Human-Computer Interaction and Interfaces
Lecture 4

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Minimal UX Process

1. BS Check
2. General Benchmark
3. Definition of User Stories and User Flows
4. Pattern Benchmark for Wireframes
5. Pattern Benchmark for User Interfaces
6. Client Presentation

1. BS check

- Conduct an in-depth interview with the client to uncover "nonsense"—wrong or unrealistic ideas that could cause serious problems in the project.
- Key questions:
  - What are the business objectives?
  - What problem does the client want to solve?
  - Is this problem a real issue?
  - Does the client's desired solution actually solve the problem?

SMART

- A possible framework for structuring the BS Check. Introduced by George Doran in 1981 (*Management Review 70(11): 35-36*).
It's an acronym:

- **S**pecific

- **M**easurable

- **A**ctionable

- **R**ealistic

- **T**ime-based

Specific

- Each goal must be clearly defined and not open to interpretation.

❌ "I want to increase visits to my website."

✔ "I want to increase monthly visits to my website by 20%."

Measurable

- Every desired outcome must be measurable.

❌ «I want my users to feel happier.»

✔️ «I want a 15% increase in user donations.»

Actionable

- Once we have a clear, measurable goal, we need ways to achieve it.
- ❌ "I want blog users to read articles to the end."
  ✔️ "I want users to be able to interact with blog posts."
- We can't force users to read everything, but we *can* add like buttons or comment sections to encourage engagement.

Realistic

- Avoid unrealistic goals.

❌ "I want every website visitor to sign up."

❌ "I want 100,000 users in the first month of our startup launch."

- Be cautious of **false friends**—goals that *seem* achievable but aren't.

❌ "I want a 10% conversion rate for my website."
(*Successful e-commerce sites typically have a conversion rate of around 3%.*)

Time-based

- Goals should have a clear timeframe.
- ❌ "I want 10,000 new users."
  ✔ "I want 1,000 new users per month for the next 6 months."
- Projections are crucial to ensuring we meet expectations.

2. General Benchmarking

- In a full UX process, after agreeing on goals with the client, we analyze competitors and conduct user research (surveys and interviews).

- When resources are limited, we rely on **general benchmarking**: studying similar initiatives.

Studying Similar Products

- How is it structured?
- Why were certain choices made?
- Why does the interface look this way?
- What can we take inspiration from—and why?
- What should we avoid—and why?

High-level concept

- We can also draw inspiration from high-level concepts—not necessarily direct product equivalents but similar ideas.

- Examples:

    "An Uber for home deliveries."

    "A Booking.com for cleaning services."

    "A Spotify for books."

Outcome of General Benchmarking

- We now have a general idea of the product we will design and a list of key features.

3. User Stories and User Flows

- User stories describe product functionalities and user flows in sentence form.

- Typical structure:
  "As a **[role]**, I want **[function/action]**, so that **[desired outcome]**."

Examples of User Stories (Airbnb)

- As a **customer**, I want to search for homes so I can rent one.

- As a **customer**, I want to filter results to speed up my search.

- As a **host**, I want to input my home's details so I can list it for rent.

- As a **host**, I want to receive notifications so I can quickly approve booking requests.

Simplified Version of User Stories

- "As a **[role]**, I want **[action]**."
- Examples:

  As a **customer**, I want to register.

  As a **customer**, I want to enter my information.

