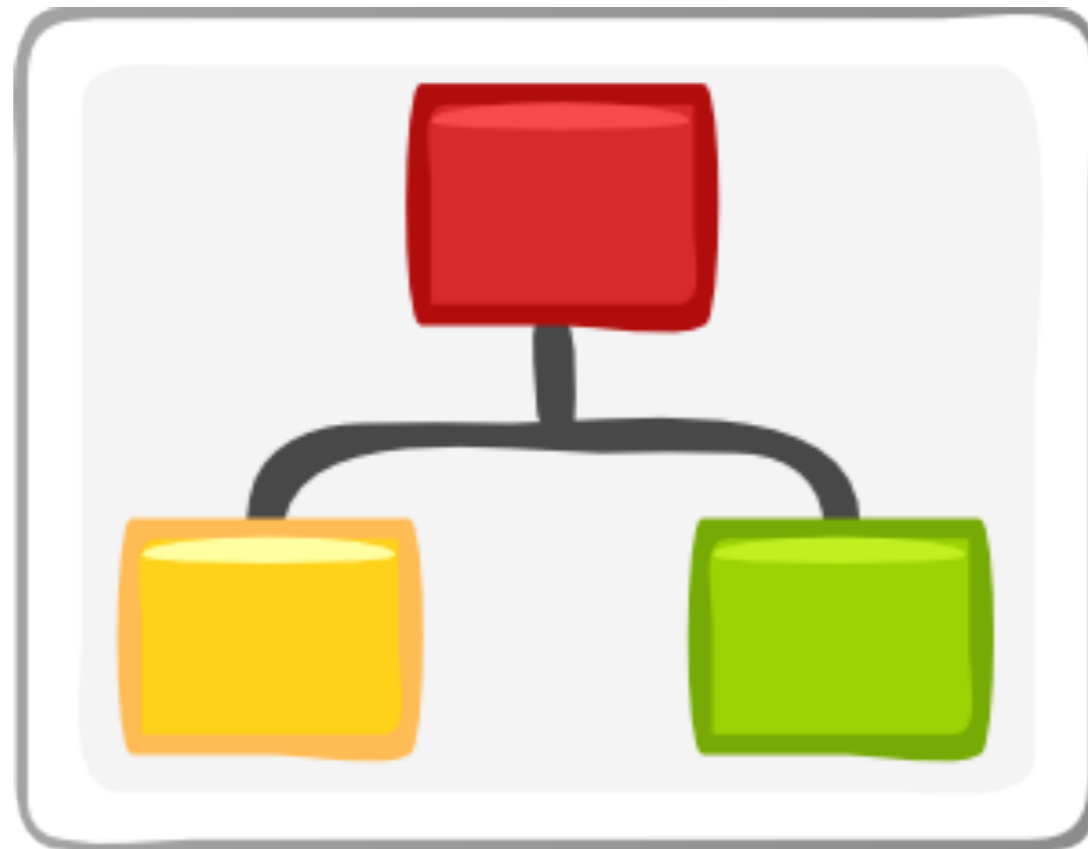


organizing your site



Mark's layout



Fit your content into your layout

A website is all about communicating information.

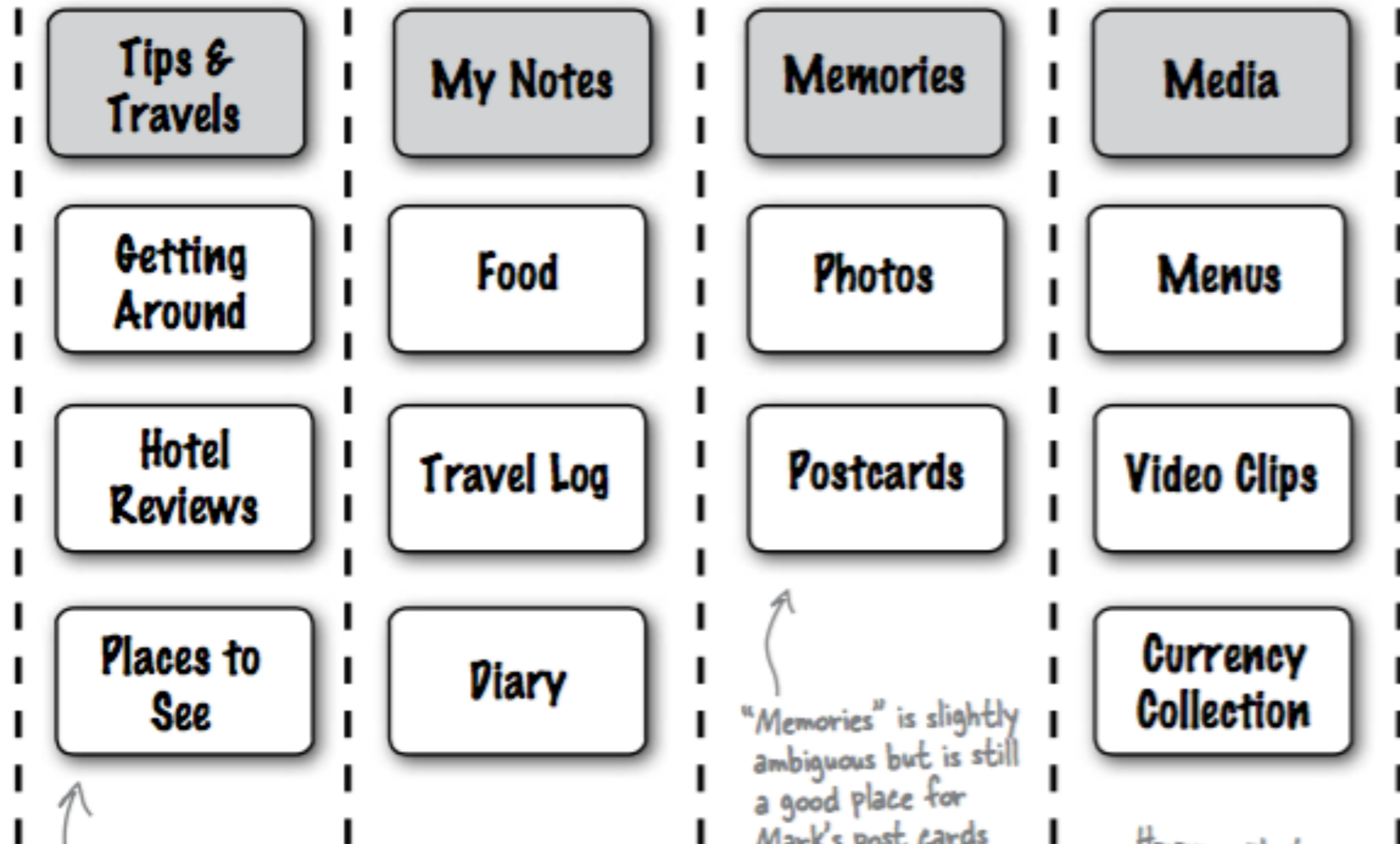
No matter how good your design is or how cutting edge your layout is, if your site doesn't speak to your audience, it won't be nearly as successful as a site that says something, and says that something clearly.

