

# Five Myths of RIA Usability

Laurie Gray, Senior Consultant, OneSpring

March 18, 2008

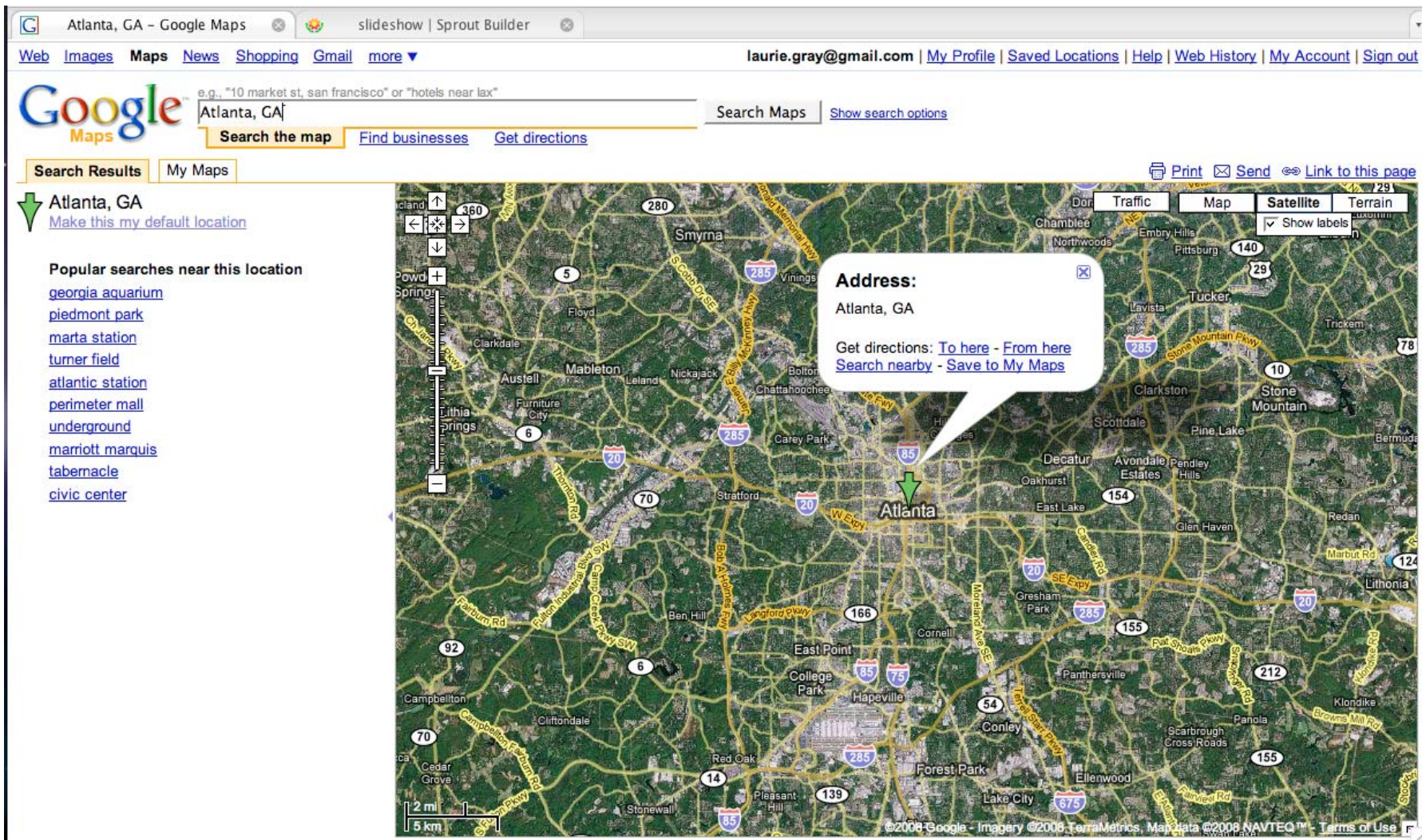
- *“People have no idea where they are, how to get to where they want to be, or even what their options for travel might be...You might assume that designers would be putting high effort into ensuring that their users were given every possible cue as to form and function, but nothing could be further from the truth. Instead, designers are creating invisible buttons, checkboxes that look like radio buttons, jumps across the world that are indistinguishable in appearance, but not behavior, from a jump two paragraphs down the page...”*

