

What is navigation?

Web navigation design is about linking. It's about determining importance and relevance of the pages and content on your site.

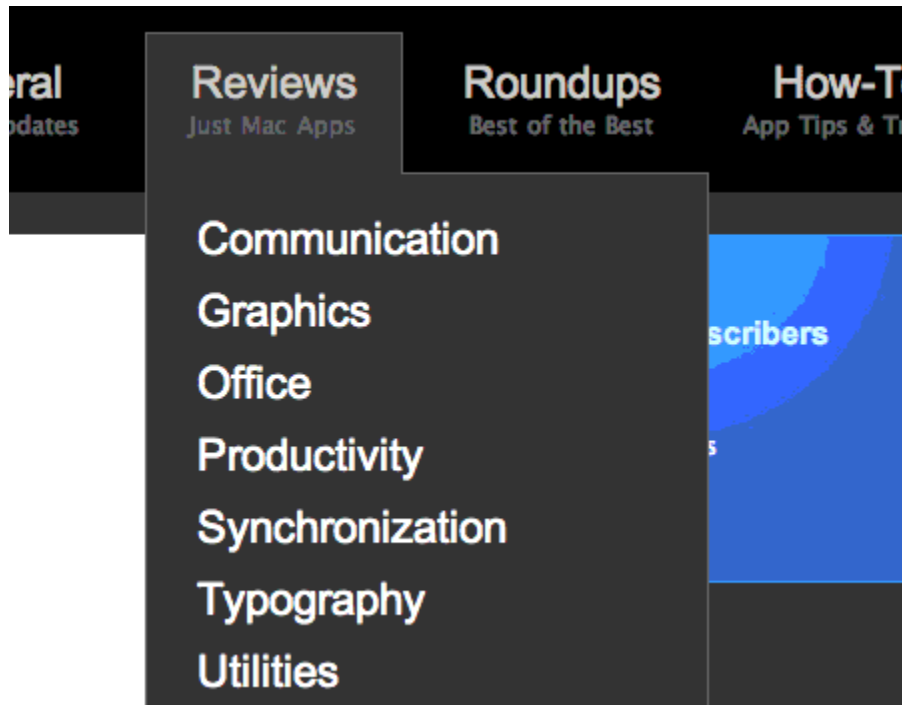
Navigation plays a major role in shaping our experiences on the Web. It provides access to information in a way that enhances understanding, reflects brand, and lends to overall credibility of a site. And ultimately, web navigation and the ability to find information have a financial impact for stakeholders.

Navigation design is a task that is not merely limited to choosing a row of buttons. It's much broader, and, at the same time, more subtle than that. The navigation designer coordinates user goals with business goals. This requires an understanding of each, as well as a deep knowledge of information organization, page layout, and design presentation. This chapter paints a broad context for web navigation to help you better appreciate not just its purpose, but its potential scope of importance.

The screenshot displays the Opodo website interface. At the top left is the Opodo logo with the tagline "let the journey begin". To the right are navigation links: "Travel guides", "Maps", "Shopping basket" (with "1 item(s)"), "My Opodo", "Contact us", and "Help". Below this is a horizontal menu with buttons for "Home", "Flight + Hotel", "Hotels", "Holidays", "Flights", "Cars", "Worldwide holidays", "Meaningful travel", "Ski", and "Late deals". A dark red banner below the menu reads "Sign up to our free newsletter for the latest travel deals".

The main content area is divided into three columns:

