The State of Mac Web Design

Jason Cranford Teague

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What this is *not* about

- HTML, XHTML, DHTML, JavaScript, CSS, XML or other Web Technologies
- Web Design Tips and Tricks
- Designing Web Sites on Mac vs. PCs

What this is about

- Web Design Process
- Web Design Deliverables
- Web Design Applications

The Process

A large Web site built without the benefit of a blueprint will fail as surely as a large building built without the benefit of an architectural blueprint. But even if you are building a garden-shed-size Web site, a good plan will save you time in the long run.

All plans require that you follow a process that is understood by everyone concerned with the project, whether they are designers, developers, managers, or the client. For Web design, we can break the process down to three basic steps, each with its own documentation and deliverables:

- Define

- Design

- Develop

Define

The web is about information and before you can begin your Web design you need to define the information you are presenting and how the user will interact with that information.

Deliverables

- UI (Site) Map

- Process Flows
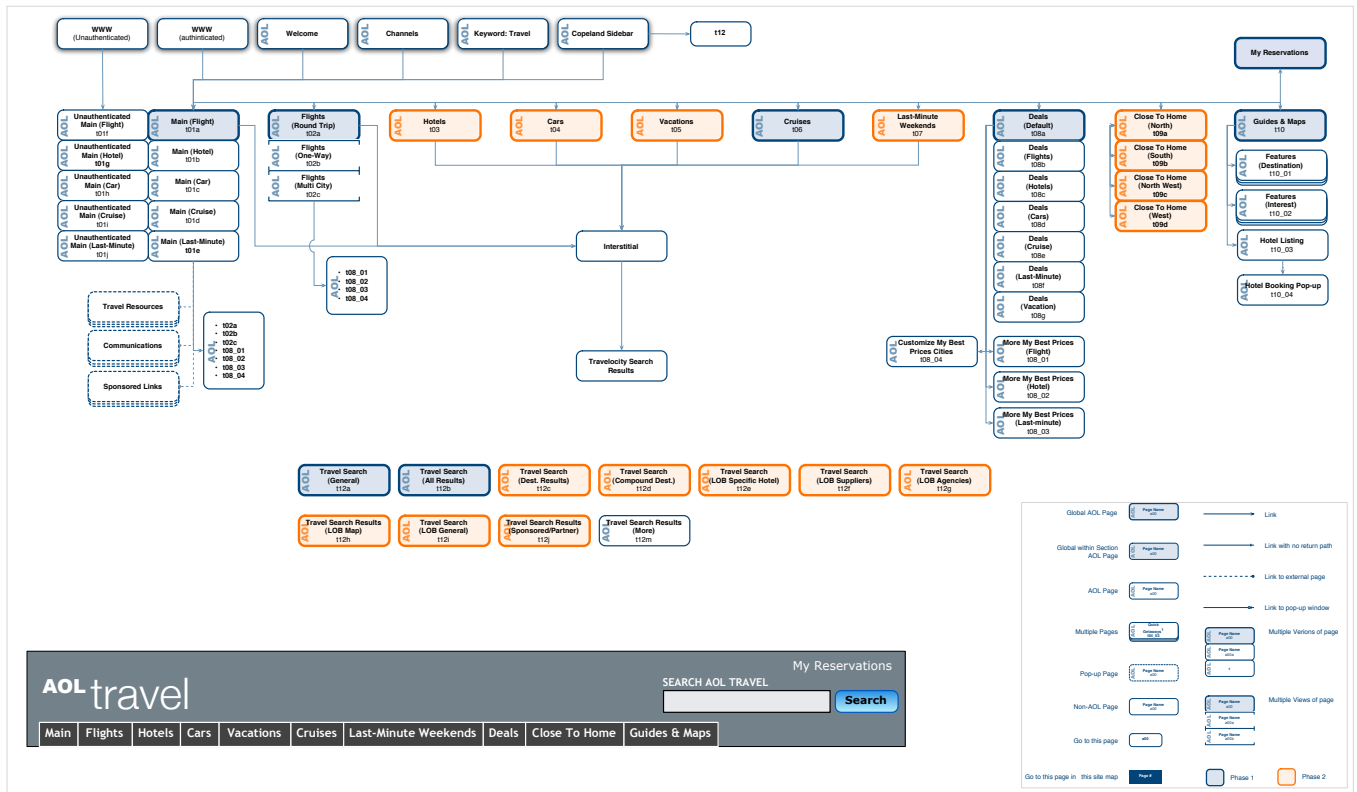
