[redacted]
eptem er , 6

IA and Content Organization Analysis - [redacted]

How the two law school websites [redacted] and [redacted] are working today and where IA an content strategy changes may have the most impact.



civ/ex]
civexperience.com

Presentation *overview*

1
Current State

2
Observations about Traffic Patterns

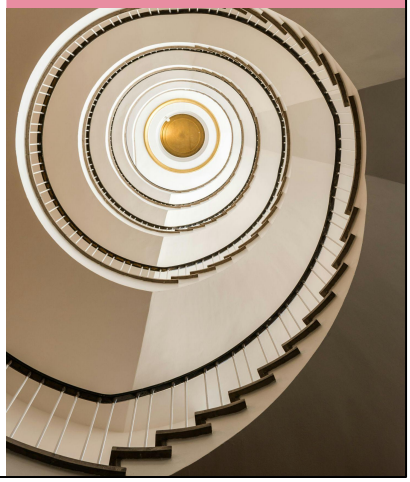
3
What the Heatmaps Show

4
Key Challenges to Update and Unify Menus

5
What Other Law Sites are Doing

6
Recommendations and Models to Consider

Current *state*



[redacted]



SIMILARITIES

- Both sites include Prospective Students and Current Students in their main nav.
- Both have ke CTAs for Give and Apply, but [redacted] has a third for Request Info.
- Both include an Alumni-related menu item (‘Alumni’ or ‘Alumni and Friends’).
- Menu (but not page) styles and interactions are the same. A button in each section of the menu takes the user to a landing page for that section.

Both sites use a button in the main menu that takes the user to a landing page for that section. In most cases, those pages are low-value and don’t offer a ton other than another list of links to their sub a es. One exce tion is [redacted]



DIFFERENCES

- [redacted] has a utilit menu that contains things found in [redacted] footer.
- [redacted] has Academics, whereas in [redacted] Aca em cs-re ated info is primarily in ***Current Students.***
- [redacted] as several more menu items including Belon in Community, and About Us.
  - I [redacted] About-related content is found in ***Prospective Students*** and in ***Academics***.

Observations about *traffic patterns*



[redacted]

Law School

HIGH TRAFFIC PAGES

- Several of the top 10 most visited pages reside in ***Academics*** and are most relevant to Current Students:
  - Class and Exam Schedules
  - Academic Calendar
  - Class Rankings
  - Faculty Directory
- Additional popular items relate to the new/prospective student journey such as how to apply and costs to attend (though the latter is within the Current Students menu item).
- In comparing pageviews by section, top items in ***Academics*** see 2-3X the pageviews of the top items in ***Prospective Students.***

Academics topics are about programs, faculty, and curriculum (including schedules, calendars, textbooks, etc.). Academics, then, is split in its audience being prospective versus current students.

Final bullet: this is a key and strange difference between [redacted] Prospective Students is the most popular section but for [redacted] does not have, Academics is much more popular than Prospective. SOME of what lives in Academics i [redacted] lives in Prospective Students in [redacted] (like Faculty) but that doesn't explain it fully. Why would similar menu items show such differences in popularity between the sites?

[redacted]

Law School

		Page title	Views
1.		[redacted]	43,732
2.	●	Class and Exam Schedules [redacted]	19,006
3.	●	Academic Calendar [redacted]	13,514
4.	●	Law School Academics [redacted]	9,215
5.		[redacted]	8,867
6.	●	Law School Class Rankings and Dean's List [redacted]	7,838
7.	●	Faculty Directory [redacted]	7,076
8.	⬟	Apply to [redacted] Law Scho...	6,427
9.	⬟	Law School Cost of Attendance [redacted]	5,690
10.	⬟	LSAT Prep Pathway Program [redacted]	5,067

3x

● Particularly relevant to **current** students

⬟ Particularly relevant to **prospective** students

Item 4, Law School Academics, is the landing page for the Academics menu item but its page title is “LAW SCHOOL ACADEMICS FOR **CURRENT STUDENTS**”, supporting the classification of this page as being pertinent to current students, and also underscoring the high level of overlap between the Academics section of the site and the Current Students section of the site.

