

bitmenu



bitmenu was a start-up company looking to provide the burgeoning podcast producers a way to charge their audience small amounts of money per episode. At the time of its inception, (and long before Patreon existed) there were no credible ways that amateur producers could do this.

The company contacted me after seeing my gruntmedia work and asked me to work with them as Design Director. Given that I was seeking exactly such a service, I was enthusiastic to get it launched (I did not want to generate revenue from advertising). Since I also had experience in other fields, such as branding and UX, it was a good fit.

My initial work was in branding. I led a number of brainstorms that resulted in our coming up with the name bitmenu, that had the added bonus of having the .com domain available. From there I designed the logo and the identity guidelines.

My subsequent work was developing the user flows and initial screen design concepts, the documentation of which follows.

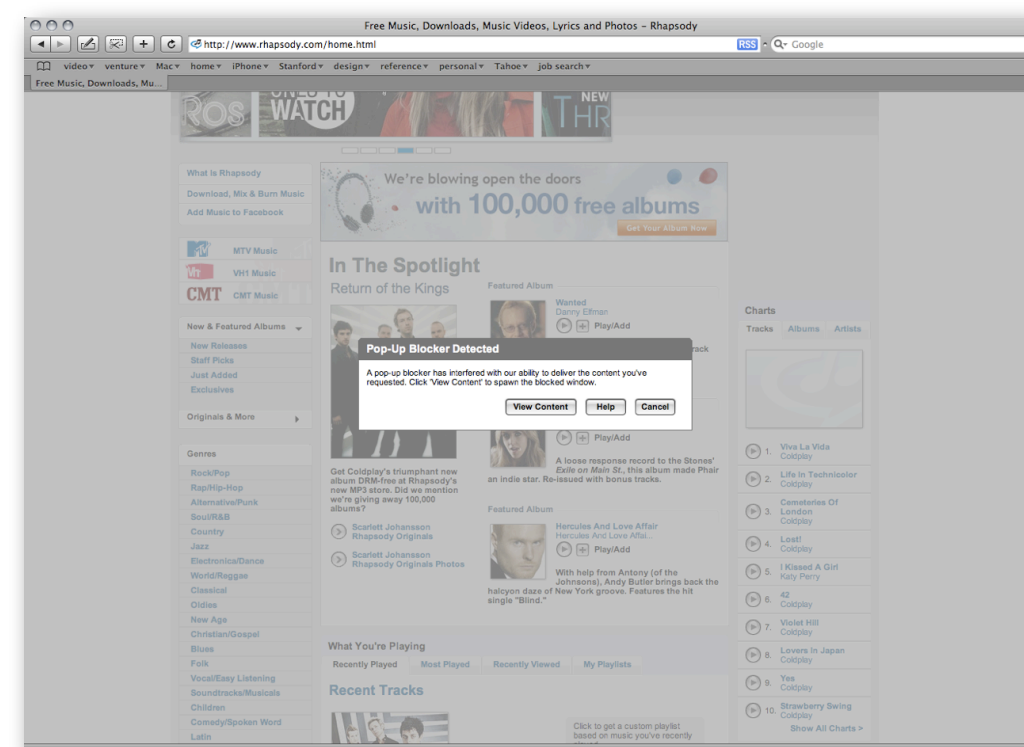
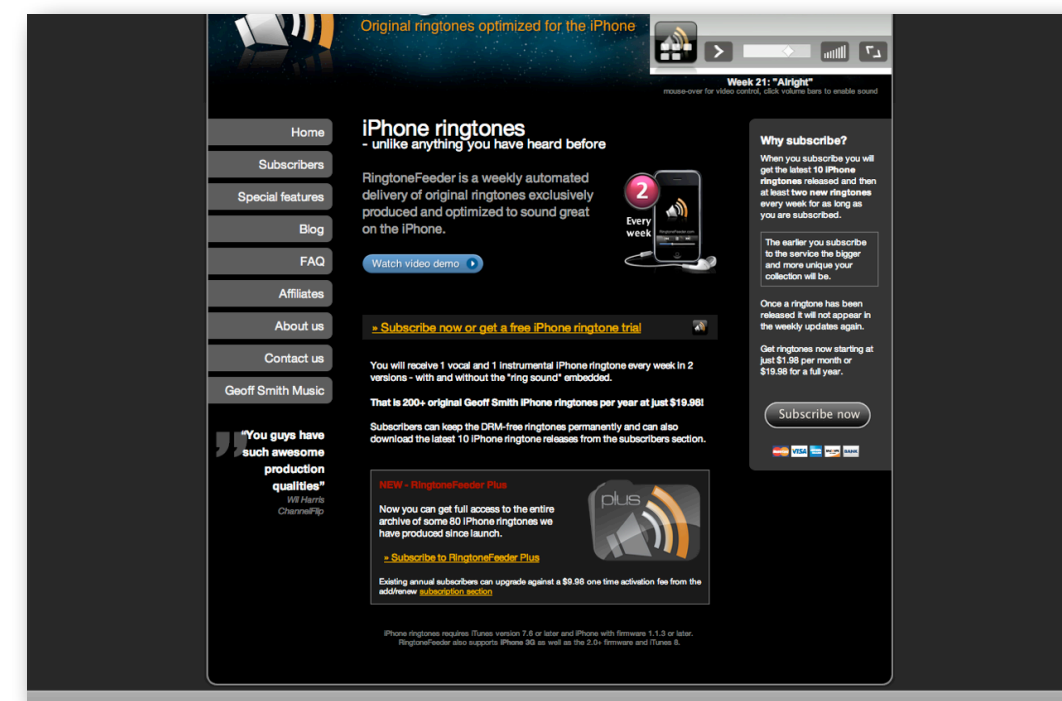
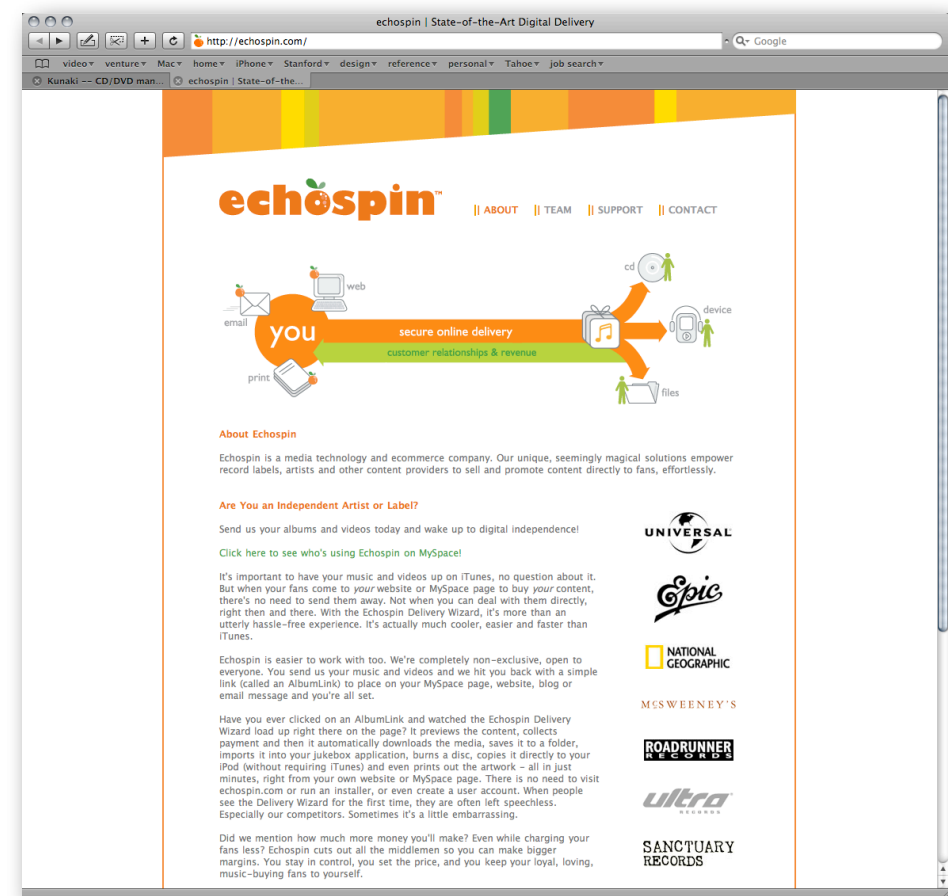
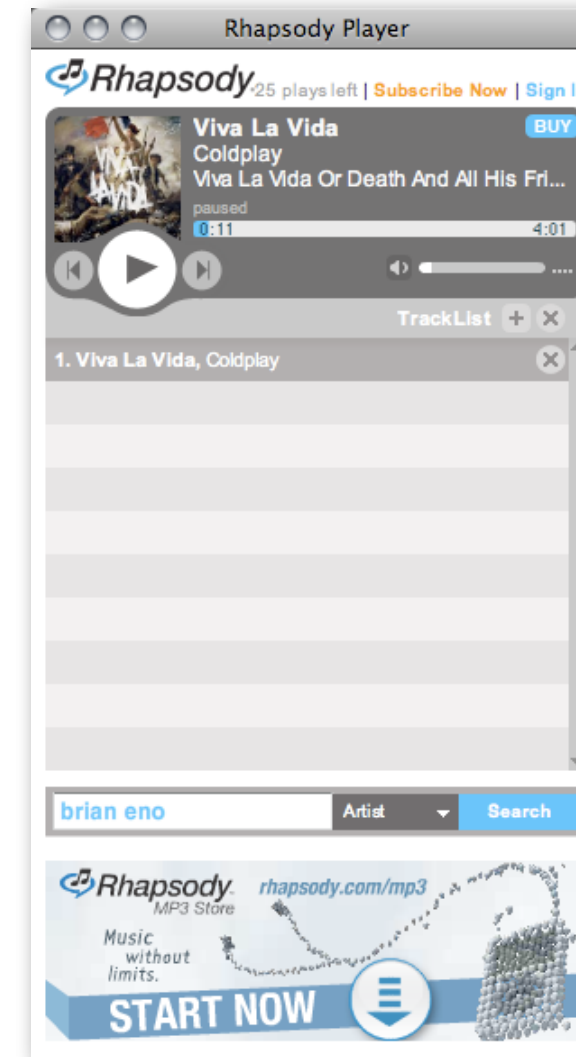
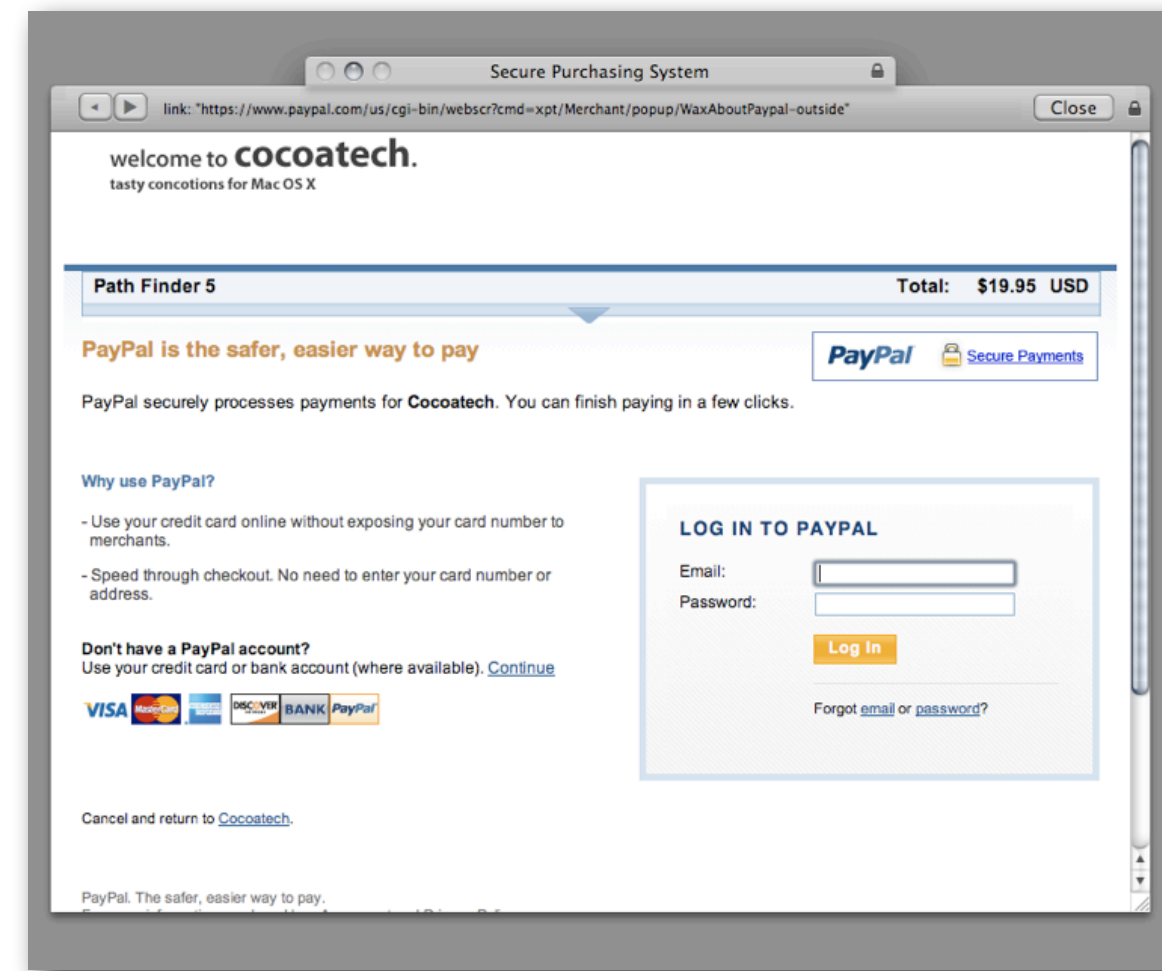
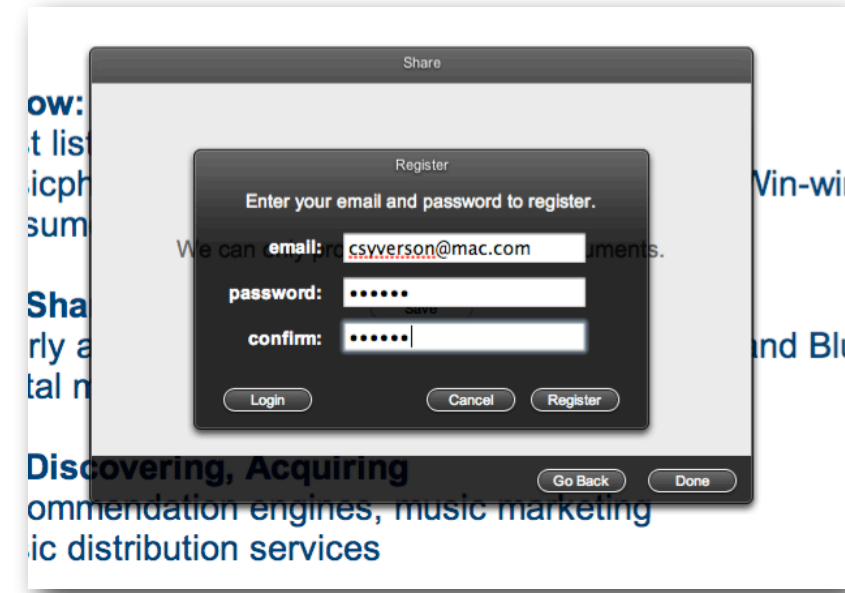