- Wireframes

- UI Requirements Document

Deliverables:
UI Map

A UI map (often called a site map) allows other people (clients, graphic designers, programmers, project managers, and so on) to see the site structure at a glance. It gives them a common blueprint to work with and reference.

Most UI maps will use a flowchart like structure to show how the various pages within the site link and relate to each other. Generally, pages in the site are represented by rectangles and links between the pages as lines.

Application	Rating	Notes
Illustrator	✪ ✪ ✪ ✪ ✪	Lacks many of the features to be able to quickly create UI Maps.
OmniGraffle	✪ ✪ ✪ ✪ ✪	An excellent Mac only alternative to Visio.
ConceptDraw	✪ ✪ ✪ ✪ ✪	Another great Mac Alternative to Visio, but with a clunky interface.
Freehand	✪ ✪ ✪ ✪ ✪	Excellent controls.
GoLive	✪ ✪ ✪ ✪ ✪	Although GoLive includes the ability to quickly build UI Maps that can then be turned into pages for development, it has limited output options for documentation.

Site Map

Site navigation allows quick access to all areas of the channel from the navigation bar.

Site Map v1.0

Project: Graceland
Client: AOL Travel
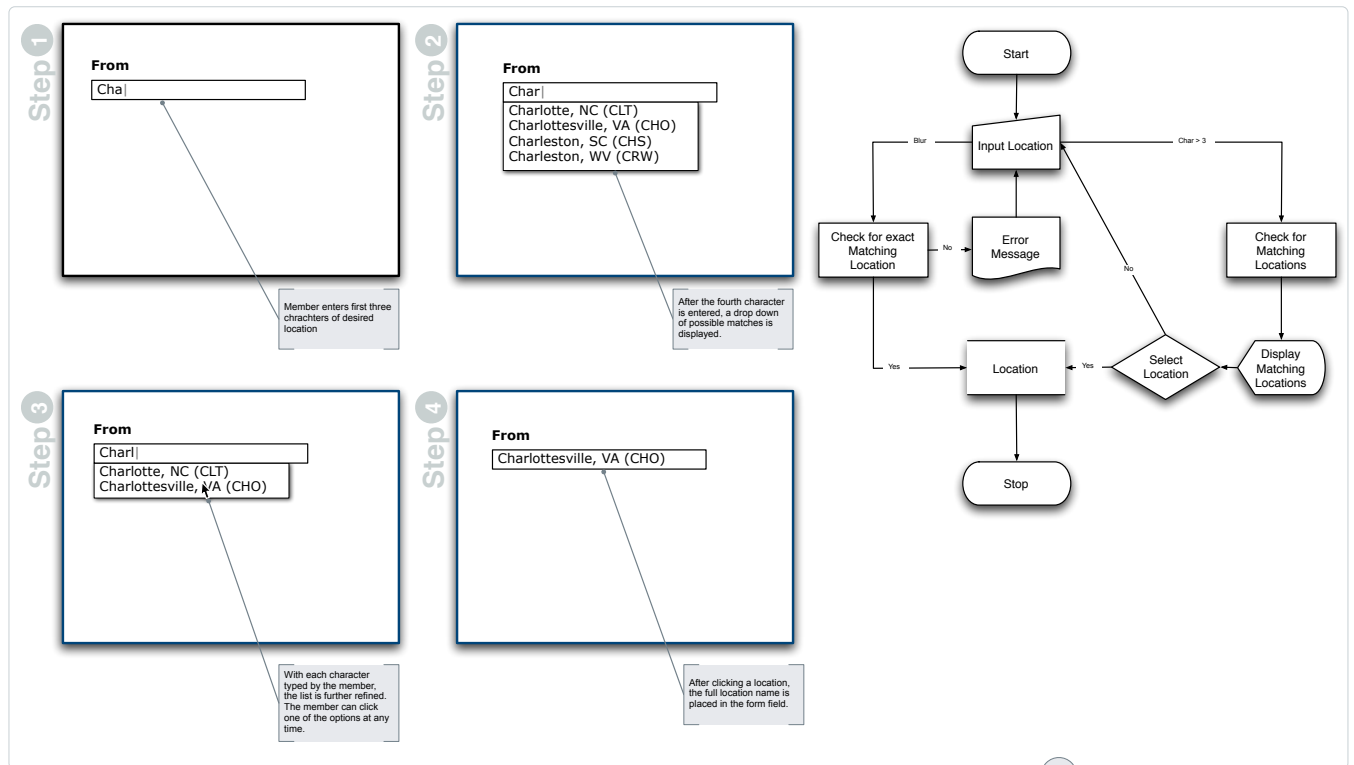**Date:** 02 November 2004

