

Preface

Dreamweaver MX stands at the center of a complex series of overlapping worlds. In one realm, we have designers of static Web pages looking to expand their knowledge base into data-driven sites. Over there, you'll find application developers — some savvy in Active Server Pages and ASP.NET, some in ColdFusion, and some others in JavaServer Pages and PHP — anxious to develop for the Internet. There's a spectrum of experience in both camps that runs the gamut from eager novice to experienced professional. Then there's yet another group of prospective Web craftsmen and artists who want to do it all and are looking for a place to start. Dreamweaver MX is the one program robust enough for them all, and *Dreamweaver MX Bible* is your guidebook to all its features and capabilities.

What's in a name? In the case of Macromedia's Dreamweaver MX, you'll find one of the most appropriate product names around. Web page design is a blend of art and craft; whether you're a deadline-driven professional or a vision-filled amateur, you'll find that the Dreamweaver underpinnings of this tool provide an intuitive way to make your Web visions a reality. Dreamweaver implies development, and Dreamweaver MX excels at producing multifaceted Web pages that bring content locked in a data store to the surface.

To use this book, you need only two items: the Dreamweaver software and a desire to make cutting-edge Web pages. (Actually, you don't even need Dreamweaver to begin; the CD-ROM that accompanies this book contains a trial version.) From quick design prototyping to ongoing Web site management, Dreamweaver automates and simplifies much of a Webmaster's workload. Dreamweaver is not only the first Web authoring tool to bring the ease of visual editing to an HTML-code-oriented world, it also brings a point-and-click interface to complex coding whether server-side or client-side. The *Dreamweaver MX Bible* is designed to help you master every nuance of the program. Are you building multipage Web applications? Are you creating a straightforward layout with the visual editor? Do you need to extend Dreamweaver's capabilities by building your own custom objects? With Dreamweaver and this book, you can weave your dreams into reality for the entire world to experience.

What's New in Dreamweaver MX

Since its inception, Dreamweaver has strived to serve two masters: professional Web developers, savvy in technique and used to hand-coding, and beginning designers looking to overcome their lack of HTML and JavaScript expertise. Dreamweaver MX attempts to continue the balancing act of satisfying the two different markets — and, in large part, succeeds. Innovations in Dreamweaver MX can be categorized into three areas: layout and design, code editing, and Web-application building.

Enhanced layout features

Perhaps the most obvious new feature is Dreamweaver's totally redesigned workspace. Panels are now docked together and, if the Windows-only MDI mode is used, documents appear in a single window. The redesigned look and feel matches other Macromedia products in the MX line: Fireworks, Flash, and soon, FreeHand. This common user interface smoothes out the workflows and aids productivity.

Dreamweaver also revamped the underlying architecture of how documents and sites work together and, in the process, made it far easier to work with different types of Web documents. The New Document feature now allows you to pick from 36 different standard formats — and, better still, you can add your own. Macromedia also includes a wide variety of basic page layouts: everything from text-based pages to product catalogs.

Dreamweaver honed its cutting edge a little finer with enhanced Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) support — both on the coding and the rendering side. The CSS Panel has been given a full makeover and now offers split functionality for easier editing and applying of styles. Design Time Style Sheets is another new feature, which incorporates CSS design with dynamic application power.

If you're a template user, you'll also find a lot more flexibility available to you. In addition to editable regions, templates may now have repeating regions or optional regions. Repeating regions are used to increase or decrease the rows in a table while keeping the table structure intact. Optional regions can hide or display any elements on a page — like an "On Sale Now" graphic — at design time.

Code editing improvements

The most far-reaching change to Dreamweaver's coding environment is under the hood, so to speak. Dreamweaver MX completely revitalized its coding architecture by tying each page type to a customizable set of tags known as a *tag library*. This enhancement gives Dreamweaver users the power to create HTML, XHTML, ASP, ColdFusion, XML, pages, and more with equal ease. Macromedia also provides an easy-to-use editor for managing existing tag libraries and adding new ones.