Organizing your site's information well (and logically) is the difference between good and bad navigation, which means the difference between your users finding what they want quickly and easily and your users being really confused.

ready to organize!

This seems like a good place for Mark's thoughts about his travels. His food content should fit nicely here, too.

Media is usually pictures and videos, but "Menus" and "Currency" wouldn't be out of place here. Besides, they are all technically pictures.



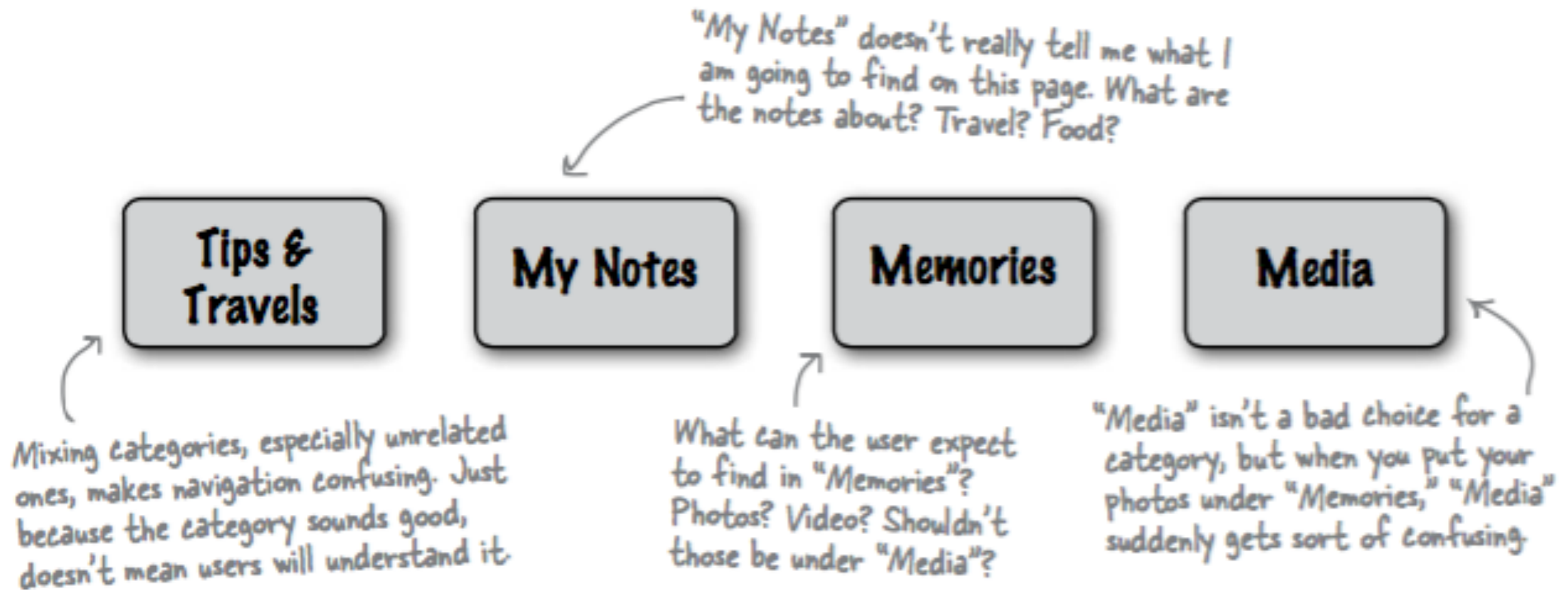
This is more text content to help people out while they are traveling in Japan.