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Deliverables:
Story-Boards & Process Flows

Story boards take the UI Map one step further, providing a general visual representation of a page or part of the page, which contains an involved functionality that requires additional explanation. Generally, story-boards show interactions between the user and the Web page, showing each action and reaction as a separate thumb-nail sketch.

Process flows are used to show the detailed decision paths involved with a particular interactive process showing all possible paths and decisions.

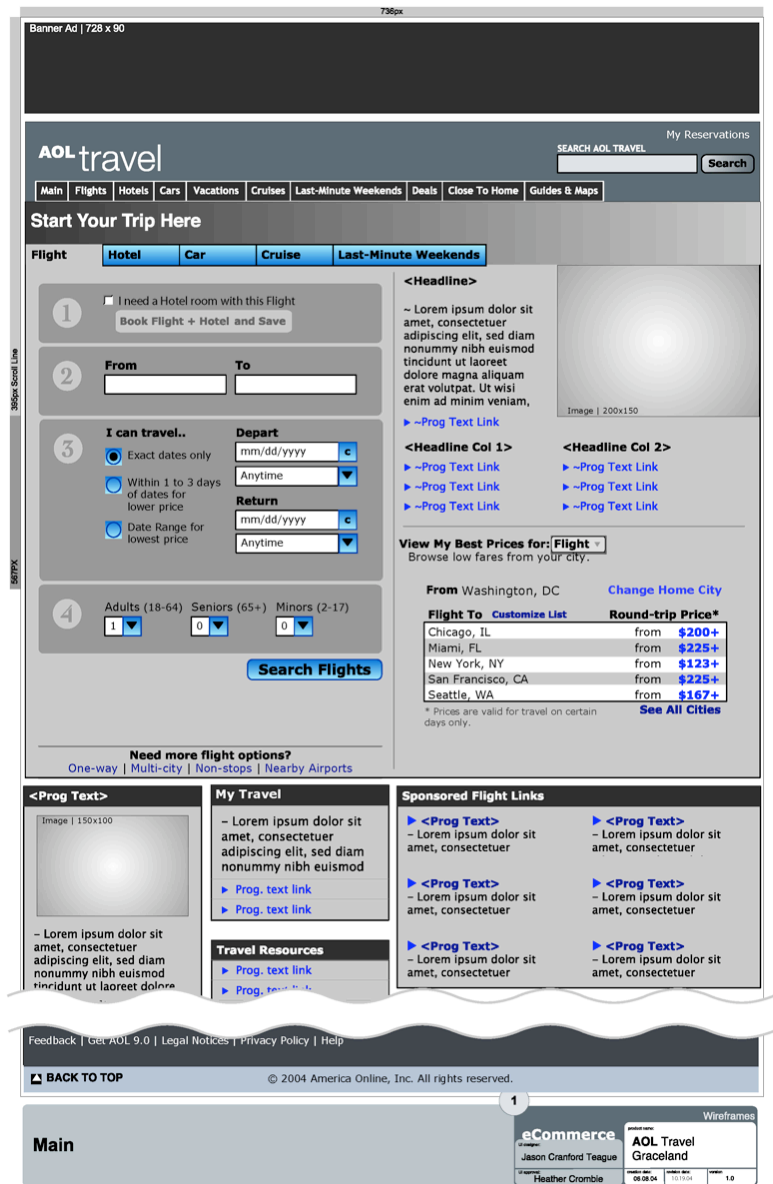| Application	Rating	Notes
Illustrator	●●○○○	Good for general story-board illustration, but limited to a single page per document, making multi-page documents difficult.
OmniGraffle	●●●●●	Combines strong illustration tools with easy flowcharting tools.
ConceptDraw	●●●○○	Good for process flows, but awkward for story-boarding.
Freehand	●●●●○	Combines strong illustration tools with easy flowcharting tools.