[redacted] Law School

TOP PAGE IN EACH MENU SECTION BY VIEWS

SECTION	PAGE	VIEWS
Academics	Class and Exam Schedule	21,631
Current Students	Class Ranking and Dean's List	8,287
Prospective Students	Apply to [redacted]	7,040
Alumni and Friends	Alumni Spotlight	1,247

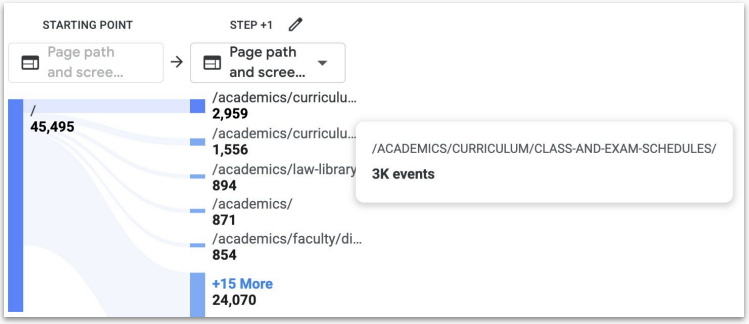
Jan 2025-Sep 2026

Note: this table lists the single most highly trafficked page in each section of the menu, for relative comparison. It does not sum all page views to all pages within a given section. This is not a list of top pages across the site. It's likely that the second highest page for views in Academics is higher in views than the Current Students top page for views. The purpose of this table is to show the relative value of the existing menu items according to their most popular page.

Notice the range: 1200-21000. This is somewhat wide, showing that main menu items do not have equal or similar weights in importance. But it's much tighter than the range we'll see later fo [redacted] When I look at Academics versus Current Students, it's pretty hard to differentiate them or decide/pick up on why a page is in one versus the other.

[redacted]

Law School



The five most popular items from Home all live in ***Academics***, and mostly pertain to Current Students (academic calendar, exam schedules, library, etc.). This echos pageview data showing Academics-related pages are the most popular in terms of views.

[redacted]

[redacted] Law School

HIGH TRAFFIC PAGES

- ***Prospective Student*** content is more popular in [redacted] than it is in [redacted]
  - The second most popular page i [redacted] after Home, relates to checking the status of an application.
  - Relatively speaking, current student content seems diminished in popularity in [redacted]
- Alumni pages are prioritized more by users o [redacted] compared to [redacted] where the first alumni-related page is ~50th site-wide in popularity.

Top bullet: this is a key difference that a) supports the idea that both prospective and current students are primary audiences for [redacted] school sites, but also b) presents a question of why prospective student content would be so much more visited on one than the other, given that the sites are consistent in their presentation of this content. Is there another platform used by [redacted] where more Current Student content is found? [redacted] Note, it doesn't appear to be MISSING from [redacted] but low in popularity.

In comparing the sites respective sections for Prospective Students, they cover generally the same information but organize and present it very differently, both in terms of page hierarchy/depth and in wording and labels.

[redacted]

[redacted] Law School

		Page title	Views
1.		[redacted]	83,797
2.	⬟	Check Your Application Status - [redacted]	30,855
3.		[redacted]	18,929
4.	●	Academic Calendar - [redacted]	17,115
5.	⬟	Admissions Policy, Application Requirements and Proc...	12,514
6.		Paralegal Certificate [redacted]	11,800
7.		Page not found [redacted]	11,666
8.		Alumni Events Archive [redacted]	11,135
9.	●	JD Class Rankings & Deans List [redacted]	10,065
10.	⬟	Cost of Attendance - [redacted]	9,915

1.8x

● Particularly relevant to **current** students

⬟ Particularly relevant to **prospective** students

[redacted]

[redacted] Law School

TOP PAGE IN EACH MENU SECTION BY VIEWS

SECTION	PAGE	VIEWS
Prospective Students	Check Your Application Status	30,662
About	News and Events Calendar	19,221
Current Students	Class Rank	10,058
Alumni	Alumni	1,640
Belonging	Inclusion	1,203
Community	Continuing Legal Education	741