"Memories" is slightly ambiguous but is still a good place for Mark's post cards and some photos.

Hmmm... photos really could go under "Media," too.

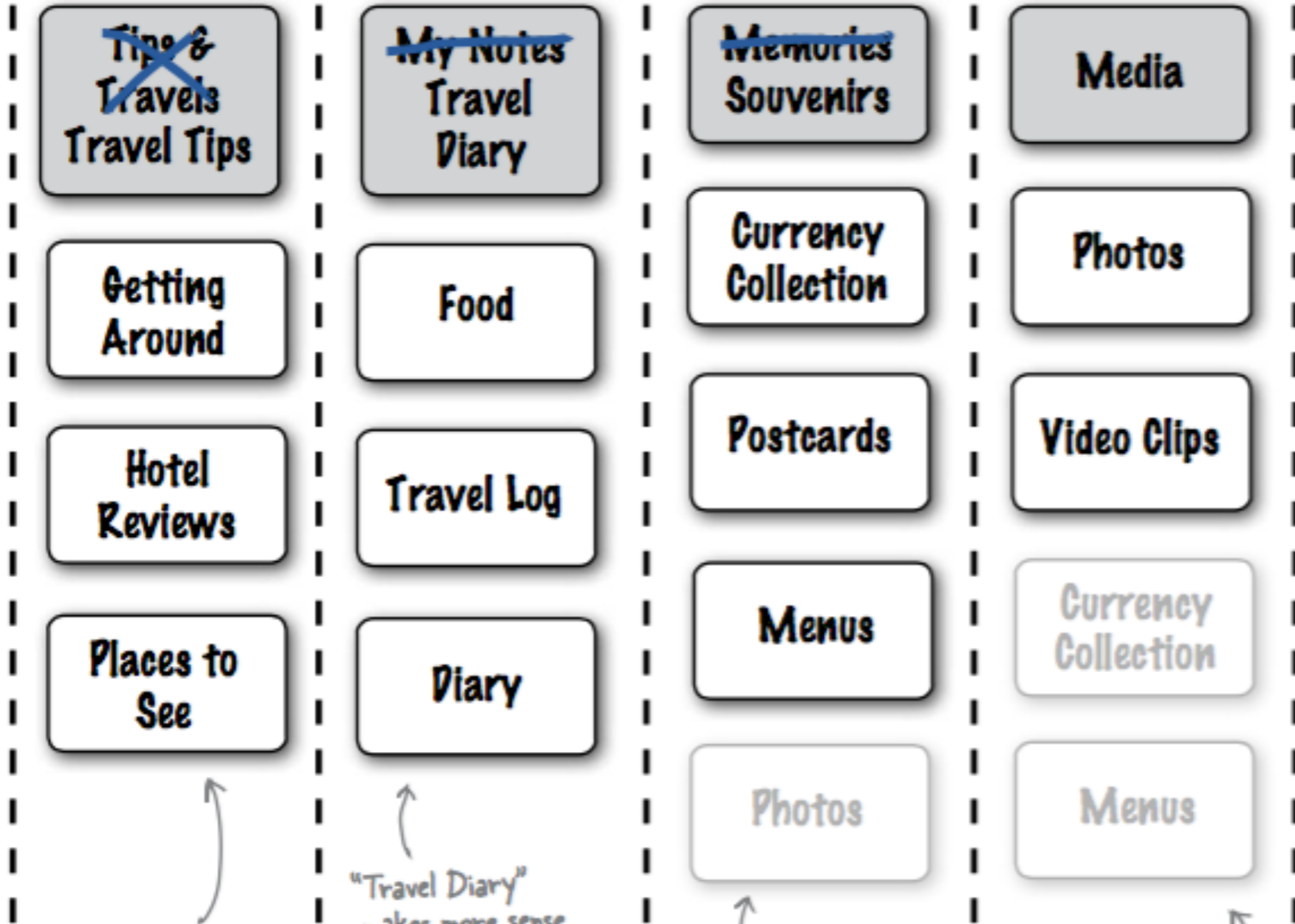
what's wrong?

Ambiguous navigation confuses users



To avoid confusion, make this one category.

"Memories" is a little vague. Let's use "Souvenirs" instead. It's concrete and understandable.



"Travel Tips" is still a little ambiguous, but it will work given the options we have with Mark's content.

"Travel Diary" makes more sense given the types of content that will be found here.

"Photos" belongs under media now.

"Media" is a good category, but "Currency Collection" and "Menus" belong in Souvenirs.

information architecture (IA)