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- Bruce Tognazzini, Ask Tog
- October, 1998

- Software
- Above the level of the operating system
- Universally available
- Any computer, any context.
- Run them in the web browser, desktop, or mobile devices
- Powerful user interfaces
- Work or play in ways that are familiar, intuitive, and exciting
- Leverage the best of the web, without sacrificing the power of the desktop
- Tony MacDonnell
- Inside RIA
- <http://www.insideria.com/2008/01/the-ria-elevator-speech.html>

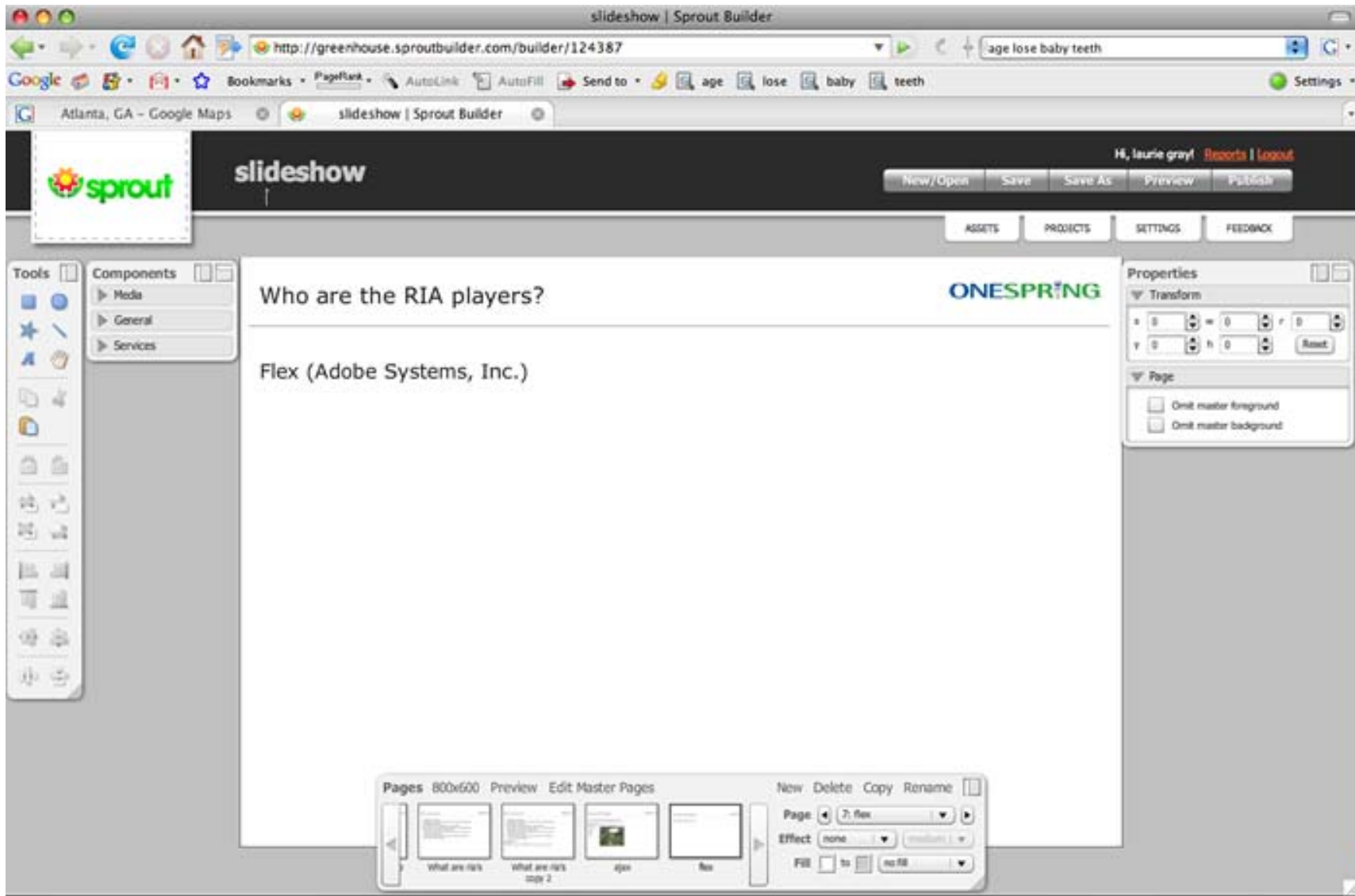
# Who are the RIA Players?

- AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML)



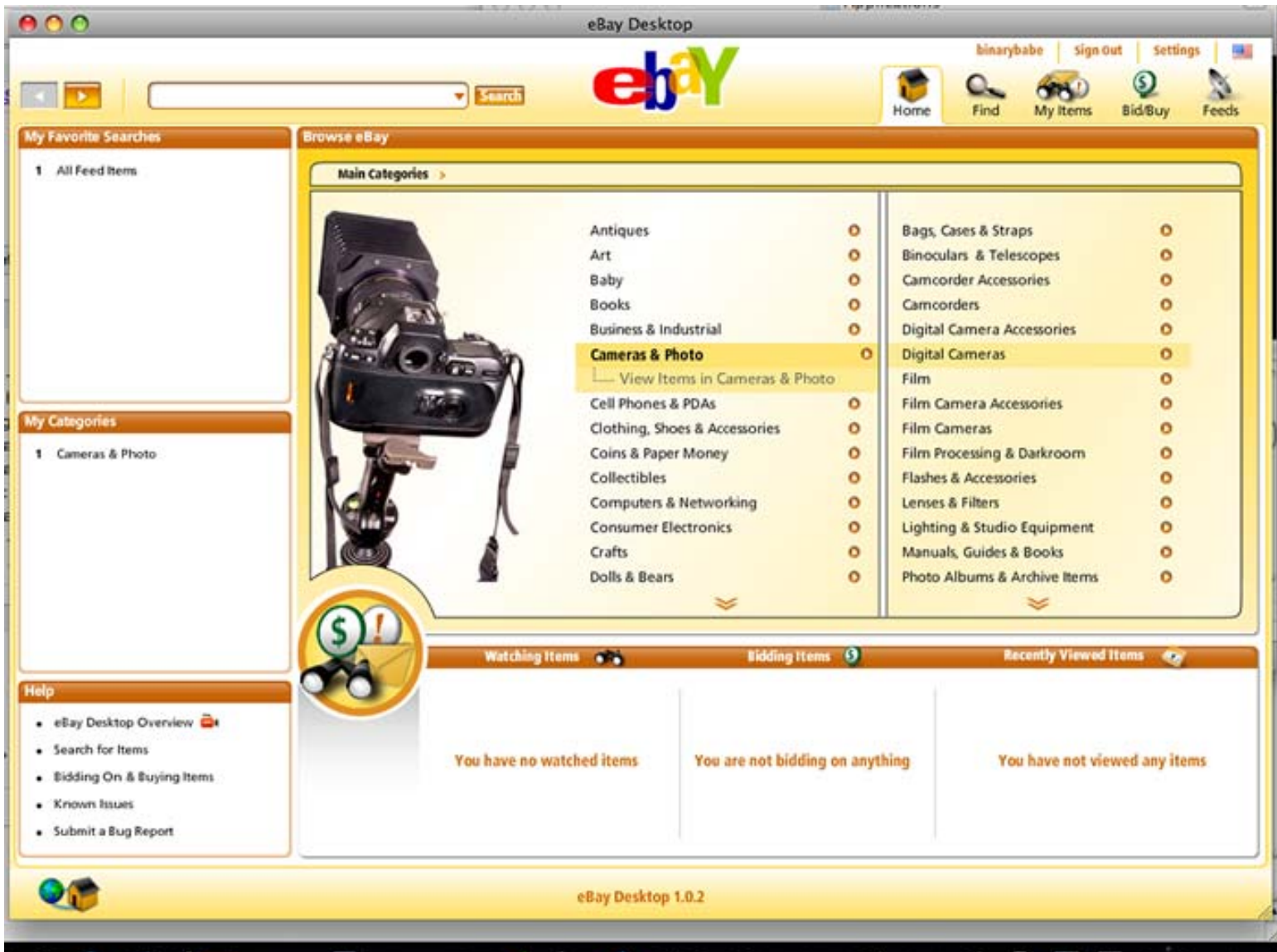
# Who are the RIA Players?

