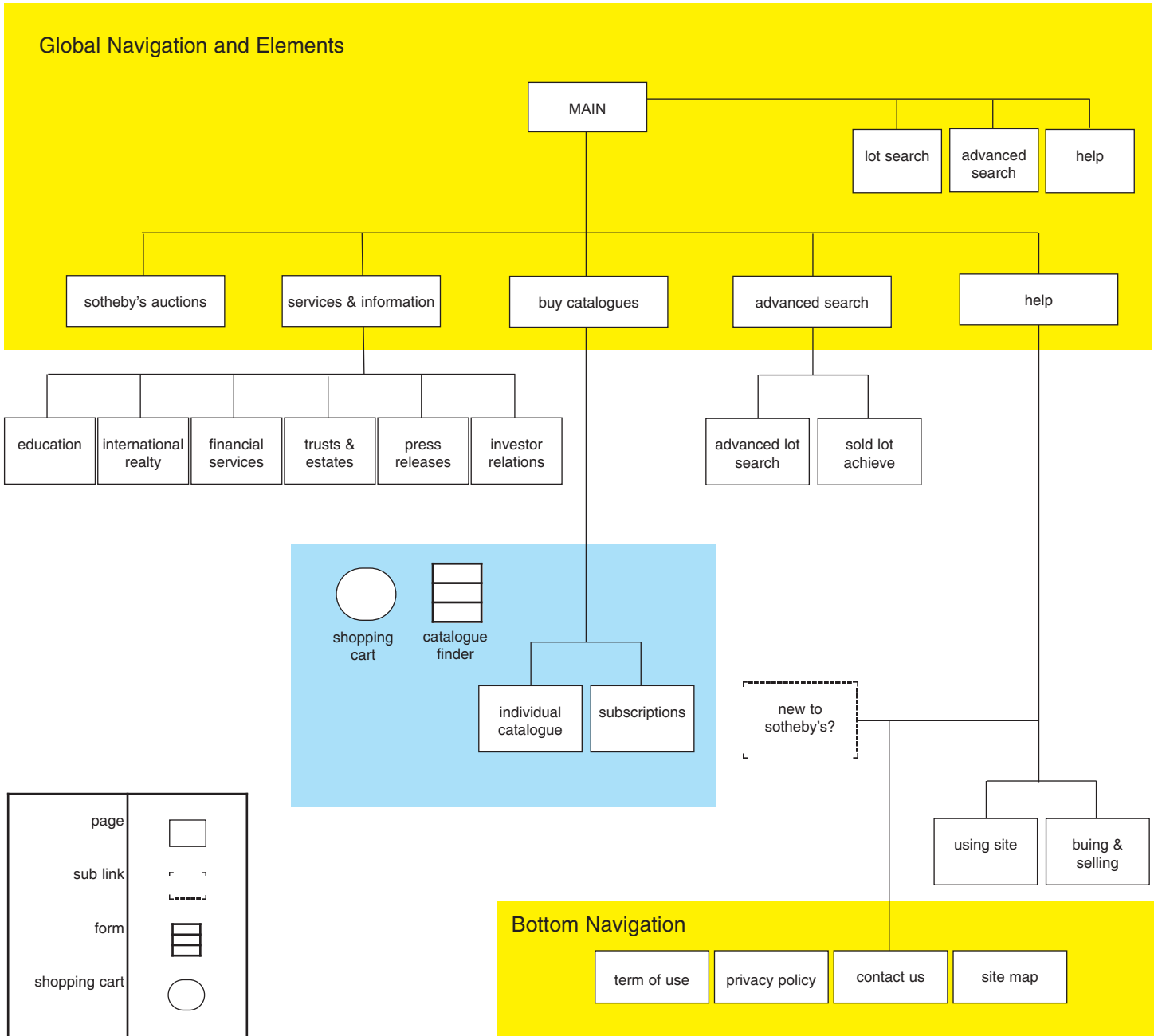
ly processed, he/she would get a confirmation e-mail notifying him/her that the order was processed successfully. The confirmation e-mail would show the user's name, address, credit card number, order number, etc. From between the database server and the users computer, the e-mail would be encrypted so identity theft wouldn't occur.

Web Server Support

In-house Web server or internet service provider (ISP)?

We intend to host our site with an internet service provider (ISP). They must provide 24 hours technical support to us. They should also provide us with unique domain names so no other company or organization online would have our name brand. They must also provide adequate storage space (approximately 10GB) of disk space for all of our web, programming and media files. They have to provide adequate capacity to meet site traffic demands. They should use DSL cables to support user traffic and huge download files. Their servers should support the majority of the programming languages such as ASP and CGI scripting for site interactivity. The ISP should also provide in-house database support for the user in case of any file corruption etc.