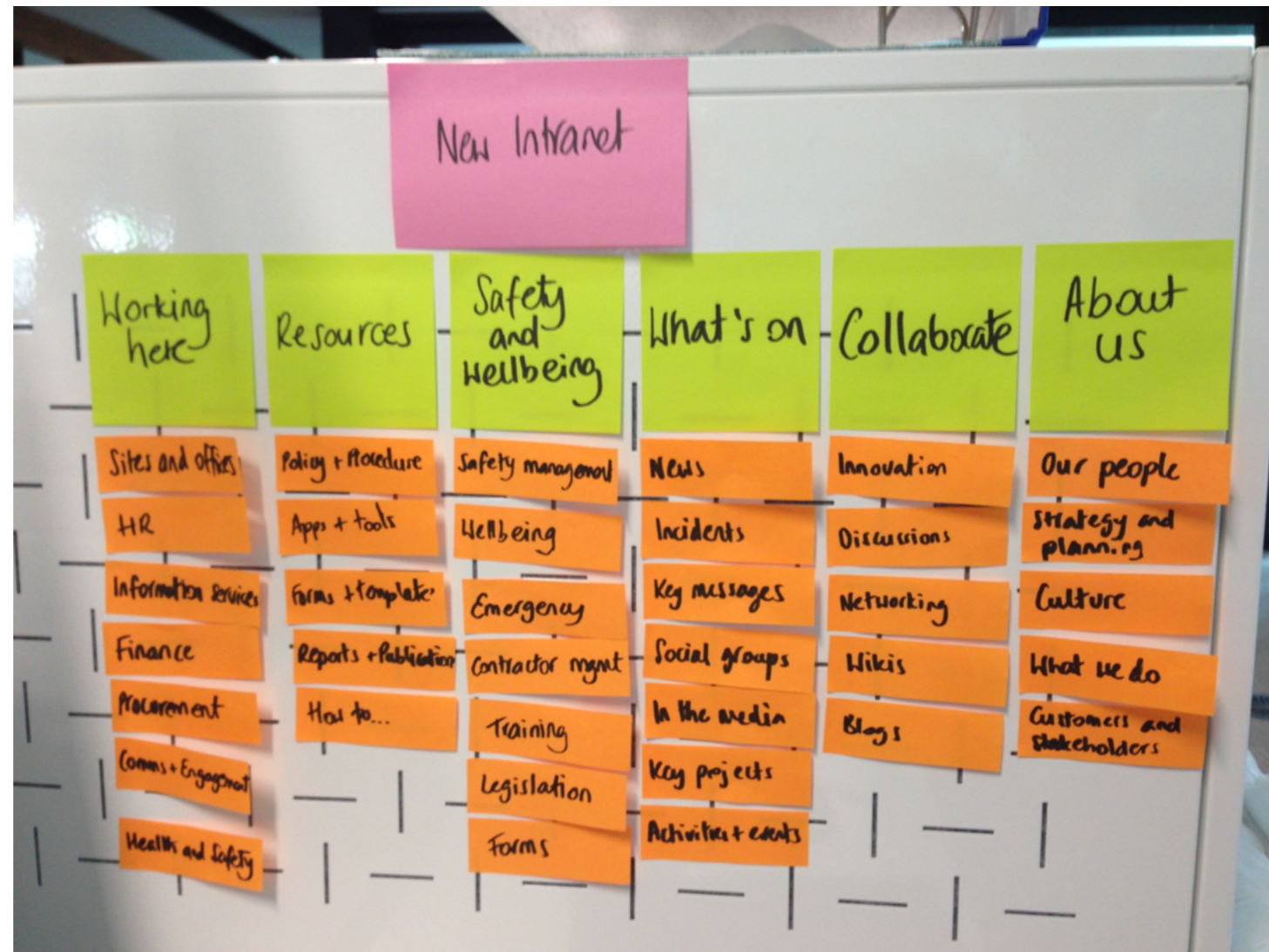
IA is just a way to organize the content you already have into groups.

Sometimes thinking about navigation, or categories, gets you too far into how a site is going to look... information architecture is all about taking a step back and really looking at what sort of content you've got!

but how do I get IA?

card sorting

a cheap and easy way to impose a structure on your site's information



Its now time to do a card sort based on Mark's content.

Mark learned a lot about Japanese culture and also compiled a list of travel advice for others planning a trip to the country.



Mark bought a rail pass and traveled all over Japan. He visited Tokyo, Hiroshima, Hikone, Kyoto and Yokohama.

Food was on Mark's mind most of his trip. He brought back menus and took lots of notes about what he ate.

Mark took video with his flip camera and lots of pictures everywhere he went.

What trip is complete without lots of images?

Landscape Photos

Pictures of cities, mountains and other places in Japan.

Travel Diary

Mark's notes about Japan while riding the bullet train to and from day trips.

Restaurant Menus

A collection of menus Mark picked up from various eateries around the country.

Video Clips

Short clips of video Mark took with his digital camera.

Activities

Notes about the daily things Mark did in Japan.

You might say Mark ate his way through Japan. Content about food is definitely important to Mark.

Tokyo

Mark visited the Tokyo Tower and got up early to go to the fish market.

Sushi

Mark's favorite food by-far was sushi. Notes and tips about eating sushi.

This is a more specific card, but sushi was an important part of Mark's trip.

Sort your cards into related stacks

Once you've finished filling out your cards, you need to sort them into groups.

The cards in each group should obviously be related and their grouping should make sense to you.

These groups will eventually become sections within Mark's website.

Orphaned cards force you to ask yourself: "Is this content really necessary?"



Media

Landscape Photos
 Pictures of cities, mountains and other places in Japan.

Video Clips
 Short clips of video Mark took with his digital camera.

People Photos
 Pictures of people and friends that Mark met along the way.



These seem like obvious chunks for a media category. Users would expect to find both photos and videos here.

Restaurant Menus
 A collection of menus Mark picked up from various eateries around the country.

Food Notes
 Notes about all the food and restaurants Mark visited.

Seems like we have quite a bit of food-related chunks. This could make for an interesting section of the site.