Some of the more resonant repercussions of Dreamweaver's underlying tag library structure are of particular use to hand-coders. On demand, Dreamweaver provides hints for both tags and their attributes. This enables very rapid code development. The tag libraries are also responsible for Dreamweaver's code completion system — you'll never forget to close a tag again!

Two other new features are geared to ramp up code production. The Snippets panel keeps commonly used blocks of code within easy reach — and, of course, you can add your own code and manage the categories however you choose. The Tag inspector serves double-duty by first exposing all the page elements in a collapsible tree structure, and second by allowing all the attributes of any selected element to be directly edited.

Web application advancements

Dreamweaver's connectivity greatly expands in Dreamweaver MX. In addition to supporting ASP (in both JavaScript and VBScript), JSP, and ColdFusion, Dreamweaver now writes ASP.NET (in either C# or VBScript) and PHP code with equal aplomb. Macromedia has even developed some custom ASP.NET tags to speed development.

Given Macromedia's merger with Allaire, you might expect a greater integration between Dreamweaver and ColdFusion — and you'll get it in Dreamweaver MX. In addition to a major overhaul of the server behavior code so that it's more familiar to ColdFusion developers, Dreamweaver now boasts a direct connection to a new feature in ColdFusion MX: ColdFusion Components. Components can be written, applied, and even inspected from within Dreamweaver.

One of the hottest trends in Web application development is known as Web services. Web services are a form of distributed application — and Dreamweaver lets you build pages that can access Web services and display the required information.

Dreamweaver appeals to both the expert and the novice Web designer. Although the program is extraordinarily powerful, it's also fairly intuitive. Nonetheless, designers new to the Web often find the entire process overwhelming — understandably so. To give folks a bird's-eye view of the overall use of Dreamweaver in Web site design and production, this edition includes a Quick Start in Chapter 2. In this chapter, you'll see how one designer — yours truly — works with Dreamweaver in every aspect of building Web pages and constructing a site.

Who Should Read This Book?

Dreamweaver attracts a wide range of Web developers. Because it's the first Web authoring tool that doesn't rewrite original code, veteran designers are drawn to using Dreamweaver as their first visual editor. Because it also automates complicated effects, beginning Web designers are interested in Dreamweaver's power and performance. *Dreamweaver MX Bible* addresses the full spectrum of Web professionals, providing basic information on HTML if you're just starting, as well as advanced tips and tricks for seasoned pros. Moreover, this book is a complete reference for everyone working with Dreamweaver on a daily basis.

What Hardware and Software Do You Need?

Dreamweaver MX Bible includes coverage of Dreamweaver MX. If you don't own a copy of the program, you can use the trial version on this book's CD-ROM. Written to be platform-independent, this book covers both the Macintosh and Windows versions of Dreamweaver MX.

Macintosh

Macromedia recommends the following minimum requirements for running Dreamweaver on a Macintosh:

- ◆ Macintosh PowerPC (G3 or higher recommended)
- ◆ Mac OS 9.1 or higher or Mac OS 10.1 or higher
- ◆ 96MB of available RAM
- ◆ 275MB of available disk space
- ◆ 256-color monitor capable of 800 × 600 resolution (OS X requires thousands of colors)
- ◆ CD-ROM drive

Windows

Macromedia recommends the following minimum requirements for running Dreamweaver on a Windows system:

- ◆ Intel Pentium II processor, 300MHz or equivalent
- ◆ Windows 98, ME, NT, 2000, or XP
- ◆ 96MB of available RAM
- ◆ 275MB of available disk space
- ◆ 256-color monitor capable of 800 × 600 resolution
- ◆ CD-ROM drive

**Note**

These are the minimum requirements. As with all graphics-based design tools, more capability is definitely better for using Dreamweaver, especially in terms of memory and processor speed.

