

Writing for Interactive Multimedia
and Design Interfaces

O'Reiley Relocations, Inc. Internet Website

“U-Turn: A Moving Story”

O'Reiley Relocations, Inc.

Internet Website

Design Proposal

Quick Pitch

It's like the *Simpson's*, except...add the do-it-yourself optimism of *Tool Time's* Tim Taylor and the penny-pinching frugality of *I Love Lucy's* Fred Mertz.

Zen Kicker

"You once dreamed scary things lived inside your closet. Deja vu?"

The Premise

"U-Turn: A Moving Story" is about the Hudson's, a family who, after Stew Hudson receives a job transfer, wants to save a few bucks by moving without professional help. We will know that Stew and family have succeeded at the end of the story when Stew gives up...after he breaks several valuable items, counts the self-move costs and risks, learns to prepare properly, and calls O'Reiley Relocations to arrange the move instead.

Explanation of Underlying Structure

The site has an entry and exit tunnel. In the middle it offers parallel streaming with multiple story paths. A user can experience the story from three character perspectives: Stew (the husband), Maggy (his wife), or Theo (their child). Each story path has a unique style and design template. In one scene of the story, "Pack the House," each perspective path offers a different set of rooms that are designed as exploratoriums. A user can click on various objects and learn proper packing techniques for that item.

Major Rules of Interaction

Users greet a splash screen that offers the TITLE and a CLOSET DOOR entry button (single point entry). The door leads to another screen where the user is asked to choose a PAIR OF SHOES (representing the choice between story perspectives). From the perspective chosen, the user proceeds into the story narrative. At any screen, the user may choose from the SHOE NAVIGATION BAR to experience another perspective on the same scene. Given that the property is an Internet website, the user controls the narrative pace. SHOES were chosen as the perspective change device to neutralize racial emphasis. It is also possible that more gender-neutral character names (e.g., Pat Terry, Chris, etc.) could be used to allow for more diverse household scenarios.

Throughout the story various interactive text boxes and forms collect small bits of information from the user to answer questions posed by the characters. This information will include: zip code, years of residence, type and number of furnished rooms, number of other family members, etc. Along the way, and within the website, the user will be offered the opportunity to process these facts into valuable moving information and estimates that include:

- moving weight (tonnage)
- required truck length
- mileage between two zip codes

- driving instructions
- checklist of tasks to do before moving day
- adequate time allowances
- packing sequence and techniques for various objects

A key theme of the website is that moving right requires professional experience for best results. "Sure you *can* do it. But considering the time, financial savings (when you include all the costs), potential damage to valuables, stress, and backbreaking moving day effort, why would you?"

By the end of the story, enough information will have been gathered to provide an itemized estimate of what it would cost for O'Reiley Relocations, Inc. to provide the move. This estimate, as well as any of the preliminary calculations, can be printed or saved by the user. A user can e-mail the information to O'Reiley for follow-up or get phone and postal information to contact a local O'Reiley representative.

At the end of the exit tunnel, hypertext links are provided to off-site Internet relocation and home-finding resources. These links may include: realtors, US post offices, school districts, newspapers, hotels, airlines, storage and equipment rentals, churches, utilities, etc.

Character Descriptions

STEW HUDSON has been offered the job promotion of a lifetime, the chance to lead a team at the new division of the Ahead Metal Works. So small did he consider the interstate relocation of the family that he negotiated for a better office view in exchange for the moving package the company offered. Considering his enthusiasm for the plan, the family's support for his new assignment, and the chance to squeeze out a few more bucks, he made the self-move deal. Not until he got into the details did he find the devil in his relocation plan. Despite the barrage of issues, in-process mistakes, and mounting stress, Stew remained captivated by the do-it-yourself optimism that would have crumbled most other men.

MAGGY usually worries when Stew gets that "look." It's not often that she is wrong about that feeling; however, this time she, too, bought into Stew's money-saving plan. Besides, that money might come in handy as she dreams of replacing some early-marriage furniture that Stew still adores (once they arrive in the new house). Her optimism is the first to falter as she sees things not coming together. Thinking about the whirlwind of details and the amount of loving stuff to move makes her left eye twitch occasionally. She'd feel better if the damn grocery store would stop crushing the boxes she's retrieving from their dumpster.

At seven years-old THEO gets the feeling that he's too small to be helpful. In fact, however, he may be the person thinking the clearest. Getting in the way, and sometimes trouble, has become all too easy. For this reason, he and Ruff (his dog) hangout most of the time in the treehouse or surf the 'net for moving tips. Through very simple (unassuming) questions he continues to spark adult discussions about another forgotten detail of the upcoming move. Last night he asked about what school he'd attend, the night before he asked about moving Ruff and the other pets. Sure seemed like good questions to ask. Mom's eye twitches every time he looks her way now.