Food

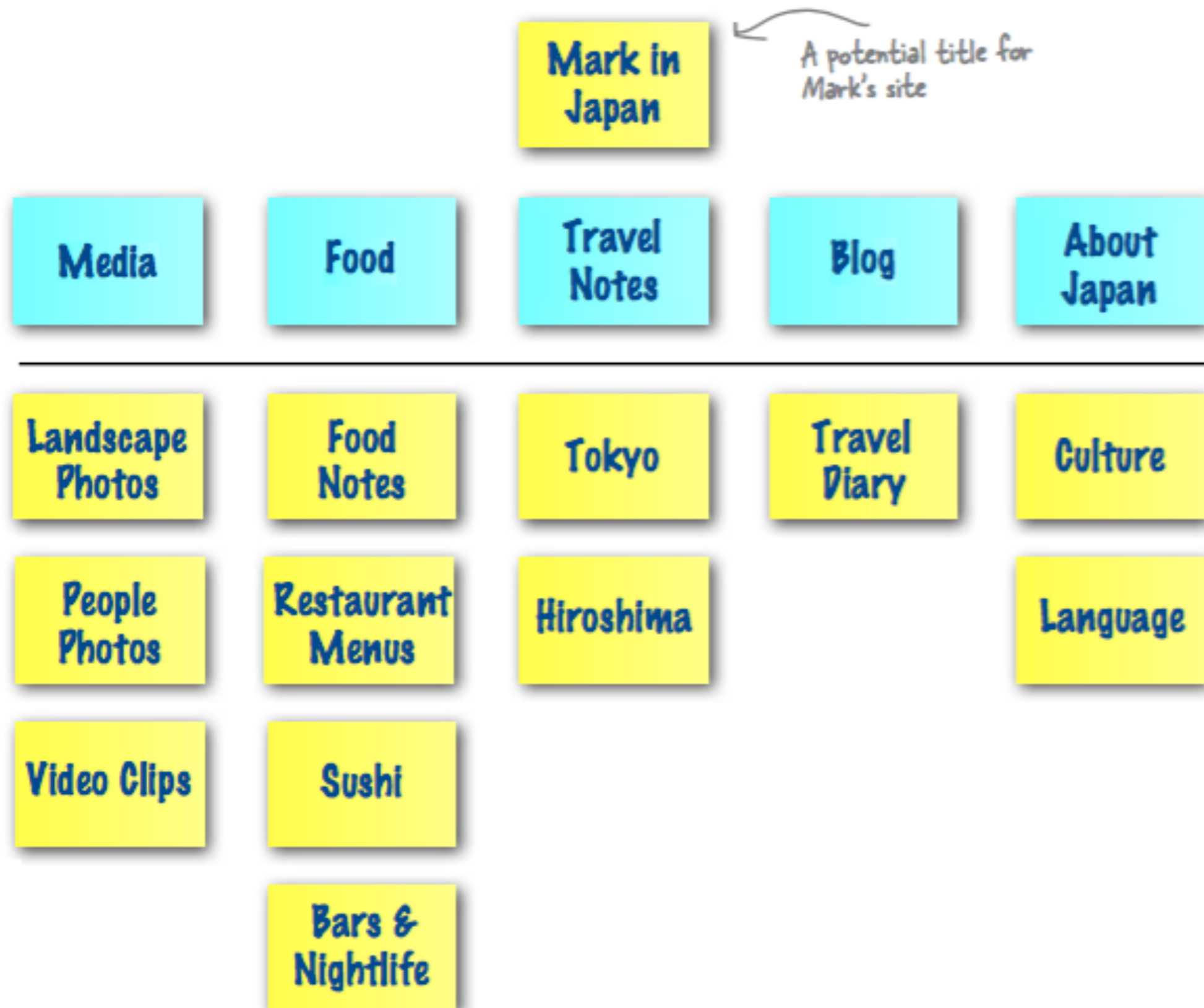


Sushi
 Mark's favorite food by far was sushi. Notes and tips about eating sushi.