- FLEX (Adobe)



# Who are the RIA Players?

- AIR (Adobe)



# Who are the RIA Players?

- Silverlight (Microsoft)





- Others:
- Java (Applets, JavaFX)
- Open Source: Laszlo

- RIA's provide the perfect vehicle for sexy, splashy sites

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**RIA's are amazing tools for complex, transactional, data driven web sites.**

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**Data Visualization:**

The screenshot shows the Mpg-Genie website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'Silverlight', 'slideshow', 'Sprout Builder', and 'Mobile Silverlight'. Below this is a list of instructions for using the tool. The main interface includes input fields for 'type of driving' (set to 'city'), '# days/week commuting' (set to 'five'), 'total miles driven per day' (set to '90'), and 'fuel price per gallon' (set to '\$3.29'). There are also buttons for 'toggle full screen' and 'print selected vehicles'. Below the input fields are tabs for 'CARS', 'SUVS', and 'TRUCKS & VANS'. A table lists various vehicle models with their respective City MPG, Hwy MPG, and Comb MPG. At the bottom, there is a table for comparing selected vehicles, showing columns for Manufacturer, Model, City MPG, Hwy MPG, Comb MPG, \$ Day, \$ Week, \$ Month, and \$ Year.

Vehicle Type	Manufacturer	Model	City MPG	Hwy MPG	Comb MPG
TWO SEATERS	ASTON MARTIN	V8 VANTAGE Manual(M6) - 4.3 liter	12	19	15
TWO SEATERS	ASTON MARTIN	V8 VANTAGE Auto(S6) - 4.3 liter	13	20	15
TWO SEATERS	AUDI	R8 Manual(M6) - 4.2 liter	13	20	15
TWO SEATERS	AUDI	R8 Auto(S6) - 4.2 liter	13	19	15
TWO SEATERS	AUDI	TT ROADSTER Auto(S6) - 2 liter	22	29	25
TWO SEATERS	AUDI	TT ROADSTER QUATTRO Manual(M6) - 3.2 liter	17	24	19
TWO SEATERS	AUDI	TT ROADSTER QUATTRO Auto(S6) - 3.2 liter	18	24	20
TWO SEATERS	BMW	Z4 3.0i Manual(M6) - 3 liter	18	28	21
TWO SEATERS	BMW	Z4 3.0i Auto(S6) - 3 liter	19	28	22
TWO SEATERS	BMW	Z4 3.0Si Manual(M6) - 3 liter	18	28	21