Branding and identity samples. The colored squares could act like a brand symbol when screen space was constrained, hence the bifurcating line between them and the wordmark in the formal logo, giving a hint that the logo is made up of two distinct parts that can act both alone or together.



Elevator pitch “deck” that I made so our executive team could flick through it via the Photos app on the iPhone, as it was the simplest and fastest way to share the top-level ideas behind the company.





Early analysis of services that touched upon certain aspects of what we were planning to build.

**Publisher**

A legal **seller** of various content **properties**.

**Property**

A differentiated product of the **publisher**:

- The New Yorker is a **property** of Conde Nast
- videogrunt is a **property** of gruntmedia
- Sermon 7/29/08 is a **property** of The New Good Church
- AKA magazine, book, series, album, artist

**Content**

A media file containing an individual instantiation of a **property**:

- CNNYKR20080714\_37.pdf
- videogrunt\_002.m4V
- TNGC20080729\_sermon.mp3
- AKA **item**, episode, issue, program

**Enclosure**

A line of XML that defines the rendering for an individual instantiation of **content**.

- Each enclosure has a unique bitmenu **Enclosure\_ID**

**Feed**

An RSS feed created by bitmenu:

- A collection of **enclosures** typically associated with a **property**
- Flexible to accommodate custom combinations of **enclosures**
- Flexible to accommodate nesting of other **feeds**
- Each bitmenu feed has a unique **Feed\_ID**

**Rule**

Defined conditions of selling **content** set by the **seller**.