  As a **customer**, I want to edit my information.
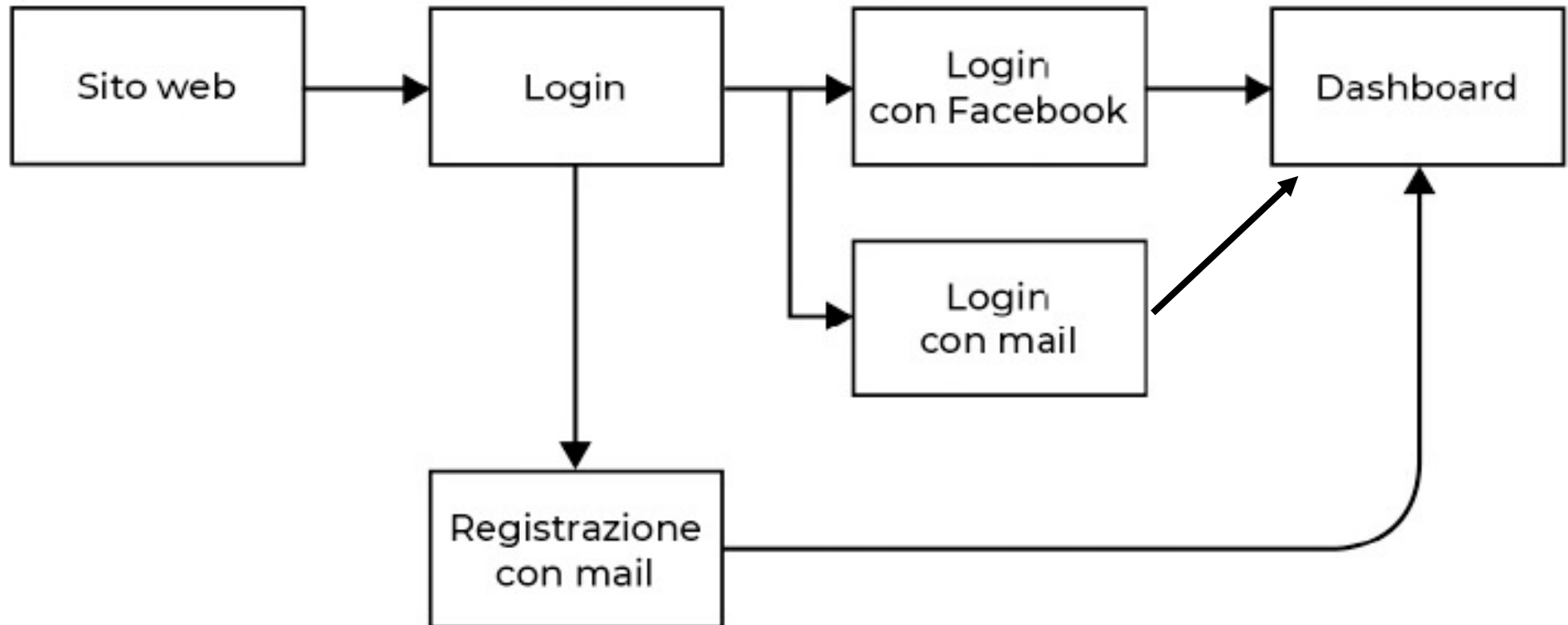
User Story in Graphic Form = User Flow

- Example: "As a user, I want to log in using email or a social account."

From "Manuale di sopravvivenza per UX Designer" by Matteo di Pascale
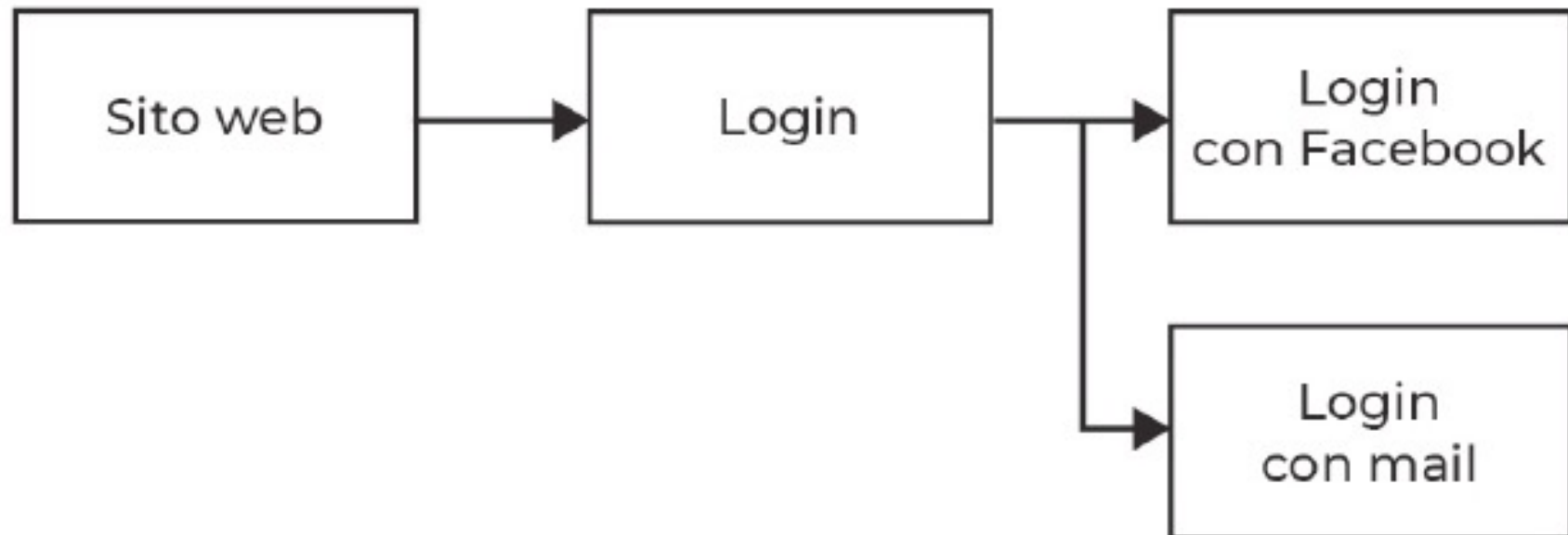
Multiple User Stories in One User Flow