Jan 2025-Sep 2026

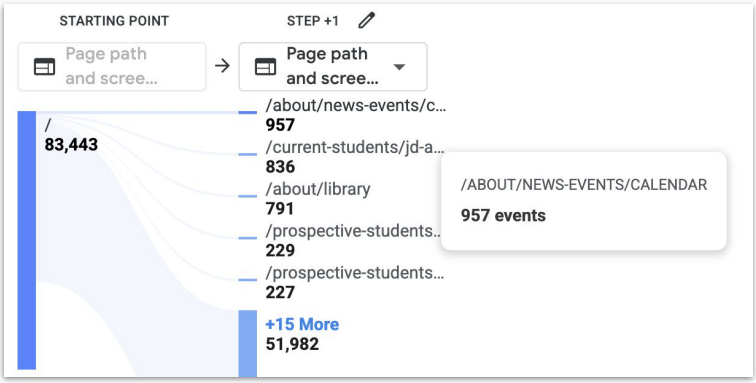
Note: this table lists the single most highly trafficked page in each section of the menu, for relative comparison. It does not sum all page views to all pages within a given section.

Additionally: there are many differences in specific pages between the sites. For instance, while Check Your Application Status is the #1 page viewed within Prospective Students on [redacted] there is not an equivalent page for [redacted] (this function is held on a separate platform requiring authentication).

The range here is much more extreme, from 740-30600. This suggests some menu items are relatively unimportant to users and may not justify presence in the main menu. On [redacted] Alumni is Alumni and Friends ,which seemingly combines what [redacted] holds in Alumni and in Community. That approach probably makes sense given these pageview numbers.

Potential data oddity for the Alumni page, where the top 2 pages listed within the Alumni section were both ‘Alumni’. For the purpose of this slide I summed the values for both lines in the report but that might be inaccurate in which case this number overstates pageviews by about 50%.

[redacted] Law School



The most popular item from Home lives in ***About***, and is offered in the utility menu. It is likely to be more relevant to Current Students. It only constitutes ~1% of traffic from Home, however. This ratio of Homepage visitors to second destination visitors suggests users are landing on interior pages when they enter, rather than going through Home.

Despite prospective student content **receiving more traffic**, it's not the most visited destination **from home** (prospective student pages are 3rd and 4th most popular from Home).

What *heatmaps* show



Key *challenges*



CHALLENGES

What a new *information architecture* should consider to improve access to content.

1. Whether to retain the audience-based main menu

- Current and prospective students, as well as alumni, are fairly distinct and well-established target audiences and represent the key set of user journeys.
- Academics as used by [redacted] despite not being audience-specific, sees the highest traffic across both sites.
- Plenty of content is not audience-specific, like program, resource, and faculty-related information.

2. The role and purpose of a utility menu, and menu CTAs

- Where it is used [redacted] the utility menu sees a lot of action, suggesting it is noticeable and valuable.
- In its current form, it is primarily used for access to specific platforms used by current students (the majority are external links), so the utility serves as a gateway to those rather than to internal site content. The same links offered in the footer on [redacted] do not get as many clicks.

3. What might be missing

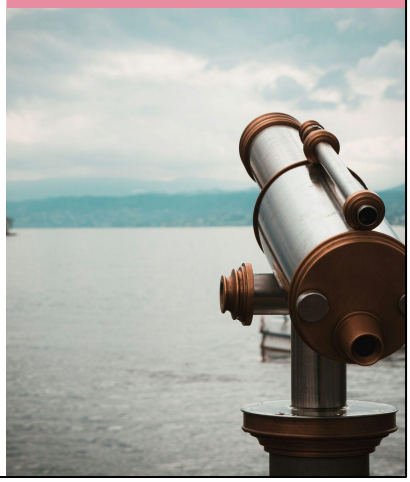
- Especially compared to other law school sites, certain topics are under-represented in the main menu, including Faculty, Admissions/Aid, Careers.
- The over-reliance on audience-based nav may be obscuring important topics and forcing users to hunt for them as if they are a particular audience type.
- There are opportunities to combine and consolidate (Belonging in Student Life, Alumni combined with Community)

[redacted] uses the audience-based nav more strictly than [redacted] because has only one other non-audience-based menu item, Academics. BUT Academics is the most popular item in the site, suggesting that forcing content into audience-based views is not as helpful as topic-based content organization. Further, it can be hard to understand what causes an item to be in Academics instead of Current Students.

