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KECUDO APP DESIGN SERIES · CLASS 2

# App Structures

PREMIUM II EDITION

Information architecture, navigation, user flows, onboarding, design systems and usability testing, as one app grows from a screen to a product.




2026 EDITION · CREATOR SERIES

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*Chapter One · Part I*

# Information Architecture

FOUNDATION

Information architecture (IA) is the skeleton of an app: what content exists, how it is grouped, what each group is called and how people move between groups. Users never see IA directly, but they feel it every time they find something on the first try, or fail to.

## 1.1 What IA is

IA answers three questions: **organizing** (what goes together?), **labeling** (what do we call it?) and **navigating** (how do people get there?). Good IA follows the user's mental model, not the company's org chart or the database.

## 1.2 Content inventory

Start by listing everything the app holds or does. In Class 1, Pocket Pantry had one screen. Now it needs to hold recipes, weekly plans, a shopping list, saved favorites, household members and settings: 23 items in the first inventory.

## 1.3 Card sorting

Write each item on a card and ask users to group them. In an **open sort** users name the groups themselves; in a **closed sort** they place cards into groups you defined. Fifteen users is a common sample for a card sort.

| Card (closed sort, 15 users) | Placed in | Agreed |
|---|---|---|
| Shopping list | List | 14/15 (93%) |
| Favorite recipes | Recipes | 12/15 (80%) |
| Leftovers | Plan | 7/15 (47%) |

Low agreement (Leftovers, 47%) is a warning: users disagree on where it lives, so the label or the place needs work.

## 1.4 Labels users understand

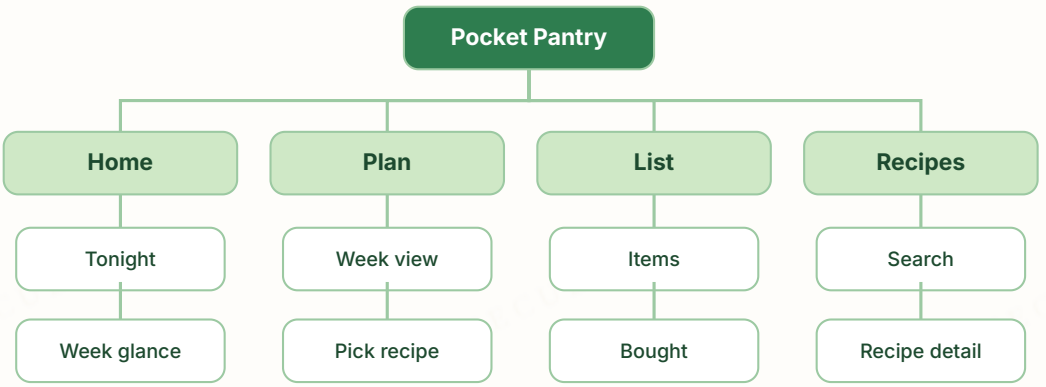
Use the words users used in interviews, not internal jargon. Pocket Pantry's team called the weekly plan the "Meal Matrix". Users called it "this week" or "the plan". The tab is now simply **Plan**.

- Short: one or two words for tabs
- Specific: "Shopping list", not "Items"
- Distinct: no two labels that could mean the same thing

## 1.5 Drawing the app map

An app map shows every screen and how it is grouped. Keep everyday tasks within two levels of a tab.

**FIG 1.1** · Pocket Pantry app map (top two levels)




*4 tabs · max 2 levels deep for everyday tasks*

**Kecudo Note.** Leftovers moved into the Plan tab as a "Use leftovers" card after a second sort raised agreement to 12/15 (80%).

### Key takeaways

- IA = organizing, labeling, navigating.
- Card sorts reveal how users group things.
- Use users' words; keep everyday tasks shallow.