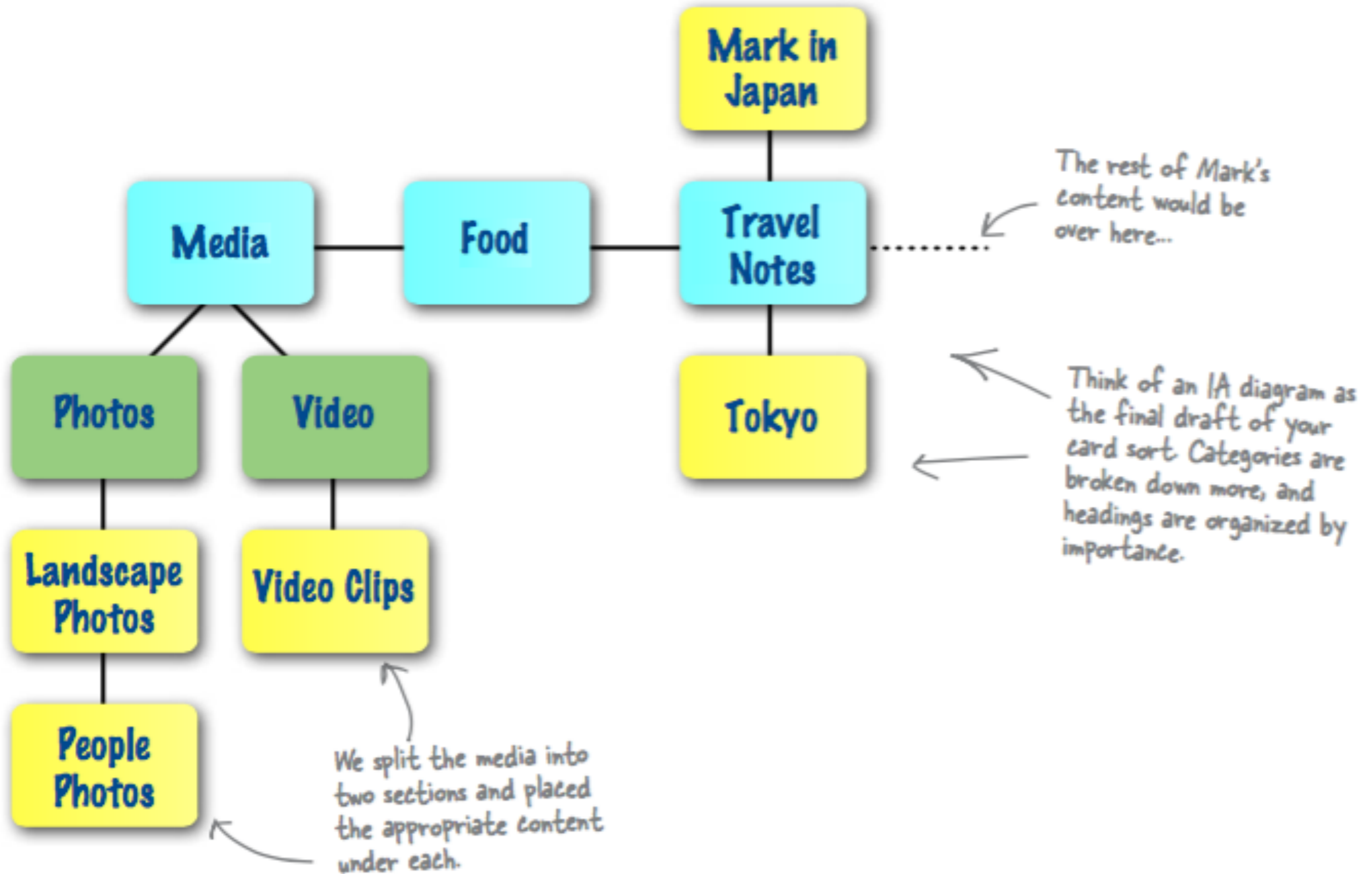
Activities
 Notes about the daily things Mark did in Japan.

This card doesn't seem to fit anywhere... we'll come back to it a bit later.

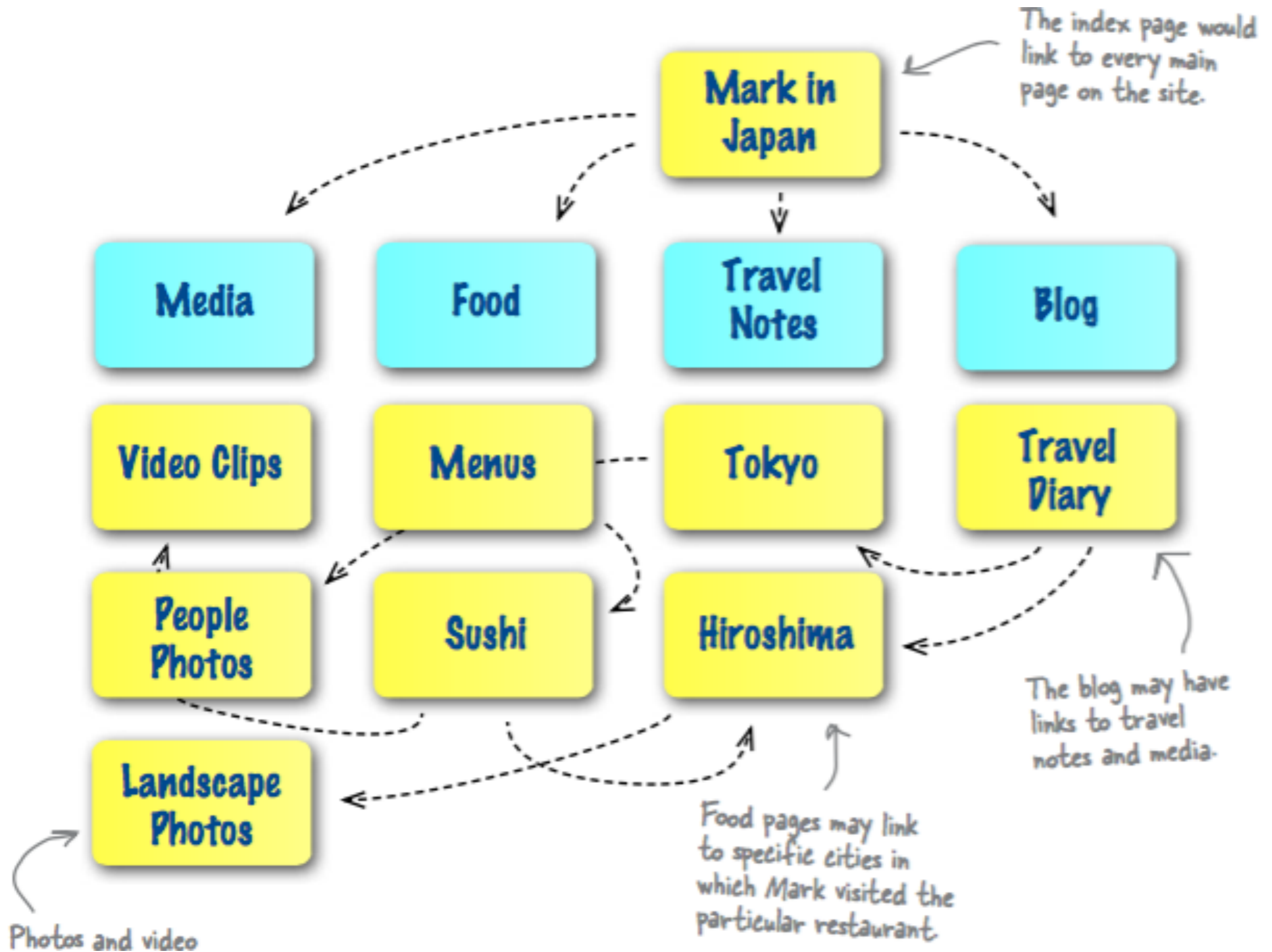
Arrange your cards into a site hierarchy