Smartbox

Deliverables:

Wireframes

Wireframes present the general structure (layout-grid) that will be used for Web pages within the site and the basic placement of elements within the page. Wireframes are not meant to indicate the exact visual treatment of the page, so avoid using colors; although you may want to use a color like blue to indicate clickable items.
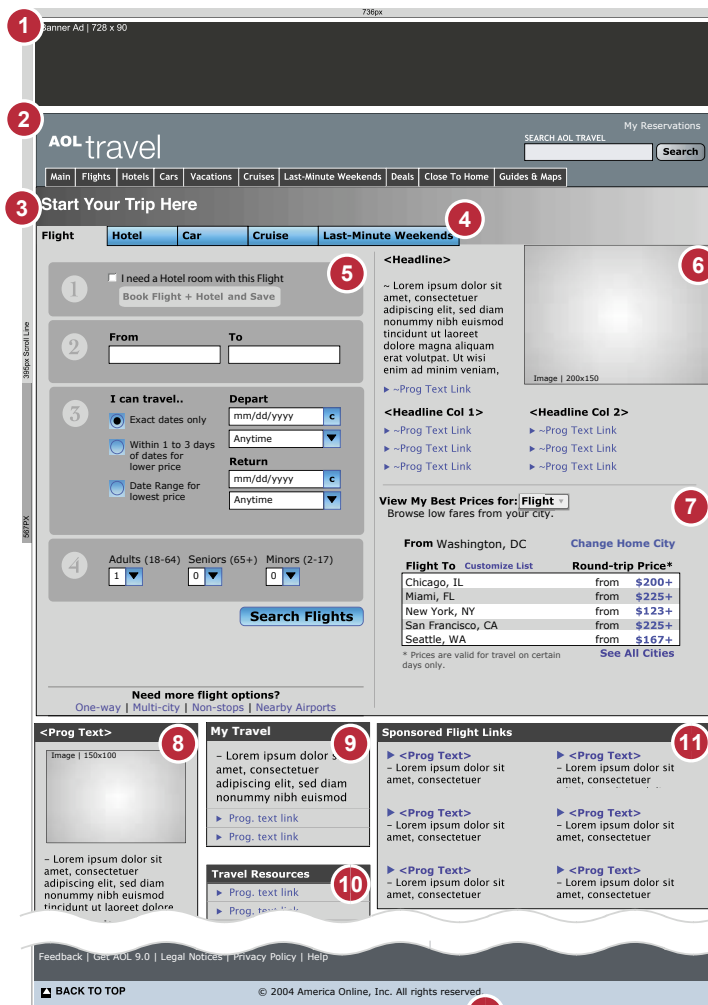
Application	Rating	Notes
Illustrator	⚙⚙⚙○○	Excellent illustration tools. Difficult for multi-page documents.
Photoshop	⚙⚙○○○	Difficult for multi-page documents.
OmniGraffle	⚙⚙⚙⚙○	Excellent tools for precision wireframing, but limited illustration tools.
ConceptDraw	⚙⚙⚙○○	Awkward for heavy illustration duties.
FireWorks	⚙⚙⚙○○	Difficult for multi-page documents.
Freehand	⚙⚙⚙⚙○	Excellent illustration tools and allows multi-page documents.

