(Abbreviated) Reasoning Behind Navigation Structure

for reference by student assistants

Since it's difficult (usually impossible) to dictate exactly where/how web users enter any website, Web Services — through research and exploration — has organized the web structure in an attempt to accommodate all users, regardless of what 'entry point' they use to arrive at the site.

Just as "there's more than one way to skin a cat," the site has been architected to provide many avenues that reach the same destination.

For example, if a user was searching for information on the Homeland Security program at the Daytona Beach Campus, they might start at the University level, where their 'journey' might lead them on the following pathway:

1) (www//search) > University site > Campuses & Online > Daytona Beach site (link) > Degrees & Programs > College of Aviation (colleges page) > (*coa link to*) >

   College of Aviation site > Departments > Applied Aviation Sciences > Undergraduate Degrees > Homeland Security Department page > happy web user ☺

Alternatively, if they were aware of the Daytona Beach subdomain, they may choose to navigate to the same program from that level, instead:

2) Daytona Beach site > Degrees & Programs > College of Aviation (colleges page) > (*coa link to*) >

   College of Aviation site > Departments > Applied Aviation Sciences > Undergraduate Degrees > Homeland Security Department page [*links to degree page*] > ☺

If the user were familiar with the College of Aviation site, they might navigate directly to the homepage, which would bring them to their destination in just a few steps:

3) DB COA > Departments > Applied Aviation Sciences > Undergraduate Degrees > Homeland Security > ☺

The challenge, however, is that everyone wants their page to be "one click away." While not every department can be featured on the homepage, Web Services *is* able to generate short URLs, similar to 'bit.ly' and other services. In this example, the short URL may be:

4) [http://www.site.com/your-site] (not an active link) > ☺

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How This Translates to CMS Structure

The CMS is set up in a folder hierarchy, similar to Windows Explorer. However, there are some CMS-specific elements that appear "hidden" in the URL structure. For example, navigating to the DB COA Homeland Security program page in the CMS will take you on only one distinct path:

CMS > Daytona Beach > COA > Applied Aviation Sciences > Undergraduate Degrees > Homeland Security

You'll notice how the structure follows the URL path, with one slight variation (the word 'departments' is missing in the final URL). This is part of the reason why Web Services typically asks for the actual web address when fulfilling work requests, rather than just the content ID number (CID) or CMS link.

How It All Connects
or, 'Hooking' Navons to Pages

Each page in the CMS is 'connected' or 'hooked' to other pages within the same site, similar to the way each link in a chain (held vertically) is connected to the element above it. This is a different process from hyperlinking. So, in this example:

a) the Homeland Security program page is connected ("hooked") to the HS navon (in the CMS folder for the Homeland Security program)

b) this HS navon (in the HS folder) is connected to the Undergraduate Degrees navon, via the 'nav sub-menu,' accessible through the 'Edit All' button

c) the Undergraduate Degrees navon is connected to the Applied Aviation Sciences navon via the 'nav sub-menu'

d) the Applied Aviation Sciences navon is connected to the COA navon via the 'nav sub-menu'

e) the COA navon is connected to DB main navon through a nav tree

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Real-Life (sort of) Examples

Kids in the late 80s and early 90s loved the cartoon Voltron. This show (and accompanying action figures) featured a series of human-powered, lion-fashioned robots that could join together to form a super robot, which defended the universe from evil forces.

In the CMS, each folder is like a separate lion robot that has the ability to function on its own (by direct URL), but when 'connected' to other folders in the system becomes a "super folder" (website) that defends the University from broken hyperlinks.

Alternatively, you may wish to view the CMS structure as something similar to a Russian matryoshka doll — sometimes known as a 'nesting' doll.

Just as a web user wishing to view a page that is 'hidden' inside the website would use navigation as their guide, someone who wants to see the tiniest doll would have to first find their way past larger dolls, until they finally reach their intended destination.

When unfamiliar with a particular site, web users expect pages (smaller dolls) to be connected to navons (larger dolls) to help them find their way throughout the matryoshka that is the website.