Mobile Design Pattern: Fly-out Menu

This design pattern is part of the Mobile Design Patterns series.

Description

A list of clickable links or sub menu that appears when focus is on a particular menu item is known as a fly-out menu.

Advantage

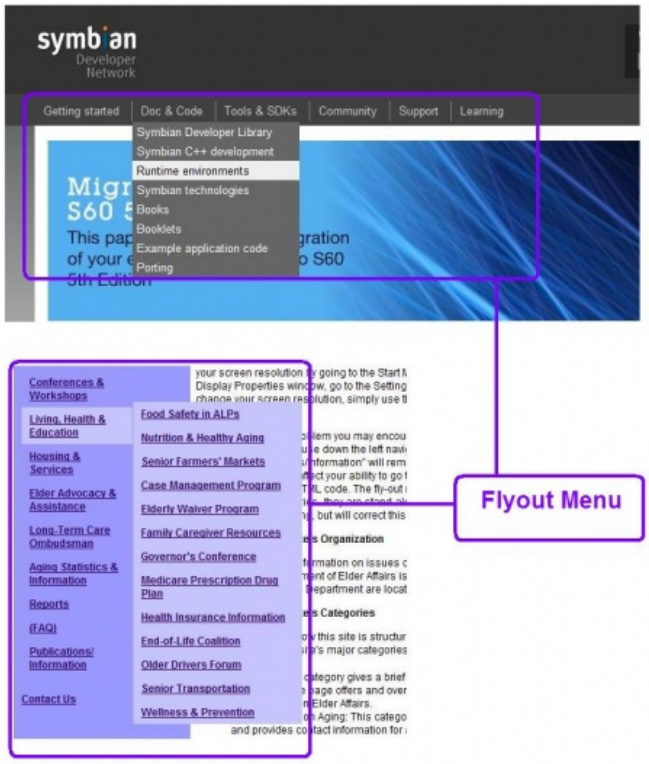
- Saves screen space for better utilization.

Disadvantage

- Prima facie, fly-out menus have a drawback to hide the navigation options from the website audience and should be judged to be used appropriately.

Use when

This component of web design may be used on websites the end user has more navigation but limited screen space. A fly-out menu may be used to reduce the screen space occupied by the navigation bar/column. The fly out menu can be accomplished in a horizontal or vertical navigation bar, as shown in screenshots, respectively.



In the above screenshot, the website has many navigation options and hence using fly-out menus is a good idea here.

Use how

The fly-out menu works or appears when a mouse over event occurs. The fly-out menu may appear in the up or down direction. If the Menu bar is vertical the fly-out appear or pop-up sideways.

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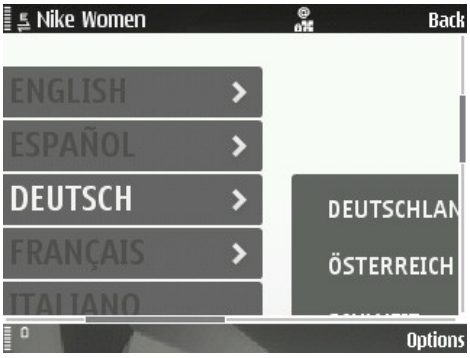
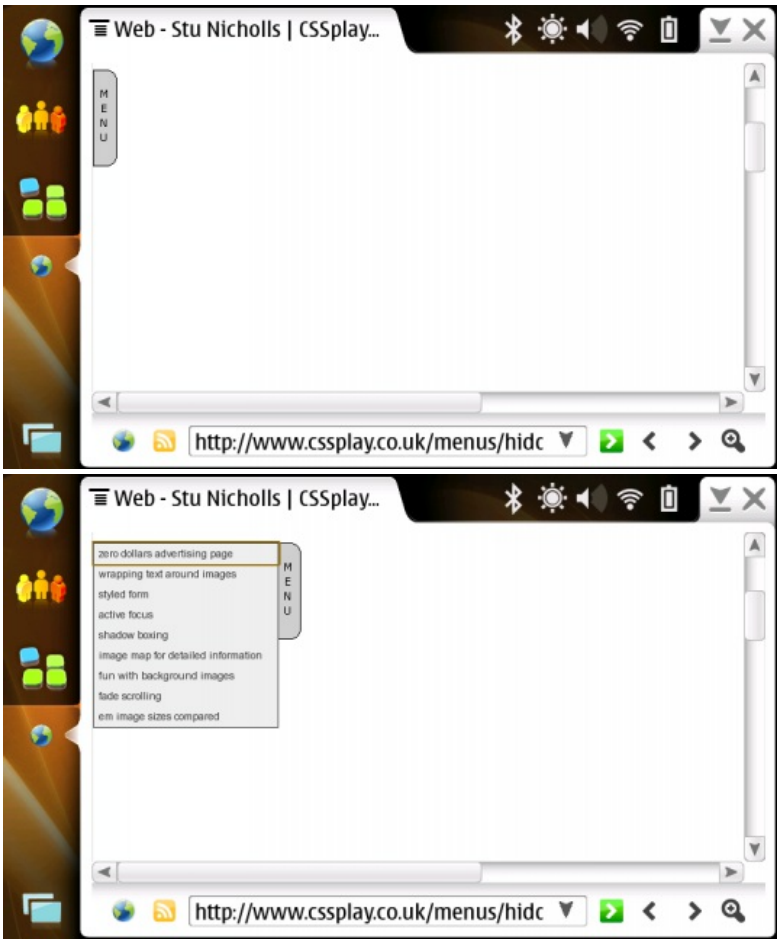


Exceptions

Pure fly-out menus may not be possible in devices accepting tactile input like S60 5th Edition devices like Nokia 5800 Xpress Music and Maemo internet tablets like Nokia N810. However, an adaptation of the fly-out menu - click able fly-out menus may be implemented in such devices.



Design Tips

- The delay between the mouse over event and fly-out menu appear event should be kept minimum.
- A potential problem encountered with fly-out menus is "sticking". To avoid this problem the fly-out menu should disappear as soon as the mouse over event is over. In other words, the user should be able to see the screen under the fly-out menu immediately as the mouse pointer leaves the button.

--Submitted by croozeus 01:18, 12 May 2009 (EEST)

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