How This Book Is Organized

Dreamweaver MX Bible can take you from raw beginner to full-fledged professional if read cover to cover. However, you're more likely to read each section as needed, taking the necessary information and coming back later. To facilitate this approach, *Dreamweaver MX Bible* is divided into seven major task-oriented parts. After you're familiar with Dreamweaver, feel free to skip around the book, using it as a reference guide as you build up your own knowledge base.

The early chapters present the basics, and all chapters contain clearly written steps for the tasks you need to perform. In later chapters, you encounter sections labeled Dreamweaver Techniques. *Dreamweaver Techniques* are step-by-step instructions for accomplishing specific Web designer tasks—for example, building an image map that uses rollovers, or eliminating underlines from hyperlinks through Cascading Style Sheets. Naturally, you can also use the Dreamweaver Techniques as stepping stones for your own explorations into Web page creation.

If you're running Dreamweaver while reading this book, don't forget to use the CD-ROM. An integral element of the book, the accompanying CD-ROM offers a vast number of additional Dreamweaver server behaviors, objects, commands, and other extensions in addition to relevant code from the book.

Part I: Dreamweaver MX Basics

Part I begins with an overview of Dreamweaver's philosophy and design. To get the most out of the program, you need to understand the key advantages it offers over other authoring programs and the deficiencies that it addresses. Part I takes you all the way to setting up your first site. In Chapter 2, you'll get an overview of the Web development process as a quick start to Dreamweaver. The other opening chapters give you a full reference to the Dreamweaver interface and all of its customizable features.

Part II: Web Design and Layout

Although Dreamweaver is partly a visual design tool, its roots derive from the language of the Web: HTML. Part II gives you a solid foundation in the basics of HTML, even if you've never seen code, as well as showing you how to get the most out of Dreamweaver's code environment with any language. The three fundamentals of static Web pages are text, images, and links. You explore how to incorporate these elements to their fullest extent in Chapters 7, 8, and 9, respectively. Chapter 10 examines the various uses of tables—from a clear presentation of data to organizing entire Web pages. Here you learn how to use Dreamweaver's visual table editing capabilities to resize and reshape your HTML tables quickly. Forms are an essential element in dynamic Web page design—you'll learn all about them in Chapter 11. Chapter 12 examines another fundamental HTML option: lists. You study the list in all of its forms: numbered lists, bulleted lists, definition lists, nested lists, and more.

Chapter 13 is devoted to image maps and shows how to use Dreamweaver's built-in Image Map tools to create client-side image maps. The chapter also explains how you can build server-side image maps and demonstrates a revised technique for creating image map rollovers. Chapter 14 investigates the somewhat complex world of frames—and shows how Dreamweaver has greatly simplified the task of building and managing these multifile creations, particularly with the new Frame objects. You also learn how to handle more advanced design tasks such as updating multiple frames with just one click.

Part III: Incorporating Dynamic Data

Chapter 15 begins an in-depth investigation of Dreamweaver's power to create dynamic Web pages by describing how to set up your basic connections and recordsets. Chapter 16 explains how to insert text from a data source on to your Web page and how to format it once it's incorporated. You'll also see how to relate other Web page elements—such as images, Flash movies, and other media files—to a data source. Chapter 17 continues the exploration by delving into Dreamweaver's powerful Repeat Region server behavior as well as discussing techniques for hiding and showing your data at will.

One of Dreamweaver's most useful features, the Live Data Preview, is explored extensively in Chapter 18. Chapter 19 enters the world of multipage applications and explains how variables and other data can be passed from one page to another.

Part IV: Dynamic HTML and Dreamweaver

Dynamic HTML brought a new world of promises to Web designers—promises that went largely unfulfilled until Dreamweaver was released. Part IV of the *Dreamweaver MX Bible* examines this brave new world of pixel-perfect positioning, layers that fly in and then disappear as if by magic, and Web sites that can change their look and feel at the click of a mouse.

