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Creating Web Pages FOR DUMMIES®

9TH EDITION

by Bud E. Smith

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Bud E. Smith is a computer book author with more than 12 years of publishing experience. *Creating Web Pages For Dummies, 9th Edition,* is one of over a dozen books Bud has written; his Wiley Publishing, Inc. titles include *Internet Marketing For Dummies* and *Web Usability For Dummies.* In addition to writing books, Bud has been a computer magazine editor, product marketing manager and project manager for online uses of video.

Bud got his start with computers in 1983, when he left a promising career as a welder for a stint as a data-entry clerk. Bud then moved to Silicon Valley to join a startup company, followed by work for Intel, IBM, Apple, and AOL. His work and interests led him to acquire a degree in Information Systems Management from the University of San Francisco and a master's degree in Information Systems from the London School of Economics.

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Introduction

It may be hard to remember, or it may seem like only yesterday, but some years ago, the personal computer was introduced. The rise and rise *and rise* of the personal computer — with maybe an occasional stumble but never a real fall — seemed certain to be the most important social and technological event at the end of the twentieth century. From the "two Steves" — Wozniak and Jobs — and their Apple II, to Bill Gates's Windows 95, it seemed nothing could ever be bigger, or more life-changing and important, than PCs.

But people *do* talk. In fact, talking is one of the main things that people are all about, and in the beginning, the personal computer didn't let you interact with others. However, first with modems, and then with networks, and finally through their combination and culmination in the Internet, personal computers became the tools that opened up a new medium of communication. The most visible and exciting part of the Internet is the World Wide Web. Now communication, not computation, is the story. Computers are still important, but mostly as the means to an end; the end result is to enable people to interact.

If the most exciting channel of communication is the Web, the means of communication is the Web page. Ordinary people demonstrate amazing energy and imagination in creating and publishing diverse Web home pages. And although ordinary people have a *desire* to create Web pages, businesses have a *need* to set up shop on the Web. So the rush to the Web continues, often with the same people expressing themselves personally on one Web page and commercially on another.

So you want to be there, too. "But," you ask, "isn't it difficult, expensive, and complicated?" Not anymore. As the Web has grown, easy ways to get on the Web have appeared. And I discuss the best of them in the pages of this book.

About This Book

It's *about* 340 pages.

Seriously, what do you find here? Easy ways to get published on the Web for any kind of Internet user we could think of. Quick ways to get a blog, photos,

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or videos online. Ways to make your first Web page rich with carefully arranged text, graphics, and multimedia, plus the information you need to go beyond your first Web page and create a multipage personal or business Web site. And free online tools, which we describe in the book, to help you go as far as you want to go in creating a Web site.

Foolish Assumptions

Lots of good information is in this book, but almost no one is going to read every word of it — except our long-suffering editors. That's because we cover Web page topics from beginning through intermediate levels, including how to publish a Web page via Google, how to use several different tools, and some Windows-specific and Mac-specific stuff. No one needs to know all of that! But anyone who wants to get a Web page up on the Web does need to know some of it.

But what do *you* need? We assume, for purposes of this book, that you have probably used the Web before and that you want to create a Web page. We further assume that you are not yet a Web author, or that you're fairly new to the process. To use the information in this book, here's what you need:

- Access to a personal computer, preferably one running Microsoft Windows XP or Vista.

  The CD-ROM only works with Windows. If you have a Macintosh or a Unix/Linux system and an Internet connection, much of this book works for you as well, but you won't have access to the tools on the CD-ROM, nor to most of the online service or Web-page creation tools that we describe, except those available directly to your user community on the Web.
- Access to the Web — either through an online service or an Internet service provider (ISP).
- You should be running a Web browser such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox, or a browser provided by an online service.
- You should already have spent at least some time surfing the Web, or be willing to do so as you gather information and examples for your Web page.

In other words, if you're wired, or willing to get wired, you're in. With that, the door to this book is open to you, whether you want to create your first Web page or add new features to one you already have.

The figures in this book show up-to-date Windows screen shots for a consistent appearance. We wrote most of the instructions and steps in this book to work equally well for Windows and the Macintosh, though the CoffeeCup instructions are for a program that runs only on Windows.

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Conventions Used in This Book

When our publisher first told us that this book was going to have *conventions,* we got out our silly hats and our Democratic and Republican paraphernalia, but apparently she just meant that we had to be consistent. The conventions in this book are standard ways of communicating specific types of information, such as instructions and steps. (One example of a convention is the use of italics for newly introduced words — as with the word "conventions" in the first sentence of this paragraph.)

Here are the conventions for this book:

- Things that you, the reader, are asked to type are shown in **bold.**
- New terms are printed in *italics.*
- Information used in specific ways is formatted in a specific typeface. In this book, one of the most common kinds of information displayed this way is HTML tags; that is, formatting information used to create Web pages (see Appendix B for a more complete definition). An example of a tag is `<title>`.

  We also use a special typeface for URLs (Uniform Resource Locators), which are the addresses used to specify the location of Web pages. For example, the URL for the For Dummies Web site is `www.dummies.com`.
- The Web is fast-paced and evolving. By the time you read this book, some of the URLs listed in it may have changed.
- Representative browser versions appear among the figures.
- Menu selections look like this: File➪Save. This particular example means that you choose the File menu and then choose the Save option.
- Related, brief pieces of information are displayed in bulleted lists, such as the bulleted list that you're reading right now.
- Numbered lists are used for instructions that you must follow in a particular sequence. This book has many sequential steps that tell you just how to perform the different tasks that, when taken together, can make you a successful Web author.

  To make the steps brief and easy to follow, we use a specific way of telling you what to do. Here's an example of a set of steps:

  1. **Start your Web browser.**
  2. **Go to the Web site** `www.tryfreestuff.com`**.**

     Note: This site is not real, just an example.
  3. **Click the link that matches the type of computer you have: PC, Macintosh, or Unix.**

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Part-y Time: How This Book Is Organized

We wrote this book to a carefully plotted, precise, *unvarying* plan, with the predictable and predicted result: the book you're holding in your hands now.

Wait a second. Isn't it true that the Web is changing every day, that Web sites appear and disappear like so many jacks-in-the-box — or whack-a-moles, if that's a more familiar example to you — and that Web companies can pop into and out of existence in a few weeks? So, what was that about a plan?

Well, okay, we did change things a little along the way. Maybe a lot. But we *did* have a plan behind the book, even if it was finalized in a conference call at 5:00 this morning. The following sections explain the parts that make up the book.

Part I: Create a Web Page Today

You probably want to dive right into becoming a Web publisher. So we start the book with some ideas about what to do in your Web site, and then give specific instructions on how to get your first, simple Web page up. You can start with Google Page Creator and get a firm handle on designing your Web page, no matter what tools you use.

Part II: Getting the Content Right

What goes into your Web page is the core of your efforts, and you can use newer, social-networking tools to work with all the different kinds of content you might want. For example, consider creating a blog to help you generate interesting text, using Flickr and YouTube to post interesting photos and videos, and more.

Part III: Your Site in WYSIWYG

CoffeeCup HTML Editor (and its many younger brothers and sisters) has been around for years, quietly getting better and better and more and more numerous. CoffeCup is a What You See Is What You Get, or WYSIWYG, tool that helps you work on a screen that looks like your Web page and handle

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many of the messy HTML details for you. This book includes the excellent CoffeeCup Editor trial software so you can get started today. Now I'm including CoffeeCup tools in this part of the book and on the CD-ROM. If you're running a Windows PC, fire it up and go to town!

Part IV: Your Site in HTML

Many Web developers don't want to use a tool, even a cool one like CoffeeCup HTML Editor, at least at first. They want to dive right into the "bare metal" approach and work with HTML in a text editor. I'm a bit like that myself, and no Web author ever suffered from learning HTML *too well.* Here's where you can develop your skills.

Part V: The Part of Tens

A Top Ten list is a great way to make complex information fun and easy to remember. My Top Ten lists show you key dos and don'ts of Web publishing and more.

Part VI: Appendixes

Appendixes in books are usually like appendixes in people: funny little things that get taken out of the patient in a hurry if they act up. But for this book, I pack in great information that can really help you. In Appendix A, a glossary defines Web publishing terms that may be confusing to you. In Appendix B, you get a comprehensive — yet brief — guide to HTML tags, the most basic tools that developers use to create today's Web sites. Appendix C tells you about the CoffeeCup programs on the CD-ROM.

Icons Used in This Book

All Dummies books include icons that point you in the direction of really great information that's sure to help you along your way. Here I briefly describe each icon used in this book.

Marks information that you need to keep in mind as you work.

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Points to things you may want to know but don't necessarily need to know. You can skip these and read the text, skip the text and read these (if you're into geek-style light reading), or go ahead and read both.

Designates the tools included on the CD-ROM.

Flags specific information that may not fit in a step or description but that helps you create better Web pages.

Points out anything that may cause a problem.

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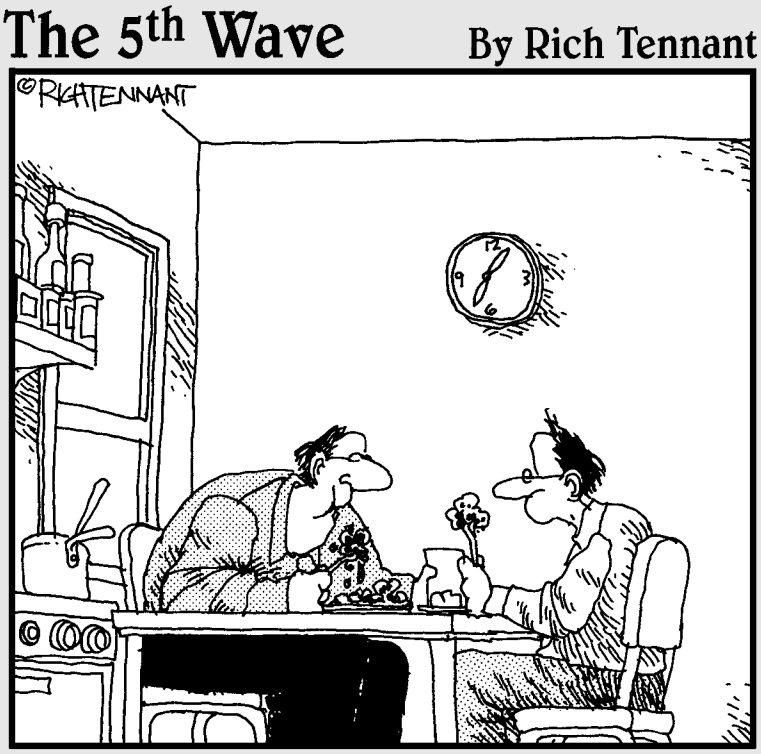
Part I

Create a Web Page Today



"Great goulash, Stan. That reminds me, are you still scripting your own Web page?"

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In this part . . .

Jump right in with simple Web page publishing. Decide what to put on your page, and then use a simple Web-based service to get it online today. Make your page look good. Your reward: Telling your friends, family, and colleagues your Web address tomorrow!

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Chapter 1

Web Publishing Basics

In This Chapter

- Getting started with Web publishing
- Putting together a Web page the easy way — and the easier way
- Examining types of Web sites
- Reviewing Web page guidelines

The Web is an incredibly easy way to get your message — any message — out to anyone in the world who's interested in it. By putting up a Web page you can stay in touch with friends and family, entertain people, help yourself get a job, or help yourself do your job. You can start a business, grow a business, or just have fun expressing yourself.

Having a Web page is also ever more important as social networking and online selling sites — eBay, MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and many others — continue to grow. You need a base that establishes your online presence, and any online commercial interests you have, across all the "walled gardens" that each want you to spend all your online time within their boundaries.

Nearly a million people have purchased this book since its first edition more than ten years ago; my readers have used every technique I describe in this book — and more — to get their first Web pages up and running. By reading this book, you're starting on a path that many, many people before you have followed to Web-page success.

Web Basics 101

You may have begun using the Internet and the Web without really getting a chance to learn how they work. Knowing how they work can help you become a better Web publisher and Web user. Here's a brief, to-the-point description. For more information, you can search the Web; the World Wide Web Consortium site at `www.w3.org` is a good place to start. (Start with the HTML section.)

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Understanding how the Web works

The Web, formally called the *World Wide Web,* is a collection of a bunch of text and graphics files (plus some other stuff) that make up *Web pages.* Web pages are combined into linked sets of pages called *Web sites.* People often use the term interchangeably, but technically, a Web page is a single HTML text file, possibly with one or more graphics and other features added; a Web site is one or more Web pages linked together. These terms will be explained further later in this book.

Underlying the Web is the Internet. The Web depends on the Internet to connect its many files together and to allow people to get to the Web. E-mail is a separate function that also depends on the Internet. And FTP (file-transfer protocol) is another Internet capability, used to move files from one computer to another.

The Web is defined by two specifications: HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and HyperText Markup Language (HTML). The underlying idea behind the Web is *hypertext* — text that can contain links to other pieces of text and other files, such as graphics files, stored anywhere on the Internet. The Web got its name from the way all the links connect the pieces of text together like a huge spider's web.

You look at Web pages by using a program called a *Web browser.* A Web browser uses HTTP to request a Web page from a Web server. The Web page, in turn, uses HTTP to request any other files, such as graphics images or ads, that are part of the Web page. After you request a Web page, your Web browser pulls the files that make up the Web page from one or more Web servers and assembles those files into a single page displayed on your screen.

The most popular Web browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer; Mozilla Firefox (the successor to the once all-conquering Netscape Navigator); Opera, a standards-compliant Web browser from a small company; and Safari, Apple's browser for Macintosh computers.

After a Web browser requests a Web page using HTTP, HTML steps in. Each Web page has as its core a text file written in a format called *HTML* (for HyperText Markup Language), which usually includes links to one or more graphics files. HTML defines a Web page's appearance and functionality. Actually, HTML doesn't precisely specify the Web page's appearance: Different Web browsers display various HTML commands differently. Also, users can specify how they want things to look on their own screen. So what one user sees when she looks at a Web page may be different from what another user sees. (Part IV goes into detail about HTML.)

Getting a Web page up on the Internet is surprisingly easy. In fact, if you're in a hurry, you may want to go straight to Chapter 3 to use Google Page Creator. Follow the instructions there to get your first Web page up in about an hour.

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Getting Webbed

This book talks a lot about the Web, but doesn't discuss how to get on the Web as a user. Even if you're on the Web already, perhaps through a connection at work, you may also want to get on the Web from home. How do you do that?

There are a wide variety of broadband offerings — some tied to cable TV or satellite TV services, others to phone offerings, and even a few to mobile phones. There are wireless hotspots that may give you inexpensive (or even free) Internet access. And yes, there are still some dialup — that is to say, slow — offerings left.

The most popular online service is still America Online (AOL). AOL has robust Web-publishing features, coverage around most of the world, good spam blocking, kid-safe controls, and many other good features. However, it tends to be expensive, and is gradually losing subscribers.

It's quite likely that your Internet service provider, whether it's a big name (such as AOL and MSN) or a little guy, offers you space for your Web site — and perhaps helpful support services as well. Check your ISP's offerings as you decide how to get your first pages up on the Web.

Getting up URL-y

The Internet is the giant computer network that connects other computer networks around the world. At its base, the Internet is just a giant mechanism for moving files from one computer to another. It finds files by using a kind of address called a *URL* (Uniform Resource Locator — which sounds like something the Army invented to track down clothes!). The acronym URL is usually pronounced "you are ell," although some pronounce it "earl." Most people today use the term "Web address" or "Internet address" instead of "URL," but as a Web publisher you should know all of the terms.

The address that you type to get to a Web page is a URL. For example, `www.dummies.com` is the URL for the For Dummies site. A URL consists of three parts (see Figure 1-1):

- **Protocol:** The name of the communications language that the URL uses: HTTP (used on the Web), HTTPS (for secure Web pages), FTP, and so on.
- **Domain name:** The name of the server the file is on, such as dummies.com.
- **Pathname:** The location of the desired file on the server.

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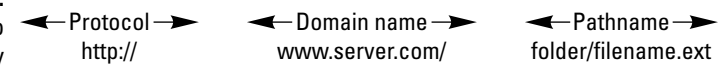

Figure 1-1: URL-y to Web, URL-y to rise.

The "For Dummies" Way to Web Publishing

Reading this book is going to make you a Web publisher — because anyone who puts up even a single, simple home page is a publisher on the World Wide Web. Congratulations in advance!

Because there's so much you can do on the Web these days, including on social networking sites such as YouTube (for videos) or Flickr (for photos), I have split the description into two basic pieces: getting your content together (Part II) and getting it up on the Web (Part III or Part IV). Part III describes how to get your Web page up using the tool included with this book, CoffeeCup; Part IV describes how to "go to the bare metal" (well, the bare fiber-optic cable) and use HTML directly.

Given the many ways you can work, and the way different Web sites and different tools handle some of the process for you, but not all of it, it's important to understand the underlying steps that define Web publishing. The steps may have different names, or be intermingled with each other, but they're always basically the same. Here they are:

1. **Create the HTML text file that's the basis for your Web page.**
2. **Create or obtain the graphic images you'll use to spice up the appearance of your page.**
3. **Create a link to the graphics in your HTML text file so they appear where you want them to.**
4. **Preview your Web page on your own machine.**
5. **Find Web-server space.**
6. **Transfer the HTML text file and the graphics files to the Web server.**
7. **Check that your new Web page works correctly now that it's online.**

If you use an easy-to-use tool such as Google Page Creator (see Chapter 3), the steps given here are combined and most of the details are handled for you. However, it's good to know what's happening "behind the scenes," to help avoid problems or to help you tackle a more complicated site later.

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Web terms to know

To clear up how I define and use some Web terms, here's a brief primer:

- **Web page:** A text document that is published on a Web server, has HTML tags in it, almost always includes hypertext links, and usually includes graphics. When you click the Back button in your Web browser, you move to the previous Web page that you visited.
- **Web site:** A collection of Web pages that share a common theme and purpose, and that users generally access through the site's home page.
- **Home page:** The Web page that people generally access first within a Web site. You let people know the URL (address) of your home page and try to get other Web page creators to provide links to it.
- **HTML tags:** Brief formatting or linking commands placed within brackets in the text of an HTML file. For instance, the `<b>` tag tells the Web browser to display text after the command in bold type; the `</b>` tag turns the bold off. (See Part IV for more on HTML.)

These steps are usually simple if you're creating a basic Web page. However, they do get more complicated sometimes, especially if you're trying to create a multipage Web site. This book tells you several different, easy ways to get content up on several different kinds of sites or create a Web page, and gets you started on expanding your Web page into a multipage Web site.

When you create a Web page that has complex formatting, or that mixes text and graphics, you'll want to test it in the most popular Web browsers. You should download Microsoft Internet Explorer, the America Online client, the Firefox browser, the Opera browser, the Safari browser, and/or other tools.

For an example of a good-looking Web page, check out the For Dummies home page, shown in Figure 1-2. It has an attractive layout, interesting information, and links to a great deal more information on the For Dummies site and other sites. The For Dummies Web site is professionally done, but you too can achieve good results with a reasonable amount of planning and hard work. In this book, I concentrate on helping you create a simple, individual Web page and combining several Web pages into a closely linked group of pages called a *Web site,* such as the For Dummies site.

Note: The For Dummies home page is shown in Microsoft Internet Explorer, the most popular Web browser. For consistency, I use Internet Explorer for most of the Web-page images in this book.

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Figure 1-2: The For Dummies home page shows Web-publishing skill.

Making simple things simple

If all you want to do is create a simple "I exist" Web page, either for yourself or for your business, you don't have to go through the rigmarole of figuring out HTML or learning a tool, finding server space, and so on. Chapter 3 helps you use Google Page Creator, a tool from the leaders in Web search, Google. To see how easy publishing on the Web is, just turn to Chapter 3 and get started. You'll be a Web publisher with just a couple of hours of effort.

Making difficult things possible

If you want to concentrate on one type of media at a time, Chapter 4 talks about writing words for the Web and shows you how to create a blog; Chapter 5 talks about creating images, especially photos, that are online-ready, and tells you how to manage photos on Flickr; Chapter 6 discusses making sound files and tunes Internet-friendly, and how to get a tune up on MySpace; and Chapter 7 focuses on videos — how to trim their massive storage requirements and get one up on YouTube.

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Seeing HTML

When Tim Berners-Lee invented HTML at CERN (the European particle-physics research facility) in the late 1980s, he probably never imagined that so many people would be interested in seeing it. Today, most browsers include a command that enables you to see the actual HTML source instructions that make the page look and work the way it does.

For example, in Internet Explorer, choose View➪Source to view the underlying HTML file. You see all the HTML tags that make the Web page look and act the way it does. However, some HTML pages are "cleaner" and easier to read and understand than others. Keep looking until you find some pages that make sense to you.

After you open the HTML file, you can edit the text and the HTML tags, save the file, and then open the file again in your browser to see how it looks with the HTML changes. Don't publish someone else's page, of course — but other than that, experimenting in this way is a good way to learn.

Part III — Chapters 8 through 11 — shows you how to use the CoffeeCup editor to pull your content together into a Web site. Part IV — Chapters 12 through 15 — shows you how to do the same in "pure" HTML.

Types of Web Sites

The Web offers examples of nearly every communications strategy known to humanity, successful or not. But not every example of a Web page that you find online applies to your situation. For one thing, the resources of different Web publishers vary tremendously — from an individual putting up family photos to a large corporation creating an online commerce site. For another, several different types of Web sites exist, and not every lesson learned in creating one type of Web site applies to the others.

The major types of Web pages are personal, picture, topical, commercial, and entertainment sites. Increasingly, you can combine different kinds of sites in *mashups* — sites that combine different kinds of technologies. (The Web itself already does that, but a mashup takes combining technologies to another level.) In the next sections, I describe some of the specific considerations that apply to each type of Web page and not to the others. Decide in advance what type of Web page you want to create, and look for other pages like it online to use as models.

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Personal sites

Personal Web sites can have many goals. Often, your goal is simply to share something about yourself with coworkers, friends, family, and others. Personal Web pages are a great way for people to find out about others with similar interests and for people in one culture to find out about other cultures. You can also use a personal Web site to share family photos and events — kind of like a holiday letter that's always up to date. Figure 1-3 shows part of the personal site of Web designer Jeff Lowe, who's piloting a remote-controlled blimp in the pictures. You can find the site at `www.jefflowe.com` and the blimp image among the pictures at `www.jefflowe.com/site/pictures/index.php`.

Creating a personal Web site is a great deal of fun and great practice for other work. But personal Web sites are often left unchanged after the initial thrill of creating and publishing them fades. Be different — keep your Web site updated!

As personal Web sites evolve, their creators tend to add more information about a single key interest, in which case the pages may become topical Web sites (described later). In other cases, the Web site creator adds more information about professional goals and accomplishments, in which case the Web page becomes more like a business Web site.

Figure 1-3: Jeff Lowe pilots the blimp (and posts his résumé too).

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Are personal Web sites still relevant?

Most of the activity you hear about on the Web these days relates to large, commercial sites, political sites, advanced technical sites, and so on. Individuals are still contributing a great deal of content but it's through more specialized sites — photo sites, video sites, social-networking sites, and so on. But these tend to appeal to only some people rather than to everyone.

Personal Web sites have gotten somewhat lost in the shuffle as better-funded sites belonging to companies and organizations get all the attention. Never fear; personal Web sites are still fun and easy to create. (And did I mention that they're fun?)

Part of what's driving the continuing interest in personal Web pages is that more and more people all over the world have access to the Web. (The Web passed 1 billion users a few years ago, an important milestone.) The chances are better than ever that a high percentage of your friends, family, and colleagues can visit and appreciate your site. So don't be put off by the tremendous growth of business and large organizational sites on the Web. The personal and fun side is growing, too; it's just getting less media attention than the commercial side.

Following a few simple rules helps make your personal Web site more fun and less work:

- **What's on first?** No, no. What's on second . . . The upper part of your Web page — the part that appears first when you bring the page up on-screen — needs to make the main point of the site clear. If the main point is "you," the first thing people see should be your name, your photo, and links to some of the things about "you" that are in your site. If the point of your site is a topical interest, business interest, or professional self-promotion, the first area of the home page should make that clear, too.

- **Keep it simple.** Start with modest goals and get something up on the Web; then create a "To Do" list of ways in which to extend your site. Consider spinning off commercial and topical pages that reflect your desires and interests — into separate sites by topic — rather than creating a sprawling personal Web site.
- **Provide lots of links.** One of the best ways to share your interests is to share information about Web sites that you like, as well as books and other resources. You can put this list on your one and only Web page or make it a separate page that's part of a personal Web site. If you develop a thorough, carefully updated list of links for a specific interest area, you create a valuable resource for others.

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- **Consider your privacy.** A Web page is just like a billboard — except that 1 billion or more people can see it, not just a few hundred. Don't put anything up on your Web page that you wouldn't want on a billboard. Identity thieves can do a frightening amount of damage with your full name, your address, the name of your employer and your mother's maiden name. And think twice before putting up information about your kids and other family members: You may well be willing to compromise your own privacy, but you shouldn't make that decision for other people.

Picture sites

Lots of people just want to share pictures online; it's a lot easier to share pictures on the Web than to mail them around, or wait until you get together with people.

You can use any of the Web-page creation tools described in this book to create a photos-mostly Web site, although Flickr (see Chapter 5) is for this purpose alone.

Sharing pictures is often a great joy, but also often quite boring for other people. Here are some tips to help keep your site interesting:

- **Get organized.** Think about how photos are going to be organized. Basically, your site should be like a magic photo album — with new content at the front, and as many older photos as you want at the back. So use the home page to highlight the new stuff, and keep the older stuff moving back into archived folders.
- **Be a photo editor.** "Less is more," up to a point, even on sites designed to show off the grandkids' latest photos to proud grandparents. Usually, one or two photos of a given spot or event, whether it's a birthday party, a visit to an historic site, or something similar, are enough to give a flavor of it.
- **Watch the megabytes.** Use a photo-editing program to save your files as JPEG images with the appropriate degree of compression (Chapter 5 has details). Even though many Web users today have broadband access, you don't want to freeze out the people who don't, and even broadband runs slowly sometimes.
- **Protect your identity.** Make sure not to provide identifying information such as anyone's full name, address, or phone number. This helps prevent identity theft.

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Getting personal with blogs

A *Web log,* or *blog* for short, is a sort of online diary that usually includes links to Web sites that the user has recently found interesting — thus the term Web log. *Blogging,* or maintaining a Web log, is a whole new form of Web publishing.

You can create a Web page or Web site that's nothing but a blog, or combine blog content with traditional content. Some blogs are extremely personal — sometimes uncomfortably so. Web logs are also used in big Web sites, such as major newspaper sites. In other words, Web logs cross the boundaries between personal sites and other categories — including the topical and business categories — and some of them are pretty entertaining as well!

I have the somewhat old-fashioned view that you probably would benefit from knowing about Web-page creation in general, not just blogging, so I defer a detailed discussion of this larger topic to Chapter 4. But if your whole reason for wanting to create Web pages is to create a blog to call your very own, please skip ahead and read Chapter 4 now, and then come back here when you want to find more about Web pages in general.

Topical sites

That's "topical," not "tropical." A *topical home page* is a resource on a specific topic. A topic can be an interest or volunteer group to which the author belongs, in which case the page may grow over time into something much like a business Web site. (Creating a Web site for a group is a tremendous contribution that you can make, but it can be a lot of work; watch what you may be getting yourself into!) Or your topical Web page can be about any interest, cause, concern, obsession, or flight of fancy that you have. In this sense, the Web is like an out-of-control vanity press, allowing anyone to go on and on about anything — sometimes offering something of great value, oftentimes not.

Making a second career out of maintaining and extending a topical Web site is easy, but the pay is usually low. Here are some things to consider when you create a topical Web site:

- **What's on first?** As with a personal Web page, the title of a topical Web page and the first screen that users see need to make unmistakably clear the topic that the page covers. And, to the extent possible, they must describe what resources the Web site offers about the topic.
- **Keep focused.** A topical Web site loses some of its value if it goes beyond a single topic. How many of the people who share your love for Thai cooking also share your abiding interest in rotifers (microscopic creatures that are too small to use in most recipes, Thai or not)? If you have two different interests that you want to share on the Web, consider creating separate Web sites.

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- **Create a succession plan.** If your Web site grows beyond your capacity to maintain and extend it properly, find someone to help out or to take it over. The first person you should ask about taking over is anyone who's complaining that you're not extending the site fast enough! Decide what role you can handle and then ask for help in doing the rest.

Business sites

Business Web sites, also known as commercial sites, constitute the 50,000-pound gorilla of the Web, with a tremendous amount of time, energy, and money devoted to them. Business Web sites cover a wide range of styles because their goals and the expertise and resources behind them vary so much. This book provides enough information for you to create a competent "Web presence" site with several pages of contact and company information. But even these kinds of sites vary quite a bit, and you need to be sure that your company's page is well implemented.

Figure 1-4 shows the BATCS home page I created along with my wife, Olga Smith, a publisher and tutor. It's created with an online tool provided by the Web host, and is a bit "rough around the edges" from a design point of view, but full of content useful for the purpose. Go surf around the BATCS site to see what a site designed and implemented by someone with a job to do (rather than all the time in the world to show off Web-design skills), looks like: `www.batcs.co.uk`.

The first question to ask about a business Web site is "Who can access it?" Some sites are intended for the World Wide Web and everyone on it; others are on the World Wide Web but are password-protected or otherwise restricted in access; still others are on private networks and inaccessible to outsiders. These inaccessible networks are described as being "behind the firewall." Any Web page that isn't accessible to everyone is considered to be on an *intranet,* if access is limited to one company, or an *extranet,* if access is limited to a group of companies that are business partners.

Despite the wide variety of business Web sites, following just a few rules can help you create a page that meets your goals:

- **What's on first?** A business Web page should make the name and purpose(s) of your business immediately clear. Also, the site should provide easy-to-find information on how to contact your business or organization and what products and services it offers.
- **Get the right look.** Telling someone you don't like his Web site is like telling him you don't like his haircut — he's likely to take it personally. But an ugly Web site, like an ugly haircut, can make a permanently bad impression. Make sure that the look of your Web site is up to the professional standards set by other aspects of your business.

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Figure 1-4: The BATCS home page gets the job done.

- **Get permission.** Unless you own the business, you need to ask for permission before putting a company page on the open Web. You also need to make absolutely sure you have the permissions you need for any images or documents that you use before you publish your Web page.
- **Inside or outside the firewall?** Deciding who gets access is tricky. For example, a small amount of otherwise-closely-held information can make a site more valuable, but the presence of confidential information *also* prevents you from opening up the entire site to the broader public. Implementing access controls can also be difficult. Investigate how to password-protect a site, or ask a network administrator at your company whether you can physically control access. For instance, you may be able to selectively allow access based on which network the user connects from.
- **Find experts.** Businesses similar to yours — or even colleagues, if you're in a large company — likely have Web sites that have a purpose similar to yours. Look to similar sites for guidance and inspiration.

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- **Monitor usage.** Investing time, energy, and money in a business Web site requires a trade-off among the Web site and other things that those resources could go to. One of the crucial questions you may need to answer in order to justify Web site maintenance or expansion is how much use the site gets. Investigate ways to measure the use of your site. A good way to start is a basic hit counter, such as the free one you can find at the following URL: `www.statcounter.com`.
- **Seek out additional resources.** This book focuses on hands-on creation of single Web pages and simple Web sites. For a larger business site, you need access to additional information to help you with the planning, hosting, and maintenance of the site. Consider purchasing *HTML, XHTML & CSS For Dummies,* 6th Edition, by Ed Tittel and Jeff Noble, for more information on the HTML specification, and *Web Marketing For Dummies,* by Jan Zimmerman (both books from Wiley), for more information on planning and creating a business Web site with a marketing bent.

Having a Web site that's too obviously "handmade," rather than professionally created, can be embarrassing for a business. However, many sites are going "back to the future" with a simple, clean look that's light on graphics. So how do you decide whether to make your look fancy or simple? The best way to get a quick reality check is to look at some competitors' Web sites and make sure that your initial site looks roughly as good as theirs. And remember: Often the most embarrassing thing is having no site at all.

Entertainment sites

Entertainment is one of the top few reasons why people use the Web, and the number of entertainment sites continues to grow. Humorous pages and shared games on online services are now a major presence on the Web.

People have high expectations of entertainment sites — which can make them some of the most demanding to create. Here are a few suggestions for creating entertainment sites:

- **Don't start here.** Don't try to figure out Web publishing by creating an entertainment site at the outset. It's a very demanding task. Try another type first and edge your way into entertainment.
- **Keep it fresh.** How funny is a joke the second time you hear it? You have to either frequently update the content on your entertainment site, or allow participants to provide new content through their interaction with one another — neither option is easy.
- **Push the technology.** Interactivity is also key to entertainment, which means going beyond HTML and static graphics. You probably need to figure out and use at least one more advanced Web technology, such as Flash, to make a fresh and interesting entertainment Web site.

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Is your page cybersmut?

For most Web page publishers, the best policy with respect to putting anything potentially offensive in your Web pages is to keep your site clean. The use of gratuitous sex and violence in your Web pages will simply put off many people and put you and your Web site in a bad light.

