



Information Architecture principles

This document summarises the principles behind the Information Architecture (IA) and navigation for tfl.gov.uk. This is to be used in conjunction with the [Digital experience principles](#), [Digital design principles](#) and [Digital content standard](#).

Audience

- User experience designers
- Information architects
- Content editors
- Technical team

Overarching principles

1. All navigation and IA **must** be user-centric – it must be based around user needs, **not** around TfL's organisational structure
2. Core tasks for the general travelling public **must** be prioritised. The longtail of information and specific audience groups are catered for via the footer
3. The primary navigation **must** be based around accessing task-based information across transport modes. A mode-based view of this information is provided within the mode hubs; however, this is a secondary means of accessing such content
4. The number of pages within the site **should** be kept to a minimum to ensure the navigation is kept as simple as possible. Having fewer (potentially longer) pages is preferable to lots of short pages, but all content should be succinct and relevant

Requirements

1. Primary navigation: Function

- 1.1 The primary navigation **must** be user-centric and travel-related, with links that surface core tasks the general travelling public are looking to complete.

It must **not** include corporate information or links aimed at specific audiences, which are included in the footer

1.2 The primary navigation **must** appear on every page of the TfL website and feature:

- Task-based links (Plan a journey; Status updates; Maps; Fares & payments). These are fixed due to space constraints
- 'More' menu
- Login/account link
- Search box

Note: On mobile devices, the primary navigation changes to a menu link featuring task-based links and 'More' content, as well as Login and Search

2. Primary navigation: Content areas

2.1 Plan a journey

2.1.1 This section **must** allow people to:

- Plan journeys within London using Journey Planner, which includes the Cycle Journey Planner but **not** the Freight Journey Planner as it has a specific niche audience. (Note: It can be linked to if relevant. However, it mustn't 'live' in this section)
- View contextually relevant fares and status information within Journey Planner

2.2 Status updates

2.2.1 This section **must** allow a user to access:

- Live network status information across all modes (eg current status, alerts, and live departures)
- Planned works information across all modes (eg weekend closures, Notting Hill Carnival etc)

- Information about the status of Santander Cycles docking stations to be included within live network status information

2.3 Maps

2.3.1 The maps area **must** include:

- Key network maps (eg Tube, Overground and bus maps)
- Links to more bespoke maps elsewhere on the site (rather than all maps living within this section).

2.3.2 Maps **should be** interactive, or at least viewable on the site outside of a PDF

2.4 Fares and payments

2.4.1 This section **must** include:

- Everything users need to know about Oyster, other ticket types, fares, discounts, refunds and photocard
- Payment links (eg Congestion Charge, Penalty Charge Notices, Low Emission Zone). The payment applications themselves **should not** live within this section (with the exception of Oyster), but links to them should be provided

2.5 'More' menu

2.5.1 This section **must** include:

- Content aimed at the general travelling public which falls outside the core tasks users want to complete

2.5.2 Content **must not** 'live' within the 'more' menu, it should just be signposted from it

2.5.3 New menu items will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by TfL Online's Content Manager. Any proposed link **must**:

- Relate to the general travelling public
- Be of adequate importance to users or the business to warrant inclusion

- **Not** be linked to from the primary navigation or modal areas
- **Not** be targeted at a specific niche audience
- **Not** be used for campaigns. If these are considered important enough, they will be given a promotion on the homepage

2.5.4 The 'more' menu **must not** be used as a dumping ground for all possible links and content. **Not** all content has to be linked to from the primary navigation or 'more' accordion. Some pages may be linked to contextually from relevant areas of the site

2.6 Ways to get around

2.6.1 This section **must**:

- Link to portal-type modal pages designed to showcase information about that particular transport mode from across the rest of the site

2.6.2 Modal pages **should** include links to any or all of the following, depending on relevance:

- Timetables
- Live departures
- Fares & tickets
- Refunds
- Payments
- Improvements & projects
- Publications & reports
- Live status
- Planned disruptions
- Maps
- Discounts & concessions
- Transport accessibility
- Station information

2.6.3 Modal areas **must**:

- Feature mode-specific content that doesn't 'live' anywhere else on the site (eg cycle training should be linked from the Cycling page; Congestion Charge should be linked from the Driving area etc), as well as cross-linking to relevant mode information from elsewhere on the site

- Be relevant to the general travelling public, **not** specific audiences. Information aimed at specific groups (eg professional drivers and operators) will be linked from the footer ('Information for...')
- **Not** be used for corporate information about the modes or as a document management system or reference library for information of more interest to the business or its stakeholders than the general travelling public

2.7 Travel information

2.7.1 This section **must** include information relevant to the general travelling public about London's transport network and how to use it. It should include links to:

- Visiting London
- Transport accessibility
- Safety
- Improvements & projects
- Timetables
- Stations, stops & piers
- Travel apps
- Help & contact

2.7.2 There **must** only be one improvements and projects-type area on the site, rather than multiple versions in different sections. This means it must contain all improvements and projects, irrespective of mode, audience, location etc. Improvements and projects **must** be specific, timed projects with a start and end date

2.8 Help & contact

2.8.1 This section **must**:

- Provide contact details, lost property and access to feedback forms and reporting mechanisms for issues such as street faults or antisocial behaviour, and the ability to submit feedback (complaints and positive)
- Be the only contact section for the entire site (rather than specific sections having their own contact sections)
- Be able to deep-link into contact details for a particular area - for example Congestion Charge-related contact information

