

Macromedia Dreamweaver: An Introduction

Getting started with your first web page can seem very daunting indeed. Macromedia Dreamweaver is the industry leader in web editors, but knowing where to start and what you need to know can be a little confusing at first.

If you are serious about web development, it is probably best to start off with Dreamweaver. There are other easier alternatives, such as Microsoft Frontpage which are fine for the novice web developers, but the package does lack a lot of advanced features. Once you are happy with your choice of web editor, it is then advisable to become familiar with its user environment.

Dreamweaver has what is known as a 'What You See Is What You Get' (WYSIWYG) environment. This means that you can easily drag and drop visually elements onto the screen. Dreamweaver 8 is the latest version and although it will look a little strange at first, you will notice that it has a similar look and feel to many other windows applications.

Now that you are familiar with the environment, you are ready to start developing...

HTML - Don't Worry About this, Quite Yet!

What is HTML I hear you ask? HTML or Hyper Text Markup Language is the coding language used to construct web pages.

Fortunately, Dreamweaver's WYSIWYG environment has two views for developing a web page - a design view and a coding view. Beginners often start off using the design view, which requires no HTML knowledge. Objects can be dragged and dropped onto the design view and it can be used in many ways similar to a word processor like Microsoft Word.

Once you become proficient in the design view, you can then start to use the code view where you will be required to have some knowledge of HTML. This is where the real web developing starts!

If at this stage you require more help, there are a variety of Macromedia Dreamweaver training courses based in the UK for introduction, intermediate and advanced levels to suite just about everyone's ability - so if you want to push your Dreamweaver and HTML skills to the next level, instructor-led Dreamweaver training may be just the ticket for you!

Page Design and Layout

Before developing your page, you should be absolutely sure what it is that you want your page to do and who the intended audience is. Initially it is often wise to sketch the look of the page on a piece of paper.

You may then wish to dedicate some time to the organisation of your home page. This should include self descriptive navigational links and the content layout should be clutter free. This will allow customers to easily find what they are looking for, resulting in potentially higher sales of products and services or from a non commercial point of view, better access to your information.

Publish Your Web Page

Once you have added content to your website, you are then ready to publish it on the World Wide Web! You will require a web server to host the site, along with a web address. Both can be acquired for no or low charge on the Internet. These online hosting web sites are aimed at the first time home developers and often have large numbers of adverts.

If the website is of a commercial nature, it is advised to go with a web hosting company with a good reputation and this will involve monthly subscription fees. It is also recommended that you purchase a web site domain.

Once you have a web address to host your website and have spent some time developing the home page, you will then be ready to publish your site online!

Macromedia Dreamweaver makes publishing web pages a real breeze.

Hopefully you have found this article informative and useful. This article is not intended as a technical resource on how to use Dreamweaver, but more of a general overview of how Dreamweaver can be used and the processes involved in creating web pages.

If you require more technical assistance Macromedia has excellent self taught tutorials supplied with the product and there is also a wealth of

resources online.

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About the Author

Author is a Web Design and Microsoft Office trainer, for a company that is UK leader in Microsoft training. For more information on Dreamweaver visit <http://www.microsofttraining.net>