Deliverables:
UI Requirements

The UI requirements collects the previous deliverables into a single document for presentation. This document also uses call out to specify the exact nature of all elements on the screen including a description, dimensions, user interactions, and system reactions.

Application	Rating	Notes
Word	●●○○○	Difficult to use for complex multi-column designs, but has good table tools.
InDesign	●●●●○	Best for professional looking documentation. Excellent table tools.
Writer	NA	Word-processor built for OS X. Good alternative to Microsoft Word.
Pages	NA	New word-processor and page layout software from Apple computer.

2:1 AOL Travel Main

Overview

The Travel Main screen is the primary entry point for AOL Visitors.

ID	Name	Description/Notes	Width x Height	Details
1	Banner Ad	•Includes "ADVERTISER" label •Click to load link in new window	728x90	Load Link URL in a NEW window
2	Header		728x80	See 1:1 (Header)
3	Page Header		728x40	
4	Mega-module	•Includes: Booking, Feature, and My Best Prices... Modules for each tab •Flight (Default), Hotel, Car, Cruise, and Last-Minute Tabs	728x*	Click tab to change booking module, Feature, My Best Prices, and banner ad
5	Booking		360x*	See 2:3 (Booking)
6	Primary Promo		360x*	See 2:23 (Feature)
7	My Best Prices...		360x*	See 1:4 (My Best Prices)
8	Secondary Promo		176x*	See 1:17 (Promo)
9	Communications	•(Optional) Alert message •Welcome message with links to Join or sign in	176x*	See 1:18 (Communications)
10	Travel Resources	•(Optional) Alert message •Welcome message with links to Join or sign in	176x*	See 1:19 (Travel Resources)
11	Sponsored Links	•Stack of 6 max text ads •Text ad: 18char max programmable title: 45char max text with link	360x*	See 1:14 (Sponsored Links)
12	Footer		728x40	See 1:1 (Footer)

* Indicates variable height

Design Requirements Document v3.2 © 2005 AOL Confidential and Proprietary

Project: Graceland
Client: AOL Travel
Date: 07 March 2005

2:1

Design

"Design" can mean many different things, but is generally used to refer to visual design. This goes beyond just adding graphics on-top of the wireframes, though. Care has to be given to making sure that the visual design places the correct emphasis where it is most needed.

Deliverables

- Mood Board

- Comps

- Visual Requirements

Deliverables :

Mood Boards

Mood Boards are a first step in design where the designer begins to put together the visual elements that will eventually go into making the interface. This includes the basic color palette, rough sketches of the chrome, and images that reflect the general look and feel that is desired.

Application	Rating	Notes
Illustrator	✪✪✪○○	Excellent illustration tools. Difficult for multi-page documents.
Photoshop	✪✪○○○	Difficult for multi-page documents.
Freehand	✪✪✪✪✪	Great for simple layouts with photos and illustrations.
Fireworks	✪✪✪○○	Difficult for multi-page documents.
OmniGraffle	✪✪✪✪○	Great for simple layouts with photos, but limited illustration.
Pen & Pencil	✪✪✪✪✪	Drawing by hand and scanning work in for presentation can be highly effective.