IA diagrams

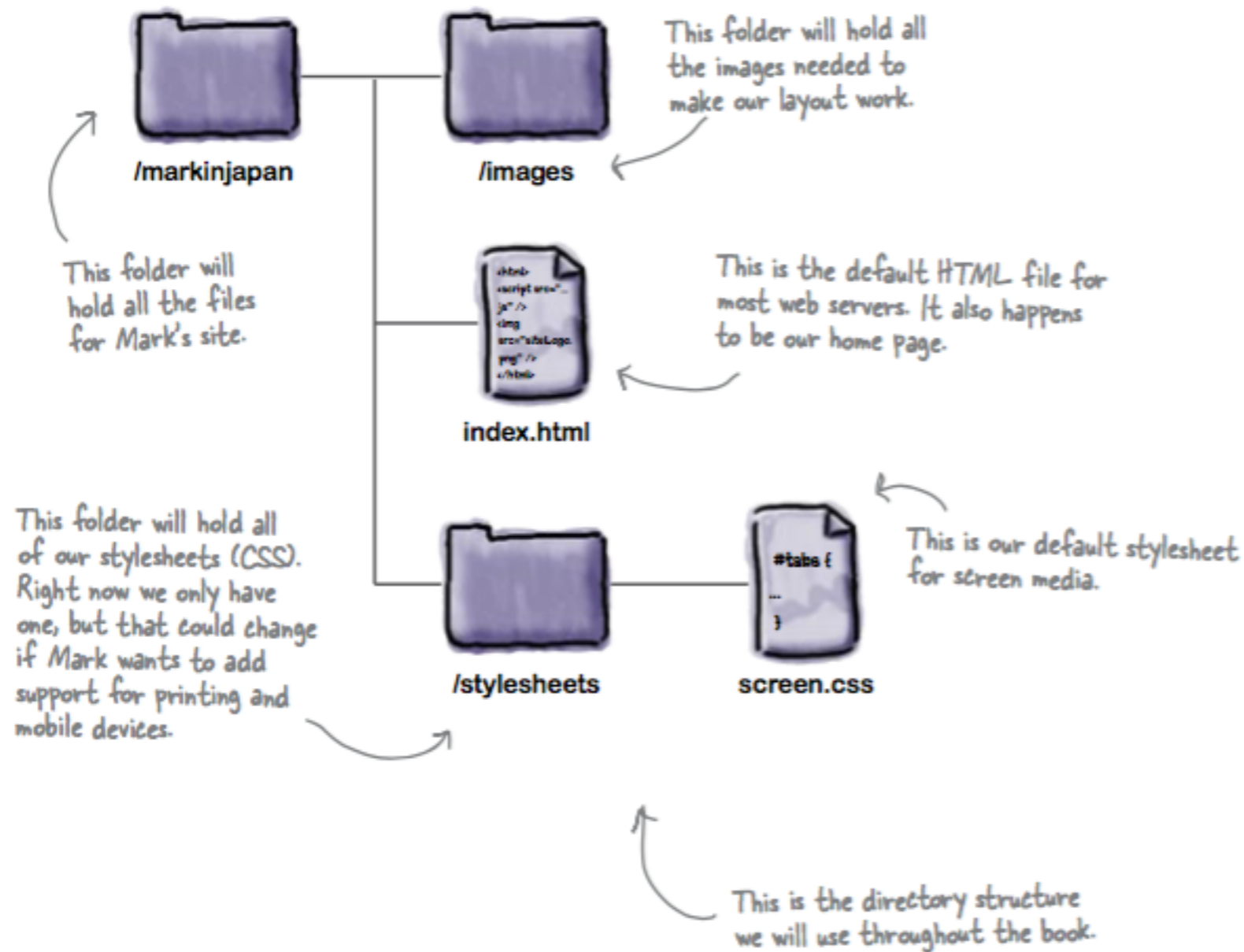


IA diagrams are NOT just links between pages!

