

Functionalism: An Approach to Site Analysis by Classifying Page Types

There are twelve basic page types identified by the purpose or goal of the page. The more goals a page attempts to accomplish, the less focused the page becomes and the less likely it is to be successful.

Pages may have characteristics of more than one type, but there is nearly always a primary type that should be the focus of the page; auxiliary functions of a page should not be given the same weight and prominence as the primary function.

Twelve Page Types:

1. Engagers (*Capture*)

Pages whose primary purpose is to interest the visitor and get them to do something or anything on the site.

2. Routers (*Vector or Guide*)

Pages whose function is to move visitors into specific places on the site. One of the differences between an Engager and a Router page is that a Router page is built with the expectation that the visitor is looking for a particular type of information or service. Search is often treated as a special class of Router page.

3. Convincers (*Sell or Persuade*)

Pages whose function is to “sell” the visitor on a product or service.

4. Explainers (*Clarify or Educate*)

Pages whose job is to help the visitor learn about and better understand some aspect of a product, service, or topic.

5. Informers (*Inform*)

Pages whose primary objective is to provide basic news and information about a product or topic. This differs from Explainers in that content is not specific to the site’s own particular product or service.

6. Billboards (*Advertise*)

Pages providing various content to visitors, but whose primary business objective is to display third-party advertisements on a Cost-per-Impression basis.

7. Sponsors (*Syndicate*)

Pages or series of pages which may be revenue-producing and whose content is mostly provided by a third-party who pays for inclusion within the web site.

8. Closers (*Direct or Lead*)

Pages that are supposed to get visitors to enter a conversion process (e.g., shopping cart.)

9. Converters (*Checkout*)

Pages that are part of whatever is necessary to gather information and agreements and get a finished lead, sale, or transaction.

10. Re-Assurers (*Support*)

Pages built to re-assure the visitor about some potentially problematic issue or concern (e.g., privacy policies.)

11. Tools (*Interact*)

Pages that are designed to collect or provide information as part of a non-sales process (e.g., checking an account balance or entering a meeting on a calendar.) There are many different kinds of tools, and for a site with several tools the pages may need to be subdivided into more granular types.

12. Completers (*Status*)

Pages designed to signal the completion of a process and – in some cases – drive to additional engagement or interaction (e.g., order confirmation, process complete, and thank you pages.)