- Each **rule** has a unique bitmenu **Rule\_ID**
- Note - The following **rule** nomenclature is not to be considered final:

RULE NAME	RULE_ID	DESCRIPTION	TOKEN
AUTO_SINGLE_DOWNLOAD	TBD	All items are the same price	SUT
SINGLE_DOWNLOAD	TBD	Items can have different prices	SUT
TIME_SUBSCRIPTION	TBD	Creates order per regular schedule	MUT
ENCLOSURE_SUBSCRIPTION	TBD	Creates order per discreet offer acceptance	MUT
AUTO_INCREMENT_ARCHIVE	TBD	Archive price that increases as content count increases	?
STATIC_PRICE_ARCHIVE	TBD	Archive price that remains constant despite content count increases	?
STATIC_CONTENT_ARCHIVE	TBD	Archive items can have different prices	?
PUNCH_CARD	TBD	Special offers based on previous purchases (i.e. "Buy 10, Get 1 Fee")	?

**User**

Two types of users:

- **Buyers** (consumers)
- **Sellers** (typically **publishers**)

**Offer**

A sales contract which is always an association of a **rule** with a **feed**.

- A buyer accepts an **offer** to buy a subscription to the New Yorker
- This subscription is a **rule** (TIME\_SUBSCRIPTION) associated with the **feed** from which the New Yorker Magazine **property** is comprised.

**Order**

An transaction request from bitmenu encapsulating the acceptance of an **offer** from a **buyer**:

- An **order** exists before the financial transaction has been cleared
- Each **order** maps to a **token**

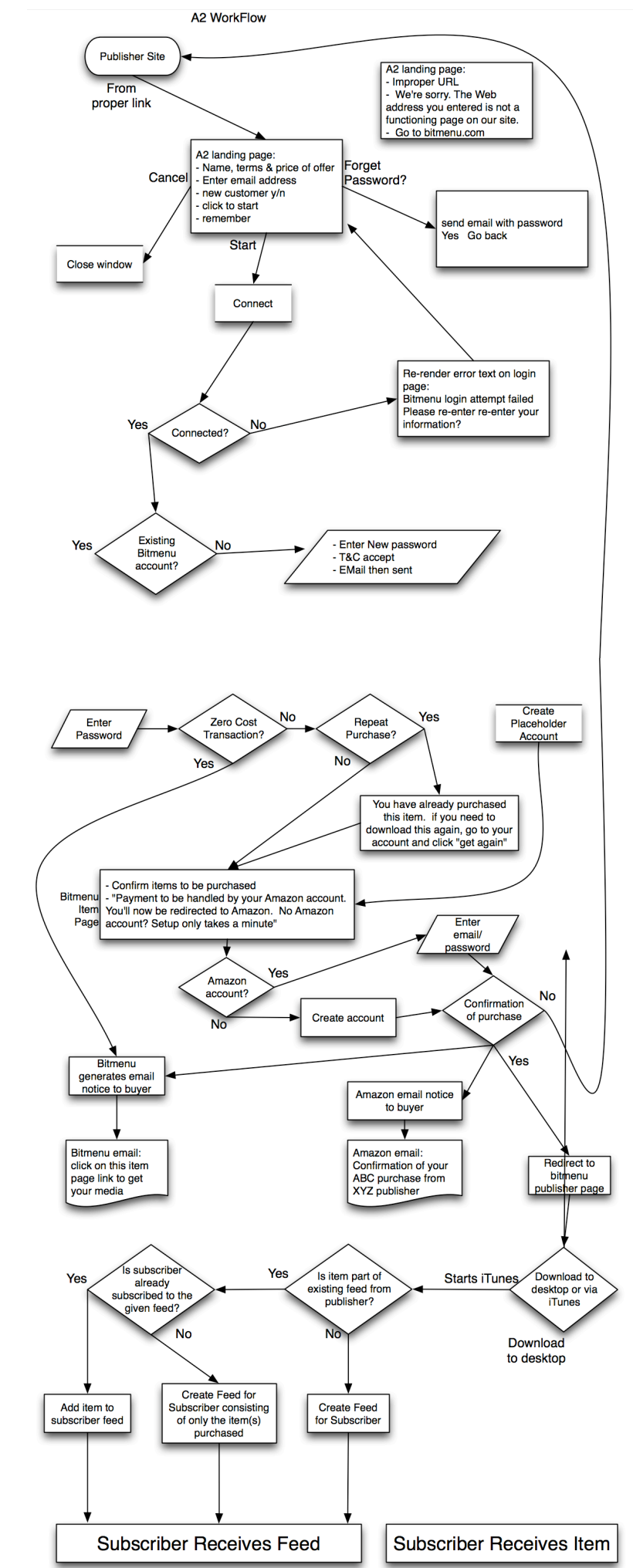
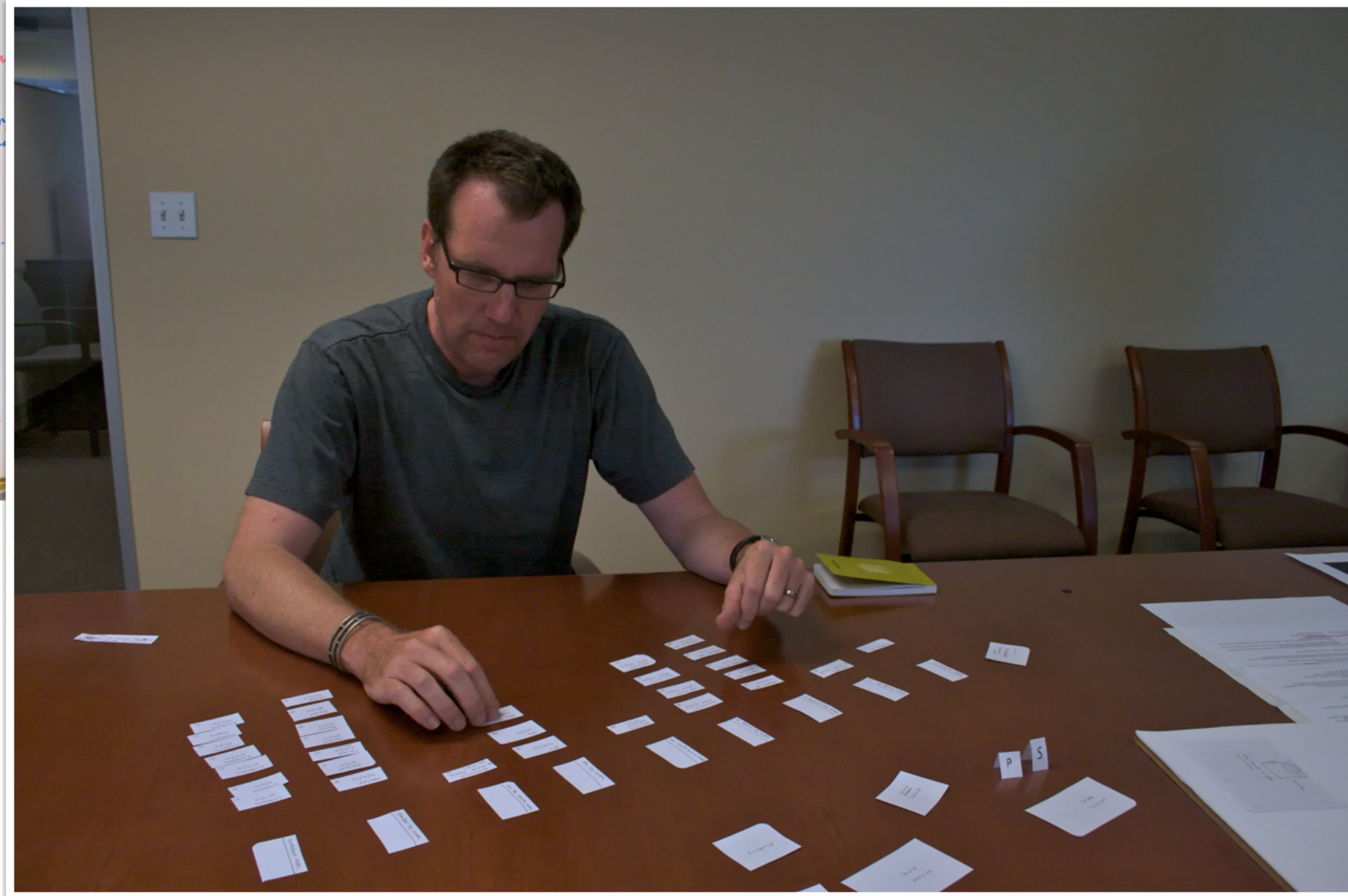
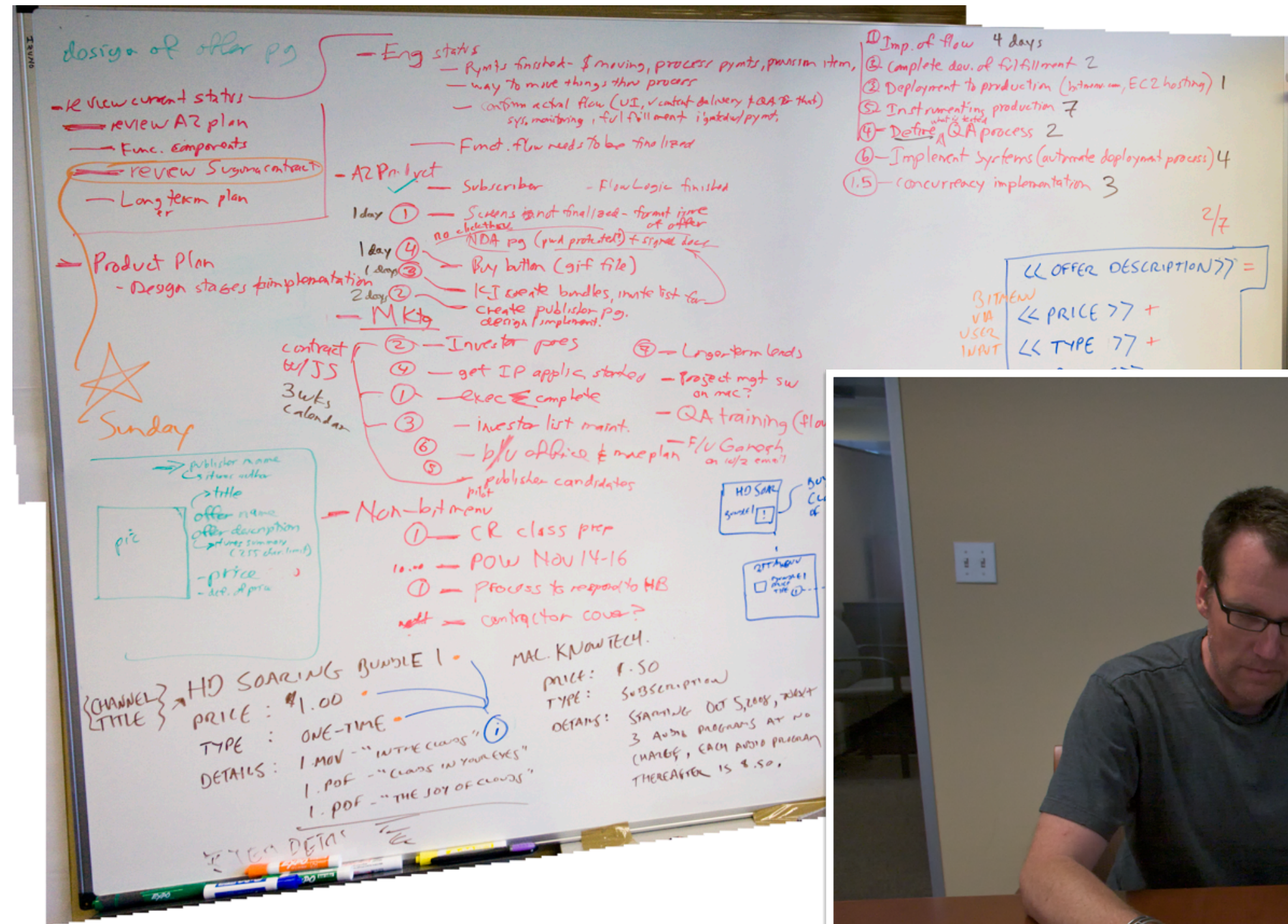
**Token**

