

Introduction

The Metamorphosis. The Transformation. The Makeover.

From fairy tales to Walt Disney cartoons to diet pill ads to home improvement television shows, we all have a natural interest in witnessing change taking place before our eyes. The ugly duckling becomes the swan. The neglected step-sister is transformed into a gorgeous beauty at the prince's ball. The rundown house is made over into the jewel of the neighborhood. When we see these metamorphoses happening to others, we are inspired to emulate these same kinds of changes in our lives.

This desire for transformation extends into cyberspace as well. You create or maintain a Web site that you put a lot of work into, but you see how poorly it compares to other sites you visit on the Internet. You realize that what your Web site really needs is a makeover.

Before & After Makeover: The Concept

Web Design Before & After Makeovers is written to enable you to make over your Web site. With this book, you get a chance to work with dozens of mini-projects that parallel the sorts of improvements you'll encounter as you revamp and overhaul the design of your Web site. These challenges include such tasks as making your home page a compelling place that visitors will want to bookmark and return to often, placing great content on your pages without cramming it in, making your site easy and intuitive to navigate, and ensuring your pages load blazingly fast.



How to Get Around in This Book

The makeovers contained in the book are divided into 12 distinct areas. Here's a chapter-by-chapter overview of what you can expect:

Chapter 1: Makeover Essentials

In this initial chapter, you explore the tools that you'll use to perform your Web site makeovers. These software essentials include Macromedia Dreamweaver (or another HTML editor), Adobe Photoshop (or another image editor), a full set of browsers, and a really nifty debugging tool.

Chapter 2: Page Layout Makeovers

This chapter explores the physical layout of a Web page, examining how to size and arrange content on the page. You also look at how to center your pages within the browser.

Chapter 3: Navigation Makeovers

In this chapter, you focus on the challenge of making your site easy to navigate, whether it has 5, 50, or 500 pages. You look at how to create top and sidebar navigation using CSS and a drop-down combo box for quick links.

Chapter 4: Page Element Makeovers

You get to dive into the design of the elements you place on a page in this chapter. Tables and their borders are looked at first; then you examine how to space elements so that they coexist well on a page. Finally, iframes are explored as a great way to package content on your site.

Chapter 5: Text Makeovers

Communication is the *raison d'être* for the Web, so text is arguably the most important element on your Web pages. And yet, *how* you present that textual information is often even more important than the content itself. This chapter examines how to work with typefaces and font sizes by using CSS. It then focuses on how you can use text as an image to present page headings, headlines, or other eye-grabbing needs.

Chapter 6: Image Makeovers

This chapter shows you how to give your Web site a face-lift by improving the way you use images on it. You explore how to create an image rollover, crop an image, and create thumbnail images. And, if you need to display several images on a single page, be sure to check out the Image Scroller makeover in this chapter.

Chapter 7: Image Performance Makeovers

Just having nice images on your Web site is not enough. Unless they are small enough to be downloaded quickly, no one will stick around long enough to see your wonderwork. Therefore, in this chapter, you explore tricks that shorten your image download time without losing image quality.

Chapter 8: Home Page Makeovers

In this chapter, you focus on transforming your Web site's most important page — the home page. You look at how to target the content of your page for the type of visitors who come to it. You also explore how to make your home page come alive with fresh, dynamic content.

Chapter 9: Content Makeovers

While much of the book's focus is on the design and look of the Web site, this chapter looks at makeovers of your site's content. You discover how to transform the content of your Web site to better communicate with your visitors. Also, explore how to write Web-savvy text, how to place links in the best locations, and how to add alternate printable versions of your pages.

Chapter 10: Form Makeovers

Forms are often one of the ugliest parts of a Web site. Discover in this chapter how you can use CSS to enhance the look of any form as well as replace normal HTML buttons with graphical buttons. You also explore how to use JavaScript to validate your forms before they are submitted to the server.

Chapter 11: Add-On Makeovers

This chapter shows you how to use various add-ons to increase the functionality of your site's offerings. Explore how to add maps, directions, a site search feature, and a blog page.

Chapter 12: Site Makeovers

This chapter examines makeovers that impact your whole site. You look at how to link to other sites without losing your visitors. Then you find out how to create your own Favorites icon. Finally, you discover how to make over your Web site to maximize your search engine ranking.

Chapter 13: Extreme Makeovers

It's time to get radical in the final chapter. You explore how to perform some extreme makeovers that will transform your site into something state-of-the-art. Check out how to let your visitors control the size of the font on your site and how to customize the content based on the type of visitor. Finally, add the latest technology — RSS feeds — to your Web site to better communicate with your visitors.

Essential Makeover Tools

The makeovers covered in this book are written specifically for our recommended tools of choice: Macromedia Dreamweaver and Adobe Photoshop. However, the makeovers are designed to be flexible enough to be performed using most any HTML editor and image software.

Companion Web Site

Many of the makeovers covered in the book have accompanying HTML or image files that you can work with to more easily follow along with the makeover instructions. If you want to download these files, go to www.wiley.com/go/makeovers.

Your Invitation to Participate!

After you've had a chance to use the makeovers in this book on your Web site, I invite you to come up with your own. If you come up with something that you think would be helpful to others and would like to share it, feel free to send it to us at makeovers@digitalwalk.net. I might select it for use in another edition of *Web Design Before & After Makeovers*.