But what if the sex or violence is not gratuitous and is actually central to your point? Then send the author and publishers your URL so that we can see it for ourselves. No, seriously: Be sure to make the first page a home page that specifically warns readers that they may find your content offensive. Doing so lets them gracefully opt out before they view whatever you show.

Also, consider your environment — the site the content appears on. MySpace pages are full of dubious content, whereas YouTube tries to keep things cleaner. A business site should not have anything potentially offensive. Don't have your content violate the local etiquette.

Even this enlightened approach may not be enough, however. Some Web-server owners will drop your page if it violates their rules, and several countries have laws that specify what can and can't be on a Web page. Be sure to find out about the rules and laws that apply to you before you put anything questionable on your Web page.

- **Let the technology push you.** The technology can give you ideas that are in themselves pretty funny. Try using Java to create a Three Stooges-type animated routine, or use ActiveX to create a virtual-reality environment that includes funhouse mirrors. (I describe both Java and ActiveX in Appendix A.)

Thinking Your Web Page Through

A Web page or Web site is basically a publication, though an interactive one. Thinking about a few simple principles now, before you start, can help make your Web page much more interesting and useful to the people who see it. You can also revisit this section after you put up your initial Web home page; use these guidelines to revise your page and make it even more interesting and useful!

Ask "Why am I doing this?"

Ask yourself, as you're starting, "Why am I doing this?" (As you do more and more work on your page, your answer to this question may come to have some degree of profanity in it!) That is, why are you creating the page, and

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not having someone else create it for you? The answer helps you determine some important things about the page. The following list details the most common reasons for people to get involved in creating a Web page:

- **For work:** More and more people are being asked to create Web pages and Web sites as part of their jobs; for example, they use the Web to communicate with people inside or outside their companies. But unless you plan to be a full-time Webmaster, you need to balance the time you spend developing your pages with the time you spend on the other demands of your job. Be modest in your initial goals, and keep track of each step in creating and modifying your Web pages so that you — or the person who takes over for you — can refer to the records later.
- **For fun:** Fun sites are a good thing, and they are a lot of what makes the Web worthwhile. But if you create your site for fun, you may find time to work on it only after you spend time on other things, such as work, school, and time with friends and family. So don't be too ambitious in your initial plans, or you may take quite a while to finish and publish your page. (Many bloggers, for one example, now feel that they need to be online 24/7 to keep up.)
- **As a career move:** So you want to be a full-time, or nearly full-time, Webmaster, blogger, or eBay seller; or you want, in some other way, to make the Internet or Web part of your career? In this kind of situation, you can afford to plan an ambitious Web site that uses advanced tools, tracks usage, and otherwise gets closer to the cutting edge of the Web. To gain experience, create your initial Web page by using the accessible and broad-based tools and approaches I describe in this book. Then take your page closer to the cutting edge by using the more advanced techniques described and taught elsewhere.
- **Who knows?** As famous baseball manager Yogi Berra once said, "When you come to a fork in the road, take it." You may not have a specific reason for publishing on the Web, but that shouldn't stop you. You may figure out a good reason after you have a little Web experience under your belt. Start simple, so you can score an early success in getting a basic Web page up, and then go from there.

Don't spend too much time on design

Designing a Web page is unlike designing any other kind of publication, because you don't have as much control over the precise appearance of a Web page as you do with other types of publications. Different network connection speeds, browsers, screen sizes, and font and other settings within a browser vary so much that users can have very different experiences with your Web page. Some people may (for example) bring up your page on a personal digital assistant, laptop, Web-connected TV, or mobile phone.

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Big issues for big sites

This book focuses on the needs of people who create a single Web page or a small Web site, and who do so on their own. Larger sites, or sites that need to be put up quickly or changed rapidly, need to have additional people working on them.

If you want to create a larger site down the road, start thinking now about what resources may be available to put into it. How many people in your company or other organization work on advertising, public relations, and marketing? How many people question whether those jobs are real work? (Just kidding — the author is a marketer, among other things!)

You may reasonably expect your company to re-target some of its advertising, marketing, and PR resources to support a presence on the Web. And what about sales? Some portion of your company's sales effort is likely to be or become Web-based, necessitating a suitable up-front commitment to bring returns down the road.

Or your company may already suffer from Web burnout. Classic symptoms of Web burnout include massive early investment to create a beautiful site, months of failure to update or maintain the site, followed by finger-pointing about who wasted all that money. Usually the problem is that no one set goals for the site, so no one managed the site's design and construction with those specific goals in mind. Companies often designate too few financial and human resources for maintenance and improvement of the site. If this scenario has happened in your company, you know the problems that result, so be sure to establish clear goals for your own Web efforts.

The most important element in adopting any new technology for business is a successful pilot project. As someone creating a smallish Web site, you're developing important skills and knowledge about the all-important convergence of your business's needs with the Web's opportunities. Set specific goals, strive to meet them, and record both your problems and your successes. By doing so, you position yourself to justify further investment of resources as the Web grows in importance for your company.

With the latest versions of HTML, controlling more aspects of your Web page's appearance is possible. Advanced sites, such as amazon.com, use many different aspects of HTML, as well as programming languages such as JavaScript, to create dense, rich layouts more like a magazine than a typical Web page. However, some aspects of the newest versions of HTML are not yet standard across different Web browsers. In this book, I stick with HTML 4.0, which works the same way for nearly all Web users.

Keep your design simple and don't spend too much time on it initially. A simpler design is more likely to work for everyone — and be easier to update as well. Then improve the design as you find out more about Web publishing and more about how people use your page.

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Put the good stuff first

Imagine the Web as a giant magazine rack and the person surfing the Web as someone scanning the front covers of all those magazines. People who see your Web page decide whether to stay at your site — or go elsewhere — based largely on what they see when your page first comes up.

If your purpose is to provide information or links, put that information first. For example, to create a site that provides information about a company, make getting contact information — your company name, address, phone number, and fax number — very easy. To create a personal site that is attractive to potential employers, make clear what employment field you're in right at the top of your Web page and make your résumé easy to access.

If your purpose is to draw people into your site to entertain them, educate them, or expose them to messages from advertisers — or to do all of these things at once — then the first part of the page should make a strong impression and invite the user to go further into your site. Figure 1-5 shows the Fabrik home page, certainly one that catches your attention, located at the following URL: `www.fabrik.com`.

Figure 1-5: Fabrik connects Web users to fast storage.

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But, like the Fabrik Web page, your home page also should help people who seek a quick "hit" of information; they're more likely to come back later if you don't waste their time during their first visit.

Think twice about download times

Putting lots of graphics in your pages is time-intensive for you because creating or finding good graphics and placing them appropriately in your Web page can take a great deal of time and effort. Graphics are also time-intensive for those who surf your site because they can take a long time to download.

Many people are ignoring this concern these days because they (and many of their users) are on broadband, so even large images load quickly. There are three problems with making this assumption:

- Much broadband service has inconsistencies and hiccups that slow speeds at particular times, making that large file download crawl.
- Even a "fast" download can never be fast enough. A 3-second wait is still annoying, and unnecessarily so if trimming the image size could have taken the wait entirely away.
- There are still some dialup users out there, and a graphic, say, 1 MB in size, can take several minutes to download on a dialup connection. If you impose this wait, you can unknowingly drive some of your users nuts and put them off your site entirely.

So plan to use *spot graphics* (small images that download quickly) at first. Think twice before creating large clickable image maps or attractive opening graphics like those you find on the sites of large companies, such as General Motors or Apple. If you do use an opening graphic, keep the file size under 20 K or so. See Chapters 2 and 5 for details on the efficient use of graphics, whether they're design elements on your site or stored photos on Flickr.

There has been a good deal of coverage in the computer press, and even in mainstream newspapers and news magazines, about ongoing efforts to make faster access available to ordinary users. But for all the talk about cable modems, Digital Subscriber Line (DSL), and other up-to-date techniques, nearly half of home users in the United States are still on 56 Kbps or slower modems — with even more dialup users in most other countries. (Business users are typically on faster connections.) So ignore the hype — the speed at which the average person accesses the Web is still moving upward gradually, not leaping ahead. For now, be conservative in how much data you put in each page, and test the download times of your pages over a modem-based connection before you publish them.

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Know your audience

According to Web researchers, Web users overwhelmingly speak English as either a first or second language. Consequently, the great majority of Web content, Web creation tools, and Web browsers use the English language. More than fifteen years after the birth of the Web — which happened in Switzerland, where there are three official languages, none of them English — the English-speaking world is still considered the "center of gravity" for Web access. This situation will gradually change as other countries catch up to Web penetration in the United States.

Why are people online? Surveys indicate that the top reasons people use the Web are for information-gathering, entertainment, education, work, "time-wasting," and shopping. Which of these purposes do you intend for your site to serve? How do you appeal to people who are online? How do you help them find you? The answers to these questions can help you enhance the appeal and usefulness of your site.

Finally, what kind of browsers are your users running? Surveys indicate that over 90 percent of Web users run Microsoft Internet Explorer; most of the rest use Mozilla Firefox. Both of these browsers (and most others that make up the remaining user base) support graphics, tables, and Cascading Style Sheets — an advanced layout feature. Nearly all users run their browsers with graphics turned on (which doesn't mean that they appreciate waiting for complex images to load — unless those images are *very* cool!).

A still-small-but-increasing percentage of Web access is via "sub-PC" devices such as advanced cellphones. That means relatively tiny screens and slow (and expensive) connections. For more on this kind of Internet use, see *Mobile Internet For Dummies* by Michael O'Farrell, et al, 2008.

Use "text bites"

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, when preparing a Web site, less is more. Saying something with less text makes users more likely to read and remember it. A *text bite* is like a sound bite — it's a short, clearly written piece of text that makes a single point.

Text bites are especially important on the Web because reading from a computer screen is physically less comfortable than reading from a printed page. People tend to end their Web sessions after too much reading. You need to shoehorn your messages into the limited amount of reading time people will devote to your Web site.

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Although you can overuse text bites, they're very important in Web-page design. Text bites help you convey as much information as possible in the limited amount of time users spend looking at each Web page. And they help you balance the basic elements of Web page design: text, links, and graphics.

If you want to put long documents on the Web, consider rewriting them as a series of text bites. If rewriting them is too much work to be practical, at least create short, punchy text for navigation and for introductory paragraphs to the long documents. Within a long document, add headers to break up the flow of text and provide pointers on your Web site to key areas within the document. Without such guidance, users may well give up in frustration without reaching the information they're looking for.

Look at sites you like

Look at sites you like and at sites whose purposes are similar to your own. What's good about them? What's not? Imitate successful elements — without copying, which would be a violation of ethics as well as copyright laws — and avoid unsuccessful models. As the development of your site progresses, keep checking it against the sites you previously identified and widen your search to get additional ideas — what not to do as well as what to do.

Few original ideas exist on the Web, so it's no big deal if your initial site contains one or two new ideas at best. The rest of your site may echo things readers have already seen, and you're still better off if your site brings to mind other good sites, rather than bad ones. (But be careful: If you start yelling "Bad site! Bad site!" at your computer screen and swatting it with a rolled-up newspaper, you may not have a working Internet connection much longer.)

Plan for ongoing improvements

As you plan and implement your initial Web page, you will, no doubt, find yourself creating a "To Do" list of things that you can't fit into the original site but want to add later, when time allows. (Creating this list for later use is great protection against trying to create a supersite right off the bat, getting stuck in the creation process, and never getting to a point where you can actually publish your first Web page.) This list is the start of a plan for ongoing improvements.

Some things you put in a Web site need to be kept current. For example, if your business Web page shows your company's quarterly results, be ready to update it quickly when the next quarter's results come out. If it lists company officers, update it as soon as a change takes place. (Unless you're one of the people changed — and then it's your successor's problem!)

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Web-site information that is obviously out of date is one of the quickest ways to leave a bad impression of you or your organization or company; it steers visitors right away from your Web site. For business, an out-of-date site can cost you customers.

Not only do you want to update the Web site, but you also want to avoid using "Under Construction" signs and otherwise apologizing for things that aren't there yet. *Everything* on the Web is under construction, which is half the fun of using the Web and creating pages for it in the first place. You get only one chance to make a first impression, and an "Under Construction" sign doesn't count in your favor.

Decide how you define success

Before you design and create your Web page, define what you believe can make it a success. For an initial effort, simply putting up something on the Web that clearly conveys basic information is probably enough. You may just need an online reference point for people who need to get in touch with you by phone or by mail, or want to know a bit more about you or your business.

For follow-up work, get more specific. Are you trying to reach a certain number of people or a certain type of people? Will measuring *page views* — the number of times that people look at one page from your site — be enough, or do you need some other measure of response, such as having site visitors send e-mail or call an 800 number? Do you want to create a cutting-edge site full of bell-and-whistle features like fancy graphics and animation — and if so, are you willing to invest the time and money to make this site happen? Talk to people who do advertising and marketing in the real world, as well as to people who work on the Web; get a sense of what goals they set and how they measure success in meeting their goals.

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Chapter 2

Designing Your Online Look

In This Chapter

- Getting the look
- Minding the principles of good design
- Circumventing design no-nos
- Working with tables, frames, and layout

There are two approaches to a new project — jump in and get your hands dirty, or plan what you're doing first. These could be called the Picard and Riker strategies after the lead characters in the *Star Trek: The Next Generation* TV show and movies.

Captain Picard, famously bald and thoughtful, always seemed to be planning interstellar strategy, even when in the grips of the Borg or other evildoers. Commander Riker, famously hirsute and energetic, was always anxious to lead an "away team" into battle, blasting away more than once right on board the U.S.S. *Enterprise*.

So it is in creating a Web page. If you want to have a clear idea of what you're trying to accomplish before you start, read this chapter first. If you want to get something done right off the bat, then go to Chapter 3, or one of the media-specific chapters in Part II, and get something — anything — up on the Web. Then come back here for a brief refresher on the bigger picture.

You Got the Look

One of the trickiest issues in creating and publishing Web pages is creating and maintaining the overall look of each Web page. Some pages look great. Others look okay. Still others look hokey and amateurish. And how good a page looks varies considerably depending on who's looking — after all, "beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Up to a point, anyway; some pages are so bad, or so good, that everyone agrees on them.

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How Web 2.0 simplifies — and limits — design

Web page design is advancing with Web 2.0, which is defined well by Wikipedia: "a trend in the use of World Wide Web technology and Web design that aims to facilitate creativity, information sharing, and, most notably, collaboration among users." (From en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.)

Web 2.0 designs actually make Web pages simpler by taking away some power from the user — you can't make a very useful blog in YouTube, for instance. And people who spend a lot of time on one type of social networking or e-commerce site — say, Facebook or eBay — tend not to give their blogs as much time and focus to most other bloggers.

In Web 1.0 — what you're doing when you create your own independent Web page — all the power, and all the responsibility, is in your hands. As mentioned before, a standalone Web page of your own is great for supporting and tying together your presence on various social networking and e-commerce sites, serving as a broadly accessible connecting point across different online communities.

You can create a first, "try it" Web page without worrying too much how it looks. But if you're creating a Web page a lot of people will be looking at, or if you're practicing to create a Web page for business or career use, you're going to want it to look good. And explaining how to make a Web page look good is hard.

The overall impression a Web page makes depends on many different factors — the balance of white space (empty space) to text and graphics, the size of text used, the font used, appropriate use of headings versus regular text, and appropriate use of bulleted and numbered lists, hyperlinks, and other eye-catching elements. Each of these factors has to be "right," but "right" is hard to define — you know it when you see it. All the choices you make have to work together as a whole.

It usually takes a professional to make a Web page look really good — so at the end of this chapter, I talk about how to get professional help for the look of your Web page. But it doesn't take a professional to make your Web page look pretty good — or at least to avoid having it be out-and-out ugly. I show you how to make sure your Web page looks at least reasonably good in this chapter.

Three Key Principles of Design

The design of a Web page can be most simply described as the look of the page and how it's perceived by the user — as attractive or unattractive, and as easy to use or difficult to use. Design is artistic and aesthetic; getting it right draws on people's creativity, and judging when it's right depends on

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people's individual taste. So there are no hard-and-fast rules that always yield a good-looking design. This fact drives some people crazy, but many of the most important things in life — like love, fine food, good wine, and good design — don't operate strictly by specific rules.

In years of work with the Web, I've learned many of the "tricks" of Web design. Instead of relying on the specific and formal rules that some professional Web designers follow, I find that following general principles usually yields good results for smallish Web design projects. Of course, it's good to begin with existing models that most people agree look good, but at carefully chosen times, it's also good to break the rules. The design process is a challenge to anyone's sanity, but mixing and matching is my favored way to consistently create designs that look good.

The design tips in this chapter are based on the author's experience in designing and using many Web sites, not on formal design principles. Furthermore, my advice is just for people doing single Web pages and small Web sites of 5 to 10 Web pages — not large sites that have to be planned carefully from the beginning. All this means that my advice may be infuriating to professionals — but is likely to be very helpful to people just starting out. For detailed information about Web page and Web site design, I recommend *Web Design For Dummies,* 2nd Edition by Lisa Lopuck (Wiley) or the industrial-strength *Building Web Sites All-in-One Desk Reference For Dummies* by Doug Sahlin and Claudia Snell (also from Wiley).

The three most important principles for designing Web home pages and small Web sites are simplicity, predictability, and consistency. It's necessary to follow each principle in order to also follow the others. In the next few sections are pointers showing how to apply these principles.

Achieving simplicity

Simplicity is considered the hallmark of good design. The modern eye is trained to look for and appreciate simple, unornamented designs. Use the simplest design that accomplishes your task, and then figure out how to simplify it further. For Web pages, simplicity means using as few of everything — design elements, graphics, and text sizes — as is reasonably possible.

Simplicity has specific advantages in Web design; in fact, the impact of download time constraints and the differences among users' computer setups make simplicity a necessity. The fact that it takes time to download each element on a Web page means that a simply designed Web page usually loads faster than a complicated one, and users really like fast-loading pages. (Actually, they hate *slow*-loading pages, but I'd rather describe the situation in a positive way.)

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The differences among users' computer setups reward simplicity as well. One user can be looking at your Web page on a mobile phone screen; another on a small "sub-PC" screen with 256 colors; another can be looking at it on a large, high-resolution screen with thousands of colors. The simpler your Web page design, the more likely the page will look about the same on all the different computer setups out there.

To you as a novice Web-page author, simplicity is especially important. You don't have the hard-earned experience of having tried many things that didn't work. "Experience," it's been said, "is what you get when you don't get what you want."

Novices also lack the technical knowledge to always do things right, especially when they're trying something new and complicated. The simpler you keep your design, the more likely you are to not mess up.

Simplicity is most important in *content pages,* Web pages where the user is reading an article or looking at a picture. The user doesn't want to be distracted from what he or she is doing. Figures 2-1 and 2-2 show the first and second screenfuls of content for the table of contents of *Dreamweaver CS3 For Dummies* on the For Dummies Web site. Notice how both Web pages allow you to focus on the content.

Figure 2-1: The top of a For Dummies content page is simple, offering tools, navigation, and content.

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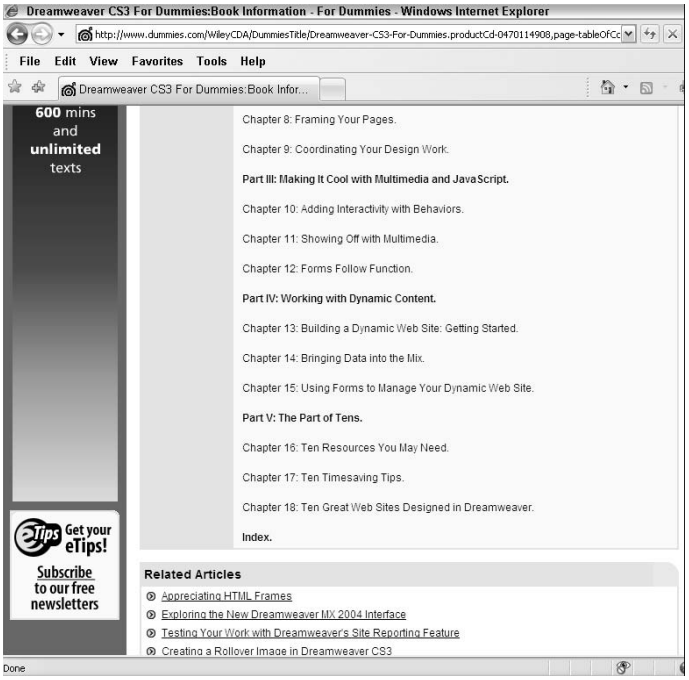

Figure 2-2: The body of a For Dummies content page is even simpler — just content, thanks.

Producing predictability

Predictability means the user can easily guess where things are on your Web page and how they work. In other words, one of your goals as you design your Web page is to achieve a sense of predictability for the content, layout, and functionality of your page when it's compared to other, similar Web pages.

An important reason that the Web is so popular is that Web pages nearly all look and work alike. Web pages that go too far from the norm tend not to be very popular with users.

Part of the reason this book is called *Creating Web Pages* and not *Creating Web Sites* is that it's focused on people just starting out, who are likely to want to create a single Web page first, and then perhaps expand that page into a small site. But another reason is that users really do experience the Web as a series of individual Web pages. Tests show that many users aren't even aware, when they click a link to a different site, that they've left one site and gone to a different one. People really do experience the Web one Web page at a time.

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To understand the value of predictability, imagine what a Web page with a newspaper article on it should look like. The first thing to catch your eye may be a picture — almost always *one* picture, if any. You'd also expect to see the headline describing the article and the reporter's byline.

You would expect to see some navigation at the top of the screen or along the left side. You'd expect a banner ad across the top (but you'd be pleasantly surprised if there wasn't one). The rest of the left side would then be empty below the navigation area. The right side may be empty as well, or have some small ads.

On some sites you may see features, such as buttons for e-mailing and printing the article, somewhere on the first screen. And you may also see a box with headlines for related articles. Figure 2-3 shows a sketch of what the major elements in an article page might look like.

Now imagine if one or more of these features was present but was implemented much differently from what you'd find on other sites. For instance, imagine that the button for e-mailing the article was labeled "Transmit Content." You'd be frustrated and confused. The clever person who put an original label on the button hasn't impressed you — he or she has just made the page harder to understand and use.

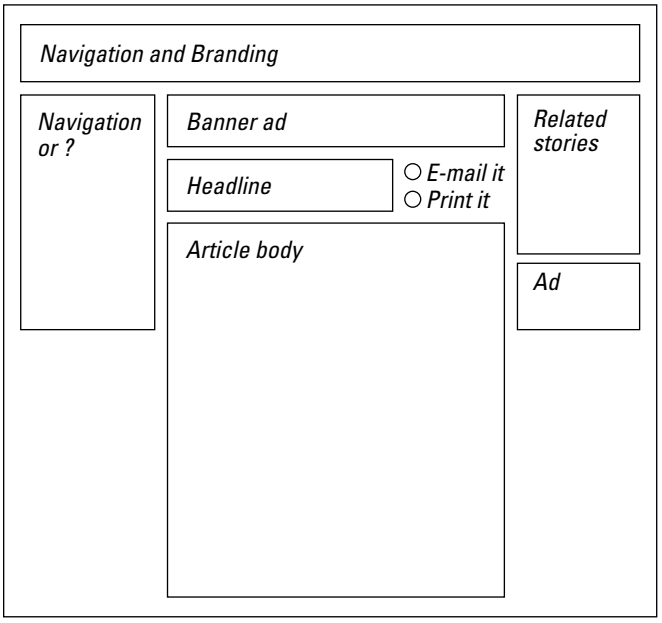

Figure 2-3: Diagram of a typical article page.

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That, in a nutshell, is what predictability is about. For any Web page you create, find a few examples of pages on the Web that accomplish something similar to what you're trying to do. See whether your page is similar in content, layout, and functionality. While you're at it, compare the simplicity of your design to the examples you've seen. If your page is different, consider modifying its design to reduce or eliminate the differences. That's predictability.

Creating consistency

Just as every Web page you create should be predictable when compared to the other pages out there on the Web (see the preceding section), each page should also be internally consistent. You shouldn't dramatically change fonts, text size, or layout style within a page.

If you create a multipage Web site (as described in Chapter 11, for use with a WYSIWYG tool, and in Chapter 15 for using HTML directly), all the pages in the site should be consistent with each other as well. Do all you can to help users understand that they're visiting a single, unified Web site.

If your Web pages are simple, and if they're predictable to experienced Web users, consistency becomes one of the easier principles to follow. Here are just a couple of ideas that can substantially improve the consistency of a small site:

- Use a repeated navigation block or graphic on each page in your Web site — always in the same position on each page.
- Use a consistent background color and foreground color, the same text size for body text, the same or similar image placements, and the same "voice" in the site's writing.

If you create a large Web site (over 20 pages or so), consistency becomes more difficult. The only foolproof way to maintain a consistent approach is to create a template for each of the different kinds of pages on your Web site: navigational pages, content pages (with and without images), forms pages, and so on. Every page in your site will be created from an existing template and then customized for the specific needs of that page. Most really large sites, such as Amazon.com, and most blogging sites automatically "populate" templates with content drawn from a database to create each specific Web page.

No matter what size your Web site is, the easiest way to achieve consistency is to print out every page on the site, then compare the printed pages to each other for consistency in style and approach. This exercise will almost always help you find inconsistencies in design and may expose errors in content as well.

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Avoiding Common Design Errors

Simply cruise the Web — especially areas with lots of personal pages, such as the GeoCities site at `www.geocities.com` or AOL's Hometown area at `hometown.aol.com` — and you can find many examples of badly designed pages. But what is it that makes these pages bad? Of the many design mistakes you can make, three are common among new Web-page creators: slow-loading pages, ugly color combinations, and small text.

Slow-loading pages

This is the number-one bane of Web-page design, whether amateur or professional. People think they're designing a magazine and throw large, uncompressed graphics around, several per page. An uncompressed screen image of a page at 1024 x 768 resolution — the size used in the screen images in this book — is over 2 MB in size and takes about *8 minutes* to load on a dialup connection. Imagine the uselessness of trying to view that page on your cellphone with a slow Internet connection! The same file, lightly compressed using JPEG compression, is only about 200 KB, one-tenth the size.

Having used large (and perhaps uncompressed) graphics, these same people might add cute little design elements, each of which has to be sent as a separate file by the Web server. As each of the different elements appears on a page, if it's not carefully designed and implemented, the page's content may shift and shimmy in a manner guaranteed to cause motion sickness.

If a page of yours loads slowly, check to see whether you're committing one of two major errors:

- **A lack of care with one or two individual graphics.** By leaving these graphics files large, you doom the whole page to slow loading. Use the techniques described in Chapter 5 to make your graphics small in their physical size on-screen as well as in their file size.
- **A profligate use of graphics in general.** Highly designed pages can have lots of little graphical elements that cause many separate file transfers as the page loads. Unless the page is carefully designed, the page actually shifts visibly as each graphic comes in. The overall effect can be quite disconcerting.

Graphics not only can cause your page to load slowly — but they also take a long time to create, tend to have copyright problems and rights issues, and present challenging design and page-layout issues. Keep the use of graphics on your page simple until you get really good at designing with graphics, or until you can get help from someone who has that particular talent.

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Ugly color combinations

Many Web page publishers don't much care if the color combinations they use are attractive or not. Others care, but can't critically appraise their own work and see whether the result is ugly and/or difficult to use.

You may understand that certain color combinations can be ugly, but maybe it seems odd for me to say that bad colors can lead to difficult-to-use pages. The reason is that on the Web, color identifies hyperlinks; unused links and recently used links have different colors. The standard colors for links are blue for unvisited links and purple for visited links. If you change these colors, or use the link colors for other purposes, your visitors have trouble identifying which text is links, which links they've visited, and which links they haven't. If you've read the section about creating predictability on your page, you can understand just how major a sin this is!

If you simply must change the link colors, try to use color combinations that are analogous to the standard ones — a lighter, eye-catching color for unvisited links, and a dull color for visited ones. This is at least similar, conceptually, to the standard colors. Then test the design on a few people and see whether they can quickly figure out which links are which.

Now, back to ugly. Just because the Web makes it possible to use various color combinations doesn't mean you should do so. Black text on a white or off-white background is what people are used to, and is always the safest choice. And with this combination, the standard link colors show up really well. You can use a graphical bar at some consistent location on the page and add in one or two useful or interesting graphics per page to give your Web pages a colorful, graphical look without sacrificing predictability and readability within the body of each page.

A few other color combinations work fairly well, but many don't. Remember also that some users run their monitors in 256-color mode and that only 216 colors out of the 256 — the *Web-safe* color palette — are the same on PCs and Macs. So a color combination that looks good on your system may look poor on a system with fewer colors; likewise, colors that look good on a PC may not look so hot on a Mac. Use the Web-safe colors described in Chapter 5 to choose, or cruise the Web looking for an existing Web page that uses a good-looking Web-safe color combination; you can use the same combination for your own site. (This isn't stealing — there are only a few such useful combinations, so the person you're borrowing from didn't exactly invent the electric blender either.)

Small text (and large text, too)

A common mistake people make is to use small text on their Web pages, packed closely together. Small text does look kind of cool, and it allows you

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to pack in a lot of information. Because of these temptations, even large Web sites (such as early versions of the Microsoft site) have made this mistake. The trouble is that small text becomes *very small text* when viewed on a high-resolution monitor. So small, in fact, that many of the people who visit your Web site may not be able to read the text on your page easily.

It's easy to believe that you've packed in a lot of information when you use small text. But communication is not a one-way street. Written information gets communicated only if it's read. Users will often click rapidly away from dense screens full of text, so nothing gets communicated at all!

Less common, but equally harmful, is text that's too large. You don't need to design Web pages with text that's readable from 20 feet away. Really. (People with true vision problems can use special options in Windows and/or their browser to display text in extra-large size, so they have a way to read text that starts out normal size.) Large text looks awful, especially when viewed on a system with relatively low resolution (such as 800 x 600 pixels).

Both of these problems are made worse by the increasing tendency to embed much of a site's text in graphic images. This text always has a consistent look, because it's treated by the browser as a graphic image, but that look can easily be too small or large. When you save text as image files, the text can't be resized by the browser to accommodate different browser settings. So users can't fix any problems they're having with graphically displayed text.

So what's "normal-size" text? Glad you asked. There's not one exact normal size, but there's a normal range. To find it, match the text size in your Web page to the text size in a few Web pages you like. The current Microsoft page is a good example; though it still uses some small text, and some graphical text, it uses "white" space (that is, empty space) to make it all more readable. See Figure 2-4 for an example.

Once you've compared your site's text size to other sites', ask several people — not all younger and hawk-eyed, nor all older or less visually acute — to tell you if they can easily read the text while sitting comfortably a couple of feet from the computer monitor. If not, fix the problem before it becomes a burden for your Web site's visitors.

Safely Breaking the Rules

A lot of the fun in creating your own Web page is doing what you want to do and not what someone else tells you. Yet you want your Web page to look good. How can you create a design that you like and that also looks good to other people?

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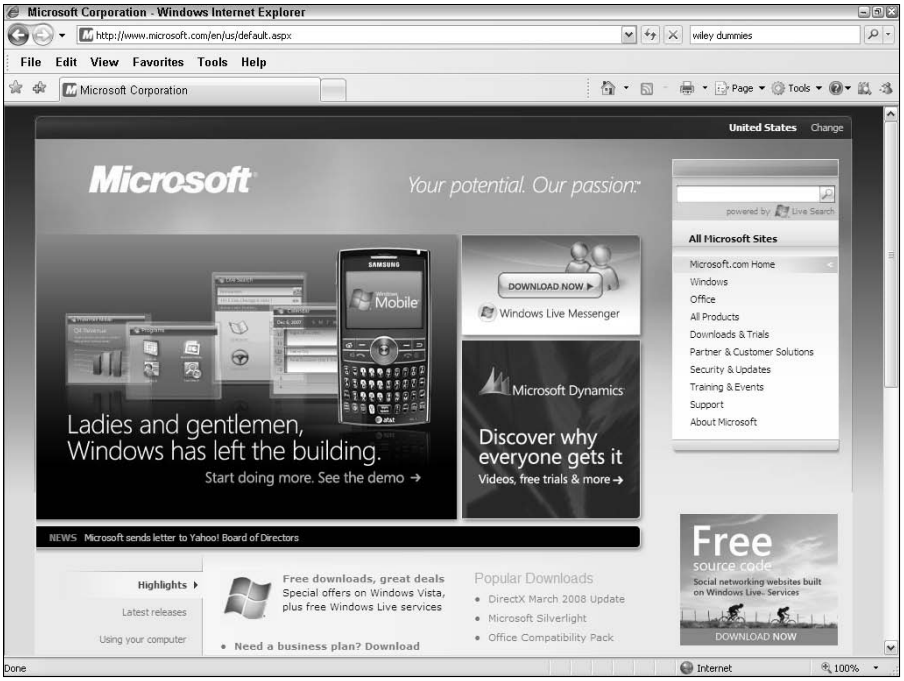

Figure 2-4: Microsoft is getting religion on text size.