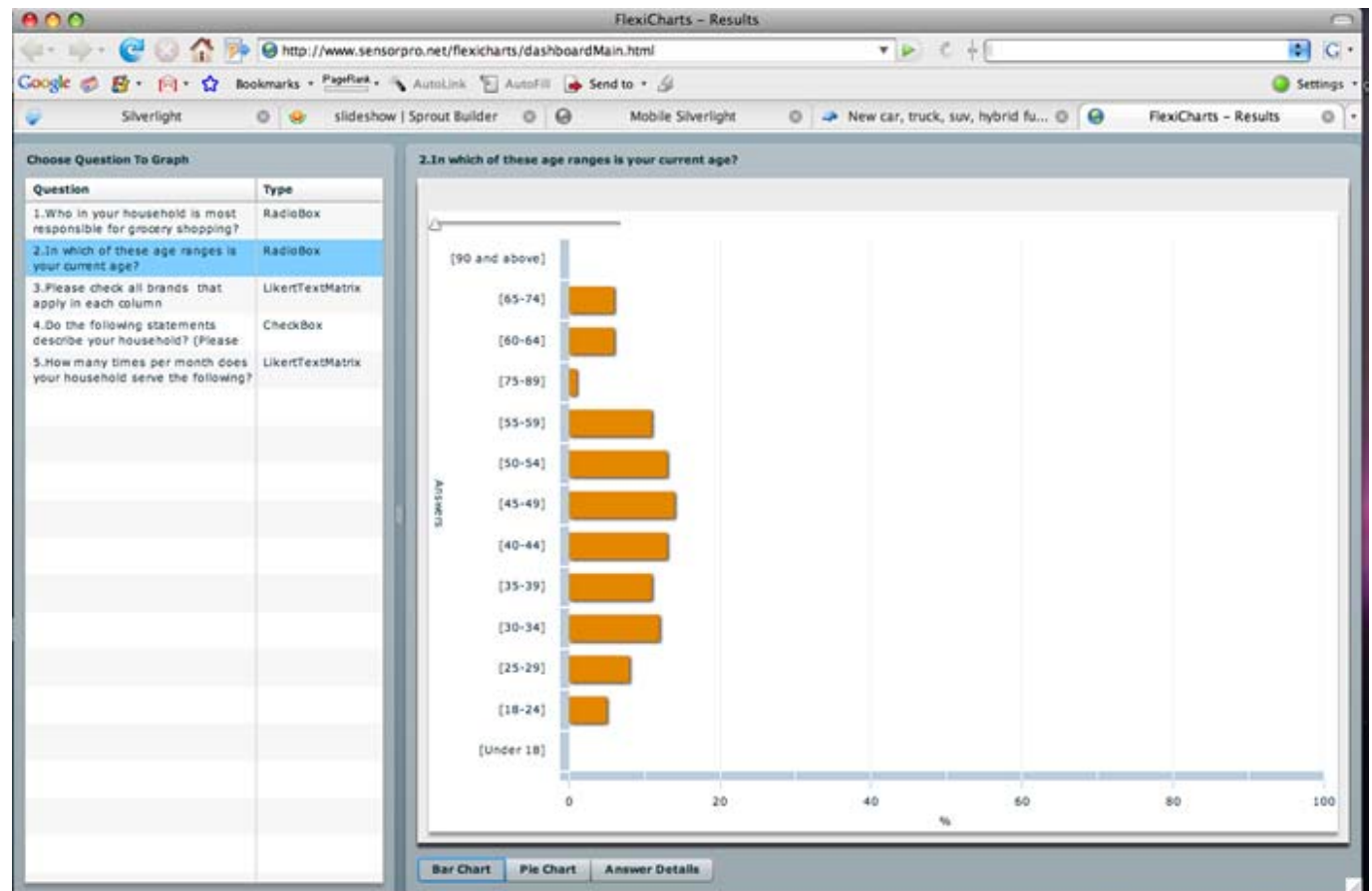
  

Manufacturer	Model	City MPG	Hwy MPG	Comb MPG	\$ Day	\$ Week	\$ Month	\$ Year
AUDI	TT ROADSTER Auto(S6) - 2 liter	22	29	25	\$13.45	\$67.29	\$269.18	\$3,230.18
AUDI	TT ROADSTER QUATTRO Manual(M6) - 3	17	24	19	\$17.41	\$87.08	\$348.35	\$4,180.23
AUDI	TT ROADSTER QUATTRO Auto(S6) - 3.2 l	18	24	20	\$16.45	\$82.25	\$329.00	\$3,948.00

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### Data Views:



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**Of course, they do turn out the sexy, splashy, and fun sites, too:**

- Sherwin Williams Color Visualizer
- Academy Awards Website
- VW Finder (UK)
- Google Maps

- *“RIA’s bring people-centered design to information workspaces.”* Forrester, 2007

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*“I will say that most, if not all of your users will have no idea whether your app was built in Flex, Silverlight, or AJAX, or event [sic] know what those words mean. They will have an experience with your application, and if its a bad experience, regardless of how great the technology is, they won't come back.”*

