Insert Table

Insert Window

Insert Image

HTML Table

Text Color

Size Text Size

Font

Link Link Field

Properties Window

Merge Cells

Browse File For Linking

Tired of .Mac's limitations on Web-page design, but clueless when it comes to code? You can quickly build your own site—code-free—with Dreamweaver.

B Bold

I Italic

Align Left

Align Center

Justify

Align Right

Border Color

Background Color

Build Your Own Web Site

by Niko Coucouvanis

WHAT YOU NEED

TRICKY

- Dreamweaver MX ($399 or free trial version; www.macromedia.com)
- FTP client, such as Transmit ($24.95, www.panic.com) or Dreamweaver
- Web host

So you want a Web page. It's 2003, for crying out loud—nobody gives a fart about the Internet since the great dot-bomb of '01. But they'll be back, and this time you'll be there ahead of the pack. Sure, you *could* just fill in the blanks on your .Mac homepage or click HomePage in iPhoto (or just about any modern word- or image-processing app) to autogenerate
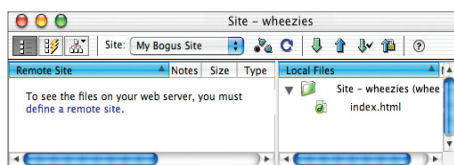
one, but where's the fun in that? Shouldn't your Web page symbolize your individuality and belief in personal freedom? We say, "Hell, yeah!" We even show you the way.

You've always wanted to flaunt your fluff 'n' stuff electronically to the masses, but .Mac doesn't cut it for you. Here, we instruct you on how to create a basic home page, complete with a title graphic, text, a photo, and navigational links to your unknown treasures within. We demonstrate how to Web-optimize photos and build a custom-made photo-gallery page. And don't worry—we also tell you how to get everything up on your hosted Web space.
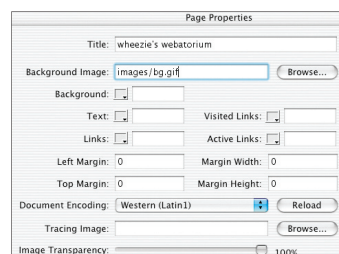
ON THE DISC

Dreamweaver MX 6.1 trial, GraphicConverter 4.6.1, Know Thy Code supplement, and Transmit (OS X) 2.5

1 Make the Map Launch Dreamweaver MX. The program opens a blank document—save the page as *index.html* in Library › WebServer › Documents. Then tell Dreamweaver to store your pending images and HTML files in this same Documents folder; select New Site from the Site menu; and in the resulting dialog, click the Basic tab and enter a name for your site in the field. Click Next to continue, leave the default setting, and click Next again. Select the same Documents folder by clicking the folder icon, navigating to it, and clicking Choose. Click Next again, select None from the server access pop-up menu (we'll deal with uploading files later), and click Next to see a summary of your site's settings. Click Done to seal the deal.
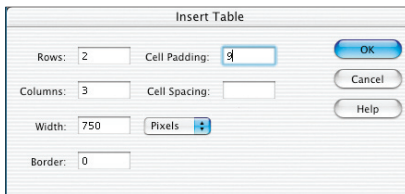
Stash files in Library › WebServer › Documents, and you can preview your site from your Mac's built-in Web server.

2 Set the Page From the Modify menu, select Page Properties. In the dialog, type a name for your page in the Title field (this is what your visitors will see). If you want to display a graphic in the background, click the Browse button next to the Background Image field, navigate to an image, and click Choose. Dreamweaver offers to copy the file to the Documents folder—click Yes, and in the resulting dialog, click New Folder, name the folder *images,* and click Create, then Save. For a solid-color background, click the Background swatch and choose a color from the palette. If you want to change text or link colors, click the appropriate swatch and choose a color. Then click OK.
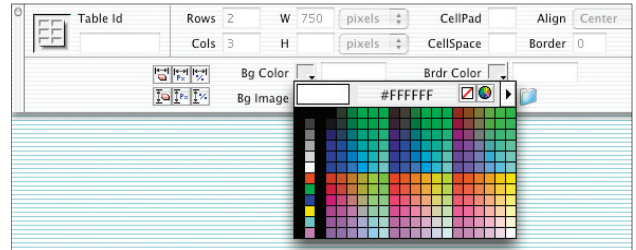
After we defined the mapping in step 1, Dreamweaver copied our background graphic to our storage folder.