I suggest you follow this five-step process:

1. **Get your Web page up.**

   Include the content and images you want, as I describe throughout this book. Don't worry much about how it looks at first. Just do it!

2. **Find a model page or two that you like.**

   Look for pages that have a similar purpose and content. Make sure that they have a simple, attractive appearance. See the sidebar, "Finding great home pages," for places to look.

3. **Create a new, reduced version of your Web page, using these models as your guide.**

   Get the major pieces — the main text, an image or two, and a list — in place first. Make this basic page look good.

4. **Put additional elements back in, one at a time.**

   By working in this piecemeal fashion, you can prevent your page from becoming a hard-to-fix mess, while still indulging your own creativity.

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Finding great home pages

Here are several places you can look to see how others have designed their home pages on the Web:

- **GeoCities:** GeoCities is the top provider of home pages for the Web. From the GeoCities home page at `www.geocities.com`, you can access GeoCities Web pages in many different categories. However, there's no "best" or "highly rated" list to help you find the best Web pages. You're going to have to look at a lot of ugly ducklings before you find a swan. And if you're looking for unusual as well as excellent designs, you'll see a lot of white (ordinary) swans before you find a black (unusual) one.
- **Tripod:** Tripod is a free Web-hosting company acquired by Lycos, a leading international Web portal. Visit Tripod at `www.tripod.com`. To see cool Lycos Web pages, look in the Member Spotlight area in the Member sites area. The Home and Family area is particularly relevant for personal home pages.
- **AngelFire:** AngelFire is the other free Web-hosting company acquired by Lycos. You can find its home page at `www.angelfire.com`. Click in the Top Member Pages area on the left side of the home page to find links to top sites.
- **Hometown:** Hometown is the name of AOL's free Web-page hosting site (see Chapter 4). You can use Hometown even if you're not an AOL member (although only members can use all of the AOL discussion areas and online help that make Hometown a real winner). The Hometown home page at `www.hometown.aol.com` has a list of the most popular categories, but you have to search all the home pages in a category to find the best ones.
- **Homestead:** Homestead no longer offers free personal home pages — only business pages, and you have to pay for it. But it offers a lot of support, has some great Web pages, and prominently features some of its customers' better work. Go to `www.homestead.com` and look for customers' sites.

5. **Publish the result and get comments.**

   Let some friends and colleagues see your newly published page, and ask them what they think. Let the site sit for a couple of days, and then take a fresh look at it yourself. Use your own fresh perspective and the comments you get to improve your page further.

You can repeat this process again and again as you improve your Web page and add new pages to create a full Web site. Work through these steps conscientiously, and you may end up with some of the best-looking Web pages around.

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Getting design help from the pros

The best way to work with a Web-graphic designer, while keeping your costs under control, is to create your Web site yourself first. Then bring in the designer just to improve the look of the site. Improving the look of your site may take the designer as much as a couple of days and cost you a few hundred dollars — money well spent, if your Web site is going to be part of your career or your business.

The problem is that many of the designers you might talk to will be accustomed to doing the whole job of brainstorming your needs with you, creating content, revising it all to meet your needs, publishing the site, and then modifying it for you. This kind of project could cost you thousands of dollars — which you're going to avoid spending by doing nearly everything yourself for free, by using the information in this book. The one part where you may need help is in getting the look right, so do all the other steps yourself and then bring someone in just for the graphic-design piece.

Organizing Your Page with Tables and Frames

Tables are a layout tool for data tables on Web pages, such as a table in an article or textbook showing the revenues of a company's different divisions each quarter. But the tables capability for Web pages has long been used (misused?) to control the layout of the entire page.

Designers have found that they can make the cells of a table very large, and put large graphics or whole blocks of text in them. You can even resize tables automatically to accommodate various sizes of Web-browser windows — at least up to a point. (I only touch on this advanced use of tables in this section.)

Whether and how to use tables was, for a long time, one of the most controversial topics in Web-page design (not exactly an area where controversies have earth-shattering consequences, but we all need some excitement in our lives).

Frames are more powerful layout devices than tables, but they have fallen into disfavor. They allow separate parts of the Web-browser window to be updated and scrolled separately. However, they produce odd effects; users seem to prefer one unified window to separate "panes" within a window. So I barely mention frames in this book.

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Creating simple tables

When used as intended, tables have rows and columns. For each spot where a row and column intersect, you have a table cell. Each cell can have its own formatting — the data in it can be aligned left, center, or right, formatted, and so on. Tables also have header-data cells, in which you put the column headings. Here's the HTML code for a simple table of this type:

```
<TABLE BORDER=2>
<TR><TH><B>Production
          (tons)</B></TH><TH><B>% of goal</B></TH></TR>
<TR><TD><I>>North 40</I></TD><TD>87</TD><TD>102%</TD></TR>
<TR><TD><I>South 40</I></TD><TD>93</TD><TD>110%</TD></TR>
</TABLE>
```

Figure 2-5 shows how this simple table looks in HTML and when viewed in Internet Explorer.

Here's what each part of the HTML code does:

`<TABLE BORDER=2>` The `TABLE` tag begins and ends the table. The `BORDER` attribute creates a 2-pixel-wide border around the table. Don't forget to include a border, so other text and graphics in your Web page don't crowd too close to the table.

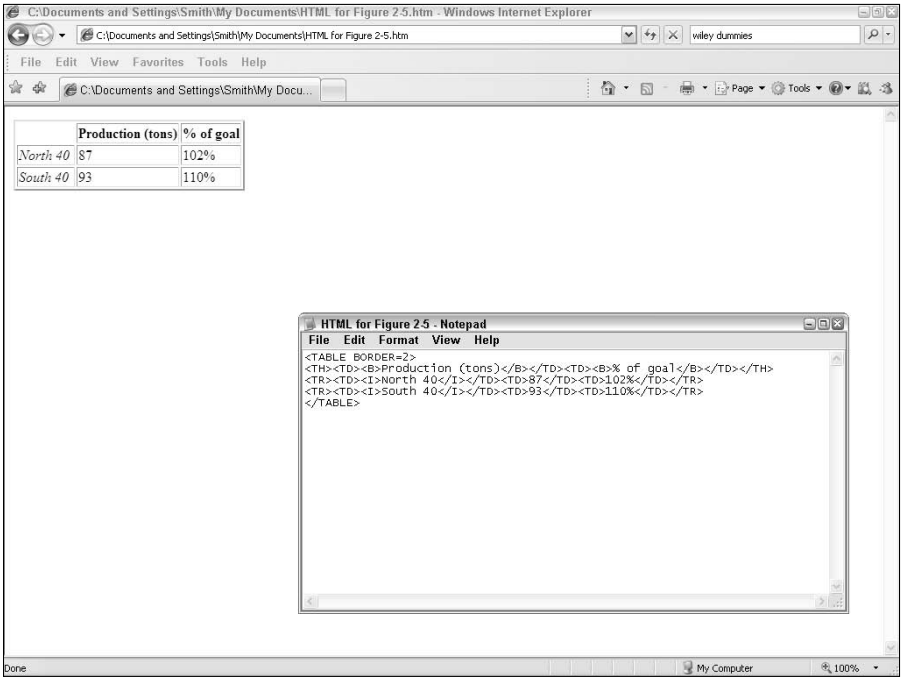

Figure 2-5: A simple Web table and its simple HTML source.

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`<TR>, </TR>` Begins and ends the table row.

`<TH>, </TH>` Surrounds table header data. Table header data is automatically formatted as bold and centered.

`<TD>, </TD>` Begins and ends the table data item.

So creating a table in HTML is fairly simple but also fairly tedious. You just create the rows and data items; if you get the data items right, the columns take care of themselves.

Getting the data items right can be a problem, though. To make your table look just right, you have to use a number of alignment and formatting options. Making mistakes becomes way too easy, and updating the table's appearance becomes very hard. That's why so many people use an HTML editor like CoffeeCup to create and manage tables — and then, in some cases, do final tweaking in HTML to get them just right.

Layout with tables

When tables were added to HTML, Web designers quickly figured out how to take them to a whole other level. Imagine making a Web page one big table. Using HTML options, you can suppress the display of the table's cell borders. You can thus create a large grid with invisible separation lines into which you insert chunks of text and graphics. This allows you to create a layout with rows and columns. You can also use tables in this fashion to make sure that a specific block of text stays next to a specific graphic, even if the user makes his Web text large or makes the window extra narrow.

Believe it or not, this whole use-tables-for-layouts thing was a bit controversial at first. Why? Because there were some idealistic motives behind the original design of HTML, such as ensuring that Web pages appear correctly on just about any screen. Table-based layouts, by contrast, only work well on screens of at least a certain minimum size, such as a PC screen rather than, say, a mobile-phone screen.

The controversy largely faded because the people who pay for Web-site development demand that their sites look good on most of the PCs and Macs out there, and tables were for a long time just about the only way to create a complex design that looks good.

For the purposes of designing your own Web page, the key word here is "complex." There are so many different elements that you have to adjust in table-based page design that you need to invest a lot of time and energy to learn how to use tables effectively for layout purposes. And then a whole

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other set of issues arises about making sure your table-based page design works well on most or all current computer systems and Web-browser setups that are in use.

Figure 2-6 shows an interior page of BATCS. The tool I use to create BATCS uses tables to create a simple, clean layout. Each major horizontal element is a separate table — the navigation is one table, the first area of the content another. Use the View➪Source or similar command in your Web browser to view the underlying HTML source for this page to see how it's done.

To create your own tables, you can get started by using the Insert➪Table command in CoffeeCup. However, you really need a more advanced tool to work effectively with tables in your Web pages — something like Microsoft FrontPage or Dreamweaver, both of which give you more direct control over specific options. Of course, your other option is to start doing *a lot* of experimenting in HTML until you learn how to get things just how you want them.

For details on how to use tables for layout, start with this article: `www.anownsite.com/web-design/html-tables.html`.

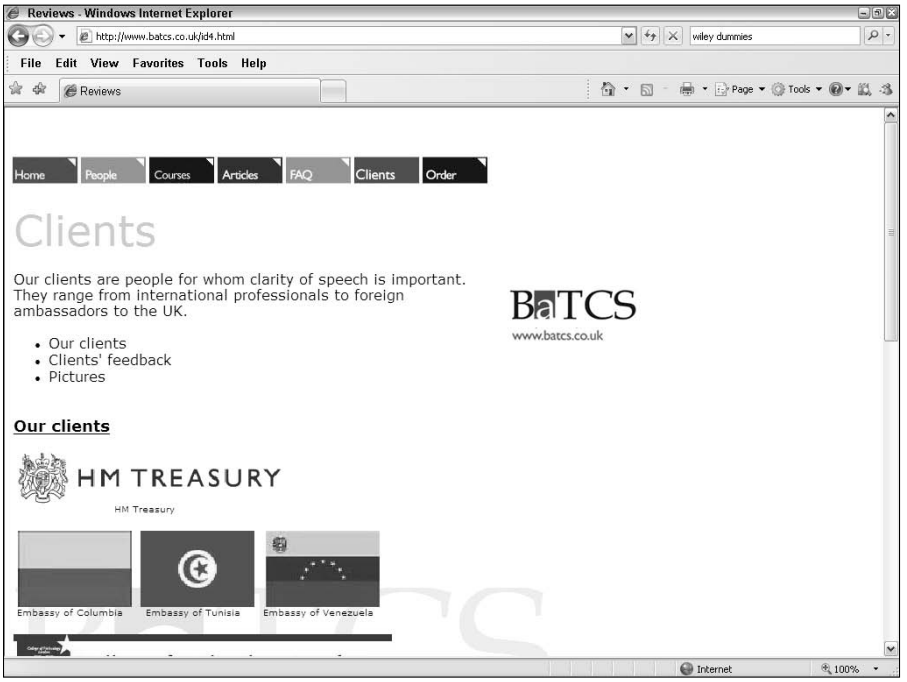

Figure 2-6: The tool used for the BATCS site uses tables to organize content.

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Friends don't let friends do frames

Frames divide a Web page into separate areas which you can then update individually as needed. For example, you can click a link in a frame in the bottom half of a Web page and update it with new content while the other frame stays unchanged. This seems like a powerful capability. However, frames have proven to be less popular than tables.

Why are frames not as popular as tables? Well, frames are hard to create and manage, just like tables. But advanced Web authors are willing to do just about anything to make their Web pages more attractive and more useful, and tables help them do so. With frames, the trouble comes with the "useful" part; users have a hard time using framed Web pages.

For example, when browsing a framed page, users sometimes have difficulty finding where the cursor is. If the user moves the scroll bar, which frame scrolls? Also, going forward and backward in a frame is different from going forward and backward in the overall Web page, so users may get lost easily. And printing a framed page properly requires extra steps — users often try to print the page and end up printing the contents of just one frame instead.

Finally, frames create a functional problem or two. When users resize a browser window, framed pages don't always resize correctly. And designing a framed page to work well for various monitor sizes is even harder than correctly designing pages with tables embedded in them.

Usability tests have shown that users are confused by frames. Some highly controlled framed sites (for instance, those with only one scrollable window) give fairly good results. However, the main purpose of frames on such sites is to allow complex navigation, advertisements, or both to stay in the user's view at all times. Unless you need to offer complicated navigational options that your users can't live without, or unless you have advertisers for your site who demand frames and whose dollars you can't live without, I recommend you avoid frames while creating your initial Web pages or simple Web site.

Still, framed pages can be useful to show complex sets of data and to support navigation. Because creating and managing the HTML for frames is even harder than for tables, I don't describe that process here.

Use an advanced Web-page tool such as CoffeeCup, Microsoft FrontPage, or Macromedia Dreamweaver if you want to use frames in your pages. (Or look up the appropriate HTML tags in Appendix B and start experimenting!)

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Chapter 3

A Fast and Easy Page with Google Page Creator

In This Chapter

- Introducing Google Page Creator
- Registering for Google Page Creator
- Taking the steps to a successful Google Page

Google has long seemed like the wildest and craziest multibillion-dollar business going. Google was started by two Stanford graduate students, and it grew to hundreds of employees and millions of users before anyone even thought of how it might make money.

Yet Google is now a wildly successful business. Google dominates today's Web, commanding roughly half of all search traffic — and billions of dollars in profits from advertising.

As part of its "ready, fire, aim" approach, Google launches new Web services frequently, usually with a "beta" tag on the new service's Web pages. *Beta* is a computer software term that means "not quite ready for wide release" — it's sort of like a rough draft of a product. Yet the Google mob does release its betas widely, allowing many millions of users to try, and test, a service before it's completed.

Google News, which uses software to make up a newspaper-like front page, was in beta for many months before Google removed the "beta" tag. Google Mail, known as Gmail, which has millions of users, is still in beta at this writing — years after it was first released.

However, the beta status is not experimental enough to accommodate all the great ideas at Google. So Google invented Google Labs, home for ideas that are *really* experimental; "still in an early testing phase", as Google puts it. Google Page Creator is a Google Labs product. (To use Google Page Creator, it's recommended that you sign up for a Google Mail account — "early testing phase" + beta = ?).

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The fact that Google Page Creator is still a Google Labs product as this book goes to press — as it was for the previous edition two years ago — shouldn't worry you much. Google has brought many successful products out of the Labs, including Google Maps, Google Scholar (for searching academic journal articles), and Google News Alerts, all products that are widely used and that I've used myself.

All of these applications and many more are considered examples of *cloud computing,* in which purchased software packages are replaced by services offered online via Web sites, often for free. Just think, in using many of the tools described in this book, you're taking part in perhaps the hottest trend in computing!

Google Page Creator is a strategic offering from Google, as it competes with offerings from Microsoft, Yahoo! and others, so you should expect Google Page Creator to go on to ever greater things, whether it's released from Google Labs or not.

We can all join in hoping for a good result here, because Google Page Creator is a slick, easy-to-use service. And it has much room for growth and improvement, given Google's world-class capabilities in search, online commerce, blogging (Google owns Blogger — see Chapter 4), and other Web services.

Getting to Know the Creative Capabilities of Google Page Creator

Google Page Creator has capabilities that seem pretty amazing: You edit your Web page, live, within a Web page! New Web technologies such as AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript And XML), which incorporates the capabilities of JavaScript and XML — a more advanced relative of HTML — allow Web pages to take on more and more of the aspects of a "real" computer program. (Watch out, Microsoft!)

Google Page Creator includes 100 MB of free storage, automatically saving as you work, and allows you to use HTML tags to directly modify the look of your page. (The overall layout of the page won't be changed, just the details of how the content looks within the page.)

Google Page Creator does have its downside, however. You can't move the site to its own URL, nor include a blog, a message board, or even any kind of form.

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The biggest bogeyman of all is advertising. The beta version of Google Page Creator does not, at this point, insert ads into your page. But given that advertising is Google's business, and one it's very good at, you have to wonder whether — or perhaps just when — your page will suddenly have ads added to it. It may be that at some point in the future you'll have to pay to keep your Google Page Creator Web site ad-free.

If you still think Google Page Creator is for you, you should first register with Google, if you don't already have a Google account. You can also register using your mobile phone number, but it's actually easier to manage communications with Google using Gmail than via a mobile phone number that might change (a change which you may well forget to tell Google about).

What's in a Google Name?

Before you begin your Google Page Creator adventure, think a bit about what name you want to use. Your Google account name will be the user name of the e-mail address you use to sign up. (That is, the part of your e-mail address before the @ symbol.) This will also be the default name of your Google Page Creator Web site. If you've been thinking for years that it's funny to have an e-mail address such as `redhotkisser@genericmail.com`, perhaps you'll find it less funny for your Google Web page to be called `redhotkisser.googlepages.com`.

However, you can change the Web site name and create more than one Google Page Creator site from your Google account. If you want a unified online identity, though, you may want to create a new Google Mail account with the user name you want and have that be the distinctive part of the name of your Google Page Creator Web site as well. Many desirable Google Mail user names are already taken, so `redhotkisser` may no longer be available! You may need to be creative to come up with a name you like that's still available.

If you do want to use a Gmail account, it's probably best to set it up first, then follow the steps in the next section to register for your Google account. The Gmail account setup process is pretty simple. Begin by visiting `www.gmail.com` and follow the instructions, which are similar to those for registering for an account.

One of the first things you can do when creating a Google Mail account is to check the availability of various names. You must enter your first and last names first; you can then enter a suggested username and check its availability. See Figure 3-1 for an example.

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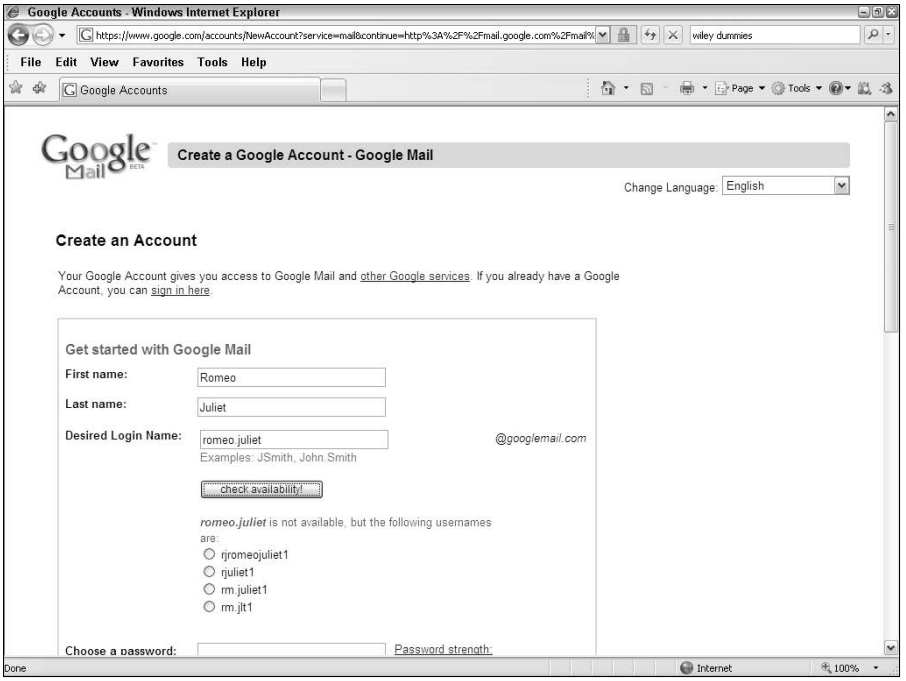

Figure 3-1: An e-mail address by any other name would not smell as sweet.

Gmail is a nice, catchy name for Google e-mail, but the real name, which Google is using and enforcing more and more, is "Google Mail" — possibly under the influence of its attorneys and marketing and branding people. When you create and use your new account, you will want to enter your e-mail address as, say, `iamsocool@gmail.com`. However, Gmail may in some cases actually send this as `iamsocool@google-mail.com`. This disparity can cause problems when, for instance, attempting to unsubscribe from some online services. So either always enter your e-mail address as `@google-mail.com` or be prepared for some possible difficulties.

Registering for a Google Account

To get a Google account, follow these steps. (The idea of Google having user accounts is pretty interesting — Google is beginning to look more like an old-fashioned online service such as AOL or EarthLink.)

1. **Open your Web browser.**

   Google works with any browser and can be used from a mobile phone or other non-computer device. However, you'll need to use a PC ("proper computer," they might say in the U.K.) to create a Web page.

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2. **Go to** `www.google.com`.

   The screen shown in Figure 3-2 appears, with some differences:

   - In most countries outside the U.S., you'll automatically be redirected to a national version of the Google home page, such as `www.google.co.uk`.
   - If you're already registered as a Google user, your username and additional options appear in the top line on the right.
   - There may be a promotion for a Google service, such as the Google toolbar, on the page. (The Google toolbar is great; it offers quick access to Google search and to features such as pop-up blocking. Try it!)
   - The Google logo is often changed to reflect national or international holidays or events. Find out more at `www.google.com/holidaylogos.html`.

3. **If you are currently signed in as a Google account holder, your username appears on the Google home. Skip the rest of the steps in this section. Otherwise, click the Sign In link.**

   When you click the Sign In link, the Google Accounts page appears.

Figure 3-2: The Google home page is gradually getting busier.

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4. **If you have a Google account, sign in and skip the rest of the steps in this section. Otherwise, click the link Create an Account Now.**

   The Create a Google Account page appears, as shown in Figure 3-3.

5. **Enter a current e-mail account.**

   If you don't already have an e-mail account, you need to ask a friend with an e-mail account to work with you on getting signed up for the first time. Or, you can create a Gmail account, as described in the previous section. This doesn't need to be a long-term commitment. After you create your new Gmail account and use it to create your Google account, you can set the Gmail account to automatically forward all incoming Gmail to your existing account. That way you always get your mail from both sources without ever having to check the Gmail account itself.

6. **Choose a password, and then re-enter it.**

   Enter a password for your Google account. The Password Strength meter automatically assesses your password to make sure it fits the rules. However, it will say "too short" until you press the Tab key or click in another area after entering your password. It will then display an assessment of the strength of your password. You can click the Password Strength link for guidance on how to make your password stronger.

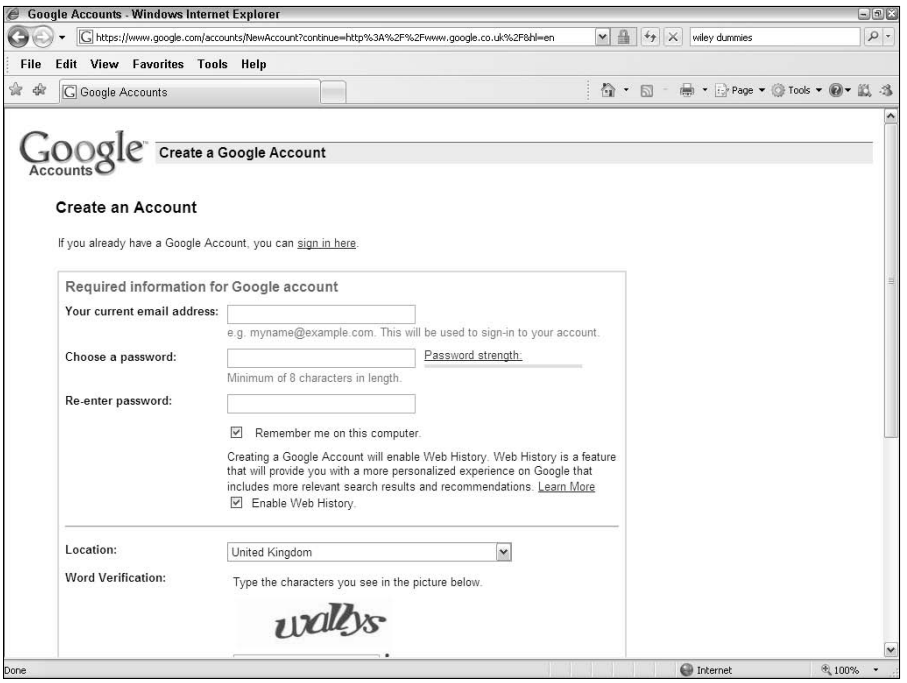

Figure 3-3: Your e-mail address will be part of your Web URL.

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7. **Click the check box Remember Me on This Computer to automatically log in to your account when you visit Google.**

   You are given this option again in the future when you sign in, so you don't need to click the check box unless you're sure you want this enabled.

8. **Clear the check box Enable Web History if you don't wish to have Google keep a history of your Web searches and Web site visits.**

   Web History allows you to search only on Web sites you've previously visited and improves your search results gradually over time based on your past searches. These probably seem like good things, but there are a few reasons you may wish to avoid Web History:

   - Enabling Web History means Google is gathering data on your searches and Web use, which you may not want.
   - Enabling Web History means that you'll get different search results than other people do; if you're a writer or researcher, for instance, you may want uncustomized search results.

   Of course, if you do enable Web History, you can also get uncustomized results at any time by logging out of your Google account.

9. **Choose your country from the pull-down list.**

10. **Type the verification characters.**

    As with many other sign-ups, Google requests that you type in the characters in the verification graphic.

    If you are visually disabled and using a screen reader, select the image of a person in a wheelchair. The characters are read aloud for you to type in.

11. **Review the terms of service; click the Printable Version link to see an easy-to-read, easy-to-print version in a new window. For details, click the Privacy Policy link or the Terms of Service link.**

12. **Reply to the verification e-mail.**

    A verification e-mail is sent to the e-mail account you entered as part of this process. Retrieve the e-mail message and use the link to verify your account — either by clicking the link, if your e-mail program supports that, or by cutting and pasting the link into the address area of your Web browser.

    After you respond to the instructions in the e-mail, you've finished creating your account.

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Private Google on duty

Google's privacy policy is detailed — there are additional, separate details provided for most of its separate services — and easy to understand. Here are some highlights:

- **Combining information:** Google combines information from your registrations for services, cookies, and your visits to Google Web sites.
- **Third parties at arm's length:** Only aggregated, non-personal information is provided to third parties.
- **A different kind of service:** If Google is served with a request for personal information as part of a legal process, they may comply with it.
- **See yourself:** Google commits to efforts to make your personal information available to you, and to allow you to correct or delete it.
- **Yes to opt-in:** In its detailed privacy policy, Google commits to requiring your opt-in consent for the sharing of any sensitive personal information; that means you have to explicitly click a check box before your information is shared.

Creating a Google Page

After you're registered, it's time to start creating your page. Google Page Creator gives you a lot of options; the following steps take you through some of the most important ones:

1. **Go to the Google Page Creator page at `pages.google.com`.**

   If you are not already signed in, the sign-in area appears in the upper-right corner of the page.

2. **If you are not already signed in, enter your password and click the Sign In button.**

   The Google Page Creator start page appears.

3. **Click the link labeled Create a new page.**

   You are asked for a title for your page. This title will be made part of your Web page's URL as follows (if you enter `newtitle` as the title): `newtitle.googlepages.com`.

4. **Enter a title, then click the Create and Edit button.**

   A new page appears, as shown in Figure 3-4. (Your page may look slightly different, but the overall layout of editable areas should be the same.)

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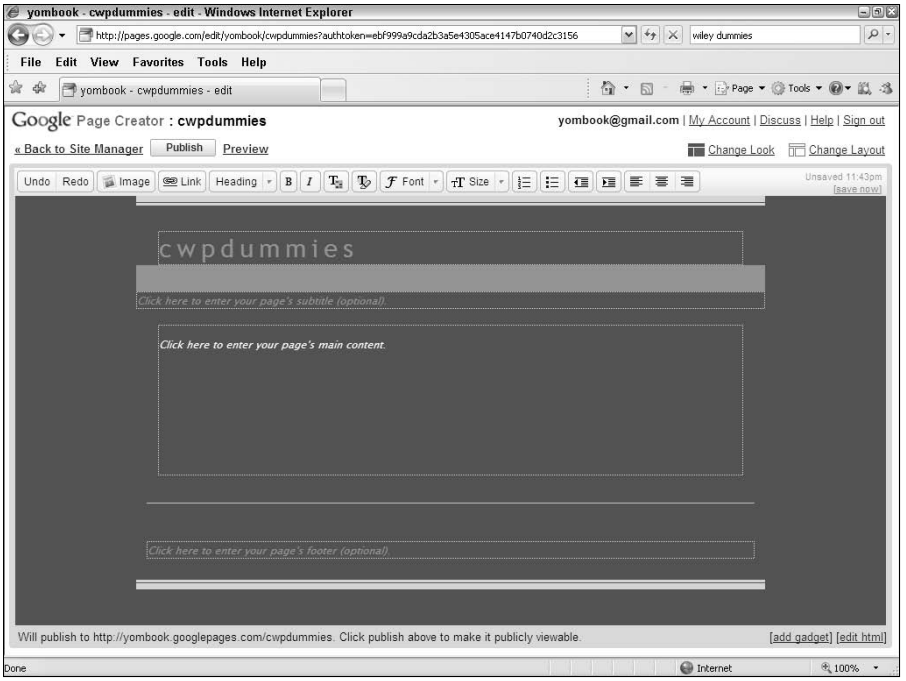

Figure 3-4: Let there be — a blank page.

5. **Try different layouts by clicking the Change Layout link.**

   Although the Change Look button seems to come before it, it's actually better to choose the layout first. The layout underlies everything else, so choosing it early makes it less likely that you'll need to make big changes later.

6. **Click the layout you want.**

   At this writing, there are only four layouts, as shown in Figure 3-5. The classic layout for a Web page is the second one, with a title across the top, a navigation area on the left, and a main content area.

   When you select a layout, you are returned to the main Google Page Creator page, now sporting your new layout.

7. **Try different looks by clicking the Change Look link.**

   Before you start entering content, take a stab at changing the look of the page. When you click the Change Look link, a collection of looks appears — more than 40 at this writing. But the "looks" are a bit generic — they don't necessarily reflect the details of your selected layout.

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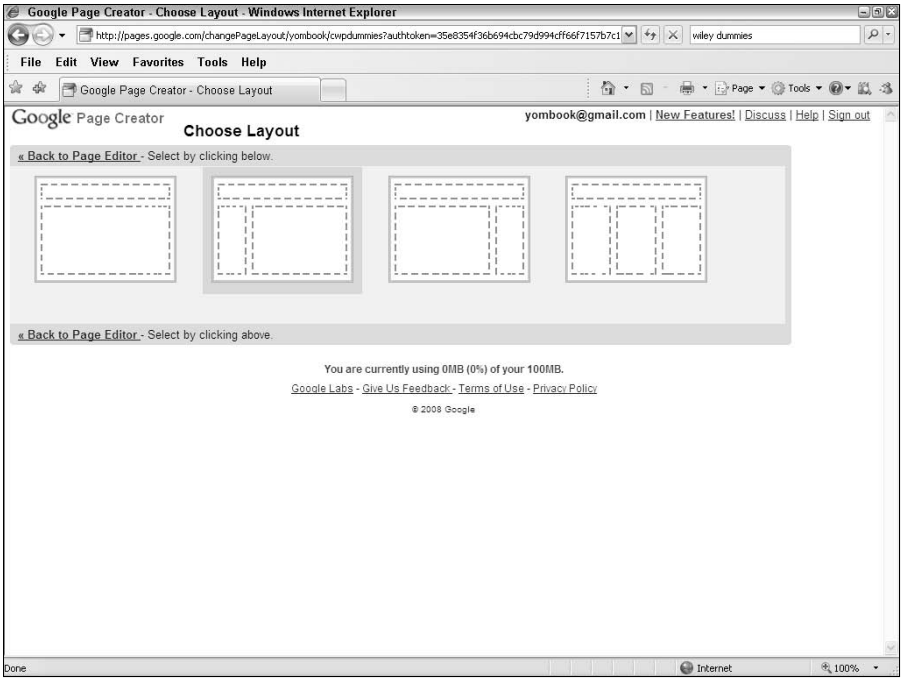

Figure 3-5: Carefully select the layout you want.

8. **Try different looks by clicking Preview under each look.**

   Preview brings up a new window with a sample page, using the previewed look.

   Choose the look carefully; although you can change it later, the look affects all the other choices you make as you design the page. If you change it later, you may find yourself wanting to change everything else on the page as well.

9. **Select the look you want.**

   Choose Select; you'll return to the main Google Page Creator page, with your page shown in the new look.

