The IA of IKEA Stores

Questions :

Activity One : Listen to the text being read out and answer these questions immediately. You can pre read the questions so that you know what to listen for. **Listen out for the stressed words – those that are really important in each sentence.**

1 In what context was the writer looking at the design of the Store ?

2 How does the writer describe who needs to go to what floor.

3 What did the writer compare the one directional only floor plan to ?

4 Does the writer think that a 'one directional plan' would work on a website ?

5 Why did the writer find that was it important to mention the designers name on the items ?

6 How was the writer's attention drawn to 'interesting items' which would be 'in bold' on a web ?

- **Now answer the questions**.

Activity Two **Read the information about stress.**
Read from the text and pay attention to stress.

REMEMBER :

In English, we give stress to certain words while other words are quickly spoken (eaten!). In French each syllable receives equal importance and therefore equal time is needed. English however, spends more time on specific stressed words while quickly gliding over the other, less important, words.



Stress words are

CONTENT words:

* Nouns
* Principal verbs
* Adjectives
* Adverbs

Non-stressed words are

FUNCTION words:

* Determiners
* Auxiliary verbs
* Prepositions
* Conjunctions
* Pronouns

Activity Three:

NOW EXPLAIN TO YOUR TEACHER THE FOLLOWING IKEA POLICIES FOR STORE DESIGN :

- IKEA encourages visitors to go directly to the second floor.
- IKEA wants visitors to all walk in the same direction.
- All items are clearly labelled including information about the style and designer.

Activity Four:

Look at the expression: you will use as many as possible in the following presentation.

Expressions for Justifying your decisions

- Our main aim was to….
- We made the decision to ….
- Our priority is to…..
- We needed to work around….
- We decided to place the emphasis on…
- Following our customer satisfaction survey we decided that ……. needed to be changed…
- We noticed that ……. was not very sucessful and so….
- We were very pleased with sales in this area and so we decided to prioritize….

Linking Words

- First of all
- After that
- The main reason is
- Besides that
- And on top of that
- By and large
- On the whole
- In my opinion
- Taking into consideration that
- This raises the problem of
- However
- And besides
- It looks like
- It may seem
- As a rule
- On the other hand
- In my experience
- Generally speaking
- For one thing
- For example
- To sum up

Activity Five:

- Describe the layout of the entrance hall in the your store and justify your choices of products and layout.
- Now do the same for the area just next to the cash tills.

The IKEA stores have great information architecture.

Someone (many people in fact) put a lot of thought into the design of the store. I'm sure this is at least partially the result of all the research done on how consumers purchase although the circular-design, open-warehouse, consumer-friendly flagship IKEA store opened in Stockholm in 1965, so they've clearly been pioneers for some time.

But, my brain processed what I was seeing as information and interface design.

As you walk in you are sent up the stairs and onto the second level. All their merchandise is laid out in context -- i.e., "what room of the house are you interested in?" If you're interested in bathroom items, the bathroom models have toothbrush holders, cotton ball containers, lamps, cabinets, towels, etc. right where you might want to see them yourselves. Of course, if you're looking for a specific thing -- "where the heck are the kitchen towels?" -- you don't need the second level, you need the first one. The first level is for those who know what they're looking for while the second level is for those not entirely certain what they're looking for...two key methods of information retrieval

The most interesting thing about the second level is that you can only move in one direction. Arrows on the floor and signs at critical junctures indicate that you're moving through the store in a planned, straightforward manner.In fact, it reminded me of being on a carnival ride. You strap yourself into a seat along with many others and get whisked off through the Fun .

It made me wonder if this one-direction-only scheme is possible on a complex, e-merchandise web site. I would guess that you could try and do this with large splash pages or graphics on the front page, but my hunch (borne out by both IA and usability experts) is that web users have less patience for one-size-fits-all organizational schemes than those taking a Sunday afternoon stroll with their families.

If you follow the people entering the store (acting like sheep is desired) you don't even see the first level on entering. The first level is the marketplace -- this is where you encounter bin after bin of toilet plungers, pizza cutters and CD holders. These seem to also be roughly laid out according to the rooms in a house, and reminded me more of a regular department store. Arranged in a huge square, it was like browsing a large, web index with interesting items in bold, i.e., the towering stack of bathroom mats.

All items are clearly labeled with a unique identifier, a style and strangely enough, the name of the designer of the style. I couldn't quite fathom why this was important. Perhaps they like to recognize their designers? Super. Then, later on, I found myself searching for styles similar to one I'd been looking at earlier, and realized that this was just another possible way of organizing their material. Similar to how clothing department stores organize their stock, e.g., Ralph Lauren, Liz Claiborne. Or, how a web site works best if it has multiple methods of access for users with different searching conceptions.