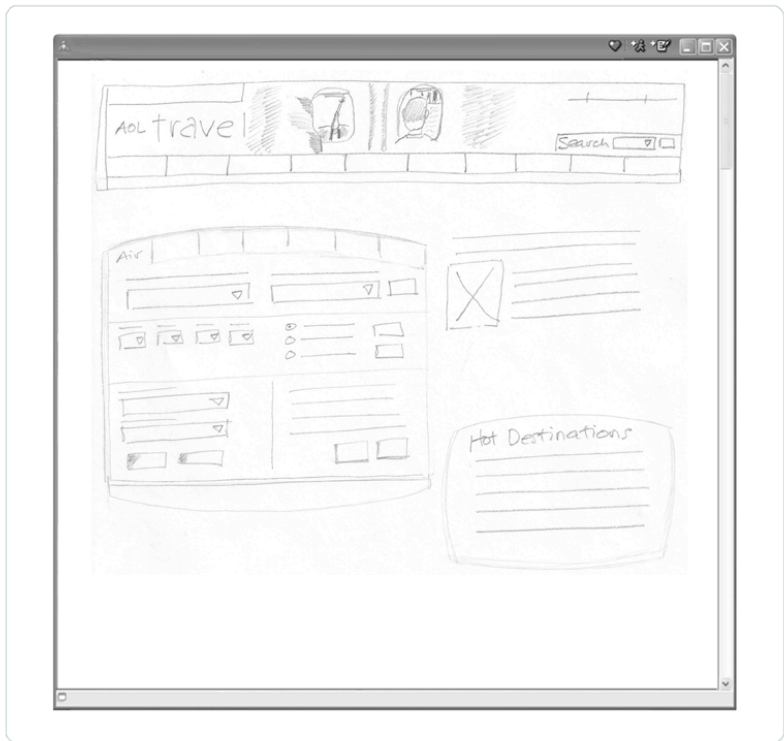STUDIO @ AOL

CONCEPT SKETCH 1: Window View

Concept: From a window (plane or car) glimpse the different travel scenery as it whizzes by.
Key Phrases: fun, exceitment, wanderlust, motion.

Color Palette

Primary   Secondary

Member   20 ○ ○ ○ ⊕ ⊕ ⊕ ○ 50

Reference Material

Font Samples   **Sample 1**   Bus. Partner Name
Sample 2   Studio Partner Name
Date Date

Deliverables :

Comps

The comps (composites) are the main thrust of the visual design, presenting a static version of what the final interface will look like.

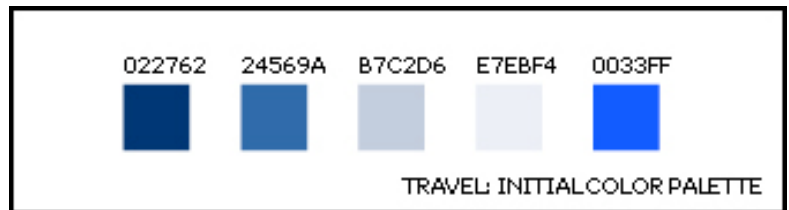| Application	Rating	Notes
Illustrator	●●●●●	Powerful vector illustration tool for creating final designs.
Photoshop	●●●●●	Powerful bit-map illustration tool for creating final designs
Freehand	●●●○○	Decent illustration tools.
Fireworks	●●●●●	Combines strong vector and bit-map editing tools for final designs.
Flash	●●●○○	Although Illustrator and Freehand offer comping tools for Flash, many designers prefer to simply start in Flash.

Deliverables :
Visual Requirements

Although the comps show what the final interface should look like, details such as the exact color values, fonts, and other styles should be detailed as a reference for developers as they work. The more detailed the Visual Requirements document, the less time the visual designer will spend answering the developers questions.

Application	Rating	Notes
Word	✪✪✪✪✪	Requires placed images to be manually updated.
InDesign	✪✪✪✪✪	Best for professional creative layouts.
Writer	NA	Word-processor built for OS X. Good alternative to Microsoft Word
Pages	NA	New word-processor and page layout software from Apple computer.