Chapter 20 takes a detailed look at the elegance of Cascading Style Sheets and offers techniques for accomplishing the most frequently requested tasks, such as creating an external style sheet. Many of the advantages of Dynamic HTML come from the use of layers, which enable absolute positioning of page elements, visibility control, and a sense of depth. You discover how to handle all these layer capabilities and more in Chapter 21. Chapter 22 focuses on timelines, which have the potential to take your Web page into the fourth dimension. The chapter concludes with a blow-by-blow description of how to create a multiscreen slide show, complete with layers that fly in and out on command. Chapter 23 offers an in-depth look at the capabilities of Dreamweaver behaviors. Each standard behavior is covered in detail with step-by-step instructions.

Part V: Adding Multimedia Elements

In recent years, the Web has moved from a relatively static display of text and simple images to a full-blown multimedia circus with streaming video, background music, and interactive animations. Part V contains the power tools for incorporating various media files into your Web site.

Graphics remain the key medium on the Web today, and Macromedia's Fireworks is a top-notch graphics generator. Chapter 24 delves into methods for incorporating Fireworks graphics — with all the requisite rollover and other code intact. Special focus is given to the Dreamweaver-to-Fireworks communication link and how your Web production efforts can benefit from it.

In addition to Dreamweaver, Macromedia is perhaps best known for one other contribution to Web multimedia: Flash. Chapter 25 explores the possibilities offered by incorporating Flash and Shockwave movies into Dreamweaver-designed Web pages and includes everything you need to know about configuring MIME types. You also find step-by-step instructions for building Shockwave inline controls and playing Shockwave movies in frame-based Web pages, as well as how to add Flash buttons and Flash text.

Chapter 26 covers digital video in its many forms: downloadable AVI files, streaming RealVideo displays, and panoramic QuickTime movies. Chapter 27 focuses on digital audio, with coverage of standard WAV and MIDI sound files as well as the newer streaming audio formats, like MP3.

Part VI: Enhancing Web Site Management and Workflow in Dreamweaver

Although Web page design gets all the glory, Web site management pays the bills. In Part VI, you see how Dreamweaver makes this essential part of any Webmaster's day easier to handle. Chapter 28 starts off the section with a look at the use of Dreamweaver Templates and how they can speed up production while ensuring a unified look and feel across your Web site. Chapter 29 covers the Library, which can significantly reduce any Webmaster's workload by providing reusable — and updateable — page elements. Chapter 30 describes Dreamweaver's built-in tools for maintaining cross- and backward-browser compatibility. A Dreamweaver Technique demonstrates a browser-checking Web page that automatically directs users to appropriate links.

Until now, individual Web developers have been stymied when attempting to integrate Dreamweaver into a team development environment. File locking was all too easily subverted, allowing revisions to be inadvertently overwritten, site reports were limited in scope and output only to HTML, and, worst of all, version control was nonexistent. Dreamweaver MX addresses all these concerns while laying a foundation for future connectivity. In Chapter 31, you see how you can tie Dreamweaver into an existing Visual SourceSafe or WebDAV version control system. Other new features covered include custom file view columns and enhanced Design Notes accessibility.

I can't think of any new technology on the Web that has so quickly gained the widespread acceptance that XML has. In a nutshell, XML (short for eXtensible Markup Language) enables you to create your own custom tags that make the most sense for your business or profession. Although XML doesn't enjoy full browser support as of this writing, it's only a matter of time — and little time at that. Chapter 32 shows you how to apply this fast-approaching technology of tomorrow in Dreamweaver today.

Part VII: Extending Dreamweaver

Dreamweaver is a program with extensive capabilities for expanding its own power. Chapter 33 explores the brave new world of Dreamweaver extensibility, with complete coverage of using and building commands as well as custom tags, translators, floaters, and C-level Extensions. With its own set of objects and behaviors, Dreamweaver complements HTML's extensibility. Chapter 34 shows you how you can use the built-in objects to accomplish most of your Web page layout chores quickly and efficiently — and when you're ready for increased automation, the chapter explains how to build your own custom objects. If you're JavaScript-savvy, Chapter 35 gives you the material you need to construct your own client-side behaviors and reduce your day-to-day workload. Finally, Chapter 36 examines server behaviors, describing every standard one in detail and then exploring the use of the Server Behavior Builder, Dreamweaver's tool for creating custom server behaviors.