2.9 Quick links

2.9.1 This section **must** include links to:

- Congestion Charging
- Low Emission Zone
- Santander Cycles

2.9.2 New quick links will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and **must** be approved by TfL Online's Content Manager. Any proposed link **must**:

- Link to an area of the site that receives high traffic, meaning it is of high value to users, or is of high importance to the business
- Link to a substantial section of the TfL site - something at a similar level as LEZ, Santander Cycles or CC
- Deep-link into one of the other sections within the 'more' menu (eg Santander Cycles deep links into cycling)
- Link to a permanent or long-term area of the site – short-term campaigns, projects and initiatives **should not** be included

3 Footer navigation: Function

3.1 The footer navigation **must** appear on every page of the TfL site

3.2 This section **must** include links that surface corporate and legal information, and links aimed at specific niche audiences

3.3 This section **must not** include information on travelling, which is considered core content and is linked from the header, 'more' menu or modal pages

4 Footer navigation: Content areas

4.1 TfL-related information

4.1.1 This area **must** contain:

- General information related to TfL as an organisation
- Information of interest to the general public **not** related to travelling

The list of links includes:

- Help & contact
- Careers
- About TfL
- Safety
- FOI & transparency
- Publications & reports
- TfL shop [external link]
- Other languages
- Help & contact
- Social media & email

4.2 Careers

4.2.1 The Careers section **must**:

- Link to a section that includes everything a user needs to search for and apply for a job at TfL, including job search, graduate careers, apprenticeships and work experience etc

4.3 About TfL

4.3.1 This section **must**:

- Link to a section that contains **all** information about TfL as an organisation, including how it is managed, the corporate vision, culture, history, insight, performance etc

4.4 Safety & security

4.4.1 This section **must**:

- Contain corporate related information about what TfL are doing regarding safety and security. This section includes information about road safety and safety on the network. This information is **not** aimed at the general public.

4.5 Social media and email

4.5.1 This **must**:

- Link to a page providing links to our social media offering. (**Note**: Cross-links to relevant social media activity **should** be provided throughout the site where relevant (eg Circle line page should link to Circle line Twitter feed).)
- Provide information about newsletter sign-up

4.6 Freedom of Information and transparency

4.6.1 This **must**:

- Link to a page in the 'About TfL' section providing links to relevant financial information and records (ie those detailing expenditure, income, funding etc).

It will also include links to a series of pages related to requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act (eg publication schemes, classes of information and how to make a request etc)

4.7 Publications & reports

4.7.1 This **must**:

- Link to a section that contains all publications and reports published by TfL that are corporate and stakeholder focused.
- There **must** only be one publications and reports-type area on the site, rather than multiple versions in different sections. It will be possible to deep link into a filtered view of this section from elsewhere on the site – e.g. link into all board paper related reports.

4.8 TfL shop

4.8.1 This **must**:

- Link to the TfL shop landing page

4.9 Languages

4.9.1 This **must**:

- Include a list where users can select their own language and be taken to a page of content in that language. **Note**: Content in any language other than English **must not** be added to the main site. Translated content **must** be added to the relevant language page instead, eg:
www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/languages/francais/, www.tfl.gov.uk/tfl/languages/gujarati/)

5. Information for...

5.1 This area **must** provide links relevant to specific niche audience or stakeholder groups - **not** the general travelling public. Specific audience groups include:

- Media
- Schools & young people
- Suppliers & contractors
- Business & commercial operations
- Planning & construction
- Boroughs
- Taxis & private hire (**Note**: information for taxi passengers **should not** be found here and should instead appear in the 'taxis and minicabs' mode area.)
- Freight
- Coach drivers
- Bus operators
- Software developers

5.2 New audience hubs must be approved by TfL Online's Content Manager and will only be considered if they meet the following criteria:

- The content relates to a specific audience group
- There is a substantial amount of information for that particular audience (**not** just a couple of pages)
- They are an audience group likely to visit the website for this information
- They are considered a priority group to TfL
- They are **not** covered by any of the other audience hubs

6. Utility bar

6.1 This area **must**:

- Contain links to legal or utility-type information, such as Terms & conditions, privacy, cookies, website accessibility. These pages exist to support the website
- **Not** contain links related to travel information or general corporate information

7. Other types of content

7.1 Campaigns

7.1.2 Campaigns **should not** 'live' within the main site IA but can be cross-linked to from relevant places. (eg a Tube campaign could be linked to from the TfL homepage, then cross-linked from the London Underground page, and anywhere else appropriate.)

7.1.3 Campaigns should be assigned a short URL

7.2 Microsites

7.2.1 Microsites **should not** be created and solutions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances following approval by the TfL Online Approvals Board. Instead, the site templates and IA are designed to be flexible, so that they can cater for new and short-term content

7.3 Exceptions

7.3.3 We will only consider a microsite if:

- It requires functionality that it makes no sense for TfL to build
- It is a site run or funded jointly by TfL and other parties

Why we do this

On a site as large and complex as ours, it is important to ensure users are able to find what they want quickly and easily. We need to ensure we put users' needs first and present content in a consistent and logical way to help them navigate the site and complete tasks with ease. This also reduces the risk of duplication, errors and frustration.

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Version	Date	Summary of changes
1.0	06/11/2013	First issue

Review history

Name	Title	Date	Comments
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