10. **Edit the page title.**

    The initial page title is your e-mail address plus the words Home Page. You'll look like a real amateur if you leave it unchanged, so click the title and change it.

11. **Highlight the new page title. Try as many formatting options as possible — bold, italic, header sizes, and more.**

    Use every formatting option you can on the title to get a feel for them:

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- Bold (the *b* button), italic (*i*).
- Font (*F*) and size (*tT*).
- Left, center, and right alignment.
- Header sizes versus normal text (*A* in different sizes and formats).

12. **Enter new content.**

    Enter your chosen content. Possible topics include

    - Information about your friends and family
    - A description of your work
    - Favorite places on the Web, with links

    Use the formatting options to arrange your content. Be sure to provide plenty of headers to break up long blocks of text; Web visitors tend to scan, rather than read, and headers help make that easy.

13. **Publish your page.**

    Click the Publish button. Your page appears at the URL `e-mail name.googlepages.com`. Click the View It on the Web link to see it. An example is shown in Figure 3-6.

Figure 3-6: You're a real Google publisher.

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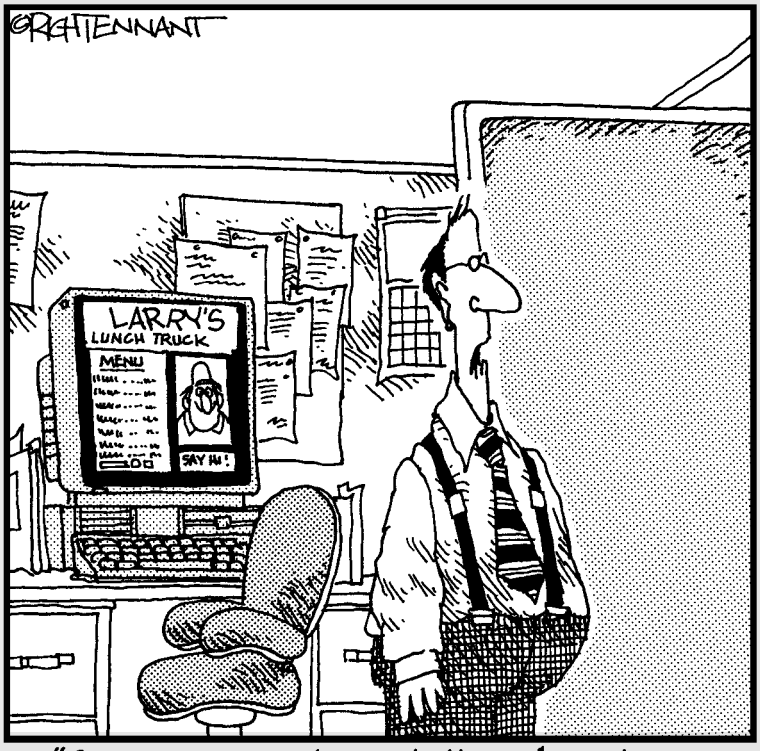
Part II
Getting the Content Right

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant



"Can someone please tell me how long 'Larry's Lunch Truck' has had his own page on the intranet?"

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In this part . . .

Use single-purpose tools to log your journey to stardom and to help your page flicker to life — or to sound off about anything you're interested in. Specialized sites support all these endeavors. Move your entire existence to the Web!

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Chapter 4

Words and Blogs

In This Chapter

- Writing right for the Web
- How HTML works with text
- Using text you already have
- Visiting the wonderful world of blogs
- Creating a Blogger site

Writing for the Web isn't a long-lost art — the Web hasn't been around long enough. It's more an art that hasn't yet been found. With the Web so new, the best way to write for it is still evolving.

Web sites are made up, first and foremost, of words. After all, HTML, the core standard that makes up the Web, stands for HyperText Markup Language. If "hypertext" sounds like words — "text" — on steroids, that's just what it is.

In this chapter, I describe some approaches for effective writing online to make the most of your site visitor's time and attention. I also describe ways to use text you may already have and ways to work *with* the expectations that your Web site visitors have for your site, rather than against them.

Then I introduce the tool that's being used to host huge outpourings of words onto the Web every day — the famous (or infamous) blog. A wonderful thing in itself, and a sort of lab experiment for better understanding the use of words on the Web.

A *blog* — the name is short for *Web log* — is an online journal of a person's thoughts, experiences, and interests. Kept up to date, a blog can help visitors move with the writer through space — well, Web space, anyway — and time.

In a sense, any site can be used as a blog. Just create a new page on your site and write your thoughts for the day. Include links to any site that you visited and want to share with others. Be sure to link to any blog that you find interesting.

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Then, a day or two later, add another chunk of text — put the new content on top, pushing your previous work down the page a bit. In your new content, refer to your earlier posting wherever necessary — and, of course, refer to other Web sites and blogs you visit.

But using an actual blogging tool makes this very easy, allowing you — and forcing you — to focus on the content. That blank blogging entry screen can be as terrifying as any blank sheet of paper has been to a non-computer-assisted writer!

Over time, your burgeoning blog may develop into an appealing take on your life and interests — or preoccupations — or even obsessions. You may find that your blog expands so you need to split it up among multiple pages and change your links to fit. Your blog may even get linked to by other *bloggers* (people who keep blogs) and begin to develop a following of its own.

Getting It Write for the Web

Every new medium develops its own style. Magazine articles are often wordy and literary in style. Newspaper articles are usually brief, to the point, and written in a "pyramid" style that puts the most important information first. The Web has its own style. Learning to use it can make your Web page much more interesting and effective.

Web realities

The new style of writing found online is based on four underlying realities about the Web:

- **The capabilities of HTML:** HTML allows you to specify some simple text formatting, headings, and lists. Newer versions of HTML also allow you to specify fonts and specific text sizes, but these may be displayed differently on different computers, and a user can override these specifications.

  What it means for you: Don't count on complicated formatting and specific layout to get your message across. Keep it simple.

- **The difficulty of reading from a computer screen:** A computer screen has much lower resolution than a printed page — about 100 dpi (dots per inch), versus anywhere from 300 dpi on up for print. And the computer screen glows, while printed pages use reflected light only. So reading from the screen is harder, and people's eyes get tired when they try to read long blocks of text on-screen. (They often don't consciously note this as they would, say, tired legs from walking a long way; they just stop reading.) Figure 4-1 shows how far on-screen letters are from the smooth lines of printed text.

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Figure 4-1: Zooming in shows how "chunky" on-screen letters are.

What it means for you: Shy away from long blocks of text. People skim rather than read online, so you are unlikely to have your site visitor's attention for long. Write small chunks of text, then break up what you write using headers, lists, quotes, and other devices. Go through the text again and cut what you write down to the fewest words that do the job.

- **The ease of clicking away:** Web surfing, like real surfing, is all about movement. One of the most fun aspects of the Web for users is one of the most vexing for Web publishers: Clicking away to another page or site is very, very easy. Web content is free and voluminous, so users are always enticed to go elsewhere.

  What it means for you: In addition to keeping your text brief and broken up, you need to make it as interesting as possible. Take advantage of the ease of clicking away: Include relevant hyperlinks in your Web text.

- **Web style:** In response to all this, Web writing has developed its own style. It's characterized by a lack of hype and an informal tone, but a strong need for accuracy — correct facts and no typos or missteaks (I meant to do that). Early Web users were military officers and scientists with Ph.D.s, who set a high standard for correctness that continues, at least on the best Web sites, today.

  What it means for you: You need to show people that you're one of the voices on the Web worth listening to. Make sure your grammar, facts, spelling, and punctuation are accurate.

To demonstrate how "sparse" on-screen information is, Figure 4-2 shows a PDF file from the For Dummies site at `www.dummies.com` with content from a previous edition of this book. It's very well-laid-out online, but the amount of content displayed is only about half of one printed page (remember, a book reader sees two pages at a time). The comparison to the Web is even more unfavorable for magazines or newspapers, which fit even more information on a printed page than a typical book does.

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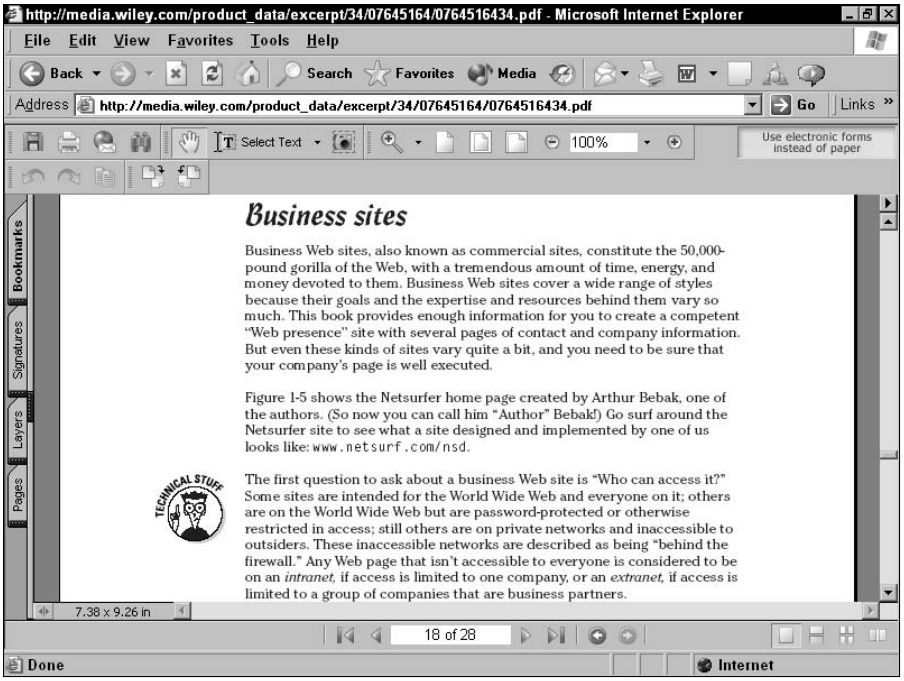

Figure 4-2: An on-screen page has fewer words than a printed one.

If you have something dense and detailed that you really want people to read, put it on a separate Web page and encourage people to print the page out. Or, put it in a PDF file that the user can download and print. (The advantage of a PDF file is that it preserves page layout exactly.) Printing allows users to carefully read the text rather than scan it, as most people tend to do with text on the computer screen, and to mark up the copy with notes and highlighting if they wish.

Even if readers do choose to read online, the use of a PDF gives readers a sense of their place in a document, preserves formatting, and makes resizing easy, making online reading easier than from a typical Web page.

The point is that readers get far more content for a given amount of effort from print than they do from online content. So when writing for the Web, you need to keep your text short, your layout simple, and your content interesting.

Once you think you've got your text short enough, start over. Identify the main point of your piece and make that the first sentence of a rewritten version. Include just enough supporting detail to explain your point. Then include each of your main supporting points, again with just a bit of detail. You should end up with about one-third the words you would use if you were writing for print.

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Sources for Web writing

There are many excellent resources for Web writing; just remember that it's still an evolving practice, so don't expect full agreement from various authorities. With that in mind, here are some good resources:

- Jakob Nielsen's `useit.com`: This justly famous site has been the leading resource for Web usability information for over a decade. There are many good resources on the whys and hows of writing for the Web at `www.useit.com/papers/webwriting/`.
- USC Annenberg Online Journalism Review: This publication of USC's famous Annenberg School for Communication has great general rules, as well as specifics for blogging, at `www.ojr.org/ojr/wiki/writing/`.
- Web Reference Writing Well for the Web: These pages on the venerable (by Web standards) Web Reference site are another good source and include special treatment of headlines, particularly important when readers are skimming as they do on the Web. Visit `www.webreference.com/content/writing`.

What HTML Lets You Do with Text

HTML, in its original and most widely supported form, doesn't give you much control over the precise layout of text. In fact, because your Web site visitor may have a different screen size, machine type, and set of available fonts than you're used to, you can only count on a few things:

- **Serif or sans-serif text.** You can only count on using a serif font, with little "features" on the characters as you'll see in the text in this book (such as `Courier`), or a sans-serif font such as Arial, which looks cleaner but also cold and inhuman. If you specify a font by name, it's quite likely that some of your site visitors won't have that specific font on their machines, and a substitute font (also either serif or sans-serif) will be used instead.
- **Relative size.** You can't control the absolute size of text, only whether it's relatively very large, large, very small, and so on, with seven sizes to choose from. Nor should you want to specify absolute font size — a small font that looks fine on a low-resolution screen may become impossibly tiny on a high-resolution one.
- **Headers.** HTML supports seven levels of headers; the biggest headers (H1 and H2, as they're called) render so large on most browsers as to be almost unusable, so a lot of top-level headers get coded as H3 or even H4 headers.

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- **Bold or italic.** Basic HTML includes specific commands for making text **bold** or *italic*. It doesn't support underlining because underlining indicates a hyperlink, not an emphasized word.
- **Bulleted and numbered lists.** HTML lets you create bulleted and numbered lists, but usually renders them with odd spacing between items — blank space above and below the list, but no extra spacing between items in the list, which to my eye makes the list hard to read.
- **Relative indent.** HTML lets you indent text from the left-hand margin not at all, some, or a lot.

That's about it. I go into detail in the following Parts on using a *WYSIWYG* (What You See Is What You Get) editor or "straight" HTML, but it's good to know up front what you're getting into.

Figure 4-3 shows these options for Web text formatting in a single example. Use it as a resource when deciding what formatting to use in your own Web page.

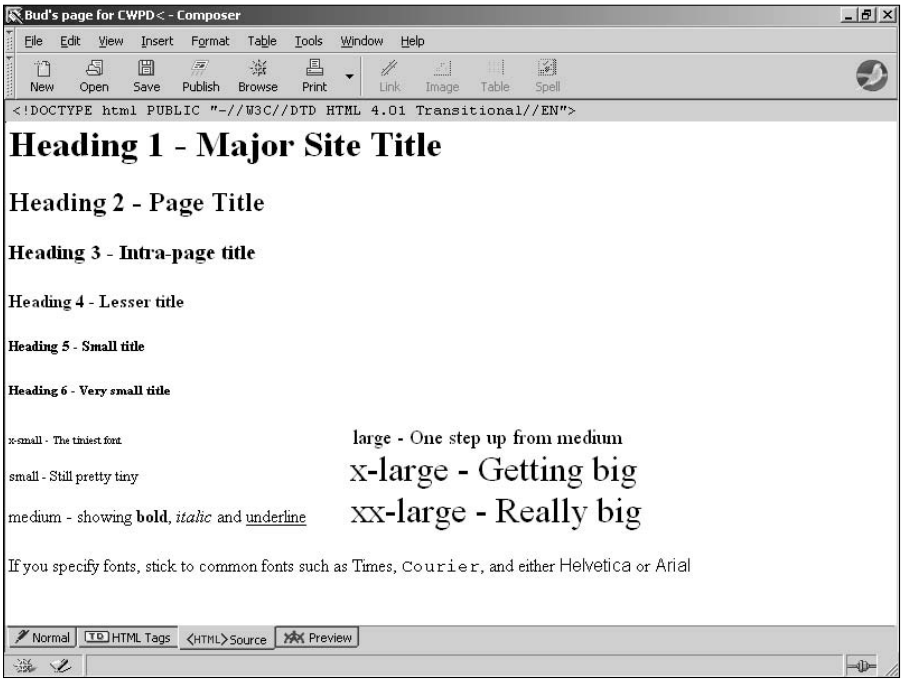

Figure 4-3: Take advantage of Web formatting options.

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What color is your hyperlink?

HTML allows you to use colored text on your Web page. I generally don't recommend this.

Why not? (This book is about all the things you *can* do on a Web page, after all!) The reason is that people are very used to monotone text, usually black, on a contrasting background. People have adjusted to the use of colored text on Web pages, but mainly in the form of standard hyperlink colors: blue for a link the user hasn't clicked yet and purple for a recently visited link.

Some Web page authors customize hyperlink colors to fit better with the color scheme of their Web pages. The problem is, research into making Web pages easier to use and less confusing has found that users subconsciously count on blue underlined text to indicated unvisited links and purple underlined text to indicate links the user has already visited. Any change in these colors, or any use of underlining or blue or purple text for other purposes, causes deep confusion.

So I recommend that you don't use colored text, don't change link colors, and don't use underlining except in links. The people who visit your Web page will have a better time using it as a result.

Don't use italics much online; italic text online is very hard to read. Use bold text, but use it in a structural way (as I've done in the bulleted list just shown here) rather than to emphasize some **very important** point or another within a flow of text.

Note that these are the features supported by "straight" HTML, the basic sort that's widely implemented across old and new Web browsers. A newer standard, Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), gives you a great deal more control. However, it's hard to use properly, doesn't work the same on every browser, and can let you do things that look good on your screen but don't work well on all equipment — the opposite of the original intent of the Web. I don't tell you how to use CSS in this book, and I suggest you use it with caution if you do decide to use it.

Using Existing Text

Now that you know what you can do with text, what are the real-world issues that come up when you actually create a Web page or Web site? It's amazing how you can wish for months or even years that you had a Web site or blog — then, when you finally do have one, find looking at that blank screen that needs to be filled so intimidating. One time-honored approach to filling it is to re-use existing content; looking at how to best do so highlights important points about writing well for the Web.

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How to reuse right

In many cases, you're actually doing a disservice to your Web site's visitors if you don't reuse things you already have. Your résumé may be of great interest to a visitor to your personal site; the information in your company's marketing brochures is very likely to be relevant to visitors to a company site. If you don't put this information on your site, the visitor will miss out on it.

You shouldn't use the text exactly as is, though, because Web formatting is different and reading from the Web is harder, as described earlier in this chapter. What you need to do is *repurpose* it.

Repurposing has two parts — reformatting and condensing. To reformat text for the Web, you need to tinker with some details:

- **Break up paragraphs and add some headers.** Since Web users scan, they may get absolutely nothing out of a long flow of, say, 10 or 20 paragraphs of text with no headers or hyperlinks. Paragraphs should be a few sentences long and there should be a header every few paragraphs so users can home in on the things they need to read.
- **Use lists with bullets or numbers.** People love lists, especially online, as they're easy to scan. Use numbered lists whenever there's a reason for them, such as a set of steps or a ranked list.
- **Add hyperlinks.** Web users treat hyperlinks as focal points just as they do headers. Hyperlinks also add credibility to your text. So gently introduce a few relevant ones.
- **Add or update bold, italic, and underlining effects.** If there's bold, italic, or underlined text in your original, consider stripping it all out, then adding bold and italic effects back to the text where appropriate; reserve underlining for hyperlinks.
- **Add illustrations and photos.** The easy addition and placement of illustrations — especially photos — within a flow of text was what really distinguished the Web from previous hypertext systems. Creating or sourcing appropriate images is a lot of work, but you have to do it if you want interesting Web pages that will get read.

True repurposing requires condensing as well. By the time you've broken up text, hyperlinked it and added graphics, you're almost bound to start shortening it. Because you're going to start developing a sense of what the purpose of the text really is, and all that extraneous stuff from the former version is going to annoy you.

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To help with this, and to fit into the online ambiance, add a bit of wit or humor. (Unless you're writing for a medical Web site, in which case you should avoid being humerus.) Web users expect a bit of levity in text. Reading online is hard; humor makes it easier. And research shows that learning is actually helped by laughter. Don't be "another brick in the wall" of boring, hard-to-read online information; lighten the tone of your text.

The text in this book is not a great example for repurposing, because the For Dummies style — designed to be used for reference, easily skimmed and easily read, with icons and illustrations — is already much of the way to good Web-writing style. But take a look at a few pages of a novel and imagine rewriting it for the Web.

As an example, let's take a few sentences from *Moby-Dick, or the Whale* by Herman Melville — a book that's no longer in copyright, so I don't have to get permission to reuse it. (Don't laugh; practical considerations of this type come up all the time in Web writing and Web graphics.) The beginning of the book is:

> "Call me Ishmael. Some years ago— never mind how long precisely — having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off — then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other, cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me."

(From the Project Gutenberg edition of this text at `http://www.gutenberg.org/dirs/etext01/moby10b.txt`.)

Figure 4-4 shows how the same text might look, rewritten for the Web — and updated a bit (with apologies to those who love their Herman Melville straight!) The H1 (header level 1) HTML tag is used for the header; note that it's unattractively large. Although H1 is technically correct, in a real page H3 or H4 would be used instead due to being rendered in a smaller, more appropriate size.

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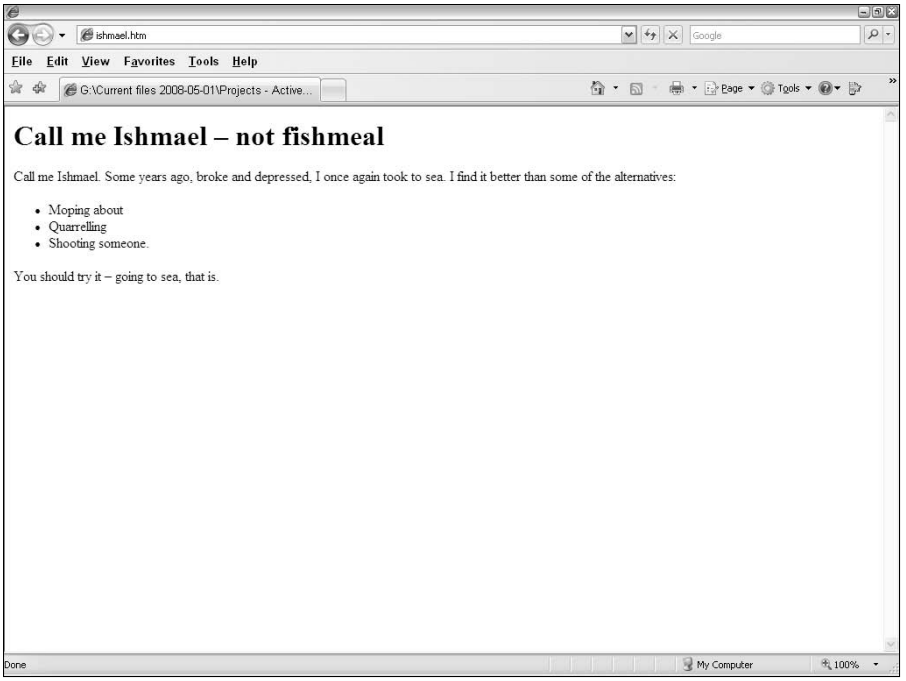

Figure 4-4: The opening lines of *Moby-Dick,* updated for the Web.

Avoiding existing formatting

If you try to open a formatted word processing file in a Web browser, it will look like gibberish. Or, worse, your browser — specifically Microsoft Internet Explorer — will look for a copy of, say, Word on your hard drive and use it to display the text with correct formatting. I say "worse" because this is a great technique *until* others on the open Web try the same trick in a *different* browser or without the same word-processing program handy. They, unlike you, will see gibberish.

Copying and pasting text from a word-processing file solves some of this, but there's all sorts of garbage — I mean, carefully inserted formatting code — mixed in with the text. Your Web-editing tool may ignore it, try to render it and fail, or successfully render it. In any event, the result is, again, unpredictable on someone else's computer or browser.

For instance, your computer may have the font Arial Narrow. It may display text in Arial Narrow in your word processing program, your Web editing tool and when you test a Web page. But if a visitor to your site doesn't have Arial Narrow, in the size you specified, he'll see some other font that may be different entirely. And your text may not fit in the space you've laid out for it.

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The only way to completely avoid such problems is to paste the text into a text-processing program such as Notepad (*not* WordPad) on a Windows PC or BBEdit on the Macintosh. These programs are incapable of coping with formatting and will toss it all out. WordPad, on the other hand, puts formatting codes in your document, just like Microsoft Word and other word processors.

Then, save the Notepad or BBEdit file, just to make sure the former formatting (try saying that three times fast) all disappears. Copy and paste the "clean" text into your Web-editing tool (as described in Parts III and IV of this book). Add formatting there. This process may become quite tedious, especially on long documents, but well-paid professionals spend hours and hours doing it anyway because it's the only sure way to avoid problems.

Getting Copyright Right

It's easy to run into copyright issues with text — and this is a case where perception may matter more than reality.

Copyright only protects one's words against nearly word-for-word copies or very close paraphrases. The old saw, "Copying from one source is plagiarism; copying from three sources is research," captures this reality.

While only a nearly word-for-word copy of someone else's text is likely to get you in trouble legally, people's sense of fairness will kick in quickly if they *believe* you're copying. Text can be different enough from an original to not be legally actionable, but similar enough to bring you unwanted and distracting suspicion from your Web audience as a copycat.

So be careful how you proceed. You may want to tell your Web site's visitors how to add your site to their bookmarks in Internet Explorer — and you may search online to find out for yourself how to do it. The site you find the instructions on doesn't "own" the technique, but it does "own" the specific wording it used to describe how to accomplish that task.

So when you go to put the steps on your Web site, go through each step yourself, then write down what you just did in your own words. Double-check that you haven't unconsciously copied any of the wording you found online. Then put your own, new wording on your Web site. This way you'll be safe from even unintentional plagiarism.

If you do purposefully quote text (as I did in this chapter with *Moby-Dick*) sharply limit the size of your quote. If the text is highly recognizable, or if you go longer, note that the work is no longer in copyright (as I've done before

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the quotation) or that you've obtained permission (after you've, ahem, obtained permission) so your site visitors know you've done the right thing. Provide a link to the original. If the work is still in copyright, and you can't get permission, don't include the text.

Discovering the Wonderful World of Blogs

One of the best ways to get on the Web quickly is through a blog. A blog is also a great way to practice your Web writing and a great tool for expression in and of itself.

Blogs tend to offer built-in WYSIWYG editors. So Part III of this book, which demonstrates WYSIWYG editing using the CoffeeCup tool, is good background for blogging. And blogs also tend to allow you to touch up your entries with HTML tags, so Part IV of this book, which demonstrates the use of HTML for markup (as well as the Cheat Sheet at the beginning of this book) will also be useful for blogging.

Blogging is not just another tool for generating Web content. Even though it's relatively new, blogging has developed such a following that many people spend hours a day perusing others' blogs and commenting on them as they add to their own blogs. There's even a special word for all this: the *blogosphere,* the world of blogs and commentary about blogs and blogging. (This would be different from *blogosfear;* nobody seems to be shouting "Beware of the blog!") Because some bloggers are also journalists (and vice versa), the blogosphere is intimately tied to the newspapers and magazines that millions of people read daily.

Some blogs are focused on the Web itself, or on technical matters relating to computers — different types of computers, different operating systems, and so on. But some of the most interesting blogs are deeply personal. One blog that's a mix of the two is from the famous, or infamous, Dave Winer, a talented creator and marketer of software who also happens to be a top-notch complainer. You can find his blog at `www.scripting.com`, which is also a great site for blogging information and tools. You can see a snapshot of it in Figure 4-5.

Blogs have even had a big influence on politics. Remember Howard Dean, the former governor of Vermont who was the leading Democratic presidential candidate in late 2003 and early 2004? His blog was one of the leading tools of his campaign. Through it, people felt they came to know him quickly and well — and wanted to join him in changing the world of politics.

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Both Dave Winer and Howard Dean are known for being, well, intense characters — and other people who are into blogging can be very intense about it as well. They tend to talk a lot about blogging and about related topics such as content syndication, collaboration, and online communities. You'll run into this if you search around the Web for blogs and conversations about them (mostly found in other blogs, of course.)

But blogging is now mainstream, having gone well beyond its founding fathers (and mothers, many of whom blog). During the 2008 Presidential campaign, one secret of the surprising success of the Obama campaign was its brilliant use of the Web and e-mail. Any visitor to the Barack Obama Web site can start a personal blog on it!

Figure 4-5: Dave Winer is an über-blogger.

Finding blogs to read

To find some blogs yourself, you can simply do a Web search using *blogs* as the search keyword. You're likely to run into a lot of stories about blogs and some technically oriented blogs before you find personal or otherwise interesting blogs.

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For instance, in one search about blogging, I quickly found a story on a sex-related blog that got a U.S. Senate aide in trouble, a Bill Gates speech about blogging, and some blogging software — but none of the quirky, interesting, if sometimes self-obsessed content that has made blogging a phenomenon found its way to the list of top results.

Here are some list sites that give you a quick peek at what other bloggers are doing:

- `www.bloggersblog.com`: If you don't like the sound of "blog," you really may not like the name of this site. But it's a very useful directory of hot blog topics.
- `www.weblogs.com`: Some blogs aren't updated much; this list shows only recently updated blogs.
- `www.technorati.com/pop/blogs`: A listing by Technorati of the top 100 blogs, great fun to surf and a very useful source for ideas. Also a good introduction to Technorati, one of the most interesting communities on the Web.

Finding software for blogging

Later in this chapter, I show you how to use Blogger, owned by Google. Blogger is one of the easiest and best blogging tools out there — but it's far from being the only tool in town to suit your blogging fancy.

Be warned: I can't promise that you'll ever want to stop blogging once you start. Blogging can be an art form, so if you want to know more about blogs and get your own blog started, here are several top blogging resources you should check out:

- `www.typepad.com`: Home for the TypePad Web-logging service.
- `www.movabletype.com`: Movable Type is quite technical and quite powerful.
- `www.diaryland.com`: Easy, easy, easy is Diaryland's claim to fame.
- `www.livejournal.com`: LiveJournal and its users emphasize the community aspect of blogs.
- `www.hometown.aol.com`: AOL's Web logging service — free to all, even non-AOL members.

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Committing to a blog

A blog takes more commitment than a Web site. The reason is simple: The diary, or "log," aspect of a blog can be time-consuming, day after day after day. An ordinary Web site can still be interesting and useful if it's not updated much for awhile. A blog, by contrast, is valuable precisely because it contains the latest information on a given topic — whether the topic is software, politics, or the daily musings of a bored teenager.

You'll see, as you search through various blogs, that many are started, gain an interesting slant or approach, start to gain regular visitors and fans — and are then abandoned. It's very frustrating to start reading an interesting blog only to see postings slow down and then stop completely. Bloggers burn out — and blog readers also burn out, from keeping up with so many blogs at once. Because bloggers feel compelled to keep up with other blogs as part of making their own blog worthwhile, bloggers can truly find themselves burning the candle at both ends.

An example of blog burnout can be found at `www.britblog.com`, shown in the figure. This formerly brilliant blog — "brill," as Brits would say — was recently shut down due to blogger burnout.

Another thing you may notice is a lot of personal information in blogs. Many bloggers willingly sacrifice some degree of privacy to participate in the blogosphere — but you may want to think twice before following their lead.

So if you're not sure a blog is what you want to do, consider creating a regular Web site first. You can then put the skills you gain creating your initial Web site to good use in creating the world's greatest blog — when you're ready to put in the time to create and maintain it.

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Using Google's Blogger.com

Blogger.com, also known simply as Blogger, is the leading blogging site, with the most users and the widest name recognition. The site was acquired by Google in 2003 when Google bought Pyra Labs, the creators of Blogger. At the time it was acquired, Pyra Labs had just six employees — but more than a million registered users for its blogging-oriented Web sites. Now another leading blogging site, LiveJournal, claims over 15 million registered users!

The great thing about Google acquiring Blogger is that it gives ordinary folks — that's you and me — some reassurance that the site will be around for the long term. Many Web sites have come and gone, and when it was owned by Pyra Labs, Blogger wasn't immune to those pressures. Google is a highly profitable Web business, so the chances are greatly increased that Blogger will go on and on.

Blogger gives you the option of having advertising hosted on your page, with you and Blogger splitting the money. This is a great way to do it but Blogger is considered admirably easy, but not as feature-rich as it could be. However, you may want to consider a paid service, such as WordPress (`www.wordpress.org`), if you want more advanced capabilities in your site.

All blogs that you set up through the process described here are hosted on `blogspot.com` and have similar URLs. If you want to have your site hosted elsewhere, use the advanced blog setup at `www.blogger.com/adv-create-blog.g`. You will need details such as the FTP server to use for transferring content to your blog; get help from the site host if you need it.

Setting up your blog

Since its acquisition by the megalith Google, Blogger has obtained the resources to make blogging easier and faster without quickly pushing its users into paying for services. Blogger has recently updated its interface to make creating an initial blog even easier — a perfect fit with the purpose of this book. Follow these steps to get started:

1. **Go to `www.blogger.com`.**

   The Blogger site appears, as shown in Figure 4-6.

   If you look around the Blogger Web site, you see links to BlogThis, a way to quickly comment on any Web page within your blog.

2. **Click the orange arrow to Create Your Blog now.**

   The Create an Account page appears, as shown in Figure 4-7. Read carefully; just about everything you enter is very important to your blogging happiness.

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Figure 4-6: Blogger welcomes you.