- As a **user**, I want to log in using email or a social account.
- As a **user**, I want a dashboard to get an overview.

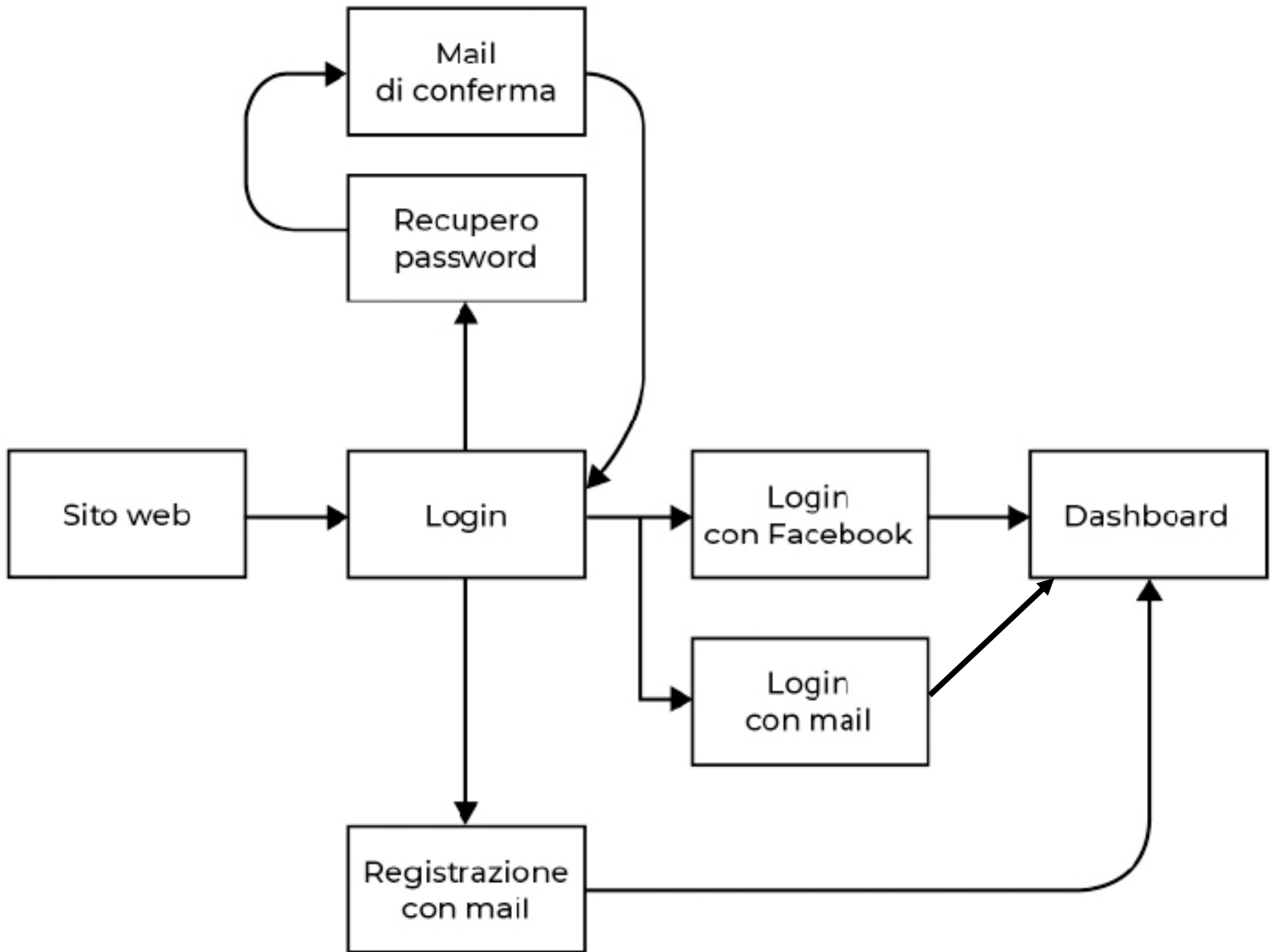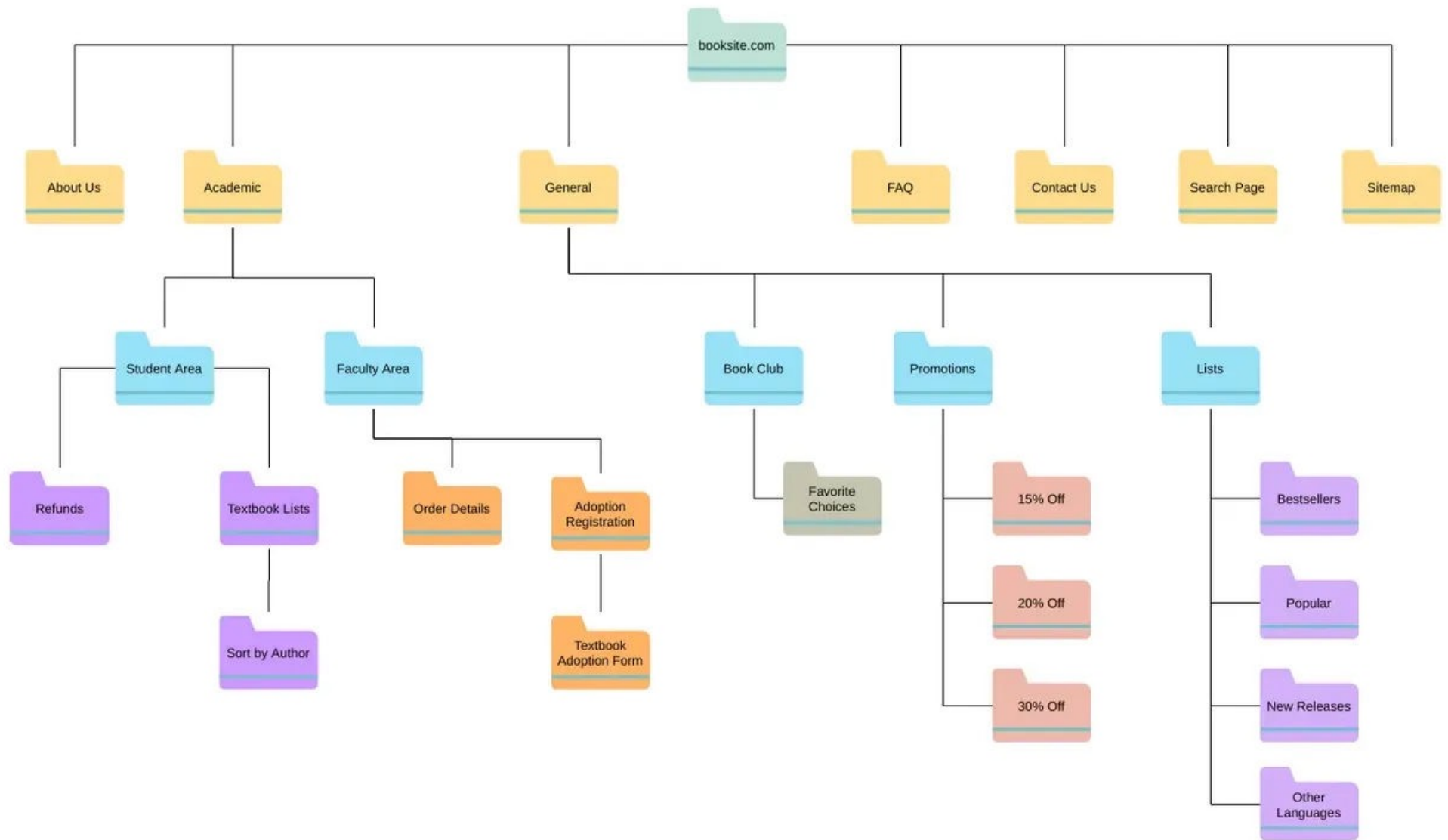From "Manuale di sopravvivenza per UX Designer" by Matteo di Pascale