[redacted] meanwhile has swung the other direction, and while they do have three key audience-based menu options (current, prospective, and alum), they also have several other topic-based items though those items do not generally see enough traffic to justify their inclusion at the top level (especially belonging and community). Visually, [redacted] higher menu items diminish the relative importance and visibility of the CTAs, whereas [redacted] CTAs feel more balanced and noticeable when sharing the region with a simpler menu.

In both examples, a PURELY audience-based nav has not been used and probably would not be, forcing a hybrid approach that might be too messy.

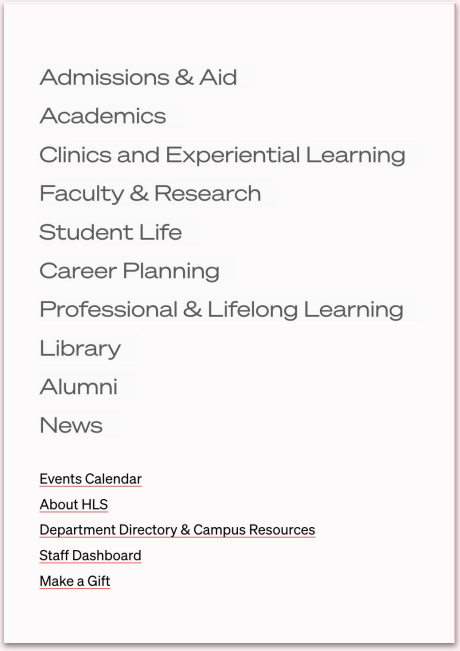
What *other sites* are doing



ANALOGOUS REVIEW

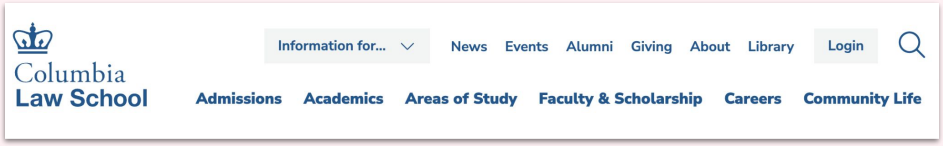
Harvard Law School

- Not audience-based in labeling, though there are a few items with primary audiences, like Admissions & Aid primarily for prospective students.
- Long list of items, which can feel hard to parse and differentiate, but the vertical UI presentation helps.



ANALOGOUS REVIEW

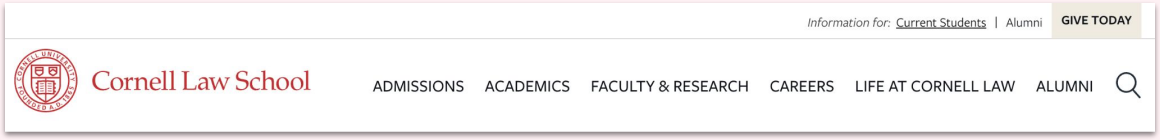
Columbia Law School



- Similar to HLS, is not audience-based though some menu items likely have specific audiences.
- The utility and main menu items are competing with each other. Alumni is treated as a secondary item in the utility menu along with About and Giving.
- This does use an audience-based dropdown menu in the utility space, with a landing page for each.
    - The links and content offered here generally are housed throughout the site; taxonomy or another organizational treatment has allowed for cross-referencing between the menu areas and the audience list.

ANALOGOUS REVIEW

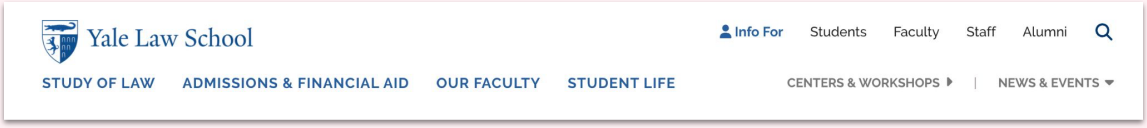
Cornell Law School



- Similar to the prior, is not audience-based though some menu items likely have specific audiences.
- The utility is minimal, housing a CTA relating to Giving and an abbreviated menu specific for Current Students and Alumni; both links are outside the main Cornell Law School site and IA, so these are gateways to those platforms.