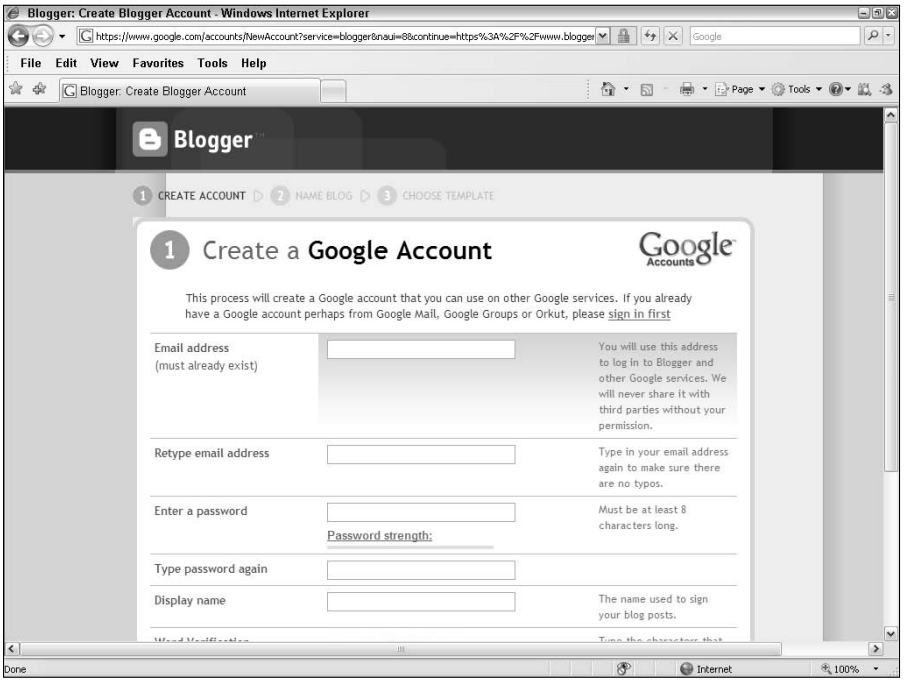

Figure 4-7: Getting started with a Blogger account is easy.

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3. **Supply a username (it's your e-mail address) and retype the e-mail address.**

   Your proposed username is your sign-on name for Blogger; only you will see it. Because Blogger is so popular, it's quite likely that most of the convenient or funny usernames that you may think of, such as "budsmith" (convenient) or "blogguy" (funny?) are already taken. Choose something you'll find easy to remember, but be ready to enter a second choice if your first choice is already taken.

4. **Enter your password, and then retype your password.**

   Unlike your username, you can enter any password you like — it doesn't matter if someone else has the same one. Just make sure your password is both easy for you to remember and hard for someone else to guess.

   It may seem as if your password is pretty unimportant because your blog is going to be immediately posted on the Web anyway. Okay, that's true, but it's not the point. The point is that if someone guesses your username and password, he can post on your blog (pretending to be you), and people will think the postings are from you — which could get pretty embarrassing!

5. **Enter your display name.**

   You may be tempted to enter your full name here, but with the increasing power of the Internet, it's quite likely that others who have your full name can find out more about you than you might want them to know. Consider using a display name that doesn't give away your complete real name.

   Be careful with putting personal information on the Web; identity theft is becoming a larger and larger problem, and you don't want to make it easy for the fraudsters by giving them a good start on a detailed profile of you.

   Think a bit about your display name; if your blog might cover personal or serious topics, for instance, don't choose a really silly one. (A posting from "wild&crazyguy" about your upcoming big business deal, for instance, may be a bit disconcerting to your blog visitors.) You may also want your display name to relate in some way to your blog title and blog address; see Steps 9 and 10 for details.

6. **Enter the verification characters.**

   Enter the word you see displayed. This is done to verify that you're a human (who can make out the letters displayed) and not a script automatically creating a Web site (which can't "read" such graphical lettering).

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7. **Click the Terms of Service link.**

   Before you click to put a check mark in the box that indicates you agree with Blogger's terms, click the Terms of Service link to make sure that you actually *do* agree.

   The Terms of Service appear in a new window, so don't worry about losing the data you've already entered.

   You should always inspect the terms of service for a Web site if you're going to enter personal information on it, such as your e-mail address. This is especially true with a blogging site — that's because, by nature, blogs require you to put so much data into the service, some of which may be personal. (Some blogs are embarrassingly personal!) Blogger's owner, Google, as a widely respected public company, may be more trustworthy than most — but you should still see what you're getting into.

   Courts take Terms of Service seriously — after you agree to them, you're bound by them, whether you've read them or not. Some unscrupulous companies have gotten away with some pretty shady scams this way — and even big, respectable companies have used them to protect themselves from angry users. So give the Terms of Service the once-over.

8. **Click the check box to accept the Terms of Service, and then click the Continue arrow.**

   If you see a new screen called 2: Name your blog (see Figure 4-4), go to Step 9. If you see the same screen as before, with an error message, the error message is most likely to be a caution sign and a warning: "Sorry, this username is not available." If so, enter a new username and reenter your password in both blank areas below it. Then click the Continue arrow.

   After your username is accepted, the Name Your Blog screen appears (as shown in Figure 4-8).

9. **In the Name Your Blog screen, enter the title for your blog.**

   You can give your blog any title you want, but give your decision some thought. Ideally, the title should be rare or even unique; should sum up what's different and special about your blog; and should relate to the blog address you'll give it in the next step, which also needs to be unique.

   For instance, if you're creating a blog in support of a book about creating Web pages, you might call it "Creating Web Pages Web Log."

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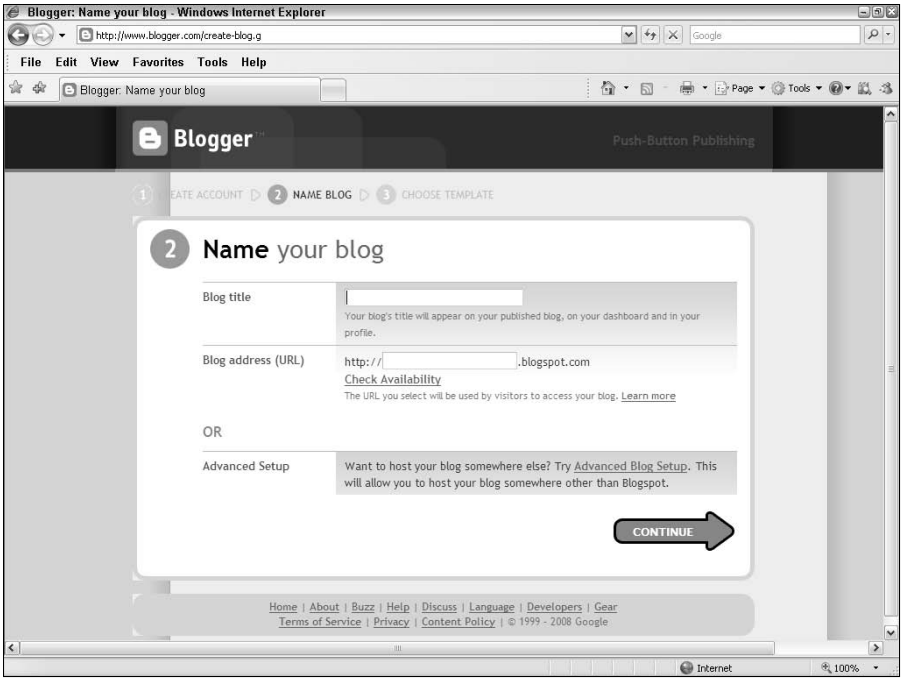

Figure 4-8: Name your blog.

10. **Enter the blog address, the first part of the URL for your blog. Click the Check Availability link to make certain it's not already taken and in use.**

    Enter the first part of the blog address for your blog. This portion of the address is used by Blogger to form the first part of your URL for your blog. For instance, if you enter **caveboy4** in the blog address spot, your URL is `caveboy4.blogspot.com`.

    As with your username, your blog address must be unique — if someone else has it already, you won't get it. Believe me — most of the good addresses are taken! So think carefully about a display name (see Step 5), blog title, and blog address that work together and are unique enough to pass muster.

    Google can help you find interesting blogs on Blogger.com — or other interesting content on other interesting sites. If you search for `site: blogspot.com caveboy`, for instance, you're likely to find most of the blogs on Blogger.com that have "caveboy" in their content somewhere. (I say "most of" because Google doesn't index sites instantly, so you may not be able to find something that's moved recently or that has otherwise escaped Google's attentions.)

11. **Click the Continue arrow.**

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If you see a new screen called 3: Choose a Template (see Figure 4-9), Step 12. If you see the same screen as before, with an error message, do the following:

The error message is most likely to be a caution sign and a warning: "Sorry, this blog address is not available." If so, enter a new blog address. Then click the Continue arrow. When your blog address is accepted, you see the Choose a Template screen.

12. **Choose a template.**

You'll see a dozen or so templates to choose from — different looks for your blog. Choose one that fits the way you want your site to appear. Click the image of any of the templates to see a larger preview appear in a pop-up window.

It may be tempting to rush this part of the process — especially because Blogger allows you to change your template (by editing the page's HTML) or substitute a different template later, without losing any of your content. But it's worth taking the time now to make a choice you can live with, at least for a while.

Before you click Continue in the next step, be sure to check all your choices by clicking the "preview template" link below a particular template sample; once you click the Continue button your blog is created instantly.

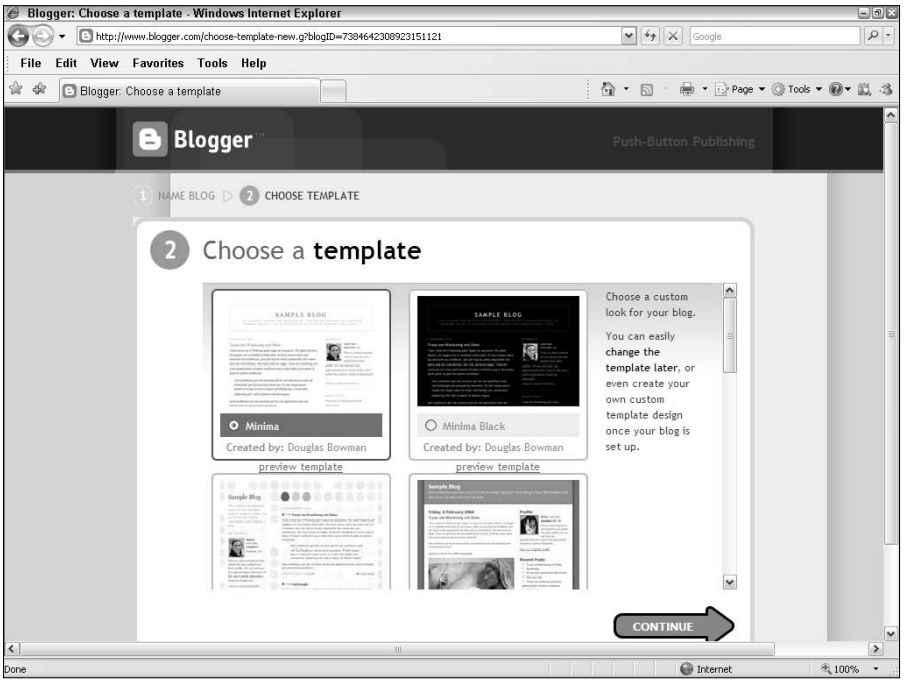

Figure 4-9: Showcase your blog in a template.

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13. **When you've made your choice of template by selecting the radio button underneath a template, think about whether you're happy with all the choices you've made so far. If you're happy, and ready to create your blog, click Continue.**

    Your blog is created!

14. **Click the Start Posting button to open your blog so you can start adding content to it. When your blog appears, save the URL in your Favorites list.**

    In Internet Explorer, click Ctrl+D to add the current page to your Favorites.

Adding content to your blog

Adding content to your blog is easy — but doing it just the way you want it can be hard. Not all the options you're used to having for text formatting in, say, a word processor, are available with the Blogger software. You have to experiment to find out what you can and can't do.

From this point, your choices as to what to do, and what order to do it in, are nearly infinite. You may want to create posts right away; on the other hand, you may want to understand everything about your blog page before creating any content — let alone telling anyone how to find it.

To accommodate all the different approaches you can take, the following sections offer highlights of each page you use to edit your blog. Read each section briefly — and then roll up your sleeves and go experiment. That's what Blogger is there for!

Posting and formatting

The Posting page (see Figure 4-10) is where you create the posts that appear on your site. You can always edit, delete, or rearrange posts later, but it all starts here.

If you leave and reenter Blogger, you may find yourself at the Dashboard. To reach the Posting page from the Dashboard, simply click the link labeled New Post.

The Posting page allows you to enter plain text and format it using several options. You can use the easy, word processor–like buttons as shown in the figure, or use HTML directly.

To use HTML directly, simply click the Edit HTML tab. Your content — and the formatting you've applied to it — is displayed in HTML format, as shown in Figure 4-11.

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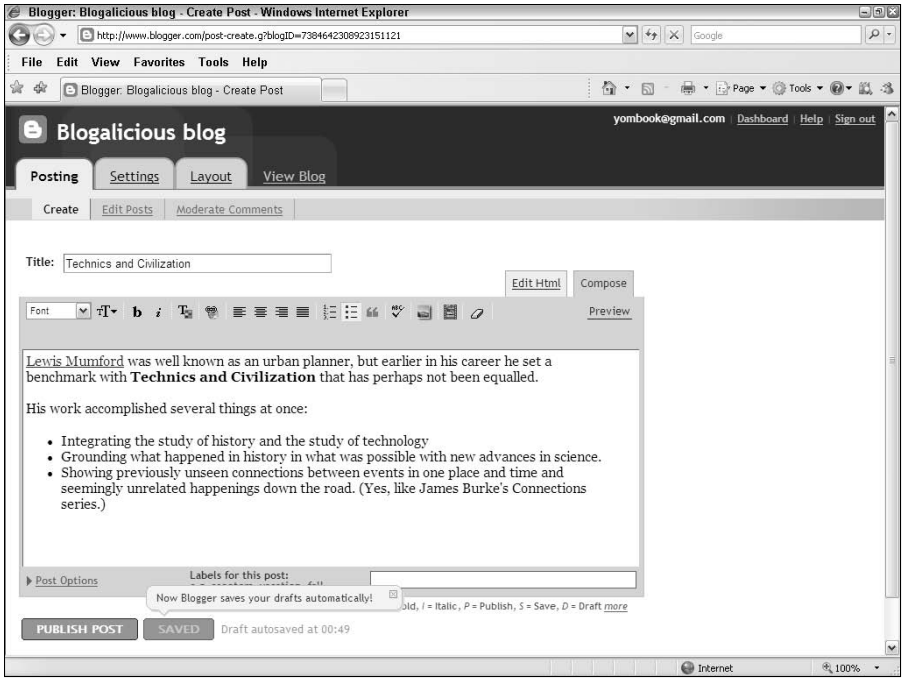

Figure 4-10: Post to your host.

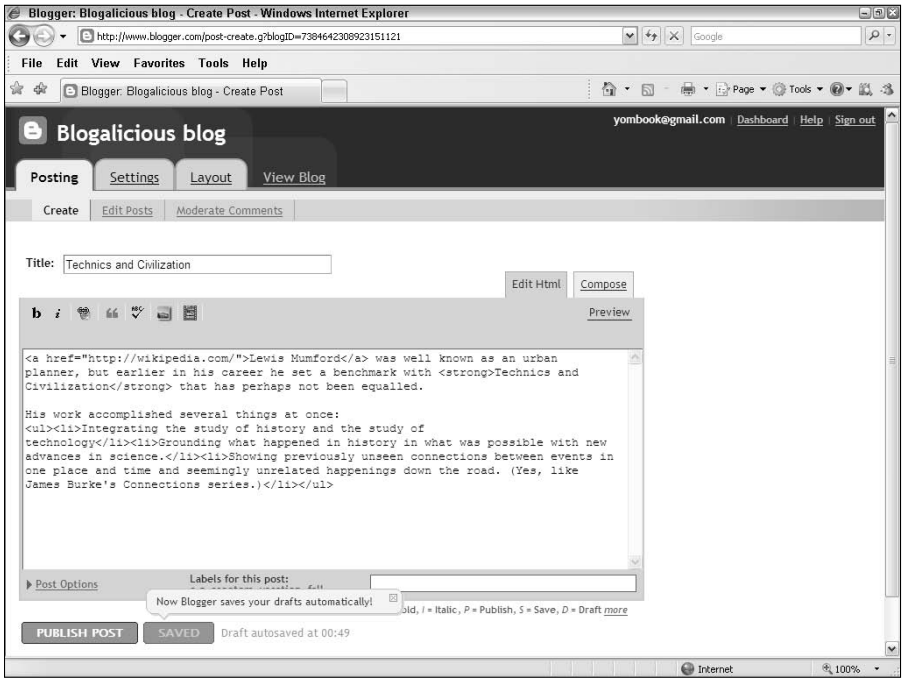

Figure 4-11: You can dig right into the HTML.

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Here are a few simple options for using HTML in your text:

- **Bold:** Makes the text you select bold, as you would guess. You'll see the HTML tags `<b>` and `</b>` surround the text, indicating that the bold is beginning (`<b>`) and ending `</b>`). Don't overuse bold text (or capital letters) because it looks like you're **SHOUTING.**
- **Italics:** Also obvious — makes text italic. The HTML tags `<i>` and `</i>` surround the text to indicate the beginning and end of italicization. Don't overuse italic text because it makes the text hard to read on-screen. (Printed italic text is much easier to read than on-screen italic text.)
- **Link:** Here's where you link text to a Web address — a big part of the original purpose of blogging. To use this, highlight the text that you want to have linked, and then click the Globe-and-Chain icon. You'll have the opportunity to link the text. To delete the link, delete the linked text.

  Make the linked text short, but at the same time ensure that the users will be able to tell exactly what they'll get when they click the link. It's extremely annoying to see a link called My Favorite Dummies Book, for instance, and click it only to find that the link is to the overall Dummies site, not a description of the specific favorite Dummies book.

  You also have the option of spell-checking your content — a capability added since Google purchased Blogger, and for which those of us with bad spelling can be greatful (sorry about that).

Using other Blogger options

In addition to posting — which, I hope, you'll spend the majority of your time doing — Blogger offers many other options. Highlights include

- **View Blog:** This option pops up a new window with your blog in it as it actually looks to a visitor (Figure 4-12 shows an example). Don't simply do this to view your site after you make changes — you may also want to use this option to see what's currently on your site as you're writing new posts.
- **Settings:** Settings allows you to change options in separate pages devoted to Basic, Publishing, Formatting, Comments, Archiving, Site Feed, E-mail, and Members options. (The E-mail option lets you post to your blog from an e-mail account.) Carefully check out and test these options, then use the ones that work for you; they support powerful capabilities such as posting to your blog by e-mail.
- **Template:** Here's where you can see the HTML code for your template — and change it any way you'd like, for better or worse. It requires real HTML skill to navigate through and change the code so it looks exactly as you want it to and doesn't "blow out" part or all of the page, wrecking the "clean" look of your template with content spilling outside the little "box" it's meant to be in.

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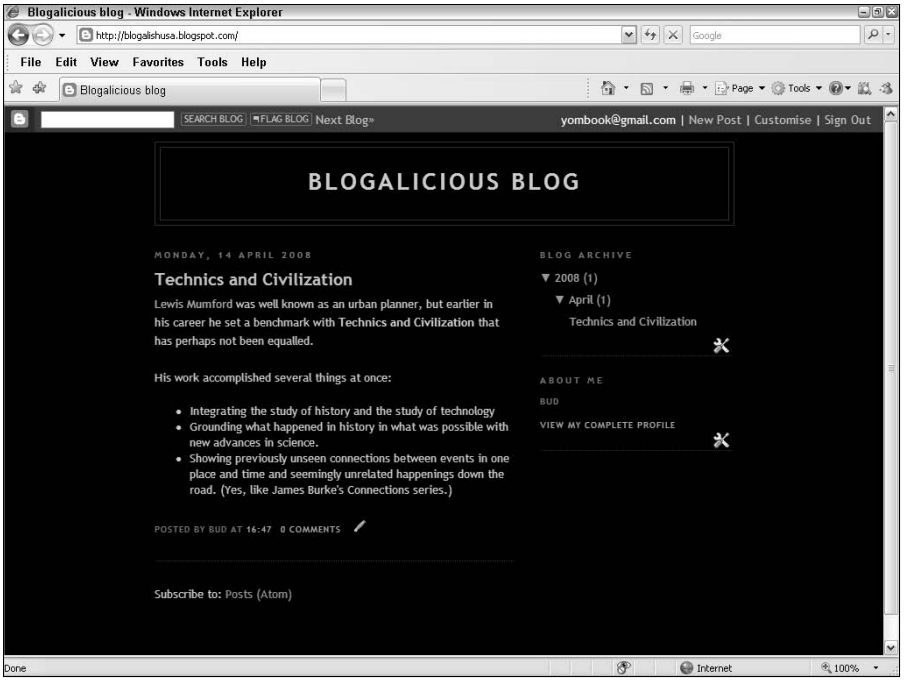

Figure 4-12: The result of all that HTML work behind the scenes.

Don't be afraid to ask someone for help if you know a skilled person. You can also choose a different preexisting template here, for which you won't need any special skill.

- **Dashboard:** This is the screen you see when you sign in to Blogger in the future. It's your starting point for managing your site.
- **Post photos:** Blogger is not as photo-oriented as Flickr (see Chapter 5), but it's pretty good with photos. Click the photo button at any point to add a photo to your blog.
- **Post from your mobile:** In the United States, you can post text or photos to your blog from your mobile phone. Just send a message to `go@blogger.com` from your phone. Blogger creates a blog entry with the text or photo you sent and sends a code to your phone. Sign in to `go.blogger.com` and enter the code to work on your new blog.

You can do a great deal with your site — allow other people to add comments to it or not, change the look and function of it, and much more. Have fun with it — and keep posting to it every day or two.(You can even post photos to your Google blog from Flickr; see Chapter 5.)

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For much more information on how to get the most out of Blogger, go to Blogger Help at `help.blogger.com` or join the Blogger Help Group at `groups.google.com/group/blogger-help`.

There are many options for including blogging capability in a full Web site, but one of the easiest is just to use Blogger for blogging, and then copy and paste the "best of your blog" onto your full Web site — on Google Page Creator (Chapter 3) or anywhere else.

When you have your blog up and running, let people know! Let them add comments if you like. That way, your humble little blog can begin to be the center of a thriving new online community — yours!

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Chapter 5

Using Images and Uploading Photos to Flickr

In This Chapter

- Why file size still matters
- Creating GIF and JPEG files
- Finding and creating images
- Using images in your designs
- How images fit in Web pages
- Flickr plusses and minuses
- Uploading a photo to Flickr
- Modifying photos on Flickr

"A picture is worth a thousand words," the old saying goes, and the right picture can convey information or evoke feelings in a way that may take many thousands of words to accomplish.

Having photos and other images as part of the Web seems like an obvious winner now — after all, magazines and newspapers wouldn't work well if you took away photographs, drawings, and all the little graphical page design elements that give each publication its own "look." In fact, including graphics in your Web pages is such a winning strategy that I've coauthored, with Peter Frazier, a companion volume to this one, *Creating Web Graphics For Dummies* (Wiley). You can refer to that book if you need more graphics-related details than you find here.

In the 1980s and '90s, before the Web, the Internet was almost entirely a text-only world. E-mail, Usenet newsgroups, and online service forums were all text-only environments, running mostly on text-only computer

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systems like UNIX and DOS. The Macintosh and early versions of Windows laid the groundwork for a better, richer way of communicating over the Internet.

Graphics embedded in Web pages made the Web take off — and they are also the most difficult aspect of getting your Web pages right. You can use graphics to convey a thematic "look and feel," to accent certain portions of a Web page, or even to convey the main content of a Web site. Some use of graphics is necessary for just about any site.

In this chapter, I introduce the creating, finding, and preparing of photos and other images for the Web. In later chapters, I describe how to make your images work well within your Web page by adjusting the size of the image; by flowing text smoothly around the image; and by putting a border around it. This is covered in Chapter 10 for using a WYSIWIG Web page editor and in Chapter 14 for using straight HTML.

But what if you just want to put photos on the Web for sharing with other people, without the complexities of creating a full Web page?

Photo sharing is one of the greatest uses of the Web. Flickr is the most popular photo-sharing Web site around, largely because it's so easy to use.

Photo files can be very large. But more and more people have digital cameras and cellphones that take pictures. These pictures are already in digital form — and they can be automatically compressed, using the JPEG standard, from their original size of several megabytes to about 100 KB or so. (A 100KB photo is just a tenth of a megabyte in size, and doesn't take long to upload and download.) These photo files go onto Flickr very easily.

The other technological advance is the increasing number of people who have broadband Web access. *Broadband* is a catchall name for all sorts of faster access, usually at least 1 megabyte per second. At this speed, you can get ten typical JPEG photos uploaded to your Web site — or downloaded to your screen — in a second. Suddenly, adding a reasonable number of photos to your site doesn't slow it to a crawl — *if* they're fairly strongly compressed with JPEG.

The problems of getting photos onto your site and of viewing photos on the Web are steadily getting easier, but "easier" doesn't mean truly easy.

To get to easy, someone has to come along and wrap the technology in a shell that just about anyone can handle — even a *For Dummies* author like me. This happened with the Model T Ford for cars, the Brownie camera for film photography, and the Apple Macintosh for personal computers. Now Flickr has done it for online photos.

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Naming of parts for images

Because of the underlying technical realities of using images on the Web, it helps if I use words carefully here. For Flickr purposes . . .

A *photo* is an image captured by a camera from reality. Photos use thousands of shades of color to see the shape and the subtleties of depth in a person's face, a flower, or even a chair, even though the image itself is two-dimensional.

A *photo-realistic image* is a computer-generated image that is so complex that it approaches the subtlety and complexity of a photograph. In this book, when I refer to photos, I include photo-realistic images as well.

The complexity of photos and photo-realistic images makes them hard for a computer to store without making the display size of the image small, then compressing this shrunken image using techniques that make the image less than perfect, but greatly reduce the file size.

The *JPEG,* for Joint Photographic Expert Group, standard uses many subtle tricks to create a highly accurate version of the image in a small file size. JPEG, which has won many awards for the members of the international committees that joined together to create it, is a towering achievement of the human intellect (seriously) and is by far the most popular standard for compressing photographic images.

A *graphic* is an image created by people, and is usually fairly simple in the colors and shapes used; there is rarely a third dimension, just a flat image. Because graphics use few colors and few or none of the subtle shadings needed for three-dimensional reality, they can be compressed to small file sizes with little or no loss of information. The standard used on the Web for compressing graphics with fewer than 256 colors is called *GIF,* for Graphics Interchange Format.

I use the term *image* here to refer to photos and graphics together.

Confusingly, for small images — even photos — either JPEG or GIF may offer a better trade-off between good appearance and small file size. So be ready to experiment with these standards before deciding which one to use for small and very small images.

File size (still) matters

To avoid making big mistakes, you need a general understanding of photo file sizes and the GIF and JPEG graphics standards used on the Web.

To understand just how important compression is, start with the sidebar, "Text files versus photo files." Then read the next section carefully.

Making an image smaller

The first step in making an image file smaller is to decide how big you want the display size to be. There's a tricky distinction here.

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Web-safe colors

There are still some computer systems out there that only display 256 colors, and the Web is designed to work with 256 colors as a minimum. There are 256 such "Web-safe" colors for Windows PCs and a slightly different list for Macs; there are only 216 colors that are truly "Web-safe" for both systems at once. If you use colors that aren't Web-safe, then display the resulting image on a 256-color monitor, it will try to create a compromise, using a dithered image mixed from the available colors — sometimes with awful results. However, this only occurs in some cases, and there are now so few users with 256-color-only systems that it's probably not worth boring you with the details of how to avoid this problem. See *Creating Web Graphics For Dummies* (Wiley) or the manual for your image-editing program if you want to learn more.

Using HTML or most WYSIWYG Web page-creation programs, you can downsize the *appearance* of the image on your Web page without changing the image itself. That is, you can display an image whose actual display size is, say, 1024 x 768 pixels in a much smaller window, say, 40 x 40 pixels.

The problem with this is that it leaves the original image, and its file size, unchanged. So the user ends up downloading a 200 x 200 pixel file — which might be, say, 150 KB in size — but only seeing a much smaller 40-x-40 pixel file (one-twenty-fifth the size, if you're counting). Not much bang for your downloading buck.

So what you have to do is use a graphics program to actually resize the image itself to the size you want to display in the Web page. This will get you a file that's no bigger than it needs to be.

Now, you might find as you work on your Web page that you actually need an image size and proportions different from those you originally created — portrait-shaped (like this page) rather than square, for instance. That's fine — just go back to your original image and resize it again.

Always, always, *always* save your original graphics file. Make a copy, and work on the copy, or save it under a name like "Master Image — Me," then under another name like "Working Copy" that you actually work on. While you're at it, always do work on your file, such as applying special effects, adding lettering and so on, to a version of the file that has not been compressed in JPEG or any other type of compression. Doing the compression should be the last step.

To make sure you don't overwrite your original graphic, find its icon in Windows File Manager, right-click the icon and choose Properties, then choose the General tab. Click the Read-Only check box, as shown in Figure 5-1, and save the change. Now, when you open the file, you'll be forced to save it under a new name — you won't be allowed to overwrite the original.

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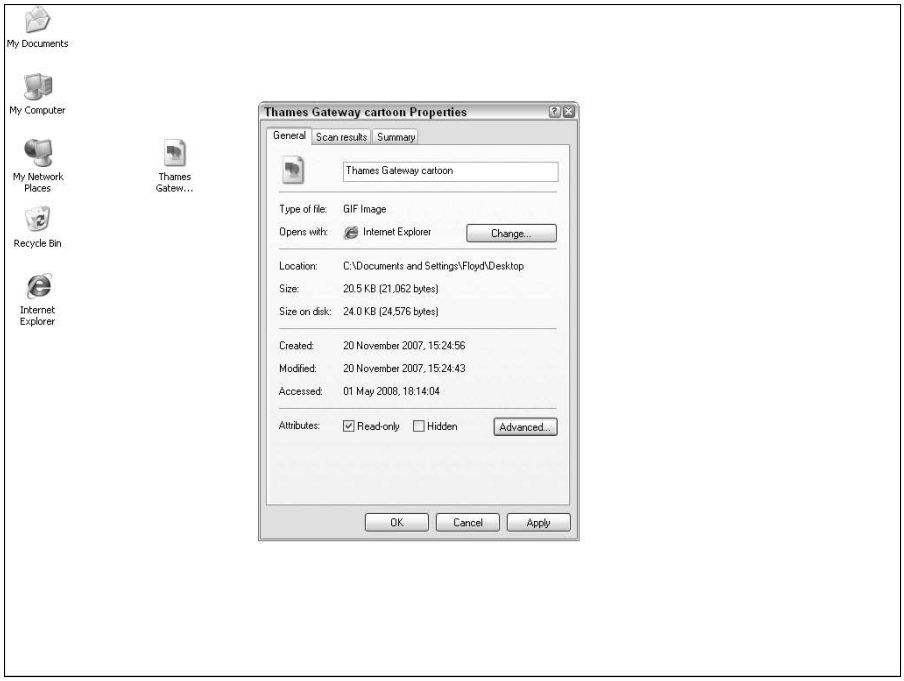

Figure 5-1: Make your original graphics files Read-Only to save them from yourself.

Using GIF and JPEG graphics formats

A graphics program saves files in its own *proprietary graphics format* — the specific arrangement of data that the program uses to save its files. For instance, the popular graphics program Photoshop saves files in the PSD format (for Photoshop Document); Paint Shop Pro, another popular graphics program, saves its files as PSP files. (Guess what "PSP" stands for. Time's up!) Web browsers typically don't know how to display files stored in these formats.

Fortunately, for the purposes of using graphics in HTML, you need concern yourself with only two formats for graphics files — GIF and JPEG — and even then you don't really need to know a lot about the gory details of these formats to use them. See the "Naming of parts for image files" sidebar for details.

GIF, or *Graphics Interchange Format,* is the file format used by most people to exchange most graphics that aren't photographs. That's because people tend to create graphics using just a few simple colors, which GIF handles well. There will be a big block of, say, yellow, then a block of red, then a lot of white. This kind of image compresses very well.

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Text files versus photo files

Text files are much more efficient for computers to store and transmit across the network than graphics files. Why? Text is very tightly coded; a typical Web page full of text contains about 1,500 alphanumeric characters, which can be represented in 1,500 bytes, or 1.5 KB, of space. So a full page of text takes about a quarter of a second to transmit on even the slowest standard most people use today, a 56K modem.

Graphics, on the other hand, require a lot of storage. Every graphic has many pixels, and each pixel contains information about the color levels of three colors — red, green, and blue. An uncompressed, full-page, full-color image takes up about 1.5 MB of space — 1,000 times more space than text. This size file takes about 4 minutes (!) to transmit using a 56K modem.

This disparity is why most Web pages are made up of lots of text (which download quickly), fairly large areas of white space (which takes no time at all to download), and small, highly compressed graphics (which still download more slowly).

It's easy to fool yourself about file sizes when you create a Web page on your computer and then test it on a fast connection. Web-page creation programs and HTML make it very easy to make an image *appear* small on-screen while still taking up perhaps 1 to 2 MB. Your computer is perhaps 100 times faster than a 56K modem, and a fast connection is anywhere from five to 20 times faster. So a 1 or 2MB image will *seem* to load fast enough while you're testing.