Objects generated by Amazon FPS as response to an **order**:

- Many **tokens** are utilized during the course of an order, representing the order owner (bitmenu), the **seller** (publisher) and the **buyer** (customer), as well as the status of the authorization (accepted, rejected, etc.)
- A **token** can be Single Use (**SUT**) or Multi Use (**MUT**)
- A **purchase** is charged against a token when bitmenu delivers the content of all (**SUT**) or part (**MUT**) of an order

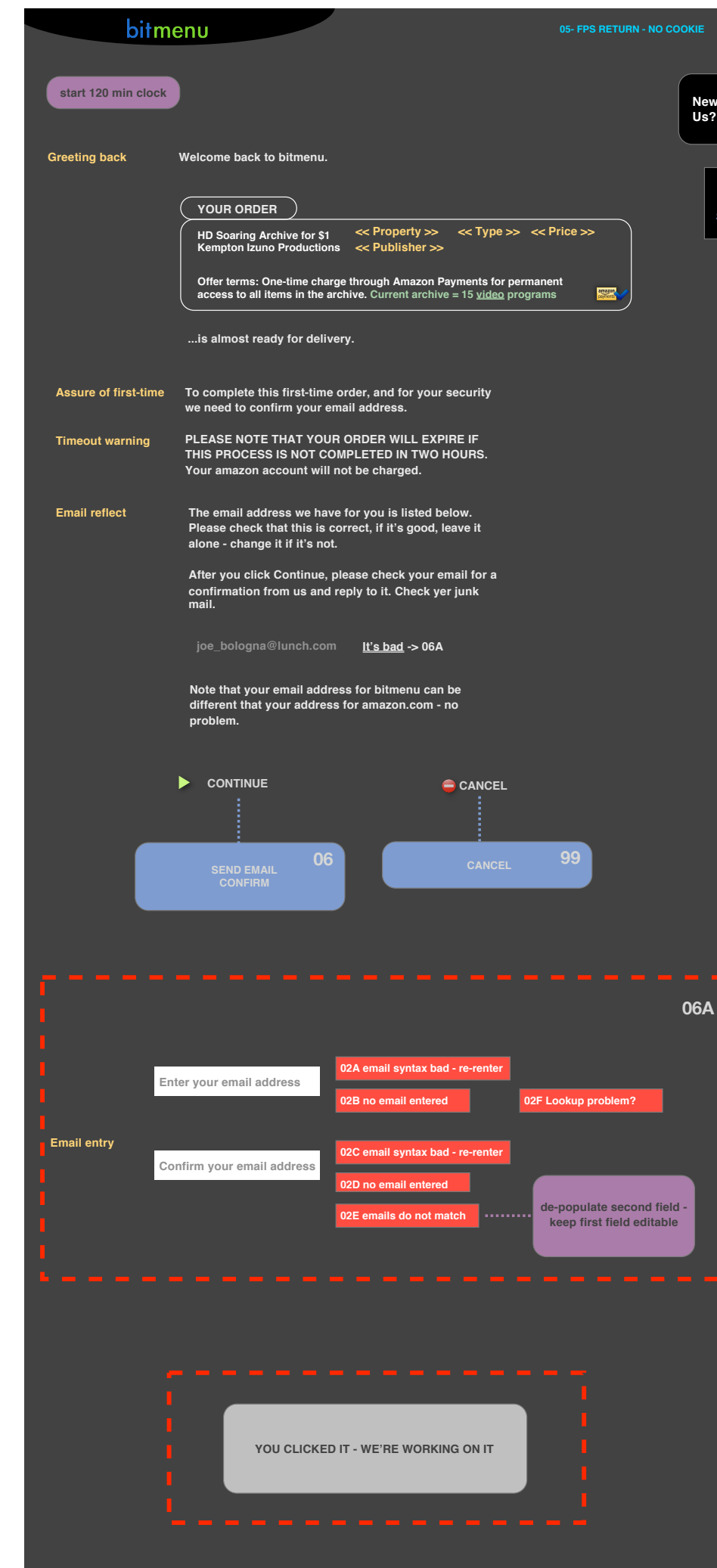
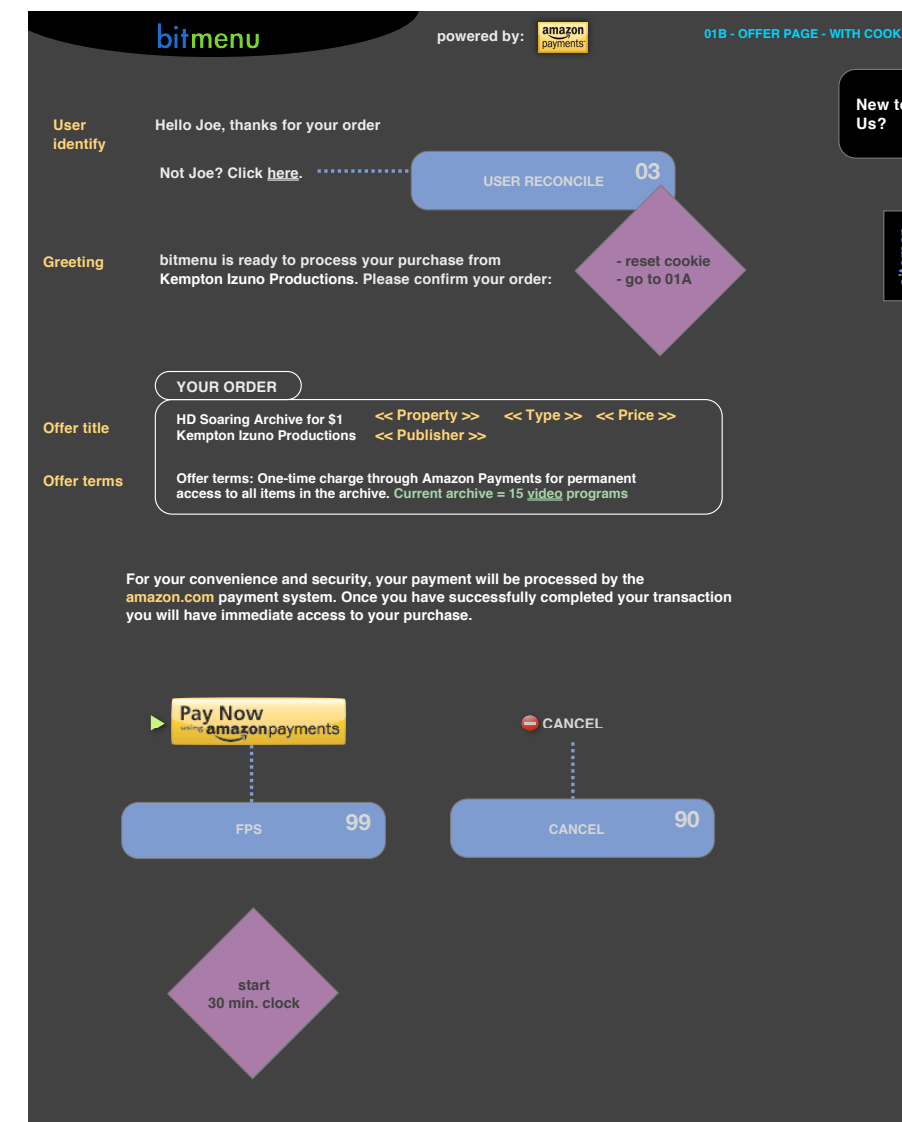
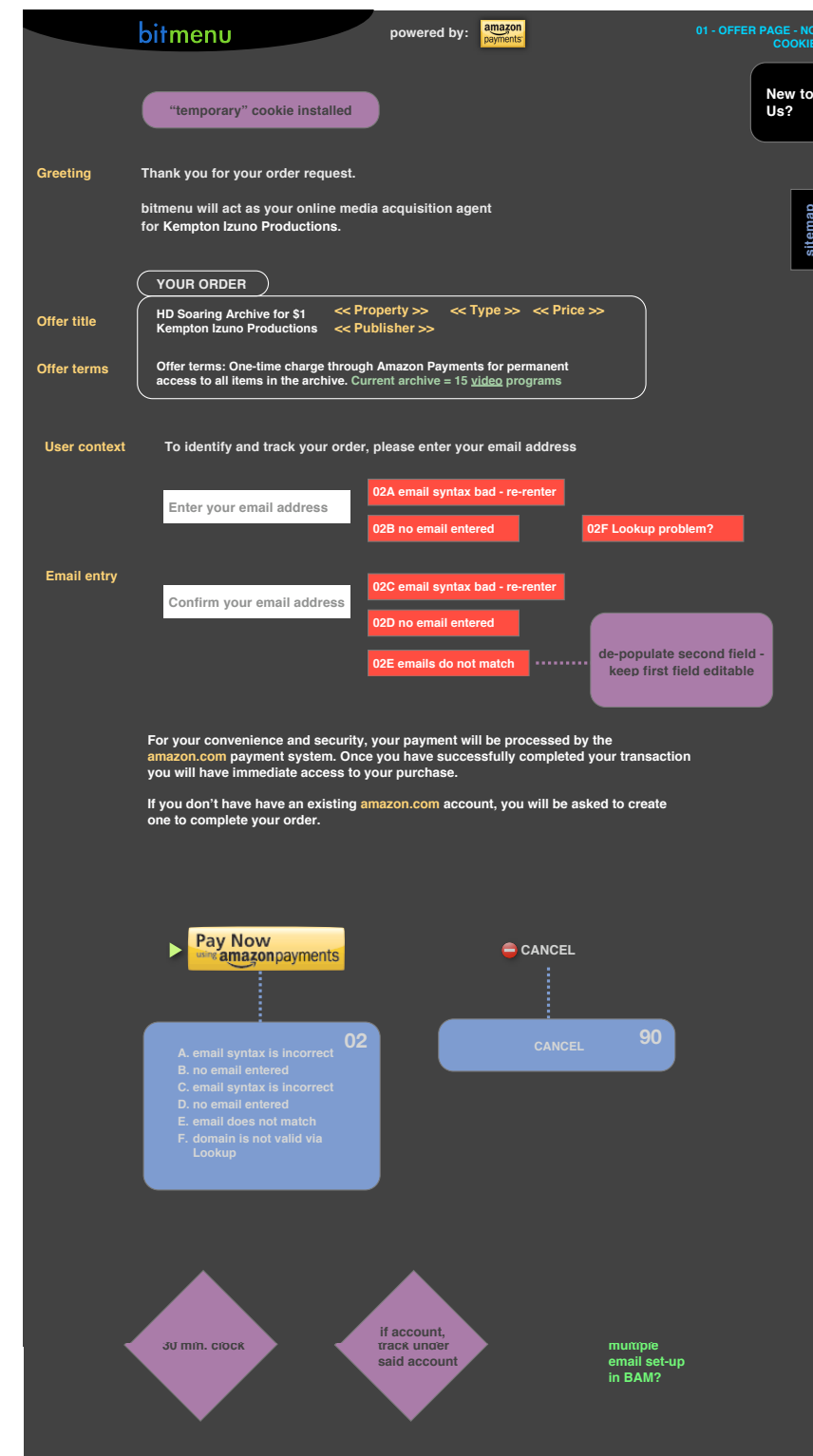
