

How I solved the problem I created by using iframes


A simple website architecture?
It depends on what you call simple.



Agenda

- Design goals – what led to the problem
- Basic website architecture
- The Search Engine Bug
- JavaScript solution – so simple, so elegant, so tedious to implement

Design Goals for ct-amc.org

- Simple pages – all text
 - No graphic menus
 - Easy to build rollovers
 - Many hands and no common software
 - Separate complicated code from the routine stuff
 - Structured design principles
 - Server-side includes
 - Modular construction using common CSS
- 

Design in a Nutshell

- “Standards” but not templates due to different software (changing)
- Rollover menus are all text and CSS
- Content is simple web pages displayed in iframes
- Example: most anywhere on ct-amc.org

The Search Engine Bug

- Searching finds text in the “content” pages and presents link to the user
 - Clicking a link displays the content page but no menus and no navigation
 - Example:
 - Before: search for “Young Members committee qualifies HIKE leaders” on [Ask.com](#)
 - After: search for “Your membership supports the important work of the Appalachian Mountain Club” on [Yahoo!](#)
-
-

The Solution

- Everyone agreed this was tough – some said to abandon the design
 - Searching JavaScript sites found two potential solutions
 - Force Page into an IFrame
(javascript.about.com/library/bliframe.htm)
 - Load a page in an external pages iFrame
(dynamicdrive.com/forums/archive/index.php/t-22271.html) [Interestingly, this page illustrates the same bug we are trying to cure.]
-
-

How this works

- My solution is a simpler, more elegant, combination of the two.
- Code must be included in every page, both menu and content.



How this works

If menu page loads first (normal):

- Code in menu page sees nothing following the URL and loads content.htm in iframe as the default
- Code in content page sees that it is not top location and does nothing

How this works

If content page loads first (link):

- Code in content page sees that it is the top document
 1. Gets it's own URL
 2. Tacks that on to 'index.shtml?' and
 3. Redirects the browser
- Now code in index.shtml runs
 1. Parses the URL and gets the content page URL
 2. Uses DOM to set iframe src to requested page

How this works

The content page code

In <head> section:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
if (self.location == top.location &&  
location.search.substring(1) != 'nf')  
top.location.href = 'index.shtm?' + escape(self.location);  
</script>
```

How this works

The menu page code

Also in <head> section:

```
<script type="text/javascript">  
function loadIframe(){  
    var curl = location.search.substring(1) ?  
        unescape(location.search.substring(1)) : 'content.htm';  
    window.frames["MainFrame"].location=curl;  
}  
onload=loadIframe;  
</script>
```



The Original Solutions

First solution generated the iframe code during the onload event.

- Force Page into an Iframe
 - Makes code harder to maintain
 - Breaks the WYSIWYG display in the editor
 - But it does work
-
-

The Original Solutions

Second solution uses the DOM and points to the real solution but does not work as presented

Load a page in an external pages iFrame

- Question is to a different problem
 - Suggested code points to using the DOM and onload event
 - Combining the code and simplifying gave the solution in use today
-
-

The End...