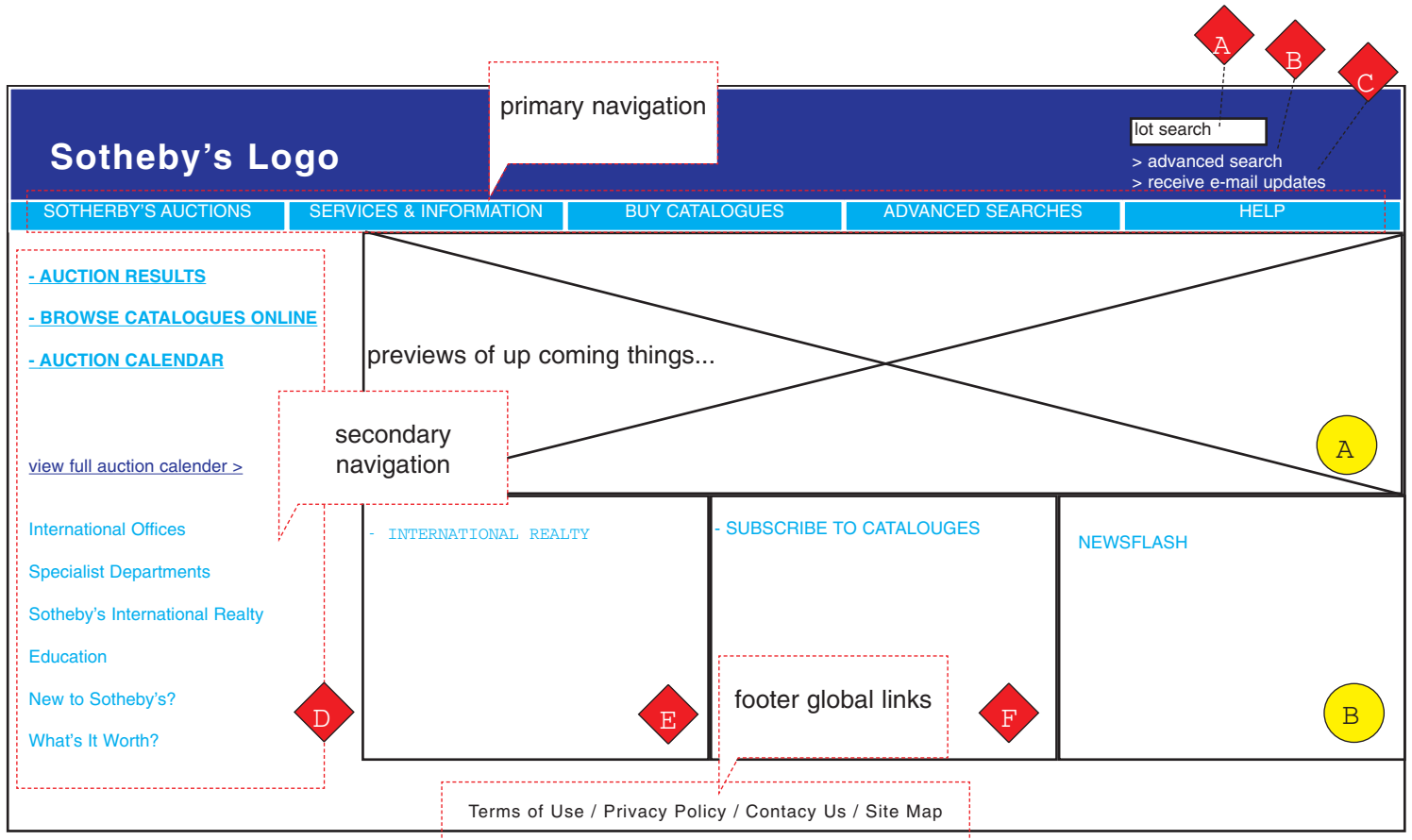
Neutral Site Map



Wireframe for Index Page

Sotheby's Logo					<input type="text" value="lot search"/>				
					> advanced search > receive e-mail updates				
SOTHERBY'S AUCTIONS		SERVICES & INFORMATION		BUY CATALOGUES		ADVANCED SEARCHES		HELP	
- AUCTION RESULTS		previews of up coming things...							
- BROWSE CATALOGUES ONLINE									
- AUCTION CALENDAR									
view full auction calender >									
International Offices		- INTERNATIONAL REALTY		- SUBSCRIBE TO CATALOGUES		NEWSFLASH			
Specialist Departments									
Sotheby's International Realty									
Education									
New to Sotheby's?									
What's It Worth?									
Terms of Use / Privacy Policy / Contacy Us / Site Map									

Functional Wireframe



Key

	content reference
	functional reference
ABC	static text
DEF GHI	linked text

Functional Annotations

- it is used to know about lot
- it is used to search about Sotheby's house auction
- it is used to receive advance notice of events
- it links to internal web site within those categories
- it takes to *International Realty* website
- it is used to subscribe catalogues

Content Annotations

- graphics, photographys and information about up coming things
- news anything relevant to auctions