Peter Baird, UX Consultant, Adobe, May 03, 2007



- 
- If you've designed web sites, you can design RIA's

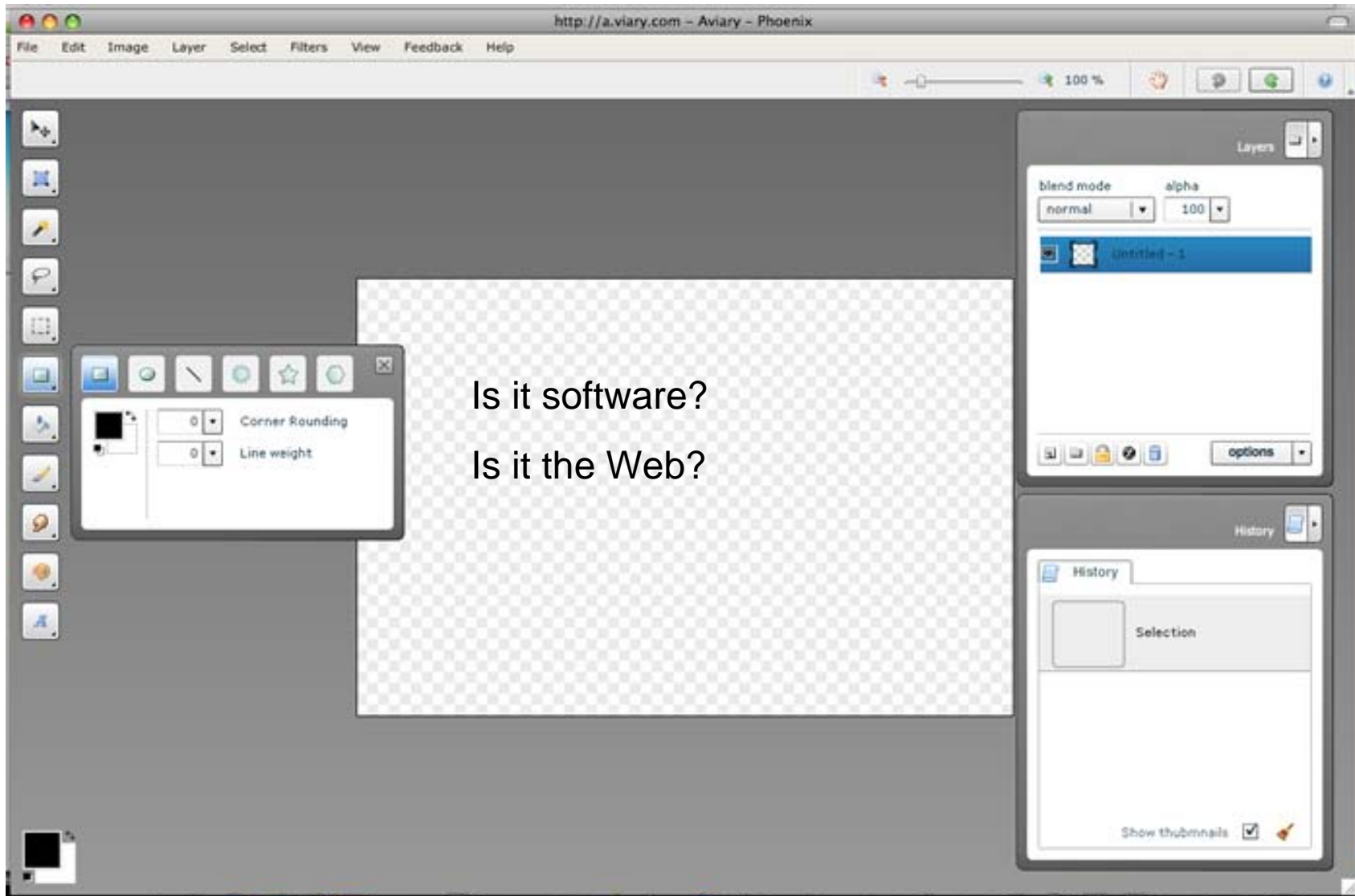
- If you've designed web sites, you can design RIA's



- It's just like our software! Of course our users will understand it!

## Myths: Myth #2

- It's just like our software! Of course our users will understand it!



- Because of their very nature, RIA's provide a better User Experience than traditional HTML sites.

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# Myths: Myth #1

- Because of their very nature, RIA's provide a better User Experience than traditional HTML sites.

Horizontal

Value:  Minimum:  Maximum:

Vertical

Blue Curve

Red:

Green:

Blue:

Color: rgb(128, 128, 128)

- Because of their very nature, RIA's provide a better User Experience than traditional HTML sites.

The screenshot displays a code editor with the following ActionScript and MXML code:

```
Slider(evt.currentTarget).tickInterval = TICK_INTERVAL;
}

private function slider_rollOut(evt:MouseEvent):void {
    Slider(evt.currentTarget).tickInterval = 0;
}
]]>
</mx:Script>

<mx:HSlider id="slider"
    minimum="0"
    maximum="100"
    liveDragging="true"
    snapInterval="1"
    dataTipPrecision="0"
    rollOver="slider_rollOver(event);"
    rollOut="slider_rollOut(event);" />

</mx:Application>
```

Below the code, a rendered slider control is shown. A message box states: "View source is enabled in the following example." Below this is a visual representation of the slider with a triangle handle.

