Objective: To analyze the information architecture of a web site in visual and structural terms and to assess its navigational structure.

Documentation: The portal I chose to analyze in structural terms is Yahoo website and I will assess its navigational structure.
URL: [www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)
Topic to search in this website (Goal): *Dining in Taiwan*

Final Destination: Dining in Taiwan (Screen Shot)

![Screenshot of Yahoo website](https://via.placeholder.com/150)
The Log of My Journey through Yahoo Website

- Go to Yahoo’s web site (www.yahoo.com).
- Click Society & Culture at Yahoo homepage
  I chose this navigational button because it should match my goal. I look at the topic of the page, and I saw, Where you are here, sign to let me know that I come from the homepage. (Home > Society and Culture). It’s very good indicator to help users know where they were and what should they do next.
- Click Culture & Groups
  I still keep my topic –Culture, and then go into more detail
- Click Culture on the first list of the categories
- Click Taiwanese
- Click Food and Drink.
- Click Dining in Taiwan (Taiwanese Cuisine page appears)
  Yahoo webpage brought me to the other webpage (http://www.sinica.edu.tw/tit/dining/) that had much information about Taiwanese food.

Directory > Regional > Countries > Taiwan > Society and Culture > Food and Drink > Dining in Taiwan > goal

I got the information of Taiwanese food that I wanted so I was successful in finding information from this website.
Design Analysis:
Organization & Visual Structure-
According to the Organization & Visual Structure, the design of Yahoo webpage demonstrates structure with unity, integrality, control, relationship, etc.

Unity: The principle of unity is clearly demonstrated with their standard link set that only sits at the top of its main page. This set consists of a shopping link, an email link, and a personalization link, among others. These nice links are not displayed on every other page in the Yahoo.

Integrity: Yahoo has maintained its integrity. The result of Yahoo's painstaking efforts to ensure the integrity of its directory is that it is by far the easiest way to find information on the web. For instance, when searching on "Dining in Taiwan". Yahoo will make a comprehensive list of all sites providing online Dining in Taiwan information.

Control: The directory category gives plenty of control to the users. For instance, they see many of the main information categories one can choose from. Control is lost once the user ventures into other categories and resources.

Relationship: Their use of breadcrumbs is a good example of relationship. The user can see the drill down of their navigating search; this is implied by the logical sequence of each parent and child category separated by using ‘>’ symbol.

Balance: The page looks balanced. For instance, the large chunk of categorical links presented in blue is countered by a strong column of featured links separated by black contrasting titles.

Negative space: Negative space or white space as many call it, is what guides user’s eye from section to section. For instance, each link or category is broken up by white spaces.

Gestalt Principles-

Proximity: The designers use proximity on the navigational buttons in the center of the page. It makes associations by displaying the navigation buttons in vertical rows. Associations can be created through proximity because when two or more visual elements are put close together, invariably they are seen as being related.

Similarity: They group by using similar shapes, sizes, and color of navigational buttons on the top of the homepage. Similar shapes of navigational buttons can be grouped to form a pattern that creates motion as the users move from one similar shape to next. They use the similar color (blue) that can be used to create a sense of balance, unity and harmony on the homepage.
**Balance:** The homepage of Yahoo presents good layout balance by presenting the negative space. They separate navigational parts and entertainment part from each other by using white space to break those elements.

Unfortunately, there are some problems ahead for Yahoo webpage. There's a ton of great information and links, but nothing is emphasized over anything else. For instance, they use same font size and color. People with limited web and computer knowledge, are baffled by pages like this – what to click on first? Yahoo has added clutter bit by bit, adding services and links to every page. This makes it impossible for users to concentrate, and they do not know where to start.

**Presentation Analysis:**

**Information Structure-**

Based on the log of my journey, Yahoo website current navigational structure coincides with the hierarchy structure which allows users to find their paths to knowledge. For instance, the breadcrumbs clearly show this structure of drilling deeper into the hierarchy (Directory > Regional > Countries > Taiwan > Society and Culture > Food and Drink > Dining in Taiwan). As I dig deeper and deeper into the hierarchy of information offered by Yahoo to get to where I needed to go; each page offered completely different information, as in the Cultures and Groups, that would bring me to different parts of the site or to different web sites in general. I would recommend Yahoo to have a multiple hierarchy.

**Navigational Top 10-**

1. **Support user’s goals and behaviors:**
   Yes. The site is the basic portal presenting the most common categories. Its structure allowed me to get where I needed to go with minima number of errors. I have successfully found Ding in Taiwan information.

2. **Be easily learned:**
   Yes. Yahoo design is based on the simplicity which contains basic concepts of main categories, subcategories, and breadcrumbs. These are standard web conventions known and clear to the user.

3. **Be consistent:**
   Yes. Yahoo site is consistent in using typeface and color. For instance, backgrounds, colors, fonts, and navigation buttons all present Yahoo site with a uniform appearance.

4. **Provide feedback:**
   Yes. Yahoo site does provide feedback in the sense that you are generally presented with another page and bread crumb as one goes into the site.

5. **Navigation should appear in context:**
Yes. The navigation and controls give immediate response and feedback. The user can tell something has happened only when the content changes. For instance, the breadcrumbs clearly show where you are.

6. **Navigation should offer alternatives:**
   Yes. Yahoo provides two search options: The user can directly typing in search box, or drill down each category in the Directory and click each links.

7. **Navigation should be fast and easy:**
   Yes. Yahoo homepage has an average download time of 3.0 seconds; it's one of the fastest download times among various website. The categories seem straightforward and the user can always tell where they are with the breadcrumbs.

8. **Provide clear visual cues: (Yes, No)**
   Yes, for someone who has experience in using Yahoo, he knows how to search his information.
   No, In case of some one who doesn’t have experience in using the Yahoo, they will get confused on finding information from Yahoo.

9. **Provide clear labels:**
   Yes, Yahoo website has a highly structured navigation system that emphasizes context and hierarchical information architecture.

10. **Navigation should be appropriate:**
    Yes. Yahoo is one of the best known search engine websites. It has a navigational structure that is appropriate for the needs and purpose of the site.

**Conclusion:**
Overall, the information architecture of the Yahoo site is sufficient for a web portal. The site is created by emphasizing speed, structure, clean navigation, and good classification hierarchy that match users’ needs. There are many great information and links where nothing is emphasized over anything else, those information needed to be reorganized. For me, Yahoo is the good website that I can use to get the information I need.