022762　24569A　B7C2D6　E7EBF4　0033FF

TRAVEL: INITIAL COLOR PALETTE

Develop

Now the tire hits the pavement, as you take all of your planning and turn it into the code that will be used to display pages live.

Deliverables

- Code Base

- Technical Requirements

- Deployed Web Site

Deliverables :
Code Base

Turning UI and Visual requirements into the Web code (HTML, JavaScript, CSS, XML, Flash, etc...) can be a time consuming and tricky endeavor. Some developers choose to only deal with the raw code, using a text editor like TextEdit. However, there are numerous tools at the developers disposal to not only create code faster, but also to make sure that their code stays standards compliant.

Application	Rating	Notes
GoLive	✪✪✪✪○	Provides strong DHTML and CSS development tools.
Dreamweaver	✪✪✪✪○	Provides strong file management tools with easy Flash integration.
SubEthaEdit	NA	Allows synchronous editing of files by multiple developers using IM.
JEdit	NA	Highly recommended coding software.
Flash	✪✪✪✪✪	For Flash content, this is your best (and about only) choice for development.
BBEdit	NA	Just the basics, but ideal for purists.

Source of: http://travel.channel.aol.com/travel/DepartmentPage?id=4&brand=aolcom

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/2000/REC-xhtml1-20000126/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
<html>
  <head>
    <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=UTF-8">
    <script type="text/javascript">var serverDate = "06/03/2005";
    </script>
    <title>AOL Travel - Travel Main</title>
    <link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/resources_7/css/style.css">
    <script type="text/javascript" src="http://ar.atwola.com/file/adsWrapper.js">
    </script>
    <script type="text/javascript" src="/resources_7/js/boxmodel.js">
    </script>
    <script type="text/javascript" src="/resources_7/js/functions.js">
    </script>
    <script type="text/javascript">var browser =
browserSupport();if(!browser){document.location.replace('/resources_7/browserError.html');}
    </script>
    <script type="text/javascript" src="/resources_7/js/simplecalendar.js">
    </script>
    <script type="text/javascript" src="/resources_7/js/pipe.js">
    </script>
    <script xmlns:travel="aol.com/travel" language="JavaScript" type="text/javascript">var
campaign_id="";var vlpc="";var s_pfxID="trv";var s_server="";var s_pageType="";var s_prop1=s_pfxID + ":
Travel Main";var s_prop2=s_pfxID + ": ";var s_prop3="unavailable";var s_prop4="unavailable";var
s_prop5="";var s_prop6="unavailable";var s_prop7="unavailable";var s_prop8="unavailable";var s_prop9="";var
s_prop10="unavailable";var s_prop11="unavailable";var kids="";var teens="";var yteens="";var mteens="";var
s_prop12="http://travel.channel.aol.com/travel/DepartmentPage?id=4&state=FL&brand=aolcom&isWelcomeScreen=fals
s_prop13="";var
s_prop16="1009343.1|1014697.1|1009349.1|1014526.1|1009367.1|1009276.1|1009833.1|1011418.1|1009863.1|1010319.1
s_prop17="travel";var s_prop18="";var s_prop19="Browser no login";var s_prop20="";var s_pageName=s_pfxID +
": Travel Main";var s_channel="us.travel";var s_eVar1="";var s_eVar2="";var s_eVar3="";var s_eVar4="";var
s_eVar5="";var s_eVar6="";var s_campaign="";var s_state="";var s_zip="";var s_events="";var
s_products="";var s_purchaseID="";
    </script>
    <link rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" href="/resources_7/css/travel_main.css">
    <script type="text/javascript" src="/resources_7/js/travel_main.js">
    </script>
    <script type="text/javascript">g_Calendar = new Object();g_Calendar.show = function(){};g_Calendar.hide
= function(){};var dynamicAdserveURL = '/travel/DynamicWidget?type=1&magicNumbers=';var flURL=null;var
flhoURL=null;

