■ @Work
by Sacha Cohen

ON THE MODEM AGAIN

PLANNING A BUSINESS TRIP is never simple. First, you book hotel, car, and plane reservations. Then, you set up meetings and appointments, and coordinate schedules with your colleagues. All said, it's a very time-consuming proposition, and one that traditionally has been done in person or via phone and fax.

Now, however, the Internet streamlines business-trip planning by letting you access timely, in-depth information—such as hotel availability, flight

times, and travel bargains—with the click of a mouse

Here are three all-inclusive sites that have links to nearly everything you'll need for planning a business trip. **Biztravel.com,** http://www.biztravel. com/V4/newhome.cfm. This site has four sections: bizReservations, bizMiles, bizCityInfo, and *bizTraveler*.

BizReservations, a 24-hour online travel service, lets users book airline flights, car rentals, and hotels.

The site's magazine, *bizTraveler,* is saturated with useful content, including a daily travel advisory that reports on flight delays and weather throughout the United States.

Want profiles on major U.S. and international cities? Then look at the bizCityInfo section of the site, where you'll find hotel rooms, airport facilities with diagrams, business services, restaurants, weather forecasts, street maps, and driving directions for more than 70 cities worldwide.

TheTrip.com, http://www.thetrip. com. This site has a host of unique features, including real-time flight tracking, a search engine, low-fare notification, interactive maps, and restaurant and hotel reviews. The reviews are searchable by type of hotel or cuisine, cost, and location within a city.

There's also a link to daily travel tips, which change when you hit the reload button on your browser. For example, did you know that to get a rental car quickly, you should join a car-rental company's rapid rental system or choose a less popular car-rental company?

WEB TRENDS

WebTV and similar devices won't reach one million U.S. households until the year 2000, says a recent study from Forrester Research, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"It will take three years for the industry to create hardware and content that can deliver what consumers really want—interactivity that enhances their television experience," says Josh Bernoff, senior analyst at Forrester's People & Technology Strategy service.

The report surveyed 51 developers of consumer-focused Web sites and 42 suppliers with a stake in TV- and phone-based Internet access.

SIMPLY THE BEST

And the winners are...
For best conferencing software:
▶ White Pine Software's CU-See-Me, **http://www.wpine.com**
▶ Apple Computer's QuickTime Conferencing, **http://quicktime. apple.com**
▶ Microsoft's NetMeeting, **http:// www.microsoft.com/netmeeting.**
For best modems:
▶ U.S. Robotic's Sportster line, **http://www.usr.com**
▶ Diamond Multimedia Systems's Supra line, **http://www.diamond-mm.com**

▶ Global Village Communications's Teleport Platinum line, **http://www.globalvillage.com.**
For best authoring tools:
▶ Adobe Systems's PageMill/Site-Mill, **http://www.adobe.com**
▶ Claris's HomePage, **http:// www.claris.com**
▶ Microsoft's FrontPage, **http:// www.microsoft.com/frontpage.**
Awards were presented at the Internet World conference by *Net-Guide* magazine, **http://www.net-guide.com.**

THANK YOU!

This month marks the one-year anniversary of @Work. Thanks for your honest feedback, compliments, and suggestions. We appreciate your involvement and look forward to hearing from you in the future! In addition, please continue to send us information about Web sites that are particularly notable or useful to the training and development community.

CORPORATE PUSH

Just-in-time, *push* technology meets customer service with ImpaQ software from Freemont, California-based Quintus, **http://www.quintus.com.**

The tool works on an in-house database or a corporate intranet, and delivers real-time information to key employees at vital moments, such as when a customer calls to complain or ask a question.

As of this writing, Quintus is the only customer service software seller to use push technology on private intranets to offer real-time customer information.

Fodor's **Personal Trip Planner,** http://www.fodors.com. Here's an interactive site that lets you create a customized mini pamphlet of information for your trip. Let's say you're lucky enough to visit Paris on business, but you have only a few days to plan the trip. The trip planner leads you through a series of checklists, including Where To Stay, Fodor's Top Picks, Eating Out, and Essential Information.

In Where To Stay, you can choose different price ranges, locations, and facilities. Essential Information tells how to pack for Paris, how to tip, and how to get around the City of Lights. Within minutes, you get a personal itinerary, complete with restaurant and hotel reviews, contact information, and instructions for the Paris Métro.

Details, details

Now, on to tying up those last-minute details. These sites are indispensable for travelers and should be kept in any road warrior's tool box.