Somebody important once said something like ‘seize the language first before trying to conquer.’ As we were inventing a new service, I felt it was important to get the team aligned internally on what words we will use for what functions, and then stay consistent with that all the way to the UI. Because someone else important once said that ‘words are the UI’ and I totally agree with that sentiment.





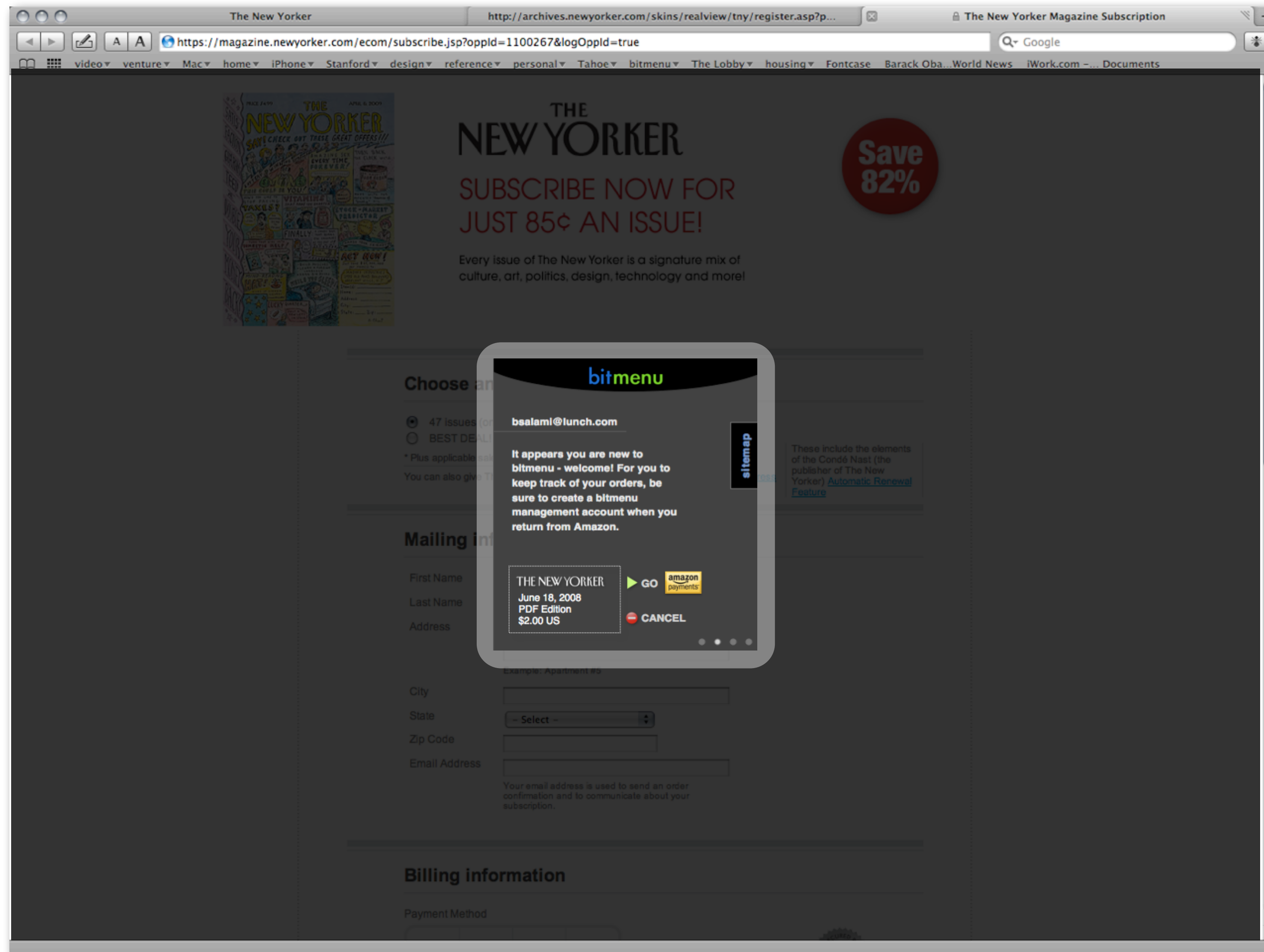
Working out the process flows via whiteboard, paper prototyping and eventually formal flowcharts. I was super happy our engineer wanted to do the last part.