Figura tratta dal libro "Manuale di sopravvivenza per UX Designer" di Matteo di Pascale

User flow vs Information Architecture

- They look similar but serve different purposes:

- **User Flow** → Shows the different usage paths a user can take.

- **Information Architecture (IA) or Sitemap** → Displays all the content and information available within the product and their hierarchical structure.

booksite.com

About Us

Academic

Student Area
- Refunds
- Textbook Lists
  - Sort by Author

Faculty Area
- Order Details
- Adoption Registration
  - Textbook Adoption Form

General

Book Club
- Favorite Choices

Promotions
- 15% Off
- 20% Off
- 30% Off

Lists
- Bestsellers
- Popular
- New Releases
- Other Languages

FAQ

Contact Us

Search Page

Sitemap

Outcome of This Step

- We now have a list of all user actions and their graphical representation.

- Once the client approves, we know exactly what to design.

4. Pattern Benchmark for Wireframes

- Now we design the screens that will allow users to navigate the structure we defined earlier.

- **Example: Website Entry Flow**
  Homepage → Login Page → Dashboard

- The **Login Page** must include all necessary elements for the corresponding user stories.

From User Story to Wireframe: The Stories

- As a **user**, I want to log in using my username and password.

- As a **user**, I want to recover my forgotten password.

- As a **user**, I want to register a new account.

From User Story to Wireframe: Necessary Elements

- Keeping the stories in mind, for the login page we need:
  - ✅ Username and password input fields
  - ✅ A confirmation button
  - ✅ A link to recover the password
  - ✅ A link to the sign-up page

