Determine Who
Select a persona you have developed or specific stakeholder or user group that you are talking about.
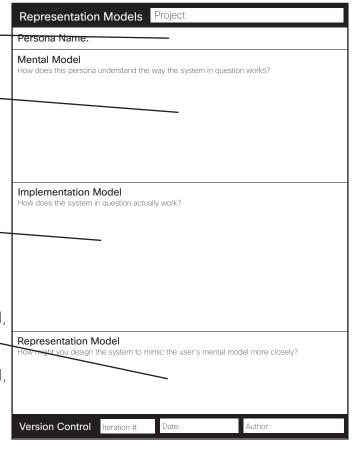
Persona's POV
The mental model is how your persona thinks that a system in question works. People have expectations about how a system will behave based on how they think it is implemented.

How It Works
Write down how the system in question actually works. This is how the people who built the system understand it, and how they probably designed it as well. How is this different from the Mental Model?

Design For People
No matter how the system is implemented, your design should always try to get as close to the Mental Model as possible. If your designs match a user's mental model, it should be extremely usable and there should be no need for explanation. How might you accomplish this?

Representation Models   Project

Persona Name:

Mental Model
How does this persona understand the way the system in question works?

Implementation Model
How does the system in question actually work?

Representation Model
How might you design the system to mimic the user's mental model more closely?

Version Control   Iteration #:   Date: Author:

Why
Implementation of a system is usually extremely complex and technical, and much to difficult for a user to understand. Because of this, users construct their own models to understand a system, and they expect the system to behave according to that understanding. As a designer, it is your job to simplify an implementational model as much as possible and to mimic a user's mental model in order to make even a complex system easy to use and understand.

Tips
A user's mental model is generally much simpler than the actual implementation model.

Most software designed by developers conforms to implementation models.

Always use research to understand a mental model, don't assume anything.

What came before?
Observation
Interview
Contextual Inquiry
Usability Testing

What's next?
Wireframing Page

Ideation

Observation
Interview
Contextual Inquiry
Usability Testing

Representation Models

Persona Name:

Mental Model
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