Finding cheap flights is a cinch with Fare Tracker, http://expedia.msn.com/pub/faretrkr.hts. Once you sign up, Fare Tracker will monitor up

COOL SITES

▶ Road Warrior Outpost, **http://warrior.com.** Here's a smorgasbord of gear to make traveling easier, plus an e-mail newsletter that covers everything from mobile office basics to battery tips. The site also has links to newsgroups and other travel Web sites.

▶ Hay PayNet, **http://www.hay-paynet.com.** An interactive, subscription-based information service that provides access to up-to-date

Gear for the Mobile Professional

Click here to save your modem!

Free! subscribe to the *Road Warrior* email newsletter!

ANSWERS.COM

Why is the sky blue? What is the meaning of life? Why is Thanksgiving on a Thursday? Answers to those questions and more can be found at answers.com, **http://www.answers.com.**

The site is an information service dedicated to finding answers, for a small fee. The company's 50 or so advisors use proprietary databases, personal knowledge, electronic data, and published information sources to help sate your quest for knowledge.

To use the service, post a question at the Web site and select a category (easy, medium, hard, or price quote) for your question. Prices range from $1.79 for an easy answer to $11.99 and up for more extensive research or a custom project. Answers are usually e-mailed to you within one business day.

compensation information via intranet and Web technology. The site's demo uses real survey data for four selected positions, and lets you query the database for any combination of jobs, industries, regions, or company size.

▶ Human resources management basics, **http://members.aol.com/hrmbasics/index.htm.** Links and information about compensation and benefits, diversity, human resource management on the Internet, job analysis, organization development, performance management, recruitment, and training.

▶ HR Press software catalog, **http://www. hrpress-software.com/index.html.** More than 150 software programs covering such topics as applicant tracking, affirmative action, COBRA, computer-based training, employee attitude surveys, employee incentive programs, HRIS, human resource information tracking, multimedia training, and skills assessment.

ROVING EYE

Capture images on the road with Specom Technologies's Vision-CAM. This 24-bit, 16.7 million-color digital camera plugs into the parallel port on any Windows computer.

The maximum resolution for the camera runs at four frames per second.

The SuiteVisions bundle includes the camera and Specom's videophone and videoconferencing software, a whiteboard application, and an editor for captured images.

The camera costs $179, and the bundle costs $199. Call 408/982-1880 or visit **http://www.specom.com.**

STATE OF THE NET

According to a survey on the Software Publisher's Association's Web site, **http://www.spa.org,** there are 60 million e-mail users worldwide and 35 million in the United States. In July 1996, there were eight million domains and 12.8 million hosts.

The top consumer Web sites are America Online, Yahoo!, Netscape, Webcrawler, and Microsoft. The highest-volume corporate sites are Microsoft, AT&T, Macromedia, Sony, IBM, and Apple.

to three destinations for you and then e-mail you regularly with current best flight deals to those places. Then, when you've found that perfect flight, you can order tickets online.

Once the flight reservation is out of the way, you'll need to focus on your itinerary. Let's say you're trying to co-ordinate schedules with a colleague in Abu Dhabi while you're in Akron, Ohio. Just point your browser at the Time Zone Page, http://www.web-shaman.com/zone/, and you can find the time in nearly any country in the world automatically.

What if you're lost in an unfamiliar town and run out of cash? Not to worry. You can locate an ATM anywhere in the United States (as long as you have a Web connection) at http://visa.infonow.net/usa.html.

If you're on a budget (and who isn't these days?), you might consider a subscription to the *Travel Discount Corporate Newsletter*, http://www.traveldiscounts.com. Once you've signed up at this Web site, you'll be

notified automatically, via e-mail, of discounts and last-minute availability for tours, airfares, hotels, and cruises.

Traveling by car in the United States and don't have a map? Then check out the AutoPilot Highway Trip Planning System, http://www.free-trip.com. This ingenious site gives you a personalized itinerary that in-cludes the locations of en-route facilities that you select. Just plug in your origination, destination, route preferences (for example, direct, scenic, one-state scenic, tolls, or no tolls), and en-route facilities.

Online travel resources continue to grow in scope and function, so much so that there is very little that you *can't* do on the Web.

So, pack your bags and hit the modem.

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@Work *is a monthly column devoted to the use of the Internet. E-mail your online experiences and suggestions to atwork@astd.org.*