From User Story to Wireframe: the Wireframe

Username

Password

Send button
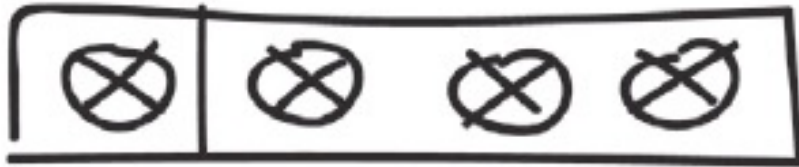
Recover Password

Register
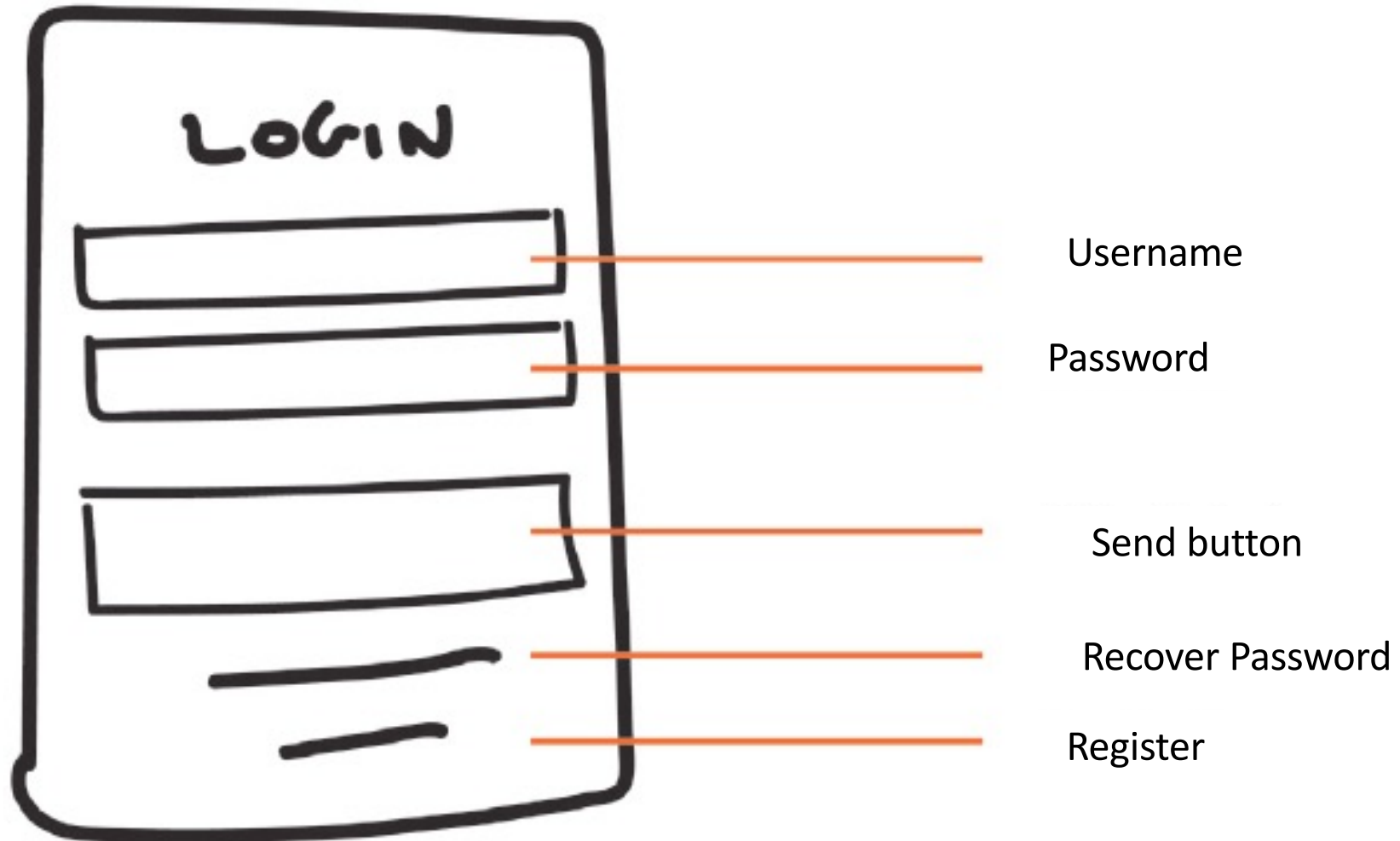
From "Manuale di sopravvivenza per UX Designer" by Matteo di Pascale

Wireframe Patterns

- **Patterns = generic structures** used to design elements within our screens.
- It's *recommended* to take inspiration from widely used **patterns in successful products**.
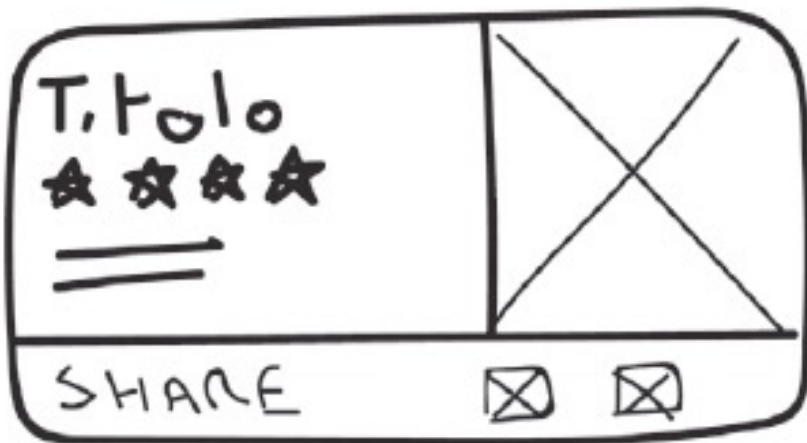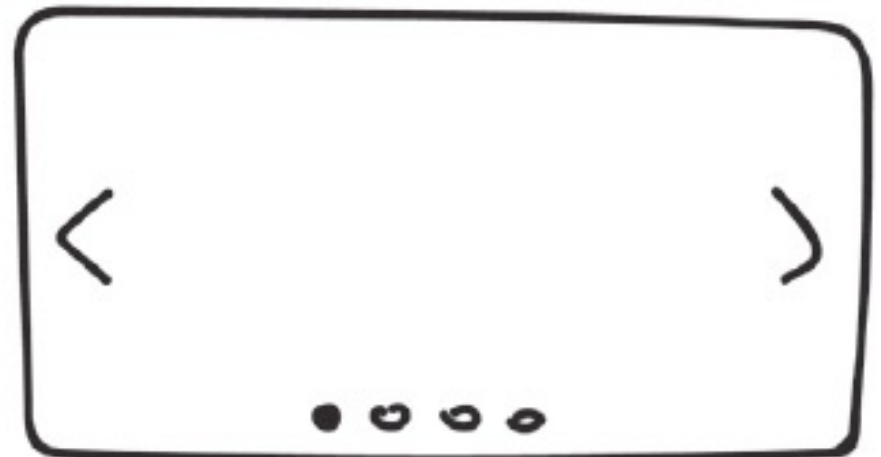
Pattern examples