3 **Set the Table** HTML tables allow you to arrange images and words into rows and columns, and are the best way to design pages that'll look the same across different Web browsers, operating systems, and platforms. Thankfully, Dreamweaver can build the tables for you; if you're a budding propellerhead, check out our HTML cheat sheet, "Know Thy Code," on the Disc. In Dreamweaver, select the Common tab and click the insert table icon in the Insert window. In the resulting dialog, type *2* in the Rows field, *3* in the Columns field, and *750* in the Width field. Select Pixels from the pop-up menu next to Width. To create breathing room between cells, type *9* in the Cell Padding field, and then click OK to generate the table.
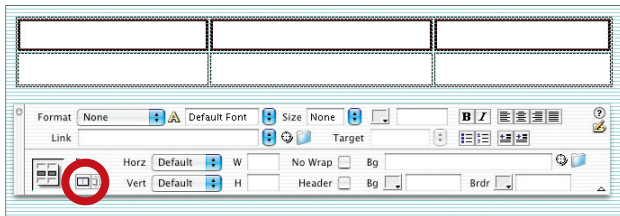
Trust us, creating HTML tables in Dreamweaver is much easier than coding them by hand.

4 **Color the Cells** To make your page easy to read, choose a background color for the table's cells. In the Properties window, click the Bg Color swatch and use the eyedropper to select an easy-on-the-eyes color from the palette—we chose white to keep things looking clean. To choose a background color that complements your background graphic (if you're displaying one), click the Bg Color swatch and use the eyedropper to select any desired color in your document window.
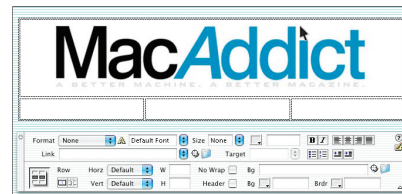
Choose a solid color for your table's background for better readability—especially if you have a background graphic.

5 **Merge Cells** Since a home page is all about self-aggrandizement, a nice big logo or text title that loudly announces your arrival to the Web world is par for the course. However, one cell is too puny for such grandiosity, so merge the top row's three cells so that your title or image runs the width of the table. Click the top-left cell to select it, hold down the Shift key, click twice in the adjacent cell, and then click the far-right cell to select the entire row (the borders will appear in bold). Then click the merge cells icon under Row in the Properties window.

You can easily merge cells in HTML tables with the click of a button—a task that used to take days to code by hand.

6 **Insert a Title** If you've got a logo, click the big cell, and then click the image button in the Insert window. In the resulting window, navigate to and select your logo graphic and click Choose. Click Yes in the subsequent dialog. In the next, save the graphic into your images folder (create this in the Documents folder if it doesn't already exist). The cell expands to hold your logo—drag any bounding-box corner if you need to scale it. If you want a text title, click the text-color swatch in the Properties window and choose a color. Then select a font from the font pop-up menu, click the bold button if you want a heavier line, select a number from the Size pop-up, and type a title. To center your logo or title in the cell, click the align-center button. Then save your file.

To title your page, insert a graphic logo or type text in the top cell and then center it.

7 **Show Them the Way Home** Now that you've got the basis for your home page, use it as a template for your site's subpages. First, create a link for your logo or title so that when surfers click it, they'll be brought back from any page within your site to your home page. Click your logo to select it, or highlight your title text. In the Properties window, type a backslash (/) in the Link field, which tells the Web browser to go to the site's root-level index page. Then select Save As from the File menu, enter a name for the next page you want to create (photos.html, bio.html, or what have you), and save it into the Documents folder (save a backup too). Repeat for any additional pages.
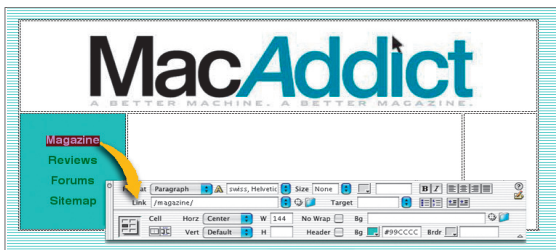
Typing a backslash in the Link field sets a link back to your main index.html page.
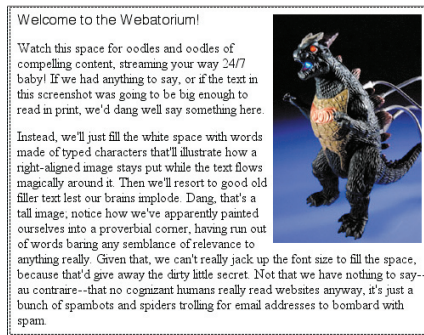
HIJACK YOUR .MAC HOMEPAGE

But wait, you say—I use Apple's .Mac for my Web space. Can I have my righteous Dreamweaver creation appear as my .Mac home page? Sure. Just mount your iDisk by selecting iDisk from the Finder's Go menu. Then deposit all of your HTML and image files in your iDisk's Sites folder. That's it—really. Now anyone can see your handiwork by logging onto your .Mac home page.