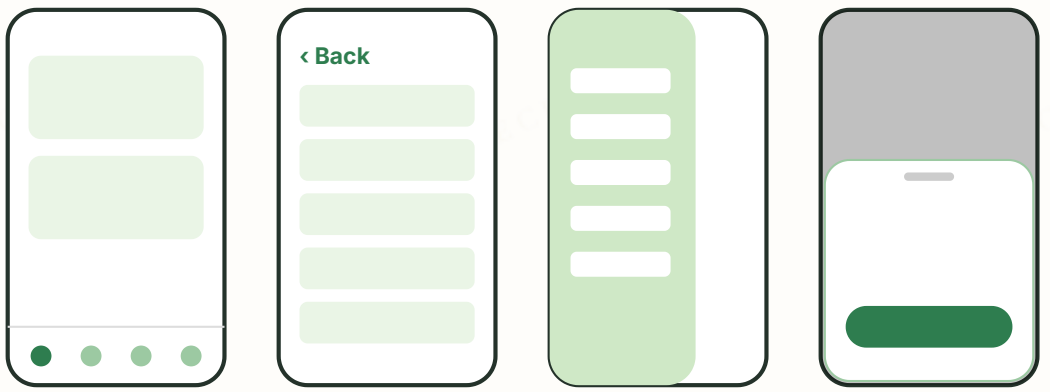
*Chapter Two · Part I*

# Navigation Patterns

●○○ FOUNDATION

Navigation is how people move around the structure you designed. Mobile apps use a small set of standard patterns, and users already know them from other apps. The skill is choosing the right one for your structure.

**FIG 2.1** · Four common mobile navigation patterns




## 2.1 Tab bar

A bar at the bottom with **3–5** top-level sections, always visible. It is easy to reach with a thumb and shows where you are. Best when users switch between sections often.

## 2.2 Stack (drill-down)

Each tap pushes a new screen on top: list → detail → sub-detail. A back control returns one level. Best for moving deeper into one topic.

## 2.3 Navigation drawer

A hidden side menu. It holds many items, but out of sight is out of mind: features in drawers get used less. Use it for rarely needed sections, not core ones.

*Chapter Three · Part I*

# User Flows & Task Flows

FOUNDATION

Screens don't exist alone. Users move through them to reach a goal. Flows map that movement step by step, so you can see where people get stuck, take detours or give up before you build anything.

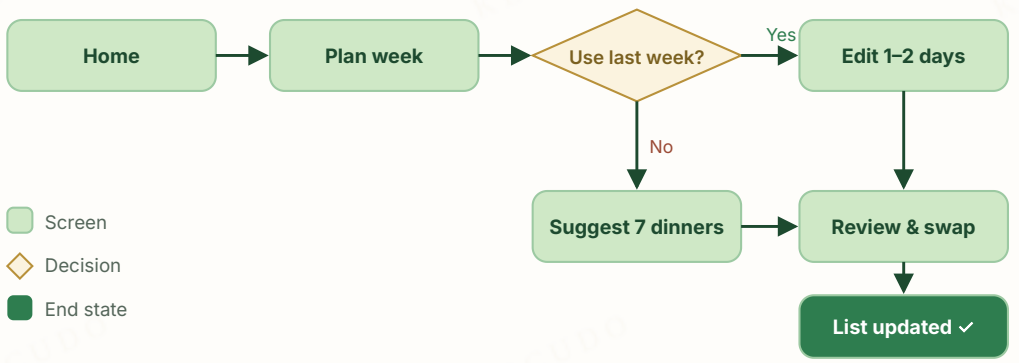
## 3.1 Three kinds of maps

| Map | Shows | Use it to |
|---|---|---|
| Task flow | One path for one task | Design a feature |
| User flow | Paths with choices and branches | Find edge cases |
| Journey map | The whole experience, incl. feelings, outside the app too | Find big opportunities |

## 3.2 Flow notation

Keep it simple: rectangles for **screens**, diamonds for **decisions**, arrows for **actions**, and a clear **end state**.

**FIG 3.1** · Task flow: "Plan a week of meals" (new design)



*Self-assessment*

# Test Yourself

25 questions, five parts. Each answer locks and explains itself; your score is in the top bar.

## Part A · Basics

**1. Information architecture is mainly about...**

- **A** Choosing brand colors
- **B** Writing the app's code
- **C** Organizing, labeling and navigating content
- **D** Setting the app's price

**2. In a closed card sort, users...**

- **A** Place cards into groups you defined
- **B** Name their own groups
- **C** Draw screens
- **D** Vote on colors

**3. A tab bar works best with...**

- **A** 1 section
- **B** 10 or more sections
- **C** Only settings
- **D** 3–5 main sections

**4. A skeleton screen is used for...**

- **A** Empty lists
- **B** Loading content
- **C** Error messages
- **D** Onboarding slides

**5. Design tokens are...**

- **A** In-app coins
- **B** Named design values
- **C** Login passwords
- **D** Icon files

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*Thank you for learning with Kecudo.*

NEXT IN THE SERIES

## Class 3 · The App Market

App stores, business models, key metrics, budgets, launch and growth, as Kecudo Apps Co. takes Pocket Pantry to market.