Tab Bar

Burger Menu

Card di Google Maps

Titolo
★ ★ ★ ★

SHARE

Slider

Wireframe

From "Manuale di sopravvivenza per UX Designer" by Matteo di Pascale

Example of Inspiration

- For a **recipe app flow**:
Login → Dashboard → Search Recipe →
Read Recipe → Save to Favorites
- Study **Airbnb/Spotify** login screens for best practices.
- Analyze **Netflix's** dashboard for personalized content suggestions.
- Look at **Facebook/LinkedIn** search functionalities.
- Observe how **GialloZafferano** presents individual recipes.

Outcome of this step

- We have created **wireframes** for all screens, using established patterns that are compatible with our target platforms.

5. Pattern Benchmark for User Interfaces

- This step involves drawing **visual inspiration** from existing products.

- **A research on Pinterest found key UI trends:**
  ✅ Extensive use of gradients
  ✅ Shadows for emphasis
  ✅ Preference for cut-out images and illustrations
  ✅ Large, rounded elements
  ✅ Big typography and carefully selected fonts

Outcome of this step

- Once the client approves the **visual style** for one screen, we apply it to all wireframes—creating a **non-functional but visually complete prototype**.

6. Presenting the Work

- We must:
  ✅ Clearly communicate our work's **outcome**.
  ✅ Justify our **design decisions**.

- The presentation is not just about showing final screens—it follows a **storytelling approach**, starting from the client's needs, competitor analysis, etc.

- **Personas** can help illustrate our reasoning.

Personas

Lucas Mellor

AGE	31
OCCUPATION	Content Manager
STATUS	Single
LOCATION	London, UK
TIER	Early Adopters
ARCHETYPE	The Creator

Practical	Adaptable
Spontaneous	Active

MOTIVATIONS

- CONVENIENCE
- WELLNESS
- SPEED
- PREFRENCES
- COMFORT
- DIETARY NEEDS

PERSONALITY

INTROVERT	EXTROVERT

INTUITION	SENSING

FEELING	THINKING

PERCEIVING	JUDGING

"I want to spend less time ordering a healthy takeaway and more time enjoying my meal."
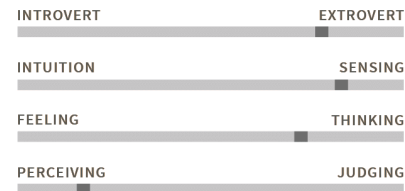
BEHAVIOUR & HABITS

- Lucas usually had meals out before the lockdown, as he wasn't very keen on cooking. He relied on ready meals and takeaways.

- He is technology savvy and has ordered all his meals exclusively online in the comfort of his home.

- During the lockdown, he began taking part in online HIIT exercise sessions and started to implement changes to enjoy a healthier lifestyle.

- Lucas works from home during the lockdown and finds it hard to balance work and his newfound healthy lifestyle.

- While purchasing meals online, he always looks to select the healthiest options.

- He orders a takeaway about 3 to 4 times a week.

GOALS & NEEDS

- To enjoy a healthy diet and lifestyle during the lockdown.

- To have all the information, he needs to select a healthy takeaway meal.

- To select takeaways based on his dietary needs.