But when Joe User tries to access your Web page over a slow modem, and it's loaded with 3 or 4 of these 1-MB-plus images, his entire computer may halt. Even fast connections have their hiccups and can be overloaded by too many large files. So sharing your photos may end up burdening your friends, family members, and other viewers of your site or photo page with very long wait times.

There's also potentially a cost issue here. Your free Web page's site may have limits on the number of megabytes you can download per month before it simply halts — or your paid site may charge you by the megabyte. If you get a sudden upsurge in usage, your Web site can stop working for the rest of the month, or you can be hit with a bill for hundreds of dollars, just to download images that were larger than they ever needed to be in the first place.

The answer is that you have to reduce the actual file size of your photos, not just resize the windows in which they display. Okay, it's clearly important. Now this chapter describes how to get it done.

GIF images may contain up to 256 colors, so GIF formatting works effectively for images that have anywhere from a few colors to a few hundred colors. Most simple images — and most images created on a computer — fall into this category.

If an image has more than 256 colors, it loses some color information when you convert the image to GIF. You have to look at the image before and after you convert it to GIF to see if trimming the additional colors noticeably affects the image's appearance.

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JPEG, or *Joint Photographic Experts Group* format, compresses complex images, such as photographs, with many color variations. Photographs work by using thousands of different shades to capture (for instance) the subtle differences in color as light falls on a person's face. Photos typically don't have large blocks of a solid color, but instead are filled with subtly varying colors. If you cut down the number of colors in a photo too much, it becomes ugly and cartoonish.

JPEG uses psychological and graphical tricks to create an image that looks as detailed as a photo in much less file space. Even very light JPEG compression, which barely affects the appearance of the image at all, can easily cut the file size of an image by two-thirds. "Stepping on" the image harder, with more compression, begins to introduce visible effects in the image, but at the same time can easily reduce a typical photo to 10 percent of its former file size.

This capability makes JPEG the image format of choice for displaying photographs and other natural-looking images on your Web page. (What makes a photo look natural is that it mimics the way different shades of a color appear as light falls differently on various parts of an object.) These images retain their appearance well when compressed with JPEG.

Figure 5-2 shows a Web page from the NASA Web site to graphically illustrate (pun intended) the difference in GIF and JPEG photo file sizes. Another site you may find useful shows various versions of the same photo of Marc Andreessen, one of the founders of Netscape, to illustrate the various file types and compression options. Here's the URL:

```
cgi.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/impact_docs/e-jpeg.html
```

You can use this GIF/JPEG test page to test the speed of your own Internet connection. The total size of the page with graphics is about 70 K.

For images with lots of large blocks of solid color, GIF file sizes tend to be small. Thus, GIFs are better for banners or images with large areas of solid color, such as bar graphs or icons. In other words, the simple drawings that most of us create work best with GIF. Dense artistic graphics and photos work better with JPEG.

However, there are times when choosing a GIF format for a photo is a good idea. The GIF format gives you some Web page display options that you don't always get with JPEG files. For example, you can make the colors around GIF images transparent to whatever is in the background of the image, and you can save GIF images in *interlaced* format. Images saved in this way, and then downloaded by a browser, first appear at a very low resolution, and then in progressively clearer resolution, until the whole image appears. This feature makes GIF images preferable for quickly displaying a rough-looking graphic that improves with time — and for creating fancy special effects.

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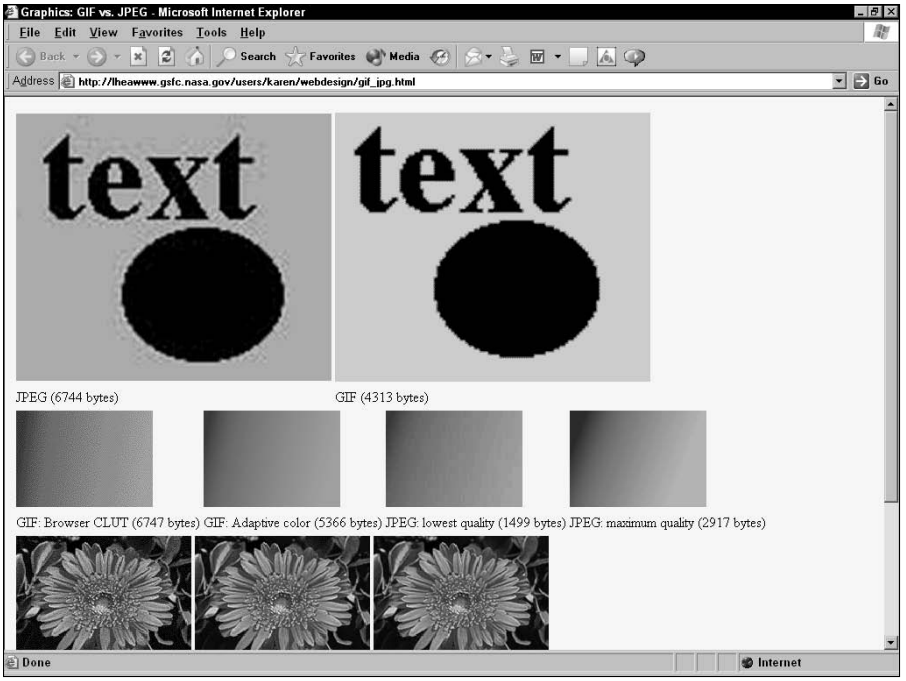

Figure 5-2: Get an idea of how different graphic file formats look.

Transparent images have a clear area surrounding the object of interest. For example, in a photo of a watch, you may not want any background color surrounding the watch, just the watch itself seeming to sit directly on the Web page and its background color. To achieve this effect, you use a transparent GIF, an image with a clear border area. The background color of the overall Web page shows through the transparent area, and the object of interest appears to "float" over the background.

Example: Resizing and saving a screen capture

There's nothing like actually going through the steps to help you gain a practical, not just an intellectual, understanding. These steps will show you how to capture the current image on your screen, resize it, and save it as a GIF and a JPEG, then compare the file size and appearance of the resulting file.

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Doing your filing for Web pages

Any up-to-date Web browser can display three types of data: text with HTML tags, GIF graphics, and JPEG graphics. (Some people pronounce GIF as "jiff," others as "giff" as in "gift." I prefer "giff" as in "gift.") A typical Web browser displays HTML-tagged text appropriately, although not all browsers understand all the same tags. A browser also displays GIF and JPEG graphics inline — that is, embedded within the Web page. A Web page with inline graphics looks like a page in a magazine, with text and images mixed seamlessly together. However, each graphics file is stored separately from the HTML-tagged text that makes up the underlying Web page. This makes the Web work better overall, but contributes to some of the problems — such as the difficulty of keeping all your Web files together for proper display — that I describe later in this book.

There are scores of graphics programs out there, many of them completely free, free for a limited time, or relatively inexpensive. (A low-cost version of the industry standard Photoshop program, called Photoshop Elements, retails for less than US$100, and many computers come with a graphics program pre-installed for free.) But there's only one graphics program you can count on finding on any Windows computer, and that's MS Paint.

So, if you use Windows, follow these steps to learn how to capture the current screen image (one of the most useful ways to get graphics, as long as you respect copyright restrictions), resize it, and save it as both a GIF file and as a JPEG. (If you use a Mac, there's no similar standard program, but you might try downloading Ultimate Paint from a source such as `www.download.com` and following roughly the same steps.)

Always think about rights issues when you're looking for graphics to use. For the example, I'm going to take a PDF file as represented on-screen and make it into a very small image to serve as an example of a PDF on a Web page. I'm going to use a PDF of a page from a For Dummies book I wrote because that way there are no rights hassles. If you follow my example and put a shrunken (but recognizable) image of a PDF file on your Web page, be sure to use a PDF file you have the rights to. It's just good practice if you want to avoid any possible rights problems.

For Windows, follow these steps to capture a graphic from the screen and save it as an uncompressed BMP file, a GIF file, and a JPEG:

1. **Create or find the graphic that you want to use online.**

   This is the fun part! But be careful, any task involving images can somehow magically expand to take hours more than the time you had expected it to. Set yourself a realistic goal with lots of room for error — "a fish," say, not "a green flounder seen from the side."

   In this example, I've navigated to a PDF of a page from *Creating Web Graphics For Dummies* (Wiley).

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2. **To capture the entire screen, press the PrtSc key (which may have a slightly different name on your keyboard); to capture the currently active window, press Alt+PrtSc.**

   Usually, you will just want to capture the active window.

   When you do this, the image is copied to the Windows Clipboard.

   The Windows Clipboard and Microsoft Paint store images in BMP format, short for BitMaP format. Every pixel that's captured gets up to four bytes to allow its color to be captured exactly. This produces an exact, completely accurate, absolutely uncompressed image that, like an uncompressed photograph, takes up immense amounts of file space.

   Despite the fact that BMP files are large and Windows-specific, you can put them in your Web page and they'll *seem* okay; Internet Explorer running on Windows will display BMP files, and testing on your own machine makes the problem of long download times disappear. But watch out; if you put your page up on the open Web, it will download slowly for users with slow connections, and the image won't even open on many non-Windows systems. A savvy user will look at your HTML source code, see you linked to a BMP file, and conclude that you bothered to read a good book on Web pages (like this one)!

3. **Open Windows Paint by clicking Start➪Programs➪Accessories➪Paint.**

   Windows Paint will open.

4. **Resize the image area to the size of the pasted area when you paste in the image:**

   a. *Choose Image➪Attributes or press Ctrl+E to open the Attributes panel.*

   b. *Enter **1** for the width and 1 for the height.*

   c. *Click the Pixels radio button under Units, as shown in Figure 5-3.*

   d. *Click OK.*

   Resizing the working area to one pixel by one pixel, using the Attributes dialog box, will make working with pasted-in images much easier.

5. **Paste the captured image by choosing Edit➪Paste or by pressing Ctrl+V.**

   The captured image appears in Windows Paint. The entire image is selected.

6. **Save the captured image twice: once as an original file, with a name like Screen Capture Original, then as a working copy, with a name like Screen Capture Copy.**

   Your changes are recorded in the copy, leaving the original alone.

   Consider creating a separate folder for each image you work with to contain the original image and various versions you create.

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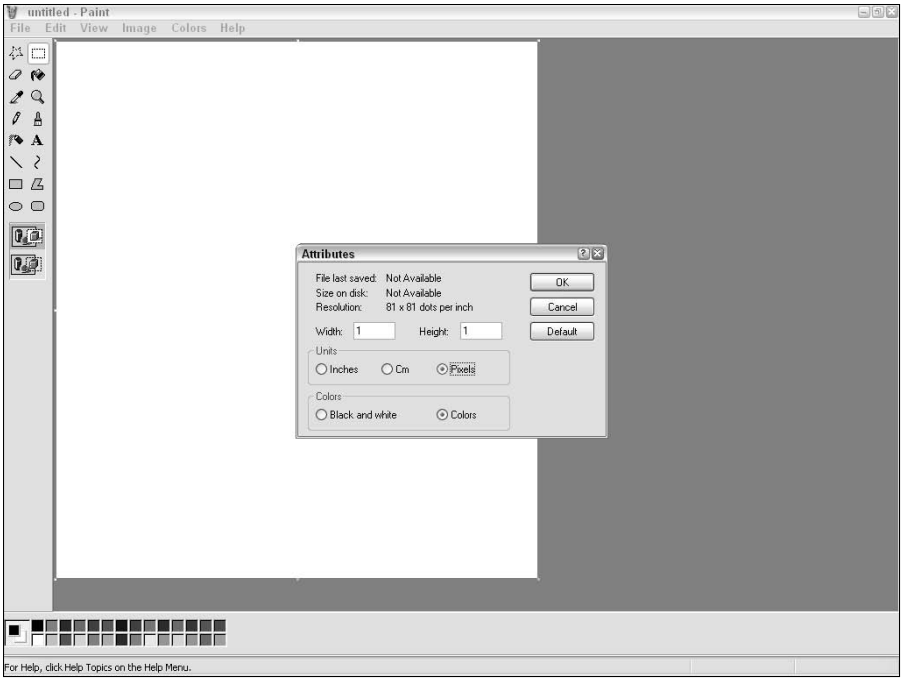

Figure 5-3: Setting the working area size in Windows Paint with the Attributes dialog box.

To make sure the original image isn't changed, find the file in Windows Explorer, right-click it, choose Properties, and then change it to a Read-Only file (refer to Figure 5-1).

7. **To see the size of the pasted image, choose Image➪Attributes or press Ctrl+E.**

   The size of the image will appear in the Attributes dialog box.

   Always check the size of the pasted image, and always write it down — on paper, so you have a record, or even in a spreadsheet program so you can calculate the percentage by which to resize it.

8. **To resize the image, choose Image➪Stretch/Skew or press Ctrl+W.**

   The Stretch and Skew dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 5-4.

9. **Decide on the size you want for the image, calculate the percentage this is of the captured image, and then enter the new size as follows:**

   - Enter the percentage you want to shrink the image by in the Stretch part of the dialog box, entering the same percentage in both the Horizontal and Vertical areas. Click OK. The image will be resized.
   - If the result isn't what you want, press Ctrl+Z to undo and try again.

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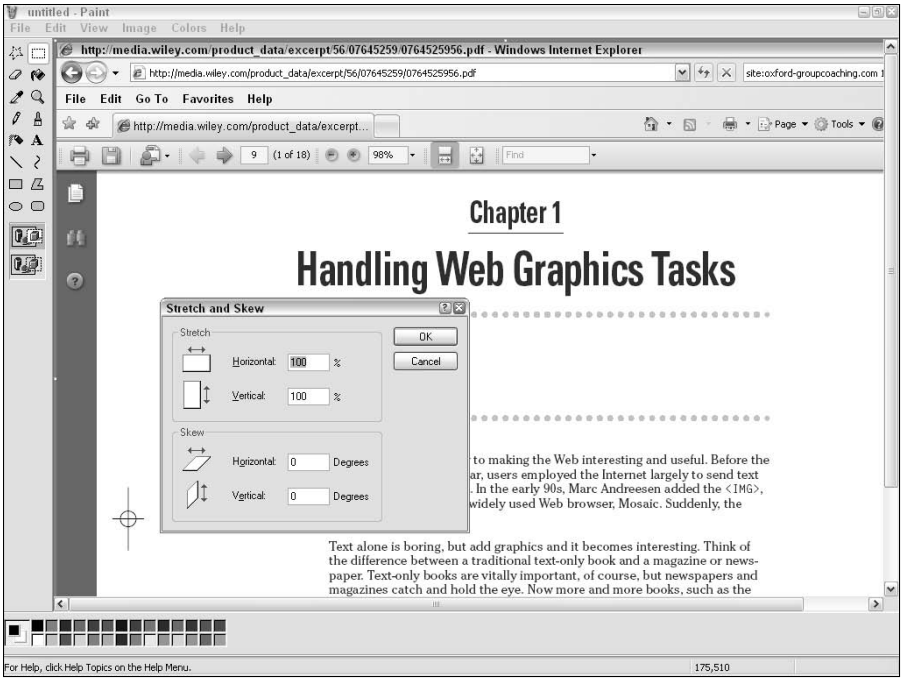

Figure 5-4: Resizing an image in Windows Paint with the Stretch and Skew dialog box.

- Be sure to enter the same percentage in both the Horizontal and Vertical areas to evenly shrink the image. (If you shrink the image unevenly, it will look very odd indeed, distracting from your Web page's message).

  For this example, I've chosen to shrink the image to about 150 pixels tall, which requires shrinking it to 15 percent of its original size. The width is also 15 percent, resulting (in this case) in a width of 115 pixels.

If you're sure you won't forget the vital step of resizing, you can use the original, very large file when creating your Web page, using commands in your WYSIWIG editor or in HTML to resize its appearance in the Web page until you have it appearing in the size you're happy with. Then go back and *make a resized version of the file* that fits what you need for your Web page.

10. **Save the resized file as a BMP file. Choose File➪Save As to open the Save As dialog box. For Save as type, choose 24-bit Bitmap from the scrolling list. Enter a name for the file. Click the Save button.**

    The file is saved. It will have the suffix .BMP to mark it as a bitmap file, but you won't see this suffix in Windows, which suppresses filename extensions.

Always save the file as a BMP file first so you have an uncompressed version for later editing.

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Consider putting the letters BMP in the main part of the filename so you can easily distinguish the BMP file from other saved versions of the file, and do the same for the GIF and JPEG versions.

11. **Save the resized BMP file as a GIF file:**

    a. *Choose File➪Save As to open the Save As dialog box.*

    b. *For Save as Type, choose GIF from the scrolling list to save the file in GIF format.*

    c. *Enter a name for the file and then click the Save button.*

    The file is saved.

12. **Save the resized BMP file as a JPEG file:**

    a. *Choose File➪Open to open the uncompressed BMP file, or choose the BMP file from the list of recently edited files at the bottom of the File menu.*

    b. *Choose File➪Save as to open the Save As dialog box.*

    c. *For Save as type, choose JPEG from the scrolling list to save the file in JPEG format.*

    d. *Enter a name for the file and then click the Save button.*

    The file is saved.

MS Paint always uses a relatively harsh compression setting for doing JPEG compression, whereas other image programs let you choose how strongly to compress the file. A JPEG created by MS Paint usually doesn't look very good if larger than about 60 pixels in height or width. If the image is too harshly compressed for you, you can still use MS Paint initially, but use a more flexible graphics editor to create the final version of the image.

13. **Check the results of your work:**

    a. *Open the file containing the BMP, GIF, and JPEG versions of the image and note the file size of each.*

    b. *Right-click each image and choose Open with➪Internet Explorer to see how the image will look in a Web page.*

    c. *Note whether the GIF or JPEG version of the image has the best combination of low file size and acceptable image quality.*

    The GIF file will lose some image quality if the original image had more than 256 colors. For large or medium-sized photos, JPEG is almost always better, but for small images only experimentation can tell you which will give better results for a given image.

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The danger of re-(re-)compression

If you're a scuba diver, you are likely to have been warned about the dangers of coming up from a great depth too quickly, which can cause a serious condition called "the bends." Unfortunately, it's possible to give your graphical images "the bends" as well — but the cause isn't decompression, it's *re*compression.

When you use GIF or JPEG to save and compress a file, the compressed file is significantly different than the original, in a way designed to maintain the image's appearance while shrinking its size. But if you recompress the compressed file a second (or third, or fourth) time, it gets ugly fast, cluttered with "artifacts" — areas in which poor compression introduces visible "scarring" to the original image. So (it bears repeating) always keep a copy of the original to work on.

There is one exception to this. Some devices (such as digital cameras) always save files in a lightly compressed, still very large, JPEG file. This kind of file can be re-compressed in JPEG to a much smaller image size without visible damage. But this can only be done one time; re-re-compressing the file makes it really ugly. So treat large JPEG files as originals — save them, and only compress them one (more) time before using them in your Web page.

Obtaining and Creating Images

So you want to put various images on your Web page. Great! But, if you can't find the image you need online and use the screen capture method above, how do you create the images you need and get them in the right format (GIF or JPEG)? Fortunately, creating the images you want, or finding some to use, is pretty easy.

The easiest way to obtain graphics is to get access to a clip-art collection. Computer stores sell many inexpensive collections of business and recreational graphics on CD-ROM. You can also access a number of royalty-free graphics and icon collections online.

If you're doing a business or professionally focused Web page, it's important that it have a clean, professional look. To get this kind of look, you have to use attractive images and lay out your page carefully. Chapters 11 (for WYSIWYG editors) and 15 (for straight HTML) tell you how to design your page appropriately for various purposes.

You can spend endless hours looking for art online. To help you get off to a quick start, here's a listing of sites I find especially cool:

- For a large number of different kinds of resources, go to the main WebReference site at `www.webreference.com`.
- For images of various types, go directly to the images area at `www.webreference.com/authoring/graphics/images.html`.

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- For page backgrounds, visit `www.webreference.com/authoring/graphics/backgrounds.html`.
- For photographs, try a site with preexisting stock photos — `www.imagestate.com` is one I can recommend. Another choice, popular with professionals, is `www.gettyimages.com`, but these images cost money.

  You can find many more sites that offer images and image conversions. Start with the sites mentioned here and expand your search until you find what you need.

Using the Image Search feature on Google or AltaVista is one of the best ways to look for suitable graphics. Be careful, though: Most of the graphics you find are copyrighted; for your Web site, you should only use images that are *explicitly* made freely available.

One of the best places to find images that are free to use is on various government Web sites — with URLs ending in `.gov` in the U.S. and `.gov.uk` in the U.K., just to give two examples. The taxpayers in each country have paid for the images, so they're made available for widespread free use. So government sites are a great resource for free images and, to a lesser extent, sound and video files.

In addition to searching online, another way to get graphics is to whip out any paint program and draw the graphics that you want. For example, you can use the free Windows Paint program (described above) for your initial graphics work. Even inexpensive paint programs today enable you to create some stunning graphics; you're limited mostly by your imagination and artistic ability (which for some of us is a pretty strong limit!).

For big-bucks commercial work and fine art, people regularly use high-end programs such as Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrator. If you lack talent, you can always ask one of your artistically inclined friends to help you, or you can even recruit a starving art student.

Another technique is to use a scanner. You may already have one at home, or have use of a scanner in your office. If not, head to your favorite copy shop or Internet cafe and rent some time on its scanner. Simply scan your graphic or photo, save it in GIF (for graphics) or JPEG (for photographs) format, and slap it on your Web site.

Unfortunately, scanned images tend to have "noise" — little bits of dust, folds in paper, and so forth — that not only mess up the appearance of your image but that also completely undermine compression by breaking up what might otherwise be solid areas of white or some other color. It can take many hours to clean up this noise if you need a high-quality, well-compressed image.

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More on graphics

The Graphics File Formats FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions page or area on a site) can answer almost any conceivable question about graphics. For a wide array of information, visit `www.martinreddy.net/gfx/utils-hi.html`. Links from this site lead to detailed technical information about GIF, JPEG, and other file formats. For a detailed description of how to use images well, see `cgi.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/impact_docs/index.html`.

For photos, work with a photo developer, such as a suitably equipped local developer, a chain store such as Wal-Mart or Rite Aid, or a mail-order and Internet operation such as PhotoWorks (`www.photoworks.com`), that can develop your film right to diskette or Photo CD.

A great way to get photographs is to take them with a digital camera. Digital cameras come with cables that connect the camera to your PC to download the photographs onto your computer. They also come with software that enables you to edit the photos on your PC and save them in JPEG format.

Many cellphones in use today take pictures that are good enough for casual Web use. These files are usually stored as JPEGs that you can downsize further for Web use. However, as you put these photos onto your Web site, you may find yourself wishing that your camera had a flash (or a better flash), a little more resolution, zoom, or some other features of a "real" camera.

No matter what format your graphic came in originally, you can convert it to GIF or JPEG by using software that you can easily obtain from the Web. Mac users can run GIFConverter (available at `www.kamit.com/gifconverter`), and Windows users can run the excellent LView program to convert between multiple formats (find LView at `www.lview.com`). Save your graphic as a GIF or JPEG file, and you're ready to incorporate the graphic into your Web page.

Save your image in the program's default format before saving it as a GIF or JPEG. When you save as a GIF or JPEG, the image can lose information. Every time you reopen the GIF or JPEG image, edit the file, and then save it again, you lose even more information. So save your file in its default format to preserve the data in it for later editing, then save a separate copy in GIF or JPEG to use on the Web.

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What about rights?

You can find a number of great graphics in books and magazines and on Web sites. Can you just scan or copy these graphics and use them in your own Web site? Should you?

Yes and no. Yes, you can; but no, you shouldn't. Publishers either own the images that they use or obtain a license for them. You can't legally use most images on your own Web site without either buying or licensing them.

For some images on the Web, simply sending a note to the Webmaster gets you a quick okay. But for most Web images and for nearly all images in print, permissions may be very hard to get. Creating a new image that serves the same purpose is often easier than negotiating permissions. And then maybe you can make a little money licensing your new images out to other people!

Designing with Graphics

The most difficult aspect of including graphics in your Web pages is resolving all the design issues that accompany the use of graphics. Creating effective graphics and placing them properly in relation to your text is *not* as easy as boiling water. Although this book doesn't cover all the complexities of graphic design, I can give you a handle on the additional concerns that arise when you use graphics on the Web. That way you can effectively apply your own graphics skills — or those of people who work with you — to your Web pages.

More on download speed

One of the Web's ongoing problems is *download speed* — the amount of time a Web page takes to appear on the user's screen. Download times are especially slow for graphics-rich pages, which, although more interesting to view, can be more frustrating because they appear more slowly. And the trade-off is not simple; lots of variables intervene — these, for example:

- **Access speeds:** Different users access the Web through connections that run at different speeds. And the same server can serve up a Web page at different speeds, depending upon how busy the server is. When you test your brand-new, graphics-rich page on your local machine, everything may run fast. But when you upload that same page to a server and access the page over a 56Kbps (kilobits per second) modem, the page loads much more slowly.

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Many more users now have broadband (fast) access at home, as well as at work. The good news is that most users will see your graphics quickly. The bad news is that the still-substantial minority with slow access are getting more and more frustrated as Web authors who have broadband access get careless about page sizes!

- **Good and bad graphics:** If you plan to spend your users' time on downloading big graphics, invest some effort up front to make sure that the graphics are as high-quality as possible. People don't mind waiting for a good graphic nearly as much as they mind waiting for a bad one. A good graphic may be a product shot that shows a Web surfer exactly what he or she is going to get. A bad graphic may be a banner that says "HELLO!" in hundreds of rotating fluorescent colors.
- **Frustration levels:** The same users who enjoy watching your page appear in the morning while drinking a cup of coffee may be tempted to scream at their browsers when they try to quickly check out your page just before heading home from work — especially if they had a bad hair day, a bad boss day, or even a bad browser day. The better the job you do with your graphics, the more your page will please people.

Table 5-1 shows the time necessary to download 60 K (kilobytes) of data. A text-only page is usually just 2–3K, but pages with graphics are much larger. A complex, quarter-screen GIF image, for example, may be about 60 K, whereas a photo measuring about 150 x 150 pixels would have to be strongly compressed to be that small. Compare the total size of all the elements in your page to the times shown in Table 5-1 to get an idea of how quickly your page loads for the most speed-deficient user, and then design with that person in mind.

Table 5-1 Download Times

Access Speed	*Description*	*Time to Download 60 K*
28.8 Kbps	Low-end Internet modem	35 seconds
33.6 Kbps	Mid-range Internet modem	30 seconds
56 Kbps	Fast Internet modem	20 seconds
DSL	Special phone line, modem	4 seconds
Cable modem	Special cable hookup, modem	1 second
Ethernet	Standard network	Less than 1 second

Avoiding three big mistakes with images

Don't make these three big mistakes that hamper effective usage of images on the Web:

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- **No images:** Sorry, but having no images on your Web pages means boring pages, no matter how good the text. Because you're reading this chapter, I assume that you're trying not to make this mistake.
- **Too many images:** Using too many large, slow-to-download images may be the biggest newbie Web-author mistake. (A lot of old hands make a similar mistake — everything is well-designed and compressed, but *one* uncompressed or too-lightly compressed photo sneaks through, making the whole page download slowly and shaking the user's confidence in the entire site.)
- **No text alternative:** An increasing number of vision-impaired people use the Web, and some users surf Web pages on text-only or slow-connection devices (such as a cellphone's Web browser). You need to accommodate these users by creating your page in a way that supports text-only access as well as graphical access, as described in Chapter 10 (for WYSIWYG Web page editing programs) and in Chapter 14 (for HTML editing programs).

Try an experiment: Go into your browser, turn off the graphics display, and load your Web page. If you can't tell what's on the page or what links go where, you need to redesign your page. (Then, just to blow off steam, or if you don't have a Web page up yet, try the same experiment on some other people's pages and send them a polite note if you encounter problems.)

The usual way to redesign your page for text-only access is to include a textual menu linking to the same places as your graphical menu. Some sites provide a whole parallel set of Web pages that are purely textual rather than graphical. Providing parallel, text-only pages lets the user choose whether to go for the attractive, bandwidth-sucking graphical pages or for the very fast text-only pages, and enables those with visual impairments (or those using other devices such as cellphones) to enjoy the full benefits of the Web.

In the past, many have chosen text-only access because of slow download times. However, because the percentage of users with non-broadband access continues to drop, providing a complete set of text-only pages may be overkill. Consider providing a *text-mostly* version, with limited use of images, simpler layout, and alternative text for images. This option may be just the ticket for users with visual impairments or those who are visiting via limited clients such as cellphones.

Here are the most important rules for supporting text and graphical access:

- As you design and create your page, think about how your page will look with all graphic access turned off as well as on.
- Test your page with graphics turned off.
- Test your page in different browsers.

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- Include `ALT` tags — actually, the `ALT` attribute within the `IMG` tag — in all images so that explanatory text appears whenever a graphic isn't displayed.
- Provide text-only menus in addition to icon-based selections and image maps.
- If you want to make everyone very happy, consider creating a separate, text-only version of your site.

If you're considering creating a Web site that's accessible by portable devices such as Windows Mobile-powered phones or the RIM Blackberry line of handheld devices, then creating a text-only version of your site makes a great deal of sense. The text-only version of your site is a good starting point for handhelds.

Flickr forward

Flickr is a great resource for working with images because it's all about photos — and about making photos easy to use online. The home page of Flickr is shown in Figure 5-5.

Figure 5-5: Flick your photos onto Flickr.

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The constant surge of camera phones and digital cameras has created a problem — many photos don't get printed anymore. That's right: The photo gets taken, maybe shown to a couple of people on-screen, maybe e-mailed to a friend or two, and then forgotten in a folder somewhere.

Even the few photos that do get printed have all the limitations of any physical object: They cost money to create, can only be in one place at a time, and have to be stored somewhere or thrown away. All of those limitations can add up to a burden on your wallet and on the environment.

Enter Flickr, which bills itself as "the best way to store, search, sort, and share your photos." (Try saying that three times fast; you'll end up saying "searching, shorting, and sharing.")

As a visitor to Flickr, you can have an awful lot of fun. You can search through photos in a bunch of different ways, from the sensible to the quirky.

But you get the most out of Flickr by using it to store and show off your own photos. When you try this, you find out the really great things Flickr lets you do:

- **Storing your photos:** You can create a free account that holds hundreds of photos. With a free account, you can upload 20 MB of photos a month, or about 100 reasonably sized JPEG images. The number of photos is also limited — to 200. Or upgrade to a Pro account and store thousands of photos.

  You can simply store all your photos online, at least up to a point. Or you can just store the interesting ones and keep the rest on your PC — or take the opportunity to send them to the great big bit box in the sky.
- **Sharing your photos:** People can visit Flickr and see your photos — under your control! You can keep private photos confined to a small group of viewers, whereas others can be seen by anyone who visits Flickr.
- **Sorting your photos:** As your "photobase" grows, you can sort and organize your photos in many ways, making them more interesting and convenient to access for your own use and for others.
- **Searching through photos:** Labeling and organizing your photos well makes it very easy for you to find just the ones you want — and for others to find the photos you want to share with them as well.

All these uses for Flickr are covered in this chapter. I show you how to get the most out of Flickr and your photos.

In addition to doing these basic things, you can also get involved with the Flickr user community. There are special things you can do with photos on Flickr that you can't do other places. You can

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- **Add notes to a photo:** For instance, you can name everyone in that picture from the office party.
- **Add tags to a photo:** Make it easy for people to find your picture among others like it. For instance, by adding the tag "Golden Gate Bridge" to your photo, you can make it easy for people to find your photo among all those of the famous San Francisco landmark.
- **Put a photo in a pool:** Pools of photos are photos linked in some way; if you see an open pool that's relevant, you can dive right in and add your photo to it!
- **Engage in discussions about photos:** You can share comments about photos on a message board — even highlight an area on a photo and mark it up with a message. (Yes, you'll see lots of immature "kiss me, you fool"-type messages if you look around.)
- **Publish photos to a blog or your Web site:** You can put pictures hosted on Flickr in your blog or other Web site. You can even see recent Flickr uploads on your mobile phone.

I don't describe these additional features of Flickr in much detail here — after you start using Flickr, you can easily (perhaps too easily) spend all your time there. I don't want to be seen encouraging you to do too much of that, or your boss, spouse, kids, and other folks who need your attention might blame me when you "Flickr out" for days on end.

Despite all Flickr does for you, you may want to master one capability for processing images *before* you upload them: making smaller versions of your photos, as described early in this chapter. Many digital camera images are very large, say, 1024 x 768, and with millions of colors, resulting in a multi-megabyte image. This is way more than you need for most purposes (except ordering prints), and means you'll use up your 20MB monthly allotment very quickly. (Mobile phone camera images tend to be much smaller.)

Flickr resizes photos during uploading, but you may want to control the process by doing it yourself.

So, to spare yourself trouble, find an image-manipulation program that you can use to make images smaller. Fortunately, Flickr has good image-manipulation features built into the site. You can also try Photoshop Express, an offering from Adobe (`www.photoshop.com/express`), though online reviews rated the initial version below Flickr's tools. One very good free program is InsightPoint. You can download a completely free version from sites such as CNET's Download.com (`www.download.com`). Or, look to see if an image manipulation program was provided with your digital camera.