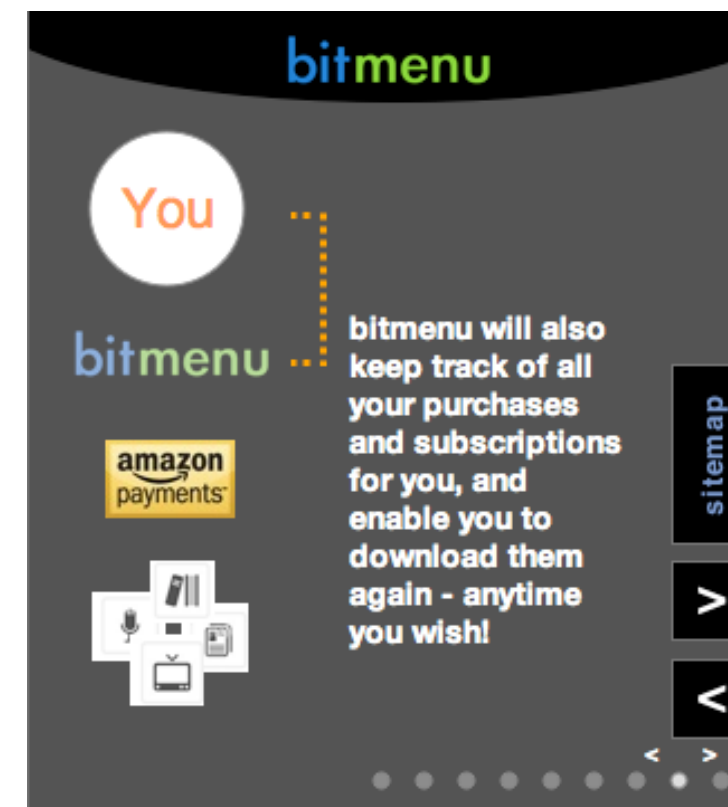
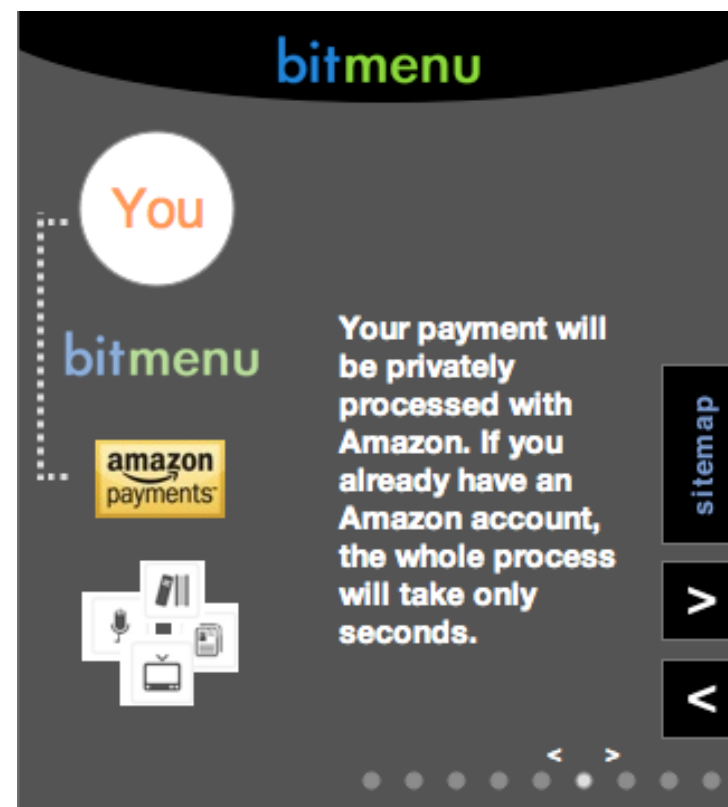
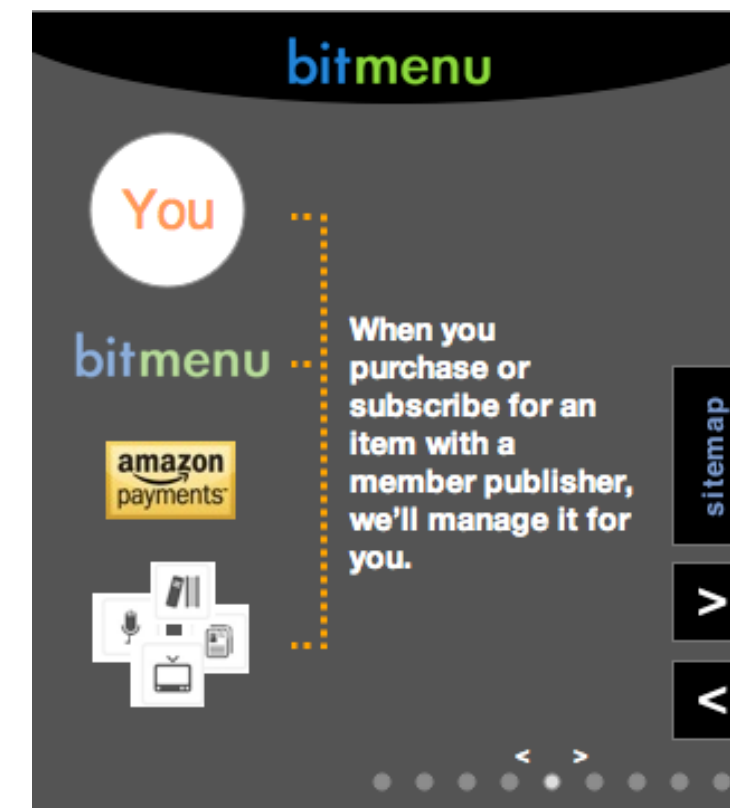
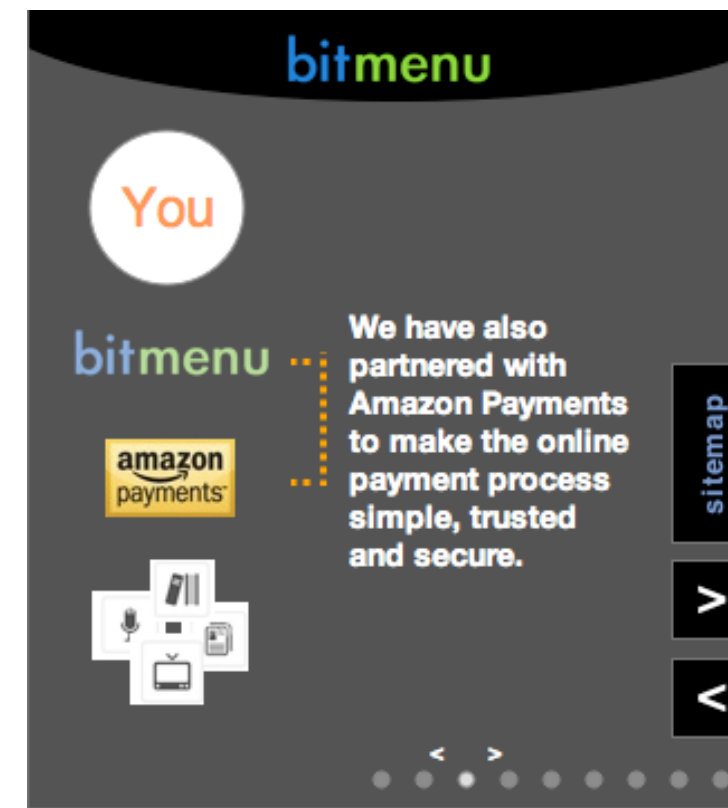
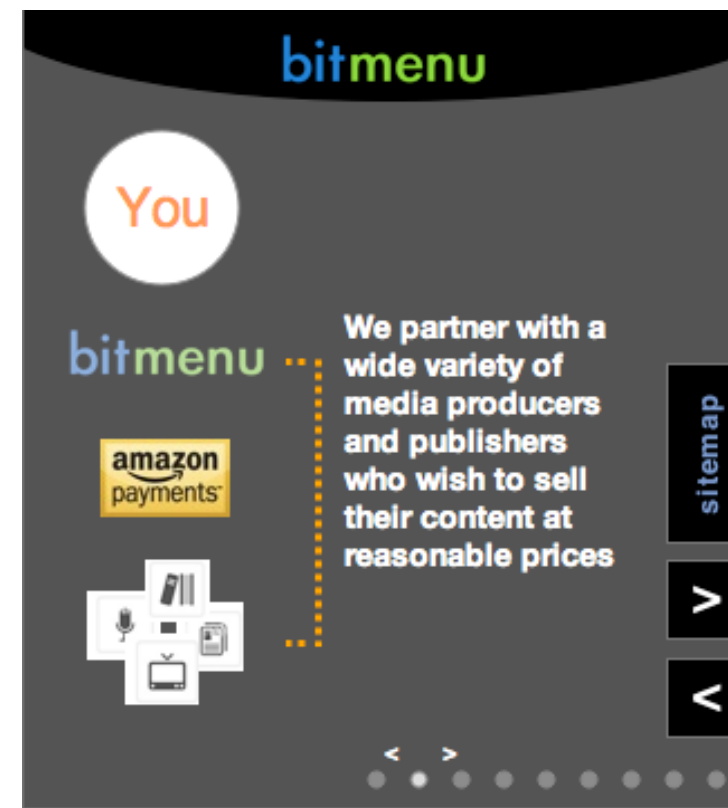
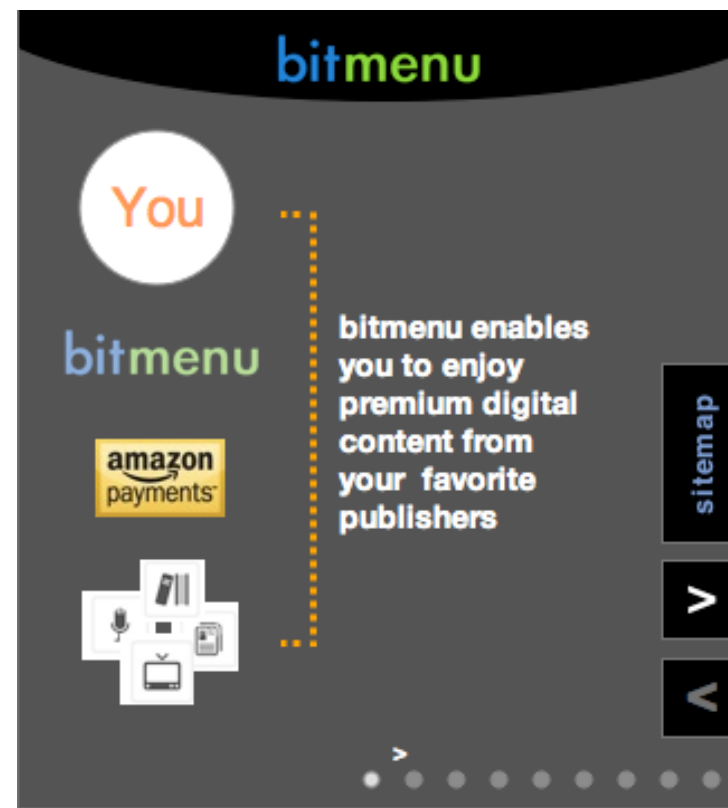