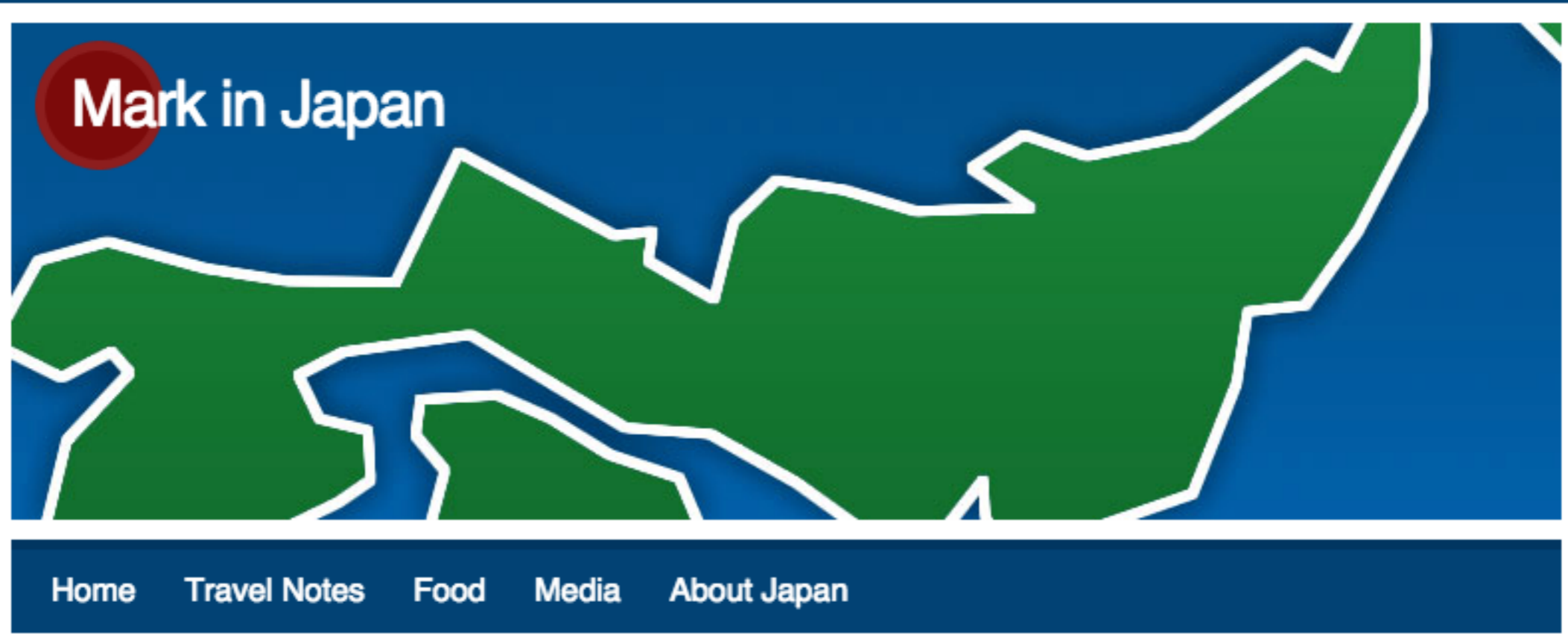


Turn on your pc now!

First of all, we have to build the site structure



after a few lines...



Sample Blog Post

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Pellentesque quis nisl eget est viverra placerat. Nam tincidunt ligula id turpis. Duis nunc. Nullam imperdiet quam ut magna. Suspendisse sed purus eu ante mattis elementum. Vivamus bibendum lectus non nisl. Sed porta, elit congue rhoncus consectetur, nulla risus faucibus metus, a interdum purus justo at ligula. Suspendisse potenti. Aenean purus mauris, aliquam et, varius et, vehicula vel, massa. In purus ipsum, auctor sit amet, tempus sed, tempus non, sem. Donec leo. Cras justo nunc, vulputate ut, tristique et, facilisis sit amet, arcu. Curabitur vel pede nec nibh condimentum consectetur.

Sidebar Heading

Fusce diam. Pellentesque bibendum. Nulla viverra vestibulum justo. Pellentesque pulvinar sapien. Cras vestibulum elit id nibh hendrerit eleifend. Pellentesque id ante. Sed volutpat blandit mi.

summing up

1 Gather all the your content.



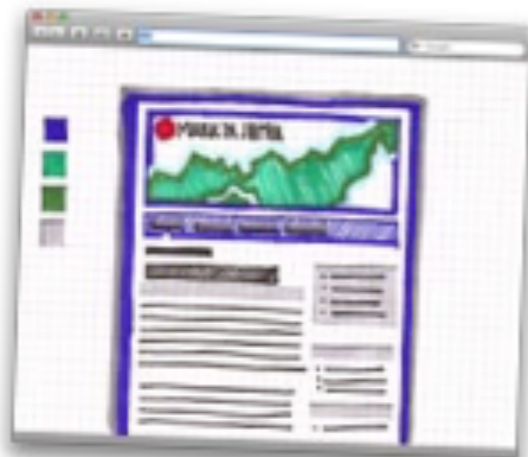
2 Brainstorm a theme and visual metaphor ideas.



3 Develop a visual metaphor and think about layout.



4 Build a storyboard (on paper).



5 Do a few card sorts and create an IA diagram.



6 Markup your content and style with CSS.