Appendix

The appendix describes the contents of the CD-ROM that accompanies this book. Throughout this book, whenever you encounter a reference to files or programs on the CD-ROM, please check this appendix for more information.

Conventions Used in This Book

I use the following conventions throughout this book.

Windows and Macintosh conventions

Because *Dreamweaver MX Bible* is a cross-platform book, it gives instructions for both Windows and Macintosh users when keystrokes for a particular task differ. Throughout this book, the Windows keystrokes are given first; the Macintosh are given second in parentheses, as follows:

To undo an action, press Ctrl+Z (Command+Z).

The first action instructs Windows users to press the Ctrl and Z keys in combination, and the second action (in parentheses) instructs Macintosh users to press the Command and Z keys together.

Key combinations

When you are instructed to press two or more keys simultaneously, each key in the combination is separated by a plus sign. For example:

Ctrl+Alt+T (Command+Option+T)

The preceding tells you to press the three listed keys for your system at the same time. You can also hold down one or more keys and then press the final key. Release all the keys at the same time.

Mouse instructions

When instructed to *click* an item, move the mouse pointer to the specified item and click the mouse button once. Windows users use the left mouse button unless otherwise instructed. *Double-click* means clicking the mouse button twice in rapid succession.

When instructed to *select* or *choose* an item, you may click it once as previously described. If you are selecting text or multiple objects, click the mouse button once, press Shift, and then move the mouse to a new location and click again. The color of the selected item or items inverts to indicate the selection. To clear the selection, click once anywhere on the Web page.

Menu commands

When instructed to select a command from a menu, you see the menu and the command separated by an arrow symbol. For example, when instructed to execute the Open command from the File menu, you see the notation File ⇨ Open. Some menus use submenus, in which case you see an arrow for each submenu, as follows: Insert ⇨ Form Object ⇨ Text Field.

Typographical conventions

I use *italic* type for new terms and for emphasis and **boldface** type for text that you need to type directly from the computer keyboard.

Code

A special typeface indicates HTML or other code, as demonstrated in the following example:

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Untitled Document</title>
</head>
<body bgcolor="#FFFFFF">
</body>
</html>
```

This code font is also used within paragraphs to designate HTML tags, attributes, and values such as `<body>`, `bgcolor`, and `#FFFFFF`. All HTML tags are presented in lowercase, as written by Dreamweaver, although browsers are not generally case-sensitive in terms of HTML.

The code continuation character (↵) at the end of a code line indicates that the line is too long to fit within the margins of the printed book. You should continue typing the next line of code before pressing the Enter (Return) key.

Navigating This Book

Various signposts and icons are located throughout *Dreamweaver MX Bible* for your assistance. Each chapter begins with an overview of its information and ends with a quick summary.

Icons appear in the text to indicate important or especially helpful items. Here's a list of the icons and their functions:



Tips provide you with extra knowledge that separates the novice from the pro.



Notes provide additional or critical information and technical data on the current topic.



Sections marked with a New Feature icon detail an innovation introduced in Dreamweaver MX.



Cross-Reference icons indicate places where you can find more information on a particular topic.



The Caution icon is your warning of a potential problem or pitfall.



The On the CD-ROM icon indicates that the accompanying CD-ROM contains a related file in the given folder. See the appendix for more information about where to locate specific items.

Further Information

You can find more help for specific problems and questions by investigating several Web sites. Macromedia's own Dreamweaver Web site is the best place to start:

www.macromedia.com/software/Dreamweaver/

I heartily recommend that you visit and participate in the official Dreamweaver newsgroup:

news://forums.macromedia.com/macromedia.Dreamweaver

You can also e-mail me:

jlowery@idest.com

I can't promise instantaneous turnaround, but I answer all my mail to the best of my abilities.