8 Make Menu Links

If you want people to see your subpages, create menu links on your home page to lead them deeper into your site. Go back to your home page, click the bottom left cell, then select Center from the Horz pop-up menu in the Properties Inspector. Then click the text-color swatch, choose a color, select a font from the Default Font pop-up menu, select a size from the Size pop-up, and type a title that describes your first subpage (such as Photo Gallery or About Me). If you want to change the cell's background color, click the Bg Color swatch and select a color from the palette. To set the text so it links to its corresponding HTML page, click and drag over the text to highlight it, click the folder icon next to the Link field, navigate to the file, and click Choose. If you have more pages, press Return, type more titles below the first, and link each title to its corresponding page.
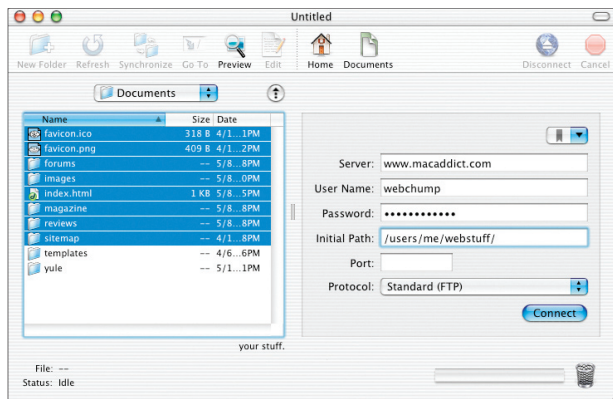
Type titles for your site's subpages in the bottom left cell to create a menu, and then link them to their HTML pages.

9 Fill 'Er Up

Now let's add a pretty picture and some compelling content. To add an image (see "Optimize Photos," next page, for important image-compression info), click the bottom center cell, and click the image button. In the resulting dialog, navigate to your desired file, click Choose, and direct Dreamweaver to copy it into the images folder. Feel free to resize the image and change its alignment within the cell (we right-aligned ours and then typed *5* in the H Space field to move the image 5 pixels away from the right). To add text, press your keyboard's right-arrow key to deselect the image, and then start typing—the text will flow within the same cell. Then apply your page design and linking knowledge to your subpages (see "Build Your Own Photo Gallery," next page, for our photo-page tutorial).

Paragraph text flows smoothly around a right-aligned image— pretty slick, eh?
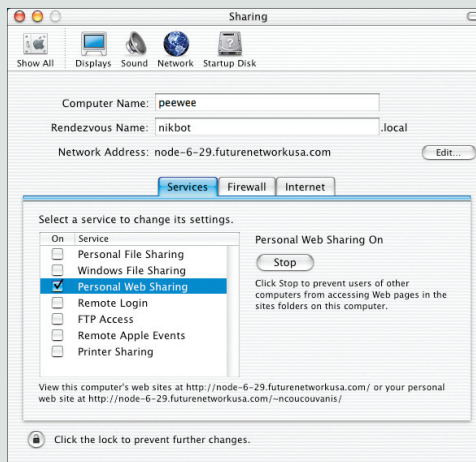
10 Leave the Nest

Once you're finished, upload your site to your Web host for all the world to see. (If you're a .Mac subscriber, see "Hijack Your .Mac Homepage," p61.) Though Dreamweaver lets you upload directly from it, Transmit is easier to use (if you're using Dreamweaver, select Edit Sites from the Site menu and apply our instruction to the appropriate panel). Launch Transmit. In the right side of the window, enter your server address (if you don't know it, ask your ISP), user name (for the server), password, and the path to the folder where you want to put your stuff in the corresponding fields. Then click Connect. In the left side, navigate to your local Web directory (Library › WebServer › Documents), Command-click all the files and folders that comprise your site, and click the upload arrow button to send them off. Then fire up your browser and admire.

Your personal information will vary, but this is where you need to enter it to upload files.

SERVE YOURSELF

As you build a site, check it out in a browser from time to time. Don't settle for Dreamweaver's Preview In Browser function. Serve the site to yourself on Apache Web Server—it's installed with Mac OS X. Open System Preferences and click Sharing. Check the Personal Web Sharing box to start it up. Then launch your browser. Because we had you save files to the Library › WebServer › Documents directory, just enter *http://localhost* in the browser's URL bar, and Apache is smart enough to know to look there to find your site.