- To have the convenience of takeaways swiftly delivered.
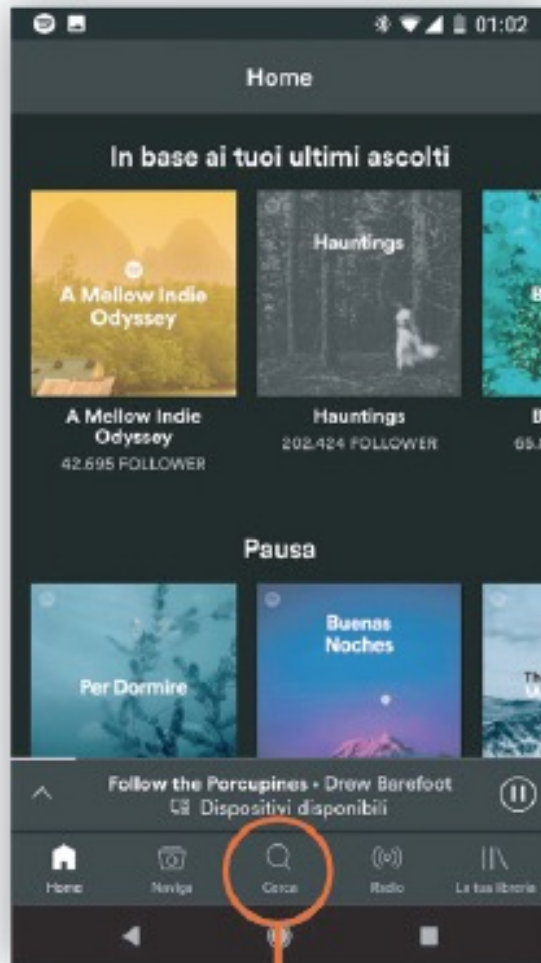
FRUSTRATIONS

- Wasting time Googling menu items because of a lack of images or descriptions.

- Can't find a category for healthy meals on the cuisine section.

- Don't know the contents of the meals ordered for takeaway.

- Restaurants offering pre-order delivery only aren't marked as such on the homepage.

- Restaurant menus are confusing, I'm not sure if it's the contents page or menu items?
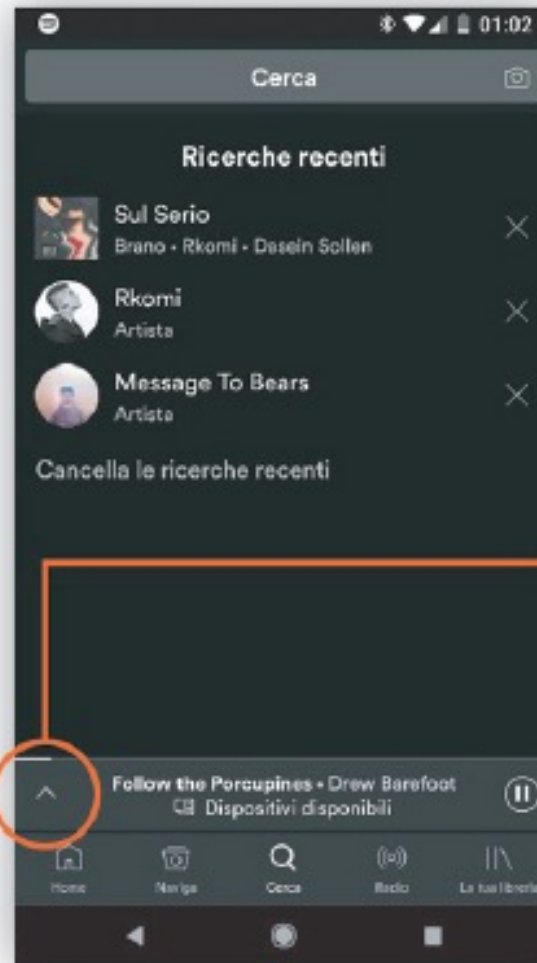
6. Presenting the Work

- To show how the product functions, we use **wireflow**: a sequence of user actions mapped onto the wireframe screens.

- **Wireframe + User Flow = Wireflow**

- If we already have a **fully designed UI**, we can present screens with complete graphics—this is called **high-fidelity wireflow**.

High-fidelity wireflow

From "Manuale di sopravvivenza per UX Designer" by Matteo di Pascale