

Columbiahouse.com  
Web Site Evolution Phase 2  
Style Guide **SAMPLE**

DECEMBER 11, 2001

**Prepared by:**

New Product Development

## NAVIGATION GUIDELINES

### 1. GIVE USERS A WAY OUT



The "close window" button gives users an additional method to close the window.

### 2. MARK EXITS



Users have multiple options to continue

### 3. HIGHLIGHT NAVIGATION



### 4. USE MOUSEOVERS SPARINGLY

Remove Item	Counts As	Price
X	1	0.49
X	1	0.49
X	1	0.49
X	1	0.49

Mouseovers are used for critical functions, such as removing items from the Cart.

## Navigation

More than anything else, we designed the site to help users find information quickly and easily. We also want our site to interest users, provide the help and support they need, and give them flexibility to use the site in the way they prefer. The architecture allows both novice and sophisticated users to explore our site in the easiest and most appropriate ways for them. Users unfamiliar with our site can navigate through the lower-level pages using the left navigation links; more sophisticated site visitors might prefer the search tool.

The main goal is to ensure that users know:

- > what they can do;
- > where they are, and where they need to go;
- > how to find the content they are looking for;
- > how long it will take them to complete their tasks.

Since users can change the basic flow of the site by selecting what they will see and when, the navigation has to be flexible, consistent, and clear on every page.

There are several different kinds of navigation used on Columbiahouse.com. Identical text navigation found at the bottom of the page is available to allow easy navigation from the top and the bottom of the page. The buttons used in navigation are html or graphical. Html is preferred for its quicker download time and easier maintenance.

## NAVIGATION GUIDELINES

### 5. BE CLEAR AND DESCRIPTIVE

Looking for the offer in your mailing?

Instead of

Enter your online code

Users should be able to easily recognize where a link will take them.

### 6. USE CONSISTENT LINK LABELS

#### Parallel Verbs

- Listen [to audio]
- Read [interviews]
- Watch [video clips]
- Browse similar DVDs
- See more Ethan Hawke films

#### Parallel Nouns

- Audio
- Cast and Crew Interviews
- Video clips
- More DVDs
- More Ethan Hawke films

### 7. MATCH LINK NAMES TO HEADERS



Users know what to expect: clicking on "Alternative" in the nav links to the Alternative genre page. This is reflected in the header.

### General Guidelines

When designing or modifying navigation, keep the following navigation guidelines in mind:

#### 1. Give users a way out.

All pages must have navigation pathways available – always give users a way out of a page.

#### 2. Mark exits.

Clearly mark exits and include visible navigation pathways through a series.

#### 3. Highlight navigation.

Highlight the page selected in navigation no matter what the navigation type.

#### 4. Use mouseovers sparingly.

Mouseovers should only be used to enhance navigation and should be used sparingly.

#### 5. Be clear and descriptive.

Try to make navigation names as concrete and specific as possible to give users a clear sense of what that section encompasses.

#### 6. Use consistent link labels.

Try to keep the entire list of navigational names grammatically parallel. If you're using verbs, for example, make all links in a list verbs.

#### 7. Match link names to headers.

Link copy should always correlate to what the user will see next.

And remember, always try to limit the number of clicks whenever possible.