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Flickr flaws

Not everything is perfect in Flickr-land. Here are a few flies in Flickr's ointment that you should be aware of going in:

- **Too adult?** For some potential users, Flickr may have too many grown-up images. Despite strict rules forbidding "frontal nudity, genitalia, and intimate moments" in Flickr photos, it's not hard to find nudity and semi-nudity on the site. If you post family photos on Flickr for your children to view, they may keep looking on the site and find some things you'd rather they not see.

  Flickr's terms of service limit users to those 13 or older, but there's no way for anyone to enforce it — probably, few users even know it. So it's up to you to decide whom you want to encourage to use Flickr.

- **Too easy?** Flickr makes it very easy to upload huge numbers of not-very-interesting photos. (Is *every* picture you take with your mobile phone worth sharing with the world?) You have to exercise considerable restraint to make sure all the photos you upload are worth the time your friends and family might spend looking at them.

- **Too open?** Flickr has excellent privacy protections, but it's still easier to do the lazy thing and make all your photos public — or for passwords to be shared more widely than you planned. Someone putting Tom Cruise's head on your body might be funny — but there are enough weirdos out there that you may want to think twice before letting photos of, say, your kids be widely viewed.

- **Too flexible?** Professional photographers are always careful to get a signed *model release* (permission form) from everyone depicted in a photograph they want to sell or otherwise use. You don't necessarily need to be that careful — but the jury's still out (pun intended) on exactly what the limits are. Be careful, especially about using photos without rights in any way that may help you make money (for instance, on a business's Web site).

- **Too good?** Flickr is so good that it's been acquired by Yahoo! You now need a Yahoo! ID to open a new account. The changes that Yahoo! makes may end up improving it — or not, depending on your point of view.

Think over these concerns before you commit a bunch of time and energy to Flickr. You may prefer to put your photos online some other way. Or, use Flickr to host your photos, but put the best of them on your own site for viewing. No matter what, you have many more options with Flickr than without.

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If you share a computer with others, you may not have as much privacy as you think. The History function of your browser can make it easy for others to see Web pages you've visited, and photos get cached in ways that a lot of bright 10-year-olds can figure out. So be very careful if you think you can use "private" areas on Flickr to upload and view highly personal photos, and then let others use your computer and not have access to them. They may see more than you intend for them to.

Uploading a Photo to Flickr

Here's a quick guide to getting a photo onto Flickr. It's amazing how confidence-building it can be just to do something simple like this once.

1. **Get a JPEG photo onto your computer system.**

   The easiest way is to upload or e-mail a photo to yourself from your mobile phone. Or, copy pictures from a digital camera. Find a photo on your hard disk. (Choose Start➪Search➪For files or folders, and then choose Pictures, Music, or Video.) Or copy a photo from the Web — use a search engine to find images that are free for use.

2. **Open your Web browser.**

   As is the case with more and more Web sites, Flickr can be used with any kind of PC — or even with a mobile phone. But when you're just getting started, it's best to have a PC with fast Web access to use when you upload photos to Flickr.

3. **Go to `www.flickr.com`.**

   A screen like the one shown earlier in Figure 5-5 appears, although the screen may change to reflect new quotes, different sponsorships, or increased influence from Yahoo!, Flickr's owners.

4. **Sign in.**

   If you're already a Yahoo! or Flickr member, click the Sign In link on the home page and use your ID to sign in. If not, click Sign up! and create an ID.

   After you're signed in, an opening screen like the one in Figure 5-6 appears. Resist the temptation to explore — it's time to get something done.

5. **Click the link *Upload your first photo* (or *Upload photos* if you've uploaded before).**

   The Upload Photos page appears.

6. **Click the Browse button.**

   The Select File dialog box appears over the Upload Photos page, as shown in Figure 5-7. Note that you can easily specify up to six photos at a time.

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Figure 5-6: Flickr invites you to upload a photo — or look around.

Figure 5-7: It's easy to upload a few photos at a time from your hard drive.

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7. **Use the Select File dialog box to locate an image — or several images.**

   Find an image on your PC to upload to Flickr. Repeat to upload multiple images.

   You can avoid the step of copying files to your PC if you can attach your mobile phone or camera to your computer. Just use the Select File dialog box to find the mobile phone or camera as an attached device, and then copy the files directly from there.

   Make sure you *don't* upload an image if you think anyone in the picture may not want his or her face plastered all over the Web. Some people have lost job opportunities (or even jobs they already had) because personal photos that depicted (for instance) drunken behavior at a party were put up on somebody's Web page.

8. **Upload your photos.**

   Click the Upload button; your photos are uploaded, and Flickr creates various preview and thumbnail versions for use in various places. Click the "add a description?" link to bring up the Describe This Upload screen.

9. **Add one or more tags to describe the image(s).**

   Add descriptive words, called *tags,* to describe your pictures. Using tags in a way that makes sense to you, and that fits the way others use tags on Flickr, is a bit of an art — for now, just pick a descriptive word or two. You can always edit tags later.

10. **Choose privacy settings.**

    There are five possible privacy settings in Flickr:

    - **Public:** Everyone can see your photos. Click the Public radio button to choose this setting.
    - **Private: Visible to you only.** To get this setting, click the Private radio button, and then leave unchecked the Visible to Friends and the Visible to Family check boxes.
    - **Private: Visible to Friends.** Click the Private radio button, and then check the Visible to Friends check box. Clear the Visible to Family check box.
    - **Private: Visible to Family.** Click the Private radio button, and then check the Visible to Family check box. Clear the Visible to Friends check box.
    - **Private: Visible to Friends and Family.** Click the Private radio button, and then check the Visible to Friends check box and the Visible to Family check box.

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You specify friends and family by adding them to lists. (Yes, you can add one person to both lists, which is sort of like an "all access" pass.) When those folks sign in, they get the access you've specified.

The Private setting visible to you only — which you achieve by choosing the Private radio button and clearing both the Visible to Friends and Visible to Family check boxes — is a bit hidden, but very useful. You can use this setting to store all your photos on Flickr, and then "publish" selected photos to others by changing their privacy settings.

11. **Add titles, descriptions, and tags to your photos.**

    Now's the time! It's easy to skip this step, but if you don't do this now, you may never get around to it — and you may have difficulty finding some of your precious photos again. A typical result is shown in Figure 5-8.

12. **Save your photos.**

    Finally, you're on Flickr! Figure 5-9 shows the first set of photos the author uploaded. Note that the middle picture is sideways — I fix that in the next section.

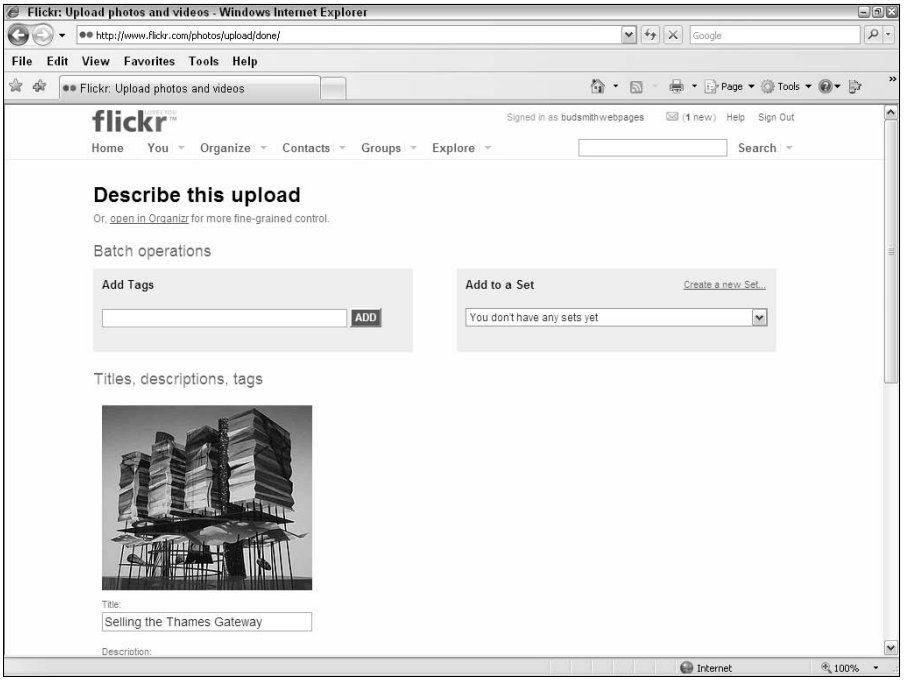

Figure 5-8: Now it's time to title, describe, and tag your photos.

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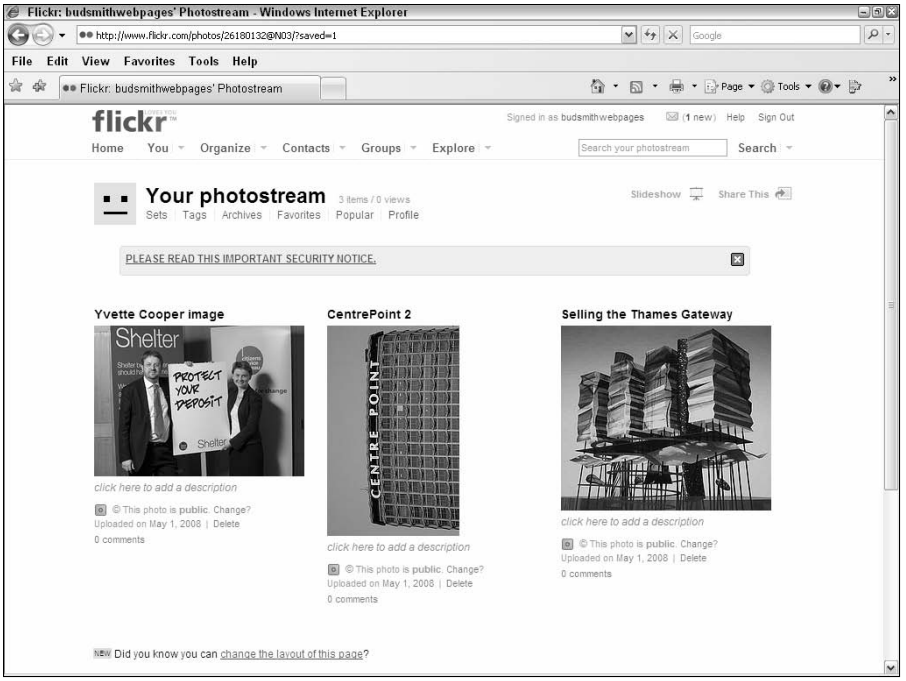

Figure 5-9: Three's a lucky number.

Modifying Photos on Flickr

One of the great things about Flickr is that the people who created it have thought through the whole process. They don't make you fix a photo before you upload it, or figure out every detail of a description the first time — you can change most of those things after you upload a picture.

Here's a quick checklist of things you can easily change after you upload a picture — avoiding, for now, some of the more advanced sharing features of Flickr:

- **Add note:** You can annotate a picture with a note in a specific location.
- **Order prints:** You can buy copies of your photos — this works better on photos with relatively high resolution (1024 x 768 or larger), thousands or millions of colors, and taken with a steady hand (not blurry).
- **Rotate:** My favorite! I like to take pictures at different angles, and Rotate saves me time because I don't have to fix the rotation until after I upload them.

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- **Change privacy settings:** It's easy to change who can see a picture.
- **Change the title, description, and tags:** Easy to do, and redo, and redo — but hard to get around to if you've uploaded a bunch of pictures without giving them meaningful titles, descriptions, or tags.
- **Flag as "may offend":** I'm sure that my wonderful readers would never upload a racy image — but in case you do, here's your chance to keep it from vulnerable eyes. Just flag the photo as "may offend" and you keep it from being found on a normal search.

Follow the instructions below to make the preceding changes, or even more, in a photo:

1. **Click a photo you've uploaded to Flickr.**

   Find any photo you've uploaded and click it. You are taken to an editing screen for the photo.

2. **Click the button you want to apply to the photo.**

   You can apply all sorts of changes or actions to the photo (see the preceding list). For example, if you click the Rotate button, a small window appears to preview the rotate operation.

3. **Finish the action you've chosen.**

   Depending on what you've chosen to do — add a note, order prints, and so on — you'll be prompted to take one or more steps to finish the action. Figure 5-10 shows how the screen looks after choosing Rotate for a specific picture, and then clicking the turn-right icon; the preview window shows the rotated photo.

Flickr-ing photos to your blog

You can "flick" photos onto your blog very easily once you set up a couple of things. Blogger, the blogging service referred to in Chapter 4, is one of the many blogging services directly supported by Flickr. Start by visiting `www.flickr.com/blogs.gne` to make your blog known to Flickr, enter the password, and so on. Once setup is done, it's just a matter of a couple of mouse clicks to move photos, with comments, to your blog. (Fellow Flickrers who don't want their photos blogged can specify that as well.)

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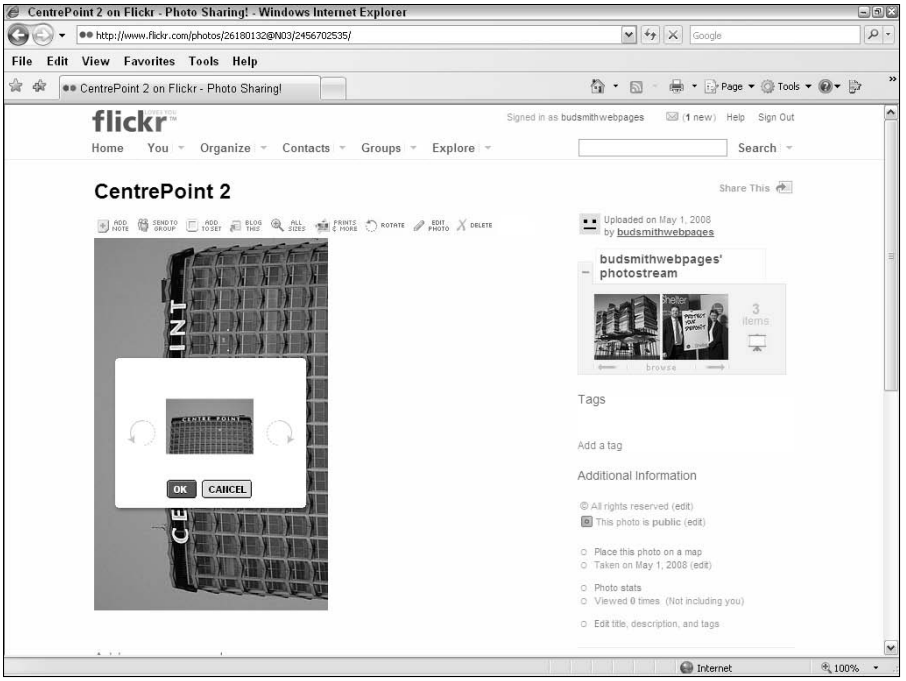

Figure 5-10: You can make your photos better and more interesting.

4. **Click OK to complete the action.**

   The screen reappears with the update you've chosen.

5. **Add comments.**

   Comments make photos more interesting — and you can use basic HTML to format them, as shown in Figure 5-11. See the Cheat Sheet at the front of this book for some basic commands, or go to Chapter 8 for more information. Here's a brief list of tags:

   `b`. Traditional formatting is `<b>` to start bold text and `</b>` to end bold.

   `i`. Traditional formatting is `<i>` to start italicized text and `</i>` to end italic.

   `blockquote`. Marking out text with `<blockquote>` before and `</blockquote>` after keeps its original formatting and line breaks.

   `a = href, target`. You can use traditional HTML formatting, `<a="www.flickr.com">`. Give a link from the picture to a Web address.

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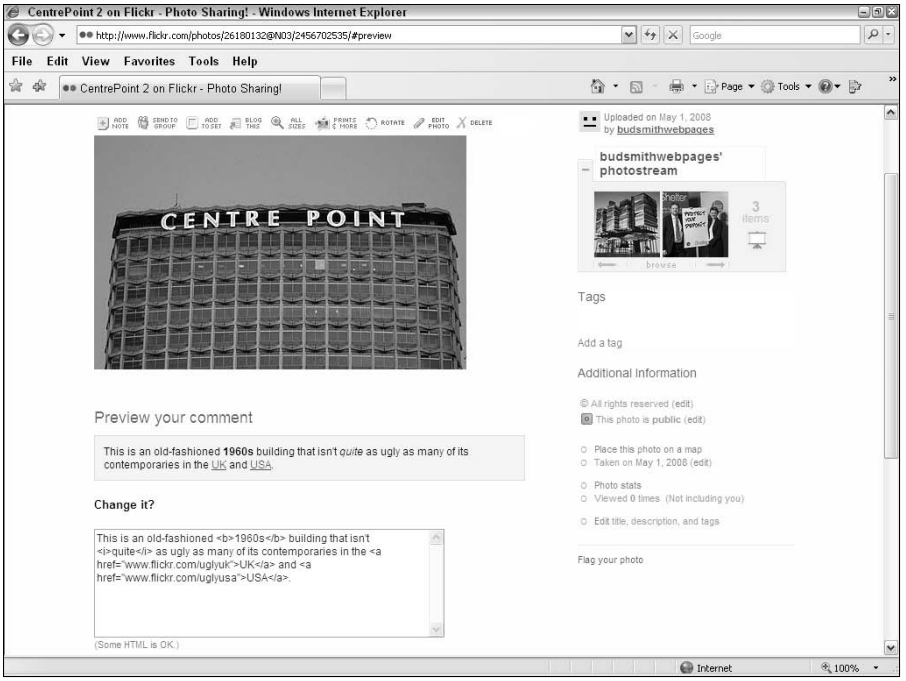

Figure 5-11: Comments make pictures richer.

Taking Flickr Further

You can do much more with Flickr. Getting experience with uploading, modifying, commenting on, and tagging photos prepares you to take advantage of all of Flickr's features.

You can organize your photos using Organizr, Flickr's photo-file management system. You can change access permission, dates, and tags. You can create sets and modify your Photostream, the log of recently updated photos.

As you do more with photos, even your view of Flickr's home page changes to reflect your work.

Flickr can, all by itself, become a major preoccupation. For example, you can find popular tags on Flickr and set yourself the task of creating and adding new photos that extend your favorite tag sets.

You can also use Flickr to host photos that you then publish on your own Web site or blog, as described in previous chapters — so Flickr can be a resource for all your Web publishing. Enjoy!

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Chapter 6

Playing Sounds on Your Site

In This Chapter

- Using sound on Web pages
- Getting sounds
- Creating an MP3 file
- Creating a MySpace account

Sound is one of the most important sensory resources we have. It's our early warning system and our primary means of communicating directly with each other. Music is one of the great artistic forms and one of the main pleasures in most people's lives.

Music download sites, for legal, illegal, and gray-market recordings, are among the most popular sites on the Web, consuming huge amounts of bandwidth and attracting usage, attention, lawsuits, and even prosecutions in large numbers. The leading *legal* music-download site, iTunes, is one of the great successes in not only Web but business history.

Yet most Web sites offer only "The Sound of Silence" (to name-drop Simon and Garfunkel). And thankfully so, many of us think; having sound come on suddenly when one visits a Web site is one of the greatest and, often, nastiest surprises that can happen to someone using the Web. (As you'll know if you've ever been embarrassed at work by people turning around to see what the noise suddenly coming from your PC is all about.)

As the example of noisy Web sites illustrates, sound is also very basic and very emotional for people. We have strong reactions to sounds. Teenagers — and, in the U.K. and other countries, soccer fans — often organize into tribe-like groups around music and songs, and music has been used throughout history to organize, direct, and inspire soldiers. So using sound wrongly has penalties that may outweigh the benefits of using it right.

Sound is also a vital — if overlooked — part of video files, the subject of the next chapter. It's the unification of the power of sound with the power of moving images, offering a decent simulation of a real-world scene, that makes video so affecting.

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This chapter describes some of the issues around using sound on a Web site — and the much sunnier picture for downloadable tunes, including how to post a tune on MySpace, the extremely popular Web-site host.

Compressing and Decompressing Sound

The human ear is really, really good at distinguishing among different sounds. We can usually spot "foreigners" — whether from another country or maybe just from another neighborhood — by their accents in a second or two, or recognize a favorite tune in just a couple of notes.

This is because there's a tremendous amount of information in the sounds we can hear. To capture this information accurately for computer storage and transmission takes a lot of cleverness — not to mention bandwidth. A relatively uncompressed file format such as the Windows WAV format and the roughly comparable Apple AIFF format take about 170 KB for *each second* of sound, or about 10 MB per minute. Even a fast Internet connection can't deliver "live" WAV sound; users must wait anywhere from several seconds to many minutes before they can hear the sound, depending on how fast the connection is and how long the sound file is.

The most popular compressed file format, the MP3 format — the audio equivalent of the marvelous JPEG photo format described in Chapter 5, using tricks of psychology and physics to capture music in a compressed file — takes about 17 KB per second of sound, or about 1 MB per minute, one-tenth the bit rate of a WAV file. This is just within the capability of most Internet connections to play back an MP3 live, or nearly live, or to download the file within a few minutes for later playback.

Despite its cleverness and success, MP3 may not be as aesthetically successful as its pictorial equivalent, JPEG. Why not? After all, the slight coldness and tinniness of MP3 files is probably, objectively, no worse than the slight visual "noise" found in moderately compressed JPEG files. But because sound is so emotionally involving, MP3 files are perhaps more likely than JPEGS to be experienced as not-quite-good-enough. Two indicators of this dissatisfaction: Vinyl record albums seem to be experiencing a slight resurgence, and there's some support for more precise audio-file formats, despite the cost in file size and transmission time.

Not every computer out there has all the necessary elements to play back sounds in a sound file — a program to decode the sound and play it, sound hardware to deliver sound to output(s), and speakers and/or a headphone jack to actually produce sound the user can hear. Where all the elements are in place, they can be turned off (or the headphones not plugged in), and users may be anywhere from slightly disinclined to absolutely unwilling to turn on the sound gear just to hear the sound you want them to listen to.

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Naming of parts for sounds

Here I'm going to refer to *sounds* to mean any of the range of different kinds of sounds you can put on a Web site and *tunes* to mean music files intended for listening, like the kinds of tunes you hear on the radio — including (just to focus on a typical American radio lineup) rock 'n' roll, country and western, classical, Spanish-language, and experimental radio stations!

Using Sound within a Web Page

Many of us would like to have a soundtrack or mood music for our Web sites — that is, a tune that plays continuously while the user surfs around our site. This would make using the site more pleasant — and contribute to its having a personality. Ideally, the user would be able to easily turn the sound on or off — most users would probably prefer being offered this choice before any sound started.

Unfortunately, making this seemingly simple set of desiderata happen in a user-friendly way is just about impossible. You can put a sound file in a Web *page* but not a Web *site.* So you can indeed start a sound playing on a given page of your site. But when the user leaves that page for the next one, sound stops.

On serving the next page, you can play a new sound file — or the same sound file again — but it won't pick up seamlessly from where the sound on the previous page left off. In fact, it's just about impossible to know where the old sound file stopped so as to try to make the sound on the new page pick up again in the same spot.

In the example that follows, I show how to place a sound file in a Web page and attempt to have it start playing automatically. Giving the user a choice before the sound starts playing requires JavaScript or other more advanced Web technologies that are beyond the scope of this book. If you want to offer this capability to the user, see *JavaScript For Dummies* (Wiley) or another source about JavaScript.

Alas, the seemingly unambitious goal of having background music play as the user visits one's Web site is surprisingly difficult to make work consistently.

Using sound on a Web page is easier on any specific type and version of a Web browser, but not easy across different types of Web browsers and different versions. The accepted HTML coding for this capability has changed over the last several years. It used to be that the `embed` HTML command could, well, embed any kind of multimedia file in a Web site. But `EMBED` never became an official standard, so Microsoft stopped supporting it, supporting the `bgsound`

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(`background sound`) command instead. Due to popular demand, Microsoft then added support for `embed` back in, but not all users of Internet Explorer have the fix.

Without `embed` in Internet Explorer, to make sound work across all types of browsers required that you execute the `embed` HTML command for some browsers and the `bgsound` HTML command for others. This can be done by combining the two commands, as I show later in this chapter (and explain in later chapters as well).

Unfortunately, the JavaScript code that could help you make the decision has compatibility problems across early browsers as well. If you made any mistake at all, or were just unlucky, sound would either not play, or the same sound would play twice, with the two instances of the sound slightly out of synch with each other!

Because of all this complexity, few Web sites embed sounds in Web pages. Because it's rarely needed, some users haven't downloaded the software needed to play back sounds from within Web pages. So if you go to the effort, and make it work, you may still be asking the user to go through a difficult and time-consuming program download just to play a background sound in your Web page.

So, believe it or not, there's no simple, reliable, completely user-acceptable way to make a sound play in your Web page. Except by embedding the sound in a video file! No wonder more music videos are now played back on YouTube than on MTV and other music-oriented TV channels.

However, `embed` is supported widely enough for "fun" use, where it doesn't reflect badly on your professional competence or your organization if it doesn't work for some people. I show how to `embed` an audio file via MySpace in the example that's coming up shortly.

Getting, Creating, and Including Sound Files by Download

Luckily it's fairly easy to set up a sound file to play by download. If the user has the necessary software and hardware set up and turned on, sound will play. If not, the user probably knows it, and won't click the download link, limiting the impact of any problems on you, the Web-page creator.

Making the user click a link avoids the problem with the conflict between the `embed` command and the `bgsound` command described above, so you don't need to use JavaScript or some other technology to try to help your Web page decide what to do.

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When standards fail

Early versions of HTML included support for two media types: hypertext and GIF images. JPEG images were not included, and sound and other multimedia files weren't either.

When JPEG files first became popular in Web pages, back in the mid-'90s, you had to download a separate player to view them. Some of these players were pretty good and produced amazingly sharp images; others were crummy. But HTML was still flexible at this time, and JPEG support was added so widely that it became a standard part of the Web browsers that people use today.

Technical Stuff: At first, embedding a multimedia file was easy; the `embed` command was used, usually bringing up Apple QuickTime as the player. But Microsoft quit supporting `embed`, apparently for security reasons. Microsoft recommends the `bgsound` tag instead, but Mozilla — including the currently popular Firefox browser, with about 10 per cent of the user base — doesn't support it.

A similar problem has hampered the physical equipment needed to play back sound. Simply put, sound playback was not part of the PC standard set by IBM back in the '80s, and is still not a completely standard part of a desktop PC, partly because corporations (until recently) have not seen the need for sound, or even actively have discouraged using it. Sound hardware is standard for laptops, but that's still only a part of the market.

For standards to work, all the major players involved have to work together. With Microsoft supporting Windows Media Player, the ex-Microsofties at Real Networks pushing RealPlayer, Apple proliferating its own QuickTime, and the Mozilla people requiring extra steps for any sound support at all, the standards process for sound files within Web pages has broken down. Of course, with universal hardware support lacking, it's little wonder. What is potentially one of the most important tools a Web-page author would like to have in his or her arsenal is missing in action.

Steps shown in Chapter 10 (for a WYSIWYG editor) or Chapter 14 (for "straight" HTML) show how to include a link to an MP3 file. When the user clicks on the link, if everything's set up and turned on, sound will play.

But how do you get a sound file, or create one? I show you here. Then you can make sound available to your users, putting it just a click away.

Getting an MP3 file

At first, it seems fairly easy to find an MP3 file on the Web. However, people know that MP3 files are desirable, so there are a lot of conditions around many of the files out there. Also, some people who want to distribute viruses, spyware, and other malware use MP3 files to attract visitors to their sites — and the innocent visitors leave with more than they bargained for.

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Also, the most desirable MP3 files are free copies of hit songs. *These files are illegal* and attract increasingly aggressive litigation and prosecution. So, although they're common on the Web, they tend to be hidden away or only available to those who use file-sharing services (which may themselves carry viruses, spyware, and other such dismal "free gifts").

One trustworthy source for virus-free, legal, free MP3s is the music-download section of CNET's `download.com`, at `music.download.com`. See Figure 6-1 for an example of what's available. Not many hit tunes are there, but not many problems are, either.

Figure 6-1: CNET's music-download site is a haven, away from MP3-related spyware.

You can search the Web for other sites, many of which are trustworthy — but make sure your virus-protection software is up to date and running first!

Check the permissions on any MP3 file you find carefully. Once you're certain the file is free of copyright problems and available for free use, you can do either of two things:

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- **Link to it in place from your own site.** This is easy and convenient. If this gives the appearance of the file being on your site, there is the possibility of problems with copyright, as you've made someone else's property appear to be your own, so make sure the file is free to use. If you bring a lot of file downloads to the site, you're also abusing their bandwidth, as someone else's bandwidth is serving your purposes. This is unlikely to be a problem for an occasional download, but for heavy use it's unfair to the file's host.
- **Download the file and transfer it to your own site.** If permissions allow this, it gives you control *and* responsibility. It also gives you the bill if there are a whole lot of downloads and you're paying for download bandwidth.

In either case, to make the file available for download, you link to it from your Web page to the location where it's hosted, whether that's on someone else's site or your own site.

The HTML code for this is simple:

To get the latest *a capella* song by me, sung loudly and off-key in the shower, `<a href=''www.dummies.com/myfile.mp3''>click here</a>`.

I show how to incorporate this functionality into a Web page a little farther along in the book, using a WYSIWYG Web-page creation tool in Chapter 10 and using HTML in Chapter 14.

Creating an MP3 file

It's very satisfying to create and deliver your own MP3 file. In this example, I use the simplest possible tools to create a sound file and convert it to MP3.

The example is a voice file, because that's the easiest to create for the most people and more often useful in a typical, rather than a specialist music, Web site.

MP3 is so good with music that it's a bit of overkill for voice files, which can be encoded and played back with less-powerful compression algorithms. But so many people have set their systems up to play MP3 files these days — both on their PCs and on music players such as the Apple iPod — that you may as well go with the flow and join the crowd (with apologies for using two clichés in a row).

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If you have a Mac, it includes well-regarded built-in software to accomplish these tasks called iLife; please refer to the iLife documentation for steps. Follow these steps to create an MP3 file under Windows:

1. **Find the built-in microphone, if your system has one, or attach a microphone to your computer.**

   It's good if you have a built-in microphone or one lying around. If not, try to determine the size of the microphone opening on your PC, or take your PC with you to the shop so you can be sure of getting a fit. Or, if you have an unused USB connector, consider buying a USB microphone, which are well-regarded and are certain to fit.

2. **Open Windows Sound Recorder by choosing Start➪Programs➪Accessories➪Entertainment➪Sound Recorder.**

   The Sound Recorder application window is very small and can't be resized. However, like MS Paint (described in the previous chapter), it includes a lot of capability; you can make sounds louder, quieter, faster, and slower, for instance. The Sound Recorder application is shown in Figure 6-2.

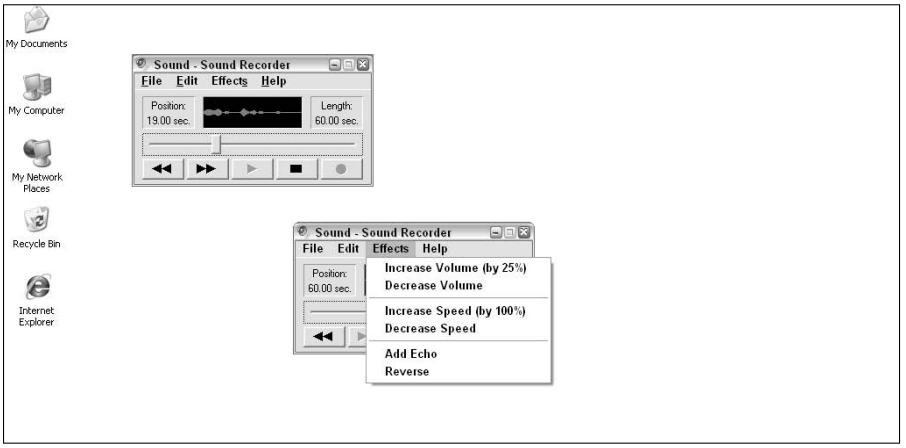

Figure 6-2: Sound Recorder during recording, with editing options showing.

3. **Record your message. Click the red Record button, wait three seconds, and speak. When you're finished speaking, wait three seconds and click Stop.**

   The sound is recorded. The three seconds of "blank tape" at the beginning and end give you room to play with in editing and prevent the recording from seeming to start or stop too abruptly.

4. **Click Play to hear your message. Choose File➪New and then return to Step 3 to re-record if necessary.**

   When you're happy with your message, go to the next step.

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5. **Save the file as a WAV file.**

   This is the only file format supported by Sound Recorder — no tricky choices to make here.

6. **Convert the file to MP3.**

   You may already have a converter program on your PC. If not, search the Web for "MP3 converter" or look for a program of this type on CNET's `download.com`. One well-regarded program that's free is Audacity, which you can download from `audacity.soundforge.net`. It should be quite simple to open the WAV file and save it in MP3 format. You can read the Help file information for instructions on how to edit your file.

7. **Play the MP3 file to test it.**

   You should be able to play the file by double-clicking it. It will play back in Windows Media Player, QuickTime, or another media player you have on your computer.