One little checkmark turns on your Mac's built-in Apache Web Server.
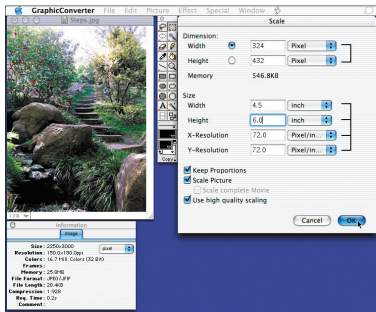
Optimize Photos

WHAT YOU NEED

EASY

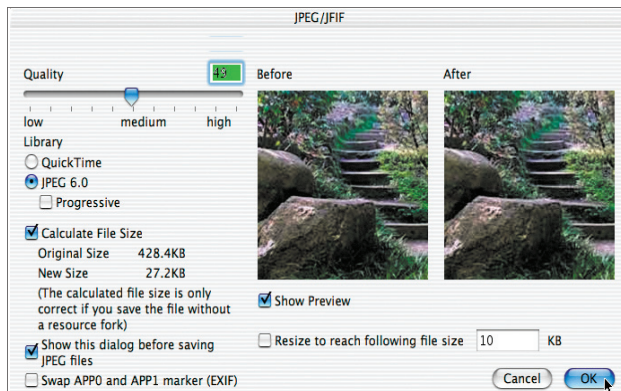• GraphicConverter ($30, www.lemkesoft.com)

If you're putting photos online, you need to bring down the file sizes unless you want visitors complaining about outrageous download times. Here's how to do just that without sacrificing too much quality.

1 **Optimize** Open a photo in GraphicConverter. From the Picture menu, select Colors, then Minimize Color Table to remove unused colors. Select Size from the Picture menu, and then Scale. In the resulting dialog, check the Keep Proportions box. Under Size, select Inches from both the Width and Height pop-up menus. Then enter a number in either the Width or the Height field so that your image is no larger than about 4 by 6 inches at 72 dots per inch (the adjacent dimension will scale accordingly), and click OK.

For the fastest downloads, scale down photos before you use them on your Web page.

2 **Compress** From the File menu, select Save As. In the dialog, select JPEG/JFIF (*.JPG, *.JPEG) from the Format pop-up menu, and click Save. Another dialog pops up, allowing you to adjust compression quality. Check the Show Preview box to see before-and-after images, and check the Calculate File Size box to preview the final size. Then use the Quality slider to adjust the amount of JPEG compression until you get a good balance of quality and file size. Click OK to slim down your image.

After we sized down and compressed our photo, the formerly fat 25.8MB file became a svelte 27.2KB.
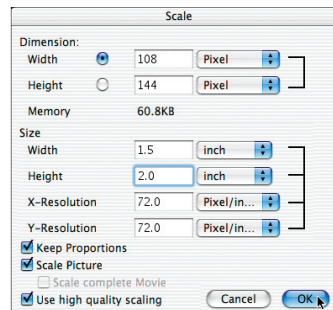
Build Your Own Photo Gallery

WHAT YOU NEED

TRICKY

• Dreamweaver MX
• GraphicConverter ($30, www.lemkesoft.com)

Why force family and friends to click through pages of vacation photos before they find that priceless image of your 2 a.m. swim in the Trevi Fountain? Instead, present them with a page of thumbnail images, and give them one-click access to your most embarrassing moments.

1 **Minimize (Mini-Me-ize)** Instead of cramming a bunch of full-screen images onto one Web page, pack your gallery page with thumbnail images, 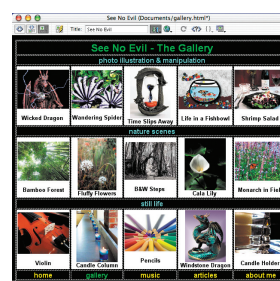which viewers can then click to open the full version. Follow our instructions in "Optimize Photos," left, to size down and compress an image, and then—with your image still open in GraphicConverter—create the thumbnail. From the Picture menu, select Size, and then Scale. In the resulting dialog, type a number in the Width or Height field so your image ends up at 1 by 2 inches (or thereabouts)—that way you can fit several on a page (the ultimate dimension is up to you). Then select Save As from the File menu, and save the image with *tn* or the like in the name to distinguish it.

After you scale down and optimize a photo, create a miniature version using the same principles.

2 **Toss 'Em in the Cell** In Dreamweaver, select New from the File menu, and click Create in the resulting dialog to create a new HTML page. Then follow steps 2 and 3 of "Build Your Own Web Site," p60, but create a bigger table with more rows and columns. Place all of your photos and their thumbnails in the images folder at Library › WebServer › Documents › images. Then click inside a cell, click the image button in the Insert window, navigate to a thumbnail image in the resulting dialog, and click Choose to add it. In the Properties window, link the thumbnail to its full-size version by clicking the folder icon next to the Link field, navigating to the image in the dialog, and clicking Choose. Add a text title, and then repeat for all other thumbnails and links.

We like .Mac's photo page, but we have more control over the layout if we make our own.

Niko Coucouvanis once coded his way out of a paper bag. Really.