

# Site Maps

Many web designers will add a site map to a website to assist users in finding content that is not obvious to them. This begs the question, if you do your job correctly and have the entire site well organized and your navigation is direct and easy to access, are site maps necessary? While it may be a slight duplication in effort (not really, site maps come together quickly), I find that it is good for the user if you supply them with a site map. I know that some people just respond better to that kind of information organization, so why not give it to them?

## Five Common Styles of Site Maps:

Categorical	<a href="http://www.saccourt.com/sitemap/categmap.asp">http://www.saccourt.com/sitemap/categmap.asp</a>
Extended Categorical	<a href="https://www.key.com/html/sitemap.html">https://www.key.com/html/sitemap.html</a>
Hierarchical	<a href="http://tinyurl.com/hierarchicalsitemap">http://tinyurl.com/hierarchicalsitemap</a>
Graphical	<a href="http://www.4dcompanion.com/sitemap.html">http://www.4dcompanion.com/sitemap.html</a>
Alphabetical Index	<a href="http://www.fema.gov/help/site.shtm">http://www.fema.gov/help/site.shtm</a>

## Sample Site Maps:

In a purely unscientific method, I googled “site map” and these were the top 10 (in Feb. 2008):

Google	<a href="http://www.google.com/sitemap.html">http://www.google.com/sitemap.html</a>
eBay	<a href="http://pages.ebay.com/sitemap.html">http://pages.ebay.com/sitemap.html</a>
Apple	<a href="http://www.apple.com/sitemap/">http://www.apple.com/sitemap/</a>
CNN Money	<a href="http://money.cnn.com/services/sitemap/">http://money.cnn.com/services/sitemap/</a>
The Chronicle of Higher Education.	<a href="http://chronicle.com/search/guide/">http://chronicle.com/search/guide/</a>
The Seattle Times.	<a href="http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/tableofcontents/">http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/tableofcontents/</a>
Microsoft	<a href="http://www.microsoft.com/library/toolbar/3.0/sitemap/en-us.mspx">http://www.microsoft.com/library/toolbar/3.0/sitemap/en-us.mspx</a>
The New York Times	<a href="http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/help/siteindex.html">http://www.nytimes.com/ref/membercenter/help/siteindex.html</a>
IRS	<a href="http://www.irs.gov/sitemap/index.html">http://www.irs.gov/sitemap/index.html</a>
FindLaw.	<a href="http://www.findlaw.com/toc.html">http://www.findlaw.com/toc.html</a>

All 10 of these use an Extended Categorical form of the site map.

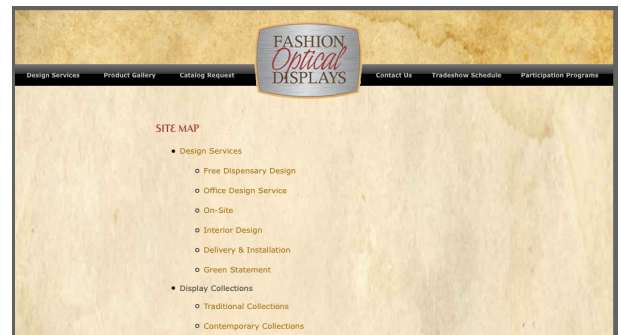
One variation that I didn't see online, but I've preferred for smaller sites is a simple outline form; a variation on Hierarchical. *FashionOptical* —>

## XML SiteMaps

A common file-formal supported by Google, Microsoft & Yahoo! which contains links and priority of those links for a website. It is created and uploaded to a website host for search engine spiders. Users cannot see this file. More info:

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

<https://www.google.com/webmasters/tools/docs/en/protocol.html>



<http://www.fashionoptical.com>

**Reading Assignment:** Following are a number of links on the subject of site maps for you to read.

**Give Visitors A Map:** [http://www.netmechanic.com/news/vol5/usability\\_no20.htm](http://www.netmechanic.com/news/vol5/usability_no20.htm)

An introduction to site maps.

**Fortune 500 Revisited: Current Trends in Sitemap Design:**

<http://web.archive.org/web/20080117004932/http://psychology.wichita.edu/surl/usabilitynews/42/sitemaps.htm>

While this is a few years old, it does have very interesting information on the styles of site maps and what is in use.

**Site Map Usability:** <http://www.useit.com/alertbox/20020106.html>

Additional study on the use of site maps.