

# Reorganizing IA: Cool Tools

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This document presents the information architecture reorganization recommendations for the site Cool Tools.

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**IAKM 60101: Information Architecture I**

# Organization Schemes

## Primary Organization Scheme

Cool Tools primarily utilizes a hybrid exact and ambiguous organizational scheme.



Today's Review: Topical  
Ask Cool Tools: Task-oriented  
Editor's Favorites: Social  
Reader Favorites: Social  
Archives by Date: Chronological  
Podcast: Topical  
What's in my Bag?: Topical  
Announcements: Topical  
Submit a Tool: Task-oriented  
FAQ: Topical  
About Us: Topical  
Email List: Task-oriented  
RSS Feed: Task-oriented

Chronological

Task-oriented

Contextual

Topical

Alphabetical

Metaphor

Topical

Metaphor

Topical

Task-oriented

Chronological

Task-oriented

Topical

Chronological

Task-oriented

Topical

Chronological

Task-oriented

Topical/Chronological

Topical/Chronological

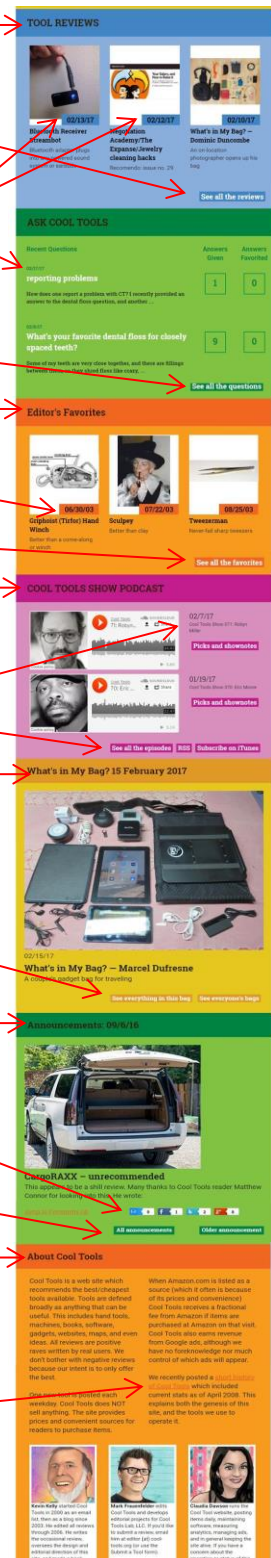
Topical

Social

Task-oriented

Topical

Contextual



While the vast majority of the Cool Tools website utilizes the same side navigation and general schemes, when navigating to the Ask Cool Tools area of the site, the top side navigation changes, although the page continues to utilize a hybrid scheme.

The screenshot shows the 'ASK COOL TOOLS' section of the Cool Tools website. The page has a green header with the 'COOLTOOLS' logo. Below the header, there are tabs for 'Newest' and 'Popular', and a search bar. The main content area lists questions and answers. On the right side, there is a sidebar with links: 'ABOUT', 'THE ARCHIVES', 'ASK CT', 'SUBSCRIBE EMAIL LIST', 'SUBMIT A TOOL', and 'FAQ'. Red arrows point from four labels to specific elements on the page: 'Topical' points to 'THE ARCHIVES', 'Task-oriented' points to 'SUBMIT A TOOL', 'Social' points to 'ASK CT', and 'Chronological' points to 'Newest'.

Questions Asked	Answers Given	Answers Favored
02/07/2017 reporting a problem with CT? I recently provided an answer to the dental floss question ...	0	0
02/08/2017 What's your favorite dental floss for closely spaced teeth? Some of my teeth are very close together, and there are fillings between them, so they shred floss ...	4	1
01/31/2017 Haflinger AT Slipper	8	1

Annotations:

- Topical: THE ARCHIVES
- Task-oriented: SUBMIT A TOOL
- Social: ASK CT
- Chronological: Newest

# Organization Structure

## Primary Organization Structure

Cool Tools primarily utilizes a top down site organizational structure with a bottom up database display of information.

## Top Down Site Structure

There is a top down structure utilized with the top right navigation menu as it will take you to various topics or chronological listings of information within the menu item.



## Bottom Up Information Display

The vast majority of information on Cool Tools needs to be known, browsed, or searched for utilizing the search box or category menu. There are no alphabetical listings of the tools or reviews, or sub menu items allowing for discovery of unknown information aside from browsing the chronological listings of information within the various categories.



# Recommendations & Justification for Reorganization

## Primary Organization Scheme

Currently, Cool Tools utilizes a top down site structure with their upper right navigation menu. As it stands, the navigation menu doesn't offer any sub menus or further refining of any of the categories to allow the user to fully explore the information on the site. It is recommended that the main navigation menu be moved to the top under the logo and search box. The categories should be renamed and regrouped, and drop down menus should be utilized to further define the information. The long category menu on the lower right would be included under the "Tools" tab in a "Tools by Category" option. The social media icons would be moved to a more prominent location at the top of the page.

Utilizing these changes would bring the navigation to a more prominent user familiar location on the page. Utilizing the drop down menus would allow users to not only explore what they may find under each category prior to clicking on the heading, it would also allow them to more quickly and easily access the site's information in the way in which they desire. This would cut down on the amount of pogo sticking and navigating the user has to do through the site while searching for items. In addition, rather than having a long right sided navigation, this simplifies the options for the user so they are less likely to become overwhelmed with options.



## Consistent Information Organization

As previously mentioned, the vast majority of the Cool Tools site follows the same organizational structure/scheme, however the Ask Us section utilizes a separate navigation menu with no way to return to the other site options without either clicking the logo to return home, or utilizing the back button to go back to the previous page. It is recommended that the navigation and menus be standardized throughout the site, allowing for familiarity and ease of use for the user.



## Filtering Options

Given the nature and quantity of information on the site, it would be beneficial to incorporate filtering options for the various areas of the site. Given the vast amount of reviews under the majority of sections, it would provide the user a smoother experience filtering from one option to the next if given the option to easily filter information in various ways. Options could include an alphabetical listing of tools, company listing, key word search, chronological search, category listing amongst other appropriate filter options for each area. The filter option could be located out of the way in the right side navigation area, allowing for a clean appearance for the search results, while conveniently maintaining the filter function throughout various pages.

## Less Jargon

The Cool Tools site organizes a lot of its information into categories with non-specific jargon labels like Big Systems, Consumptivity, and Life on Earth. The organization of information into these categories makes it harder for the user to find the information they desire if they are unfamiliar with the meaning of the terms being used. Simplifying the information into less more commonly recognized categories would enable the user to more easily find the information they are searching for. This combined with the filter functions would produce better search results for the user.

## Better Tagging For Search

When a user attempts to search for an item, they are not presented with predictive text (aside from the option of “adding search to a site” which randomly pops up if you type an a). If the reviews within the site were better tagged for search, and predictive text were added to the search box, the user would be able to more easily find unknown or partially known information. This would then limit the amount of time they spent scrolling through search results, and provide more useful search results.

## Search Results

For easier, more fluid navigation, it is recommended that a search results bar be added to the top of each review page. When a user searches for an item, and clicks on the item to read the review, it would prevent them from having to pogo stick through the search results if a search results bar were added to the top of the page giving them the option to scroll through the result items and jump from one product review to the next without having to return to the search result page.