Featured Technology and Authoring Tools

The site employs standard HTML text (.html) and illustration style graphics (.gif). Page design will include the use of tables, background colors and images, image maps, and animated GIFs—items which are standard for GUI based browsers. Additional enhancements will be available for users with recent Internet Explorer (ActiveX, JavaScript) or Netscape Navigator (& Macromedia Flash Plug-in) installations. The enhancements will create mouse-over highlights and dialog balloons to appear interactively, especially in the exploratorium areas.

A Sample Play Scenario

- Entry Tunnel
 - Introduction
 - Choosing a Perspective
- Story Hook
 - Job Transfer News
 - The Big Negotiation
 - Garage (No) Sale
- Plan the Move
 - Moving It All
 - Gathering Supplies
 - Damage, Oops!
 - Other Arrangements, WOW!
- Pack the House
 - Tips & Techniques
 - Sequencing Quiz
- Count the Cost
 - Time
 - Packing Supplies
 - Rental Truck Problems
 - Where Did All My Friends Go?
- Epilogue
 - O'Reiley Quote
 - The U-Turn
 - Moving Success
- Exit Tunnel
 - Other Web Resources

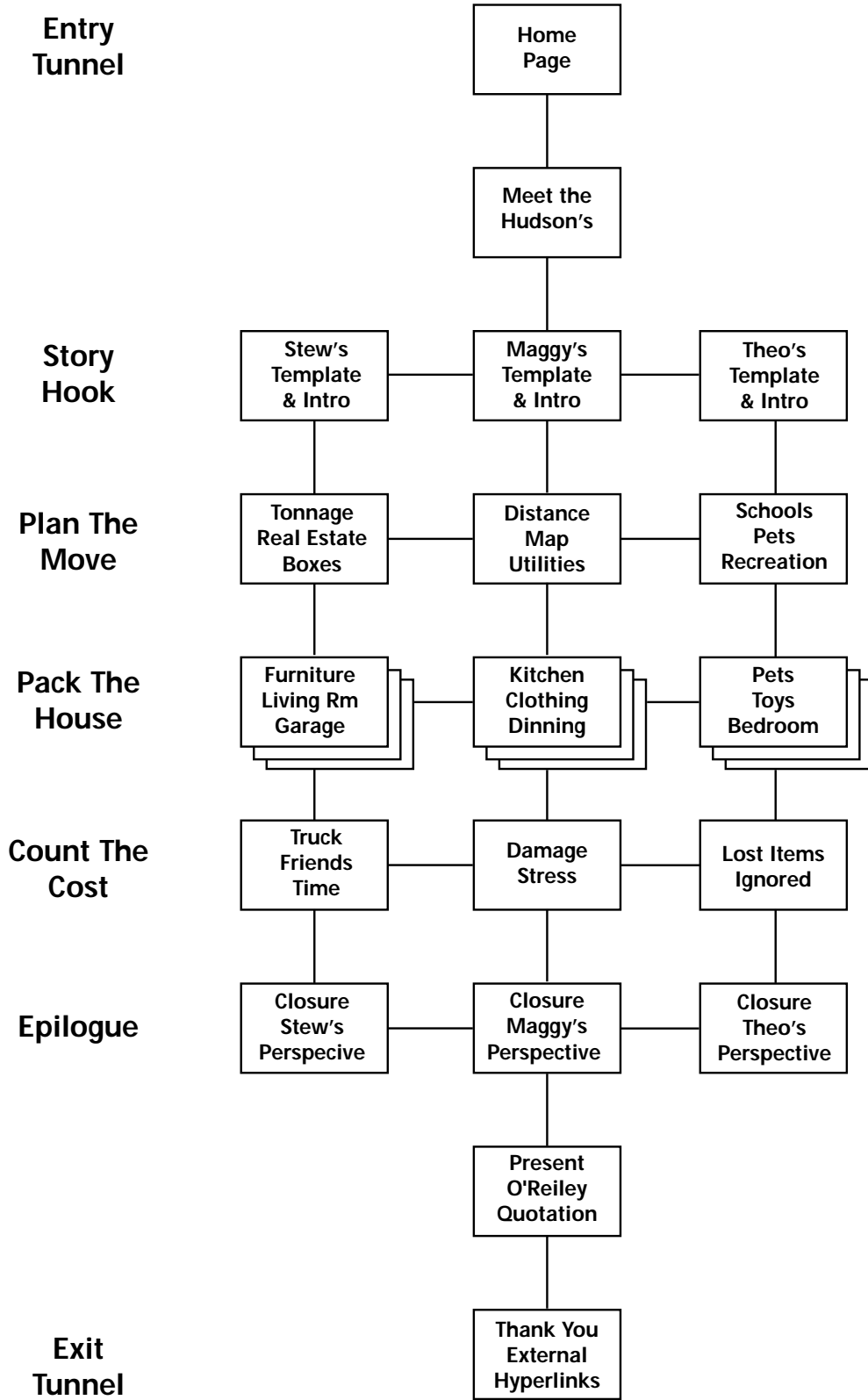
Key Market Strategies