                            if (navigator.userAgent.toLowerCase().indexOf("aol") != -1)
{document.write("<style type=\"text/css\"> .inclient {display: block !important;} </style>");}
                            else {document.write("<style type=\"text/css\"> .outclient
{display: block !important;} </style>");}
```

Deliverables :

Technical Requirements

There is more to creating a Web site than its visual appearance. The technical documentation specifies the technologies being used to create it, how they are used, any common code snippets, what browsers and operating systems are supported, as well as contingencies for display in different environments.

Application	Rating	Notes
Word	⚙⚙⚙⚙⚙	Difficult to use for complex multi-column designs, but has good table tools.
InDesign	⚙⚙⚙⚙⚙	Best for professional looking documentation. Excellent table tools.
Writer	NA	Word-processor built for OS X. Good alternative to Microsoft Word.
Pages	NA	New word-processor and page layout software from Apple computer.

Deliverables :

Deployed Web Site

Once the code is finished and thoroughly tested, you are ready to go live by FTPing your code to its final location. Although most Web development tools (Dreamweaver, GoLive, etc...) will have FTPing functionality, there are several stand alone FTP clients that offer additional features.

Application	Rating	Notes
Fetch	✪✪✪○○	Few advanced features
RBrowser	✪✪✪✪○	OS X like interface
Transmit	✪✪✪✪✪	Excellent file synching. Droplet uploading.
FTPClient	✪✪✪✪✪	Excellent file synching.

Web Application Checklist

Macromedia Freehand
www.macromedia.com/freehand
UI Map, Story Board, Process Flows,
Wireframes, Mood Boards, Comps

Adobe Illustrator
www.adobe.com/Illustrator
UI Map, Story Board, Process Flows,
Wireframes, Mood Boards, Comps

Macromedia Dreamweaver
www.macromedia.com/dreamweaver
Code Base

Adobe GoLive
www.adobe.com/golive
UI Map, Code Base

Macromedia Flash
www.macromedia.com/flash
Comps, Code Base

Adobe InDesign
www.adobe.com/indesign
UI Requirements, Design
Requirements, Technical Requirements

Macromedia Fireworks
www.macromedia.com/fireworks
Mood Boards, Comps

Adobe Photoshop/ImageReady
www.adobe.com/photoshop
UI Map, Story Board, Process Flows,
Mood Boards, Comps

The OmniGroup OmniGraffle
www.omnigroup.com/omnigraffle
UI Map, Story Board, Process Flows,
Wireframes, Mood Board

TheCodingMonkeys SubEthaEdit
www.codingmonkeys.de/subethaedit/
Code Base

Microsoft Word
www.microsoft.com/mac/products/
word2004/word2004.aspx
UI Requirements, Design
Requirements, Technical Requirements

jEdit
www.jedit.org
Code Base

Apple Pages
www.apple.com/pages
UI Requirements, Design
Requirements, Technical Requirements

Web Application Checklist

FTPClient
www.ftpclient.com
Deploy

Transmit
www.panic.com/transmit
Deploy

Fetch
www.fetchsoftworks.com
Deploy

RBrowser
www.rbrowser.com
Deploy

About Jason

Jason Cranford Teague is the author of the best-selling DHTML and CSS for the World Wide Web. His other books include Final Cut Pro 4 and the Art of Filmmaking. He has contributed numerous articles to the Apple Developers Center, Computer Arts Magazine, and MacWorld Magazine as well as appearing on TechTV's the "Screen Savers."

Jason has been working as an Internet designer for more than 10 years creating real-world solutions for clients including Coca-Cola, Virgin, CNN, Kodak, and WebMD. Jason is currently the Senior User Interface Designer for AOL eCommerce and regularly rants about technology, politics, and culture on webbedENVIRONMENTS (www.webbedenvironments.com).