8. **Compare the file sizes of the WAV and MP3 files.**

   Just to convince yourself of how great MP3 is, do a comparison: In Windows Explorer, navigate to the folder where the files are stored. Right-click each file icon and choose Properties. Inspect the size of each file.

You're done! You now have an MP3 file ready to host on your Web site. And, more importantly, you've learned the process of creating an MP3 file from scratch.

The process is the same for podcasting as for Web-page hosting, so you may have a future in creating your own music or talk show for playback on iPod and other MP3 players.

Posting a Sound File on MySpace

MySpace is amazing, and amazingly popular. It's the graffiti wall for the digital generation, hugely popular with teenagers, young adults, and others who keep up with music, along with smatterings of all kinds of people.

There are a huge number of things you can do on MySpace, but there's one thing it's definitely the best place for: sharing your enthusiasm about music. There are millions of people on MySpace interested in and willing to listen to, comment on, and even become a fan of a new artist or group of just about any type.

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MySpace is also famous for being relatively "wild," with lots of, as the Brits would say, "dodgy" (or downright objectionable) videos and other content that only get taken down slowly, and after complaints are made, if at all. Also, even some of the non-obscene content is not for all tastes; when I was logged on, there was a constantly looping video on the home page of two furry toys beating the heck out of each other, which was sort of funny but not what I would have chosen to watch over and over and over. So MySpace is not the place to send your 9-year-old nephew to listen to your latest upload; kids might find lots of objectionable stuff after they view your new cultural contribution.

Join the MySpace cadets

Joining MySpace is relatively simple. Follow these steps:

1. **Go to the MySpace home page at** `www.myspace.com` **(as shown in Figure 6-3) and click the orange Sign Up button.**

   The Join MySpace Here! Page appears. Click the Sign Up Button to start.

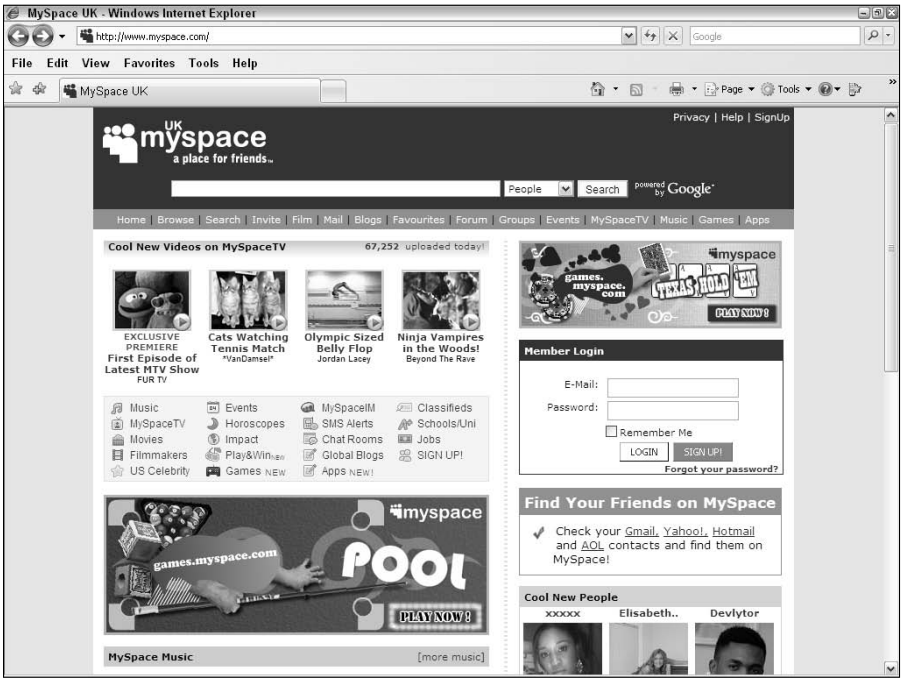

Figure 6-3: You may want to make MySpace your space.

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2. **Enter login details — a valid e-mail address and a password.**

   The e-mail address you enter will be used to confirm your sign-up and possibly to send you a MySpace newsletter. It may be best to avoid using your work e-mail address, as the MySpace newsletter may not be what your management expects you to be receiving at work.

3. **Note the extra sign-up areas at the right for BAND/MUSICIAN, COMEDIAN, and FILMMAKER members. If you fit in one of these categories, click the appropriate Sign up Here link to sign up.**

   Because MySpace has landed in some trouble for hosting copyrighted material, it limits what users can post. These options allow you to upload files of your own performances — MP3s, for instance, for BAND/MUSICIAN members — but only if you pass MySpace's checks (which can vary from one period of time to the next) that you really do qualify as a BAND/MUSICIAN. Ditto for the other creative categories of members.

4. **Enter personal details — your name, location, birthday, gender, and language. Decide whether you want to allow others to see if it's your birthday.**

   The location info is to allow friends and family to find you on MySpace. On the birthday option, I chose "No," not wanting to get any kind of MySpace spam — or, for that matter, to learn what might be more than I wanted to know about my fellow MySpacers' ideas of appropriate birthday greetings.

5. **Enter the verification text. If you can't make it out, click the Refresh button to bring up different characters.**

   The verification characters prevent automated entry of new MySpace membership details.

6. **Right-click the Terms of Service and Privacy Policy to open them each in a new browser window. Read them, and then close the browser windows. Then click the check box to indicate you've read them.**

   Note that this process may include signing you up for a MySpace newsletter and other materials from MySpace. Refuse this option if you wish.

7. **Click the Sign Up button.**

   The Welcome screen appears, giving you the chance to upload a photo or add friends.

8. **Click Skip this step twice to skip the photo and friends options for now.**

   Your MySpace home page appears.

9. **Click the Edit Profile button.**

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The Profile Edit page appears. You can enter HTML or even CSS code here. As you learn more about HTML, you can use your new MySpace page to experiment.

10. **Embed a link to a sound file.**

    All sorts of code to do things in MySpace can be found easily online. Embedding is a bit tricky because of the need to accommodate both the `embed` and `bgsound` commands, but it can be done, as shown in Figure 6-4. (The last part of the command is `</noembed>`.) By placing the commands in the Headline area, the sound plays automatically when the user visits the page.

    One good source I found for MySpace-ready HTML, with plenty of links to other resources, is `www.hypergurl.com`.

11. **Click Save to save your work.**

    You'll return to the MySpace home page.

12. **Visit and test your page.**

    You'll return to the MySpace home page.

13. **Keep updating your MySpace!**

    MySpace is a great place to have fun and to learn Web-page skills as well. Keep having fun with it.

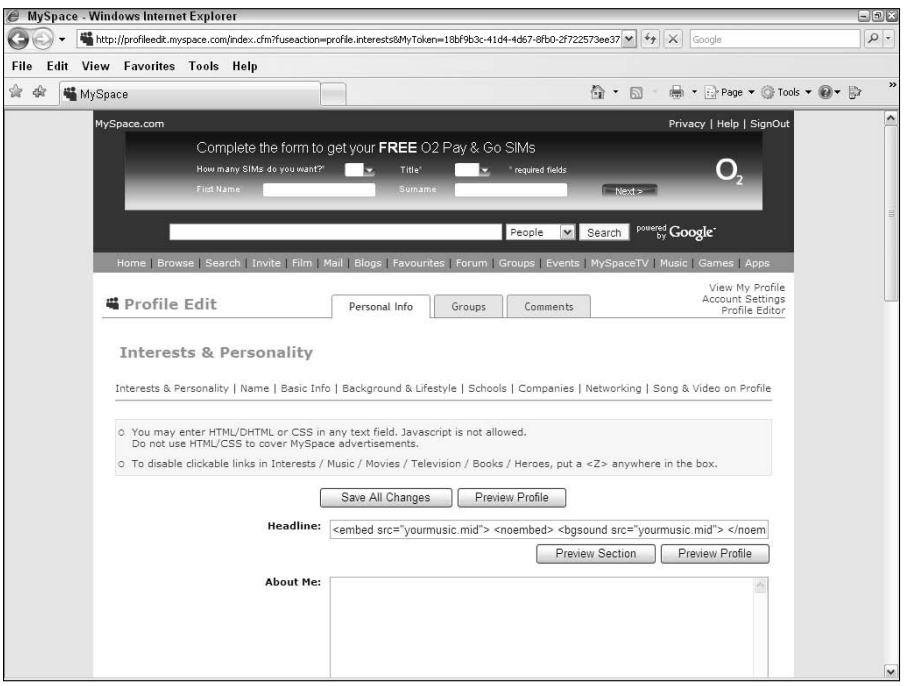

Figure 6-4: EMBED links to music you like.

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Chapter 7

Screening Videos on Your Site

In This Chapter

- Keeping your clips short
- The role of YouTube in Web video
- Finding video clips to use
- Making your own videos
- Converting to different formats
- Uploading a clip to YouTube

A great deal of derision is poured on television — "a vast wasteland," it was once called, by the chairperson of the Federal Communications Commission, no less. Even the best-known and most widely used Web site for videos, YouTube, gets far more usage than it does respect.

But video is actually the highest form of multimedia. Incorporating images, animation, and sound, it evokes reality better than any other medium. And video is increasingly used even when the primary purpose is to convey sound, as in playing a music video.

Keeping Online Video Small, Short, and Sweet

Pervasive as it is online, video has the potential to impose tremendous burdens on even the most powerful personal computer and the fastest Internet connection. In fact, no one even thinks about recording, transmitting, and playing back uncompressed video full-screen. The bulk of online video you'll see is compressed and concise, for some very good reasons. . . .

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Why Web video is compressed

To play back a completely uncompressed widescreen video at 30 frames per second would require a connection with a speed of more than 1 Gb/second (1 gigabit, or one billion bits, per second), more than a thousand times faster than the rated speed of a very fast home or office connection. We're just not there yet. Instead, video is heavily compressed, using a three-stage process:

- **First, video is shown in a small window.** YouTube recently upgraded its offering and began showing most videos in a relatively generous 480 x 360-pixel window, exactly one-fifth the pixels available on a typical 1024 x 768-pixel screen.
- **Then the frame rate is reduced.** Though players are meant to adapt to the bandwidth available, a rate of 10 frames per second — one-third the frame rate of television — is considered acceptable.
- **Then the images themselves are compressed.** JPEG compression, good as it is for images, only works with one frame at a time, so MPEG — Motion Picture Experts Group — video compression is used instead.

MPEG standards are very widely used online (MPEG audio compression is more widely known as MP3), and no wonder: MPEG compression is quite clever. It takes advantage of parts of a scene that don't change from one frame to the next, and only encodes the changed parts. Unfortunately, when part of a scene changes very fast, or all of a scene changes fairly fast, there's often visible distortion in the scene until the compression and decompression can catch up.

For amateur videos such as those seen on most Web sites or on YouTube, this is not a big problem. But for enthusiasts and professionals, image-quality concerns can consume many hours of work and rework.

It's very common for video clips, even on the relatively robust YouTube site, to stall during playback, sometimes for a long time. This is extremely frustrating for users — and for you, if the video is on your Web site. Unfortunately, there is so much variation at all points in transmission, reception, and display of online video — from the servers, across the Internet and on the user's computer — that it's impossible to give users any quick or certain fix for any problems they experience. (Though you can make good money selling more reliable video solutions to corporations and government agencies.)

Keeping your video clips short

Compression helps your video work well on the Web, but to make it sweet, keep it short. Long videos can work (see the accompanying sidebar), but they have some problems that make them the exception rather than the rule:

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For typical YouTube-style video clips — medium-size 480 x 360-pixel images, harshly compressed, usually grainy and a bit dim — each 15 seconds of video takes up roughly 1 MB. That's 4 MB per minute. Not too bad a size for a three-minute music video, but that one-hour CEO speech at the annual results announcement is going to take up 240 MB!

- **Video can't be searched with the same precision as text.** Searching the video part is tedious, with the necessity to drag the slider back and forth, and searching for a string of words is just about impossible. (If the text has been transcribed quite accurately and made searchable, it becomes possible, but this is rare.)
- **Start time is an issue.** If you watch the progress bar on YouTube closely when you watch a video, you'll see that the video begins to download first, then playback starts only after a chunk has downloaded. Basically, the player waits until it can get a head start sufficient that the downloading, as it continues in the background, should complete before the playback in the foreground catches up. If playback overtakes downloading, the video clip must pause for downloading to get ahead of playback again.

For a short video clip, the initial wait for a "buffer" of downloaded video to accumulate is only a few seconds. But for a long clip, the wait may be many minutes.

So keeping your video clips short makes sense for the user, as well as for technical reasons. For that CEO speech, a few minutes of highlights will get a lot more downloads than a full version. Instead of a complete video, the full speech can be delivered in audio as a podcast, perhaps synched with display of any charts or photos that the CEO showed.

If you must deliver a long video — if the CEO wants every moment of his or her precious speaking time to be immortalized in downloadable form for the ages — break up the speech into clips. Preface each clip with a brief description. And hope that at least some of your site visitors have the patience to get through all of it.

Any good long videos out there?

For an example of long video clips that work, visit the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's high-quality MPEG download page at `www.cpsc.gov/mpeg2.html`. To accompany their press releases, they offer high-quality clips (as an alternative to lower-quality streaming video). Clips available are up to 100 MB in size and take 10 minutes or more to download, even over a fairly fast broadband connection. Yet the playback, while high-quality, is in a much smaller video window than on YouTube. That's a trade-off to keep in mind if you want to go long.

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The Role of YouTube

The cost of storing and downloading videos is high enough for even large, well-funded organizations to think twice before posting them, let alone individuals out to have a little fun. This is where YouTube comes in.

YouTube allows you to use its site as a storage site for your video clips. You can store your video clips on YouTube, link to them from your own site, and they play as if you were storing them on your own server. All YouTube gets for this is a YouTube logo showing on the clip and the right to make your videos available on YouTube as well.

This is one of the greatest deals since — well, since Google bought YouTube for $1.65 billion in 2006. That's a lot of money, but for the king of Web search to acquire the king of Web video — as YouTube's founders described it when they announced the deal — for a small fraction of its value today was one of the steals of the Internet's short but exciting history.

YouTube was suffering from increasingly serious service problems before the acquisition, and Google's involvement has been critical to the continued success of YouTube. Google uses proprietary techniques for storing and retrieving large amounts of video quickly and cheaply that were very much needed to support YouTube's continued growth. And Google's deep pockets supported the investment needed to keep the service growing even as some of the sharper business brains around tried to figure out how to make money from it. (In early 2008, YouTube's bandwidth costs alone were estimated at $1 million a day.)

And now that I've brought it up, how *will* they make money from it? The answer, so far, is similar to how Google makes money from search capabilities: by placing small, relevant text ads next to the video when it's played back on YouTube. This kind of thing is a multibillion-dollar business for text search, and may become similarly large for videos. But it's a pretty harmless way for your free video storage and playback to be paid for.

All of this is important to you as a Web-page creator because a potentially huge source of technical problems — and cost for you in using video in your site — is completely solved for you by YouTube. "You" can just put your videos on their site and have them played back for free on any "Tube" on the planet! Pretty cool, huh?

Don't think you're the only one doing this. Governments, political campaigns, and global corporations all host video on YouTube. Figure 7-1 shows the YouTube channel of the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office as just one of many examples. (The clip would have benefitted if they'd given the young woman a bit of frontlighting, as described in the next section.) Join the crowd!

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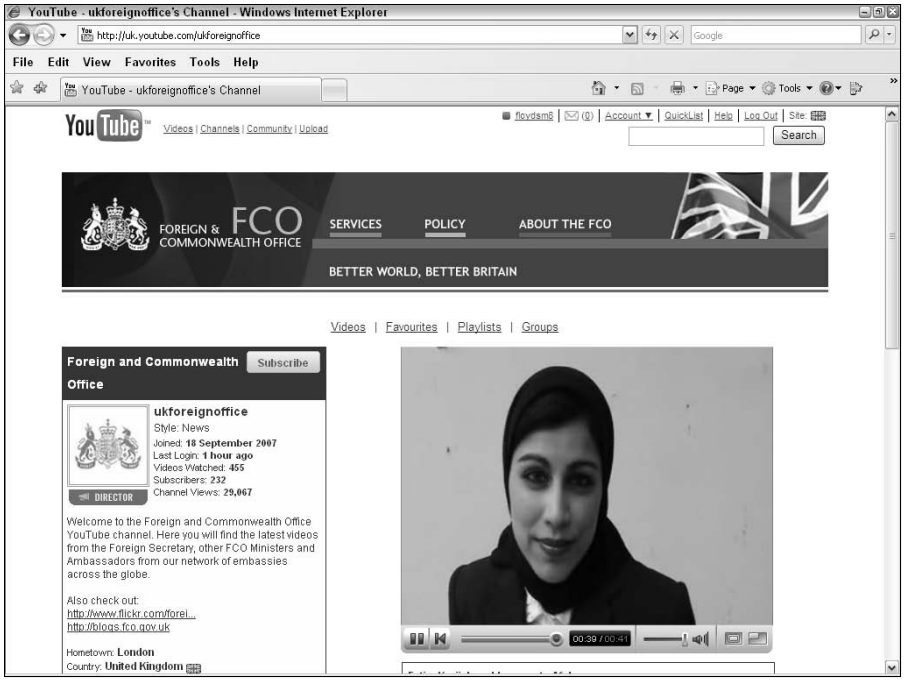

Figure 7-1: Her Majesty's Government "gets" YouTube.

Finding Videos for Your Site Online

The easiest way to get video for your Web site is to find a video you like on YouTube, link to it from within your site, and the user will be able to play it while looking at your site, yet all the mechanics are handled by YouTube.

Each video on YouTube is accompanied by the HTML tags for including it in your Web page. Putting YouTube-hosted videos in your Web page is described in Chapter 10, for use with WYSIWYG Web-page tools, and in Chapter 14 for working directly in HTML.

For finding videos for your site, you should use YouTube's Advanced Search, as shown in Figure 7-2.

Searching for specific kinds of videos on YouTube may not always be easy. Yes, it is easy to find music videos by a specific artist, for instance (of course, if the person who posted a video misspelled "Duran Duran" or whatever the band's name is in the posting, nobody's likely to find it!). But the kinds of searches you'll want to do for Web site use might be quite different.

Let's say you want a clip that demonstrates cooking in a wok, just to bring to life the concept of what a wok is for people who may never have seen one.

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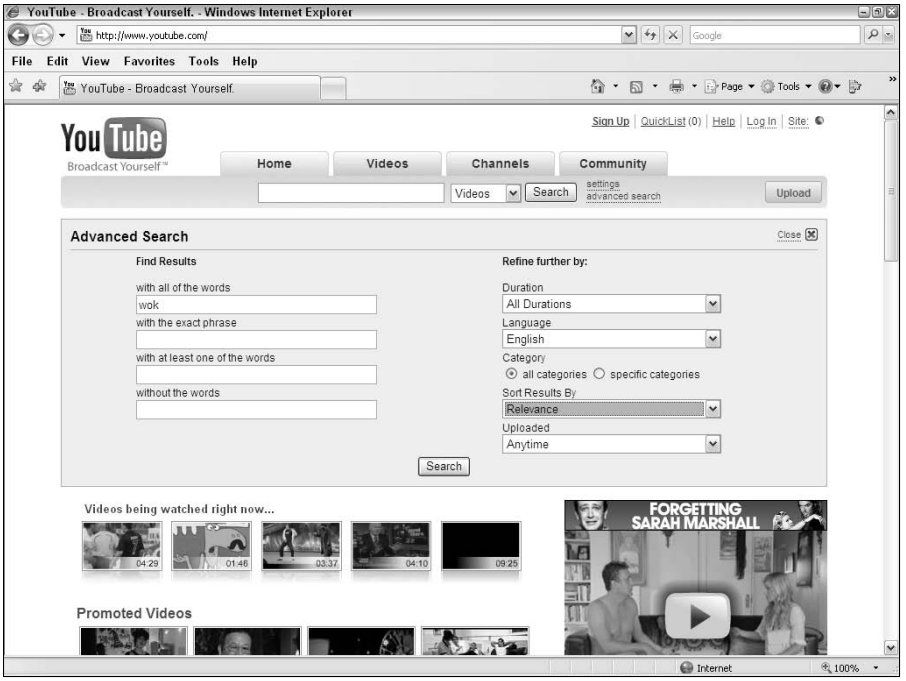

Figure 7-2: An Advanced Search for video from every walk of life.

When I searched for "wok" using YouTube advanced search, I found a couple of clips prominently featuring obscenities, but also several that showed a wok in an interesting way that I could use on a personal Web site.

But let's say I wanted to show using a wok to cook vegetables on a site for vegetarians — so I don't want any meat involved. Typing in "wok vegetables" only got me one suitable clip. And the clip was a bit too long; there was no way for me to edit it down.

Getting a bit creative, and stretching my knowledge of Japanese food preparation to the limit, I tried "wok tempura." This got me a bunch of clips, several of which involved the use of a wok to make vegetable tempura. The word "wok" wasn't mentioned in the words though; I had basically backed into what I wanted, the wok, by association with a dish that's commonly *made* in a wok, tempura.

Inspired (bored? obsessed?), I tried several other combinations of words, dropping "wok" altogether, and got several promising clips I could consider for my intended purpose.

The problem gets even worse if you want to use video, or music attached to a video, to set a mood. The initial results for "peaceful" include a movie trailer for "Peaceful Warrior" and typography relating to "tragic peaceful death."

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The first result for "calm" shows two young men playing a war-themed video game in a tournament. Yikes.

However, none of this means the desired results aren't out there, just that they are likely to be hard to find. Set yourself broad goals before looking for a specific piece of video — and be prepared to look at a lot of stuff, not all of it necessarily wholesome, before finding what you want (or settling for something you deem close enough).

If you really want to have a YouTube video on your own hard drive, there are many tools you can find online for grabbing them. Perhaps the simplest is KissYouTube, an online site that makes getting a video clip from YouTube ridiculously easy. You just navigate to the video you want on YouTube, then insert the word "Kiss" into the URL just in front of YouTube. Press Enter, and a download box appears to ask you where you want to save the movie to. (For detailed instructions, visit KissYouTube at `www.kissyoutube.com`. For a couple of gentle-but-timely caveats, see the next couple of paragraphs and the handy sidebar.)

Be careful how you use the clips you download; the person who uploaded the video to YouTube did *not* thereby agree automatically to your borrowing and re-using it. If you're downloading video because you want to use it on your site, ask the owner first — and abide by the answer you get. If the person got the video from somewhere else, doesn't own it, and can't really give you permission to use it, you're better off *not* using it on your Web page.

You can link to online video clips from many sources besides YouTube, but those hosts may well frown on your linking to their expensively produced, stored, and served clips — especially as they may have rights worries of their own. Be very careful whose online videos you link to from your site, especially if you embed the video clip in your own page. Remember that (as mentioned in Chapter 5) the government is always a good source of free media content.

Capturing Videos from a Camera

You can also capture your own videos for online use. There used to be a lot of things to think about in doing this but, with the availability of YouTube to "launder" your videos into an acceptable format and size, store and serve them for you, and provide you with the HTML to embed them in your Web page, many of those concerns are taken care of.

There are a variety of tools you can use to edit video; if you're using a camcorder, it probably came with one of several available tools. The Macintosh comes with iLife, which includes a well-regarded movie program, and Windows comes with Windows Movie Maker — which you can download for free from Microsoft if you don't have it already. There are also tools available free, or free for an initial trial period, from sources such as CNET's `download.com`.

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Legal concerns for video?

There are huge copyright issues with video and with YouTube. But as I write this, I'm listening to an REM video on YouTube. (The visual part of the video is just a static shot of their album cover; it's the sound I'm interested in.) REM is famously protective of their intellectual property, but they don't object to fans posting a grainy-looking video with somewhat tinny audio on YouTube.

It's possible that someday the band (or their record label) will go after YouTube. But it's pretty unlikely that ordinary people who link to the video from their own Web sites will be involved. However, if your site makes money, or if you have a lot of money that you need to protect, you may want to talk to a lawyer before linking to copyrighted content.

Another similar issue relates to *model releases* — permission forms that say, in effect, "Sure, you can use this image of me for the purpose you've explained to me." Before you use a photograph of someone else for any purpose, but especially before using it to make money, you should have a signed model release listing the rights you have to the image, or the person depicted can come after you legally.

The same reasoning used for photographs applies to video; even if people willingly upload videos of themselves with no thought of compensation, your re-use of such a video on your site could make you liable to compensating the person later.

But, as with music copyrights, these concerns seem to be mostly ignored when it comes to video on YouTube. Again, if your site makes money — or if you, personally, have a lot of money — you may want to talk to a lawyer before linking to content that depicts recognizable individuals who have not given permission for you to use their image.

Overall, such legal worries seem (to me) to favor using YouTube — which encourages the re-use of their videos — as opposed to other online sources for video. Google is big and rich enough to go toe-to-toe with anyone who might come after YouTube for infringement of copyright or image rights. In protecting themselves, they'll be protecting you as well.

I won't describe how to use these different programs here, as there are so many of them; refer to the program's online help file, its manual, or a third-party book on it.

If you're planning to make a habit of making your own video clips and uploading them to YouTube or elsewhere — hey, no copyright worries! — check out *Digital Video For Dummies,* 4th Edition (from Wiley). It covers making video with Windows, Mac, and Linux machines.

Meanwhile, some general steps for capturing video are coming right up.

Whichever program (or platform) you use, don't worry too much about which video format to save the resulting file in. YouTube accepts .WMV (Windows movies), .AVI (a common Windows format), .MOV (QuickTime video), MPEG (the cross-platform standard), and .MP4 formats.

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Just for your interest: YouTube will convert the video to a proprietary standard using the Sorenson codec and MP3 audio, controlled by a Macromedia Flash wrapper. Flash does require a plug-in on the user's computer for playback, but most people have it already installed, if only because of previous visits to YouTube. If your users don't yet have Flash installed, it should install automatically when they visit your Web page.

Follow these steps to capture a video for use on your Web site via YouTube:

1. **Set up the shot with strong lighting.**

   All laptop users, and more and more desktop users, have LCD monitors, most of which are a step back in terms of image quality and clarity from the best of the old (expensive, clunky) CRT screens. Also, your video may well be viewed, particularly if on a laptop (or on a mobile phone!), in mediocre or even poor lighting conditions, such as bright room lighting or sunlight. All this means your clip needs to be as bright as possible. Light is the key secret of still photography and one of the two secrets of making video.

2. **Get light onto the faces of people (and animals) and onto the front of objects of interest.**

   See Figure 7-1 at the beginning of this chapter as an example of too little frontlighting.

   If you don't specifically light the faces of people and the fronts of things, they won't be very visible. If you have the background lit but not the foreground — say, if you're filming people with the sun at their backs — the camera will compensate to make the bright background acceptably dimmer, which will make the dim foreground nearly invisible. Although it can be uncomfortable, your subjects should face toward the light (if indoors) or the sun (if outdoors).

3. **Try to capture several seconds of the scene before and after the main action occurs.**

   Having a few quiet seconds of "intro" and "outro" allows the viewer to get used to the scene before anything happens, and to relax afterward before it ends. (People who watch YouTube a lot don't need this cosseting.)

4. **Try to keep motion slow and within a relatively small part of the frame.**

   Because of the way MPEG compression works, fast motion — or motion across the majority of the frame — is likely to cause visible distortion on playback.

5. **Spend extra time and effort on sound.**

   Sound is the other big secret of video. If you're going to use sound picked up during filming, consider using an external microphone — either a lapel microphone on the subject or a boom microphone that

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can be held close to the subject, but out of the picture. If you're going to add sound after filming, take your time and do it right.

As with light, any sound you don't capture during filming is lost forever.

6. **Try a rehearsal before you shoot the real thing.**

   It's surprisingly easy (and surprisingly uncommon practice) to do a dry run before shooting an important scene. Have your kids run around on the grass and film them a few days *before* the big soccer match. Have someone stand onstage behind the podium and try filming her for five minutes a few days *before* the big speech. Go through your entire production process (however simple it might be) and try the resulting video clip on the Web *before* the real event. What you learn will help you improve your final product many times over.

   You can use the soundtrack from your video, if it's good enough, as an audio podcast as well.

7. **Think twice before using a Web camera.**

   It seems that most of the videos on YouTube and other online video sites are the head of some young person tilting down to talk into the built-in or added-on Web camera on a PC; YouTube makes this very easy with their Quick Capture feature. But (as some of us have found out the hard way) most of us don't look so good from a shooting angle that points halfway up one's nose. Webcams are fun and convenient, and they're fine for young people who may not know each other in any other way except via Webcam conversations. But such clips don't work well for most older people, nor for most halfway serious purposes.

8. **Don't spend too much time in production.**

   You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, as the saying goes, and you can't add quality to a video after it's captured — you can only clean it up a bit. (Okay, if you're a pro or a talented amateur, you can clean it up a lot, time and budget permitting.)

   Your work is likely to be viewed in a small window on a crowded computer screen in bad lighting and heard over cheap built-in laptop computer speakers (or viewed on a mobile phone screen and heard over a mobile phone speaker!). Don't sweat the small stuff, or even the medium-sized stuff.

9. **Enjoy yourself.**

   It's easy to forget, after worrying about legal, technical, and creative concerns, but video is the most natural of media types, and putting video on the Web and playing it back should be fun. Spend some time worrying about the "hygiene" issues described here, but then just relax and enjoy yourself. Any sense of joy and playfulness you bring to your efforts will come through in the result.

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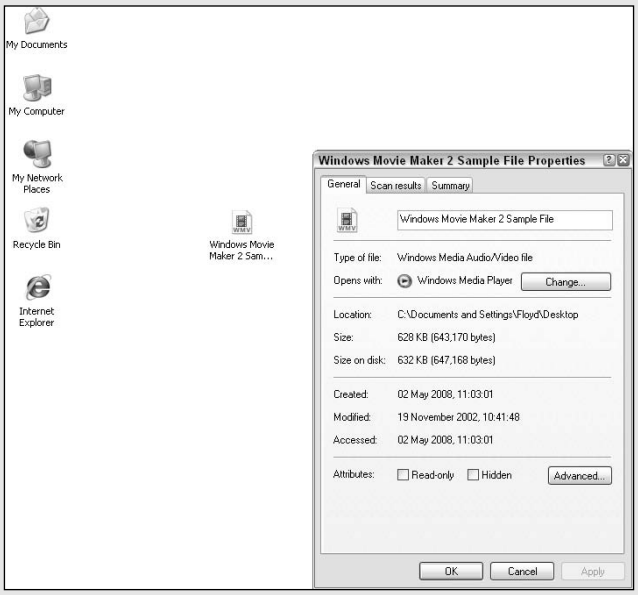
Opening up the convert-sation

Even if your video clip is not already in one of the formats YouTube accepts — .WMV (Windows movies), .AVI (a common Windows format), .MOV (QuickTime video), MPEG (the cross-platform standard) or .MP4 — you should be able to convert it to one of the accepted formats.

To find out the file type, look at the icon in Windows Explorer. For details, right-click the file icon in Windows Explorer; choose Properties from the cursor menu. Click the General tab; the file type will appear within a little icon symbol.



To convert the file, either open it in any program you have that will open it, and try to save it in one of the formats YouTube will accept; or visit `www.download.com` and search for "file converter" and the actual and desired file types for your file, for example `file converter flv wmv`. You're likely to find a suitable converter.

Uploading a Video Clip to YouTube

Uploading a video clip to YouTube is almost hilariously easy, as long as it's in one of the right video formats, as it's likely to be. (See the "Opening up the convert-sation" sidebar for what to do if it's not in one of the right video formats.) Follow these steps to put a clip on YouTube:

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1. **If you haven't previously joined YouTube or Google, get a Google ID, as described in Chapter 3.**

   A Google ID will not only let you use YouTube, but also all sorts of other cool Google services.

2. **Go to `youtube.com` and sign in to YouTube.**

3. **Click the yellow Upload button in the upper-right corner of the home page (and most other YouTube pages).**

   The Video Upload (Step 1 of 2) page appears.

4. **Enter key facts about your video — think carefully about the right words, as this is how people will search for it. Enter a Title, Description, a Video Category, and Tags.**

   You really want people who know you to be able to find the video, so enter your name in the Title, Description, or Tags area. An example is shown in Figure 7-3. Then a search on your name will find the video. Consider including the name of the place it was recorded and the names of people who helped create it and/or who appear in it. Don't worry about getting this wrong, though; you can always change it.

   Depending on the category you choose for your clip, YouTube offers selected, standard suggested tags that you simply click to add to your Tags list. Use as many of the suggested tags as apply to your posting; experienced YouTube users know these tags and search on them specifically, so you should use them where they make sense.

   A future employer may someday Google your or a friend's name, so be careful if the video is risqué, and don't post it at all if it shows anything that even looks illegal.

5. **To change Broadcast Options, click Choose Options if you want to change your video from Public, the default, to Private — that is, viewable only by a list you specify of up to 25 contacts you have in Google.**

   Try to choose Public if you can to make it easier for people not in your Google contacts list to find and enjoy your video. Also, remember the Private designation is only relative; people on your list can still gather others around their PC to see your clip, or use external programs such as KissYouTube to make a copy and forward it. (Even if it's sent to just one additional person, who sends it to one more, who sends it . . . .)

   