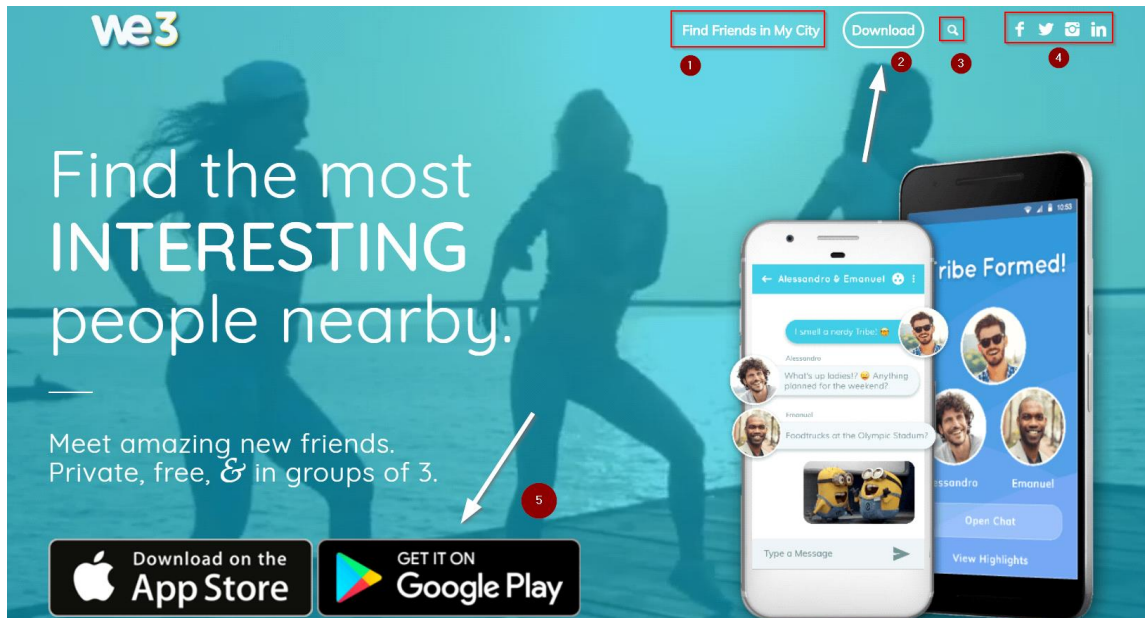
- Left Column:** A vertical menu with categories: "Flight + Hotel" (with a sub-menu: "Top 10 city breaks", "Christmas shopping", "Christmas markets", "Madrid from £106", "Prague from £120", "City sights and sound"), "Hotels" (with sub-menu: "Best value hotels", "Last-minute hotels"), and "Flights".
- Middle Column:** A promotional banner for "City breaks from SWISS Flight + Hotel" starting from £128, with a "Book now" button. Below it is a "Today's top deals" section listing "Holiday offers": "3* Ski in January" for £149, "3* New York" for £397, and "5* Singapore" for £745, with a "More offers" link.
- Right Column:** A "Search for your trip" section with radio buttons for "Flights", "Hotels", "Flight + Hotel", "Cars", "Ski", and "Worldwide holidays". Below this is a "Flight search" section with options for "Return", "One way", and "Multistop". It includes input fields for "From" and "To" (both with "Airport list >" links) and a "Departing" section with a date selector (set to "24", "November 2006", "Fri") and a "View calendar >" link.



3 Great Website Navigation Examples

Now that we have a better understanding of what website navigation is, let's figure out what it looks like. The following are three examples of excellent website navigation best practices in use.

1. WE3



How web navigation best practices can be molded to fit your website's or business's specific needs.

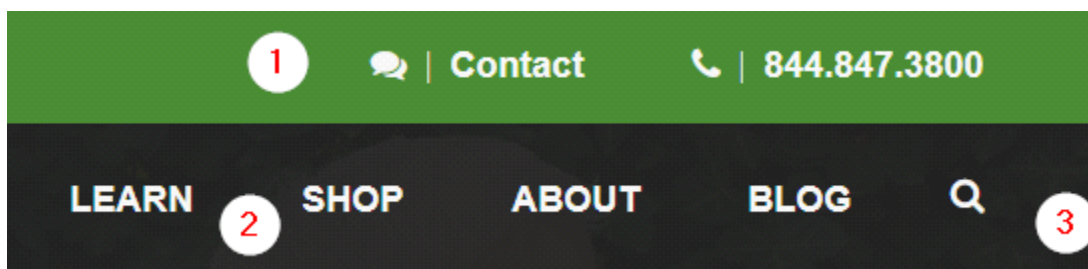
Here's the main focus of the site. You can click this link to immediately locate friends in your city.

The Download link is special. You can tell by the button look.

Search is extremely important in website navigation. You want visitors to be able to find what they want through a simple search of your site.

Then we have the social icons. This is an extremely social-oriented brand, so highlighting these links in the header navigation makes perfect sense.

2. Ensurem



Here's the primary navigation for the website Ensurem. It's very simple, but also highly intuitive.

Contact information is essential. You want it on every page of your site. This example shows two ways to get in touch with company representatives.

Here, we have the core pages of the site. The Learn and Shop links expand to show even more options and to narrow down what the visitor wants.

Again, there's a search bar. Allowing people to search your site saves them time and reduces your bounce rate.

3. Greenstreet Coffee



You see the typical navigation menu, but this one is special for a couple reasons.

The wording of the navigation headings are extremely user friendly. You can decide exactly what you want to check out first, whether you're interested in buying or you want to know more about the company.

There's an open search bar, which differs from the previous two examples. It might be more intuitive for people who aren't as well-versed in web navigation.

There's an icon to show you how many items are in your cart. This is a hugely beneficial navigational element to include in an ecommerce case. The link takes you to your cart.