Early wireframes. When architecting a new UI, I like to start to mix some hints of UI elements in early, sometimes writing a paragraph in place that describes the function of what will eventually be represented by a single button. By color-coding different function classes, it also helps inform a possible color scheme to be used in the final design.





First step in refining what a UI might begin to look like, but still more of a wireframe than a design. Very wordy at this stage, but I want to document the sentiments and tone I feel should be reflected in the UI. This mock shows a full-page overlay over a publisher's website that would bring up bitmenu, assuming the user followed a CTA to purchase some media asset.



A pass on what a new user guide might feel like.

The screens I mocked up were rather small, and the iPhone was less than a year old, and responsive web technologies hadn't been invented yet. But I thought it would be a good idea to make sure that all I wanted my screens to do could fit on a mobile screen. Later I heard about the "mobile first" strategy being used, and thought it did make sense depending on the product being built.



Payment type: Pre-paid subscription  
Terms: 24 months  
Begins: 04-10-2007  
Expires: 04-16-2009  
Weeks received: 30  
Weeks remaining: 73  
Primary medium:  PDF  
Default delivery: iTunes  
Copies shared: 0



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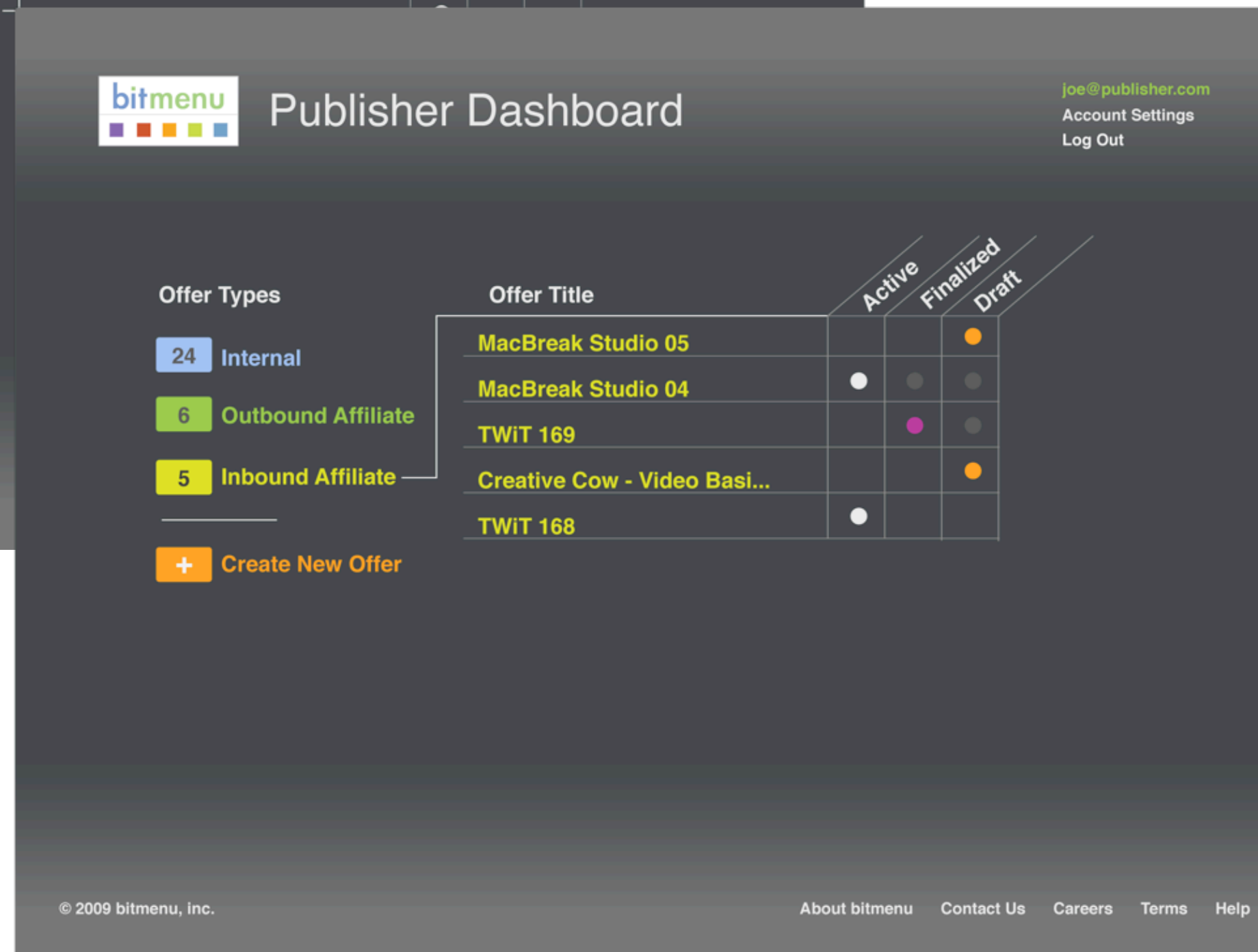
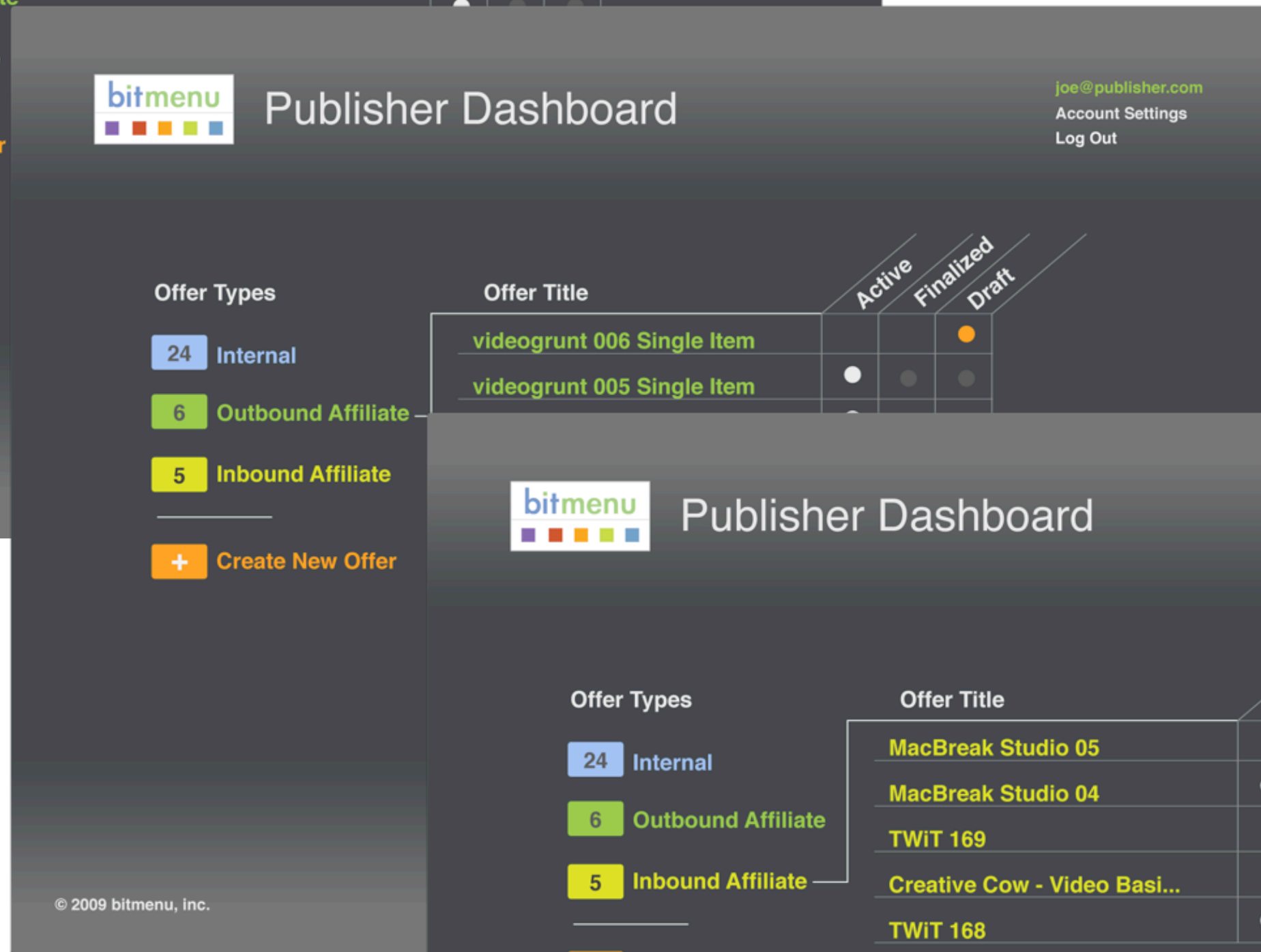
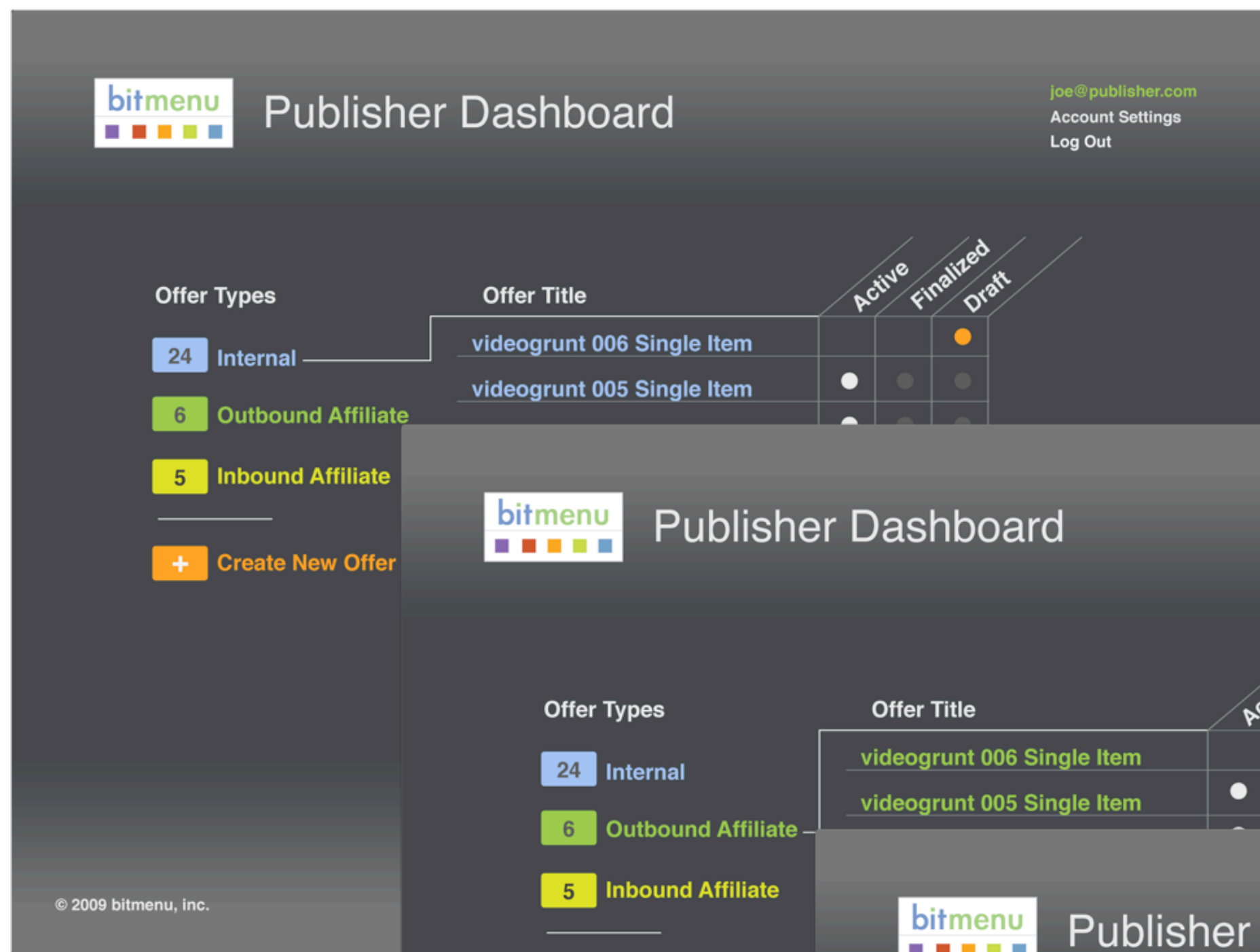
GET

sitemap



Early wireframe of a page within the user UI that manages a property (in this case a print magazine via PDF).





Mockups of a full-screen webpage, moving closer to an actual UI and design language.



Sadly, bitmenu fell victim to the many venture funding difficulties that occurred on the heels of the 2008 mortgage crisis. Happily, a few years later, the value of the name and the .com domain became significant.