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New Web sites add value for travelers

By [Richard Velotta / Staff Writer](#)

Mark Becker has a passion for travel and a knack for finding low airfares. Now, he has a Web site.

Becker said members of his family have long enjoyed the benefits of his ability to locate cheap fares on the Internet and parlay them into trips around the world. Now, he's offering his expertise online. His Web site — www.airfaredig.com — was one of three on my radar screen this past week.

Becker's site is a model of simplicity and efficiency. He simply posts the lowest round-trip fare in a market and supplies a link to make the purchase. Sometimes, he'll direct readers straight to an airline site, such as those run by Allegiant Air and Southwest Airlines. Sometimes, the low fare is offered by an aggregator like CheapAir or Travelocity.

I thought about inviting the site creator out to Las Vegas to buy him a beer or something, but alas, Mark Becker is a high school senior.

"I like putting things together like this and I've always been interested in Web design," said Becker, who hopes to attend the University of North Dakota next year after he graduates from Fergus Falls High School in Minnesota.

"It's been a work in progress for about two years, but when I finally got everything together, it took me about three months to set up," he said.

Becker said he uses "a wild combination of things" to track fares and once he gets all the information he needs, he manually transfers that to the site — not an easy trick when airfares fluctuate wildly and change frequently.

He likes international travel the most, taking a trip to Europe last year and spending some time in Central America before that. He said his parents "thought it was pretty cool" when he was interviewed by Minneapolis media. Now his site is getting noticed nationally with a variety of links to airports and a list of destinations and fares. McCarran is among those on the list.

Also worth a look online is a new beta site by London-based Cheapflights Ltd. executive Hugo Burge, who is now offering www.hereorthere.com to Web surfers.

Burge's new site is blend of a travel forum and a social network, inviting participants to air their travel experiences in narrative form. Some of the most recent entries discuss swimming with great white sharks off Capetown, South Africa, hang-gliding over Rio de Janeiro and a tour of Salvador Dali's home in Figueras, Spain.

Each entry offers a Yahoo! map to pinpoint the location and subscribers are invited to comment in forums.

The site is in its infancy with only a handful of participants and, surprisingly, no entries yet on Las Vegas travel experiences. That should change as the site picks up steam.

Participants can submit as visitors or residents and can provide text, photos, audio or video.