The right sidebar contains the following sections:

- Returning values from JavaScript in your Flex applications using the ExternalInterface API**
- Calling ActionScript functions from your HTML templates using the ExternalInterface API**
- Checking to see if the ExternalInterface API is available in Flex**
- blogroll**
- Deepa Subramaniam -- lamdeepa on flex
- Adobe Labs -- Adobe Flex 3 SDK Prerelease Software
- Raghu Rao -- FLEXing My Muscle
- Narciso (nj) Jaramillo -- much ado about something
- Alex Harui -- Alex's Flex Closet
- Adobe Flex 3 Developer Documentation
- Joan Lafferty -- Flex Butterflies and Bugs
- Ely Greenfield -- Quietly Scheming
- Flash Player Feature Request/Bug Report Form
- Harish Sivaramakrishnan -- FlexGeek
- badge farm**
- FIREFOX 2
- REDQABLE
- TECHORATI
- FEEDBURNER
- 1346 readers BY FEEDBURNER
- 1,557 blog reactions
- tags**
- Click here to see tags

At the bottom, there is a banner for "Zinc 3.0 Build Desktop Apps With Flash or Flex" with icons for SWF, Windows, Mac OS X, and Linux. Below the banner, it says "0 Responses to 'Toggling a Flex Slider control's tickInterval property'" and "3 blog reactions".



- Because of their very nature, RIA's provide a better User Experience than traditional HTML sites.

Marlon Smith Says:

[April 26th, 2007 at 8:21 am](#)

[Visit Marlon Smith](#)

Yeah, as development is my primary skill, I'm in the process of building my design, usability and IA skills. It's opened my eyes to a whole new way of developing products, I don't want to sound corny here, but it has changed the way I build software forever!

I am in the beginning stages of this and there is so much information and theory out there, but as a software developer User Centric Design (UCD) has been the most rewarding.

UCD/IA/UX is what's missing from the SDLC of a large percentage of our consumer and corporate software development projects! Over time I'm hoping the industry and education will help make design a first class process of our SDLC.

Microsoft seems to have awakened to this and has the resources to influence a large section of developers and architects. Hopefully as Microsoft begins to add more roles to its Team System products, designers who find themselves using MS technologies, will have a home on the projects.

Adobe has established tools and are making some moves in the developer space, but for me, as I am not a Adobe developer, it's hard to see a cohesive vision, beyond just delivering enabling technologies like Flex/Flash/Apollo.

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- Read, read, read!
- Experiment
- Assist your development team
- Collaborate and move toward standardization

- Slide 3: <http://www.asktog.com/columns/015WebDesignRant.html>
- Slide 4: <http://www.insideria.com/2008/01/the-ria-elevator-speech>
- Slide 6: <http://maps.google.com>
- Slide 7: <http://sproutbuilder.com/>
- Slide 8: The AIR Ebay Desktop
- Slide 9: <http://sl.weatherbug.com/?zip=30328>
- Slide 13: <http://www.mpggenie.com/Mpg-Genie.cfm>
- Slide 14: <http://www.sensorpro.net/flexicharts/dashboardMain.html>
- Slide 16: [http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/pdfs/Forrester\\_RRogowski\\_BusCase\\_for\\_RIAs3\\_07.pdf](http://www.adobe.com/enterprise/pdfs/Forrester_RRogowski_BusCase_for_RIAs3_07.pdf)
- Slide 17: [http://weblogs.macromedia.com/mc/archives/experience\\_design/index.cfm](http://weblogs.macromedia.com/mc/archives/experience_design/index.cfm)
- Slide 19: <http://idea2reality.net>
- Slide 21: Phoenix Image Editor, <http://a.viary.com>
- Slide 23: <http://www.zapatec.com/website/main/products/slider/demo.jsp - slider.html>
- Slide 24: <http://webfx.eae.net/dhtml/slider/demo.html>
- Slide 25: <http://blog.flexexamples.com/2007/11/03/toggling-a-flex-slider-controls-tickinterval-property/>
- Slide 26: <http://blog.digitalbackcountry.com/?p=780>
  
- Other good stuff:
  - [InsideRIA](#)
  - [Ryan Stewart](#)
  - [Jesse Warden](#)
  - [Adobe Labs](#)
  - [Adobe Flex](#)
  - [Silverlight developer's site](#)
  - [Mozilla/AJAX developer center](#)

- Questions?