The target market for this website is second-home buyers (both genders) between the ages of 30 and 45 years-old. It is assumed the audience will be Internet savvy and upwardly mobile. Website marketing will include placing the website URL address on all future print materials, submitting the site to all major search engines, and purchasing banner ad space on industry related websites.

Project Key Selling Points

An Internet presence will enhance credibility with the target market, inexpensively expose the company's name and services to a nationwide audience, generate estimates and bids on-line, and provide a valuable information exchange. The key aspects of a relocation effort are the preparation and resources leading up to moving day. By teaching techniques used by the professional, a company doesn't give away as much as it gains. A content-rich education process that unravels a fear will help the customer cut through the hype, will foster a relationship of confidence, and will empower them to select the best provider.

Internet Website • O'Reiley Relocations., Inc





Go To:

U-Turn

A Moving Story

by O'Reilly Relocations, Inc.



just beyond the closet door



Go To: www.oreiley.com/hudsons/index.html

THE Hudson's

Select a pair of shoes to begin the tale...



Stew



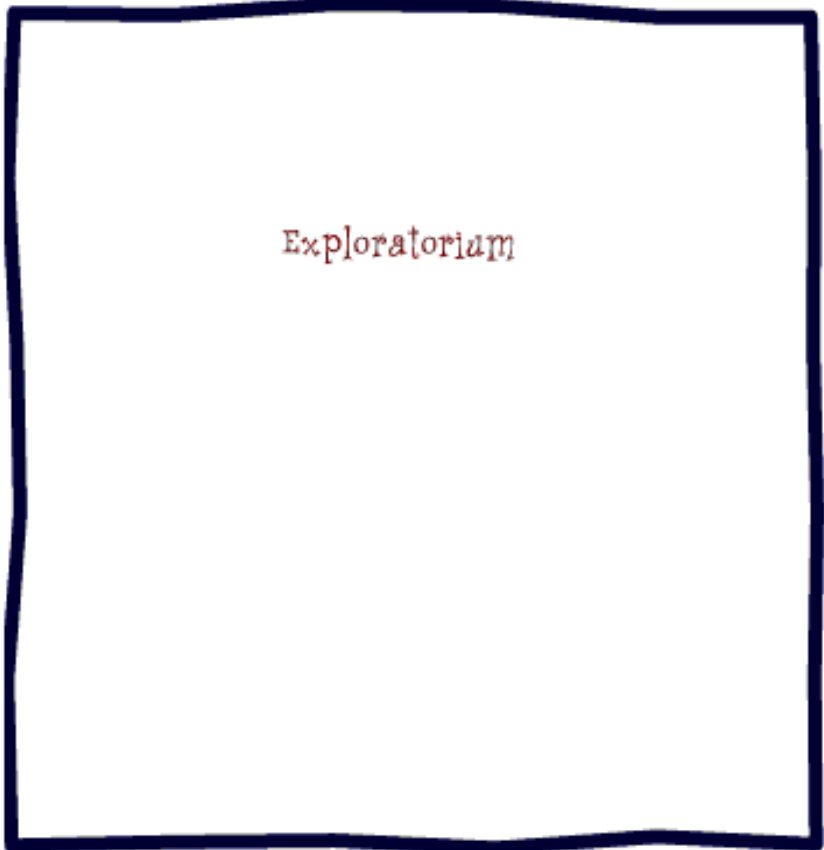
Maggy



Theo



Go To:



Kitchen

- ▶ Small Appliances
- ▶ Refrigerator
- ▶ Pots and Pans
- ▶ Table
- ▶ Chairs
- ▶ Dishes
- ▶ Glasses
- ▶ Food
- ▶ Microwave

Previous ◀ Home ▶ Next



Stew



Maggy



Theo