ANALOGOUS REVIEW

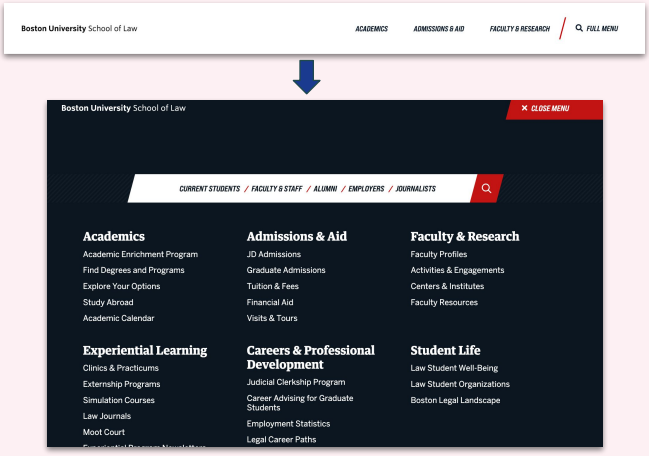
Yale Law School



- Again, main menu is not audience-based.
- The utility does emphasize several core audiences though it does not distinguish between Current and Prospective Students.
    - Similar to Columbia, these provide landing pages for each audience that offer links, which appear to be compiled from across the site and tagged with audience distinctions.

ANALOGOUS REVIEW

BU School of Law



- Unique two-phase menu that presents limited items initially and then a much more exhaustive full-bleed menu when selected.
- Audience-based navigation is presented in a modified utility/search bar.

- Notice: all the examples so far have included Student Life (or Community Life, or Life at ...).

Recommendations and Models to Consider



RECOMMENDATION

Eliminate the audience-driven main menu in favor of a broad topic-based menu.

Organizing law school content by target audience is too simplistic, with many items belonging to multiple audiences. Since the relationship between content and audience is not a clean 1:1, users with a question or topic in mind have to frame their need by what type of audience it may belong to; the audience organization introduces an extra step between the user and the topic.

DO incorporate a utility menu, possibly a dropdown, that provides lists of links and resources according to target audience, so that users who want to see information curated specifically for them can do so.

RECOMMENDATION

Put high-priority functional or topical areas in the top level of the information architecture.

Even when not adhering to a strict audience-based organization, the user journey and scope of information sought is still important. Considering key areas of need along the journey from research to application to acceptance to attendance should illuminate content groups for the new IA. For instance, based on research, two items that should be included are Admissions & Aid, and Student Life. Academics *may* be too broad, in its current use. Possibly separate items for 'Academic Curriculum' and 'Programs of Study' could cover these topics.

RECOMMENDATION

Include alumni, but broaden it so that the menu is more hard-working.

Alumni are in some ways outside the standard student journey. Alumni engage with the school in very different contexts. Often, content that appeals to alumni, such as relating to supporting the school in a professional manner or doing networking, also appeals to non-alumni in the judicial community. Therefore an ‘Alumni & Friends’ or ‘Alumni & Community’ menu item should be included.

RECOMMENDATION

Consider elevating faculty in the menu.

Faculty-related information stands out in the current menu experience because it appears in multiple places, which demonstrates its broad relevance. It could be broadened to include ‘Faculty & Leadership’ or incorporated into an ‘About Us’ section, but in most other comparable sites it is given its own position in the main menu.

RECOMMENDATION

Evaluate whether content development could further enhance the site's organization.

To different extents, both sites talk about Experiential Learning (law clinics, externships, and other opportunities), but this content is not prominent. Comparable sites including HLS and BUSOL include top-level nav for experiential learning.

Another common menu item that seems under-represented i [redacted] sites is Careers. Depending on business goals about attracting professionals, this might be emphasized more, including being offered in the utility.

Draft Model to Consider

Main

1. Admissions and Aid
2. Academics
3. Student Life
4. Faculty

Utility

5. ‘Resources for’ dropdown
6. Give, Apply, Request Info CTAs
7. Search

In lieu of dedicated landing pages for each audience, you could display the audience names and let the dropdown behavior be quick links for each. That would keep things lik [redacted] nd the Email link very accessible in the header. Because of their high engagement in the [redacted] where they appear now, it would probably be a downgrade for some users to lose them in the utility space.

Note: in this model, alumni would be visible in the Utility as a core audience, but not called out in the main menu. It’s possible that career opportunities could be linked in the audience resources if an audience for ‘Professionals’ was included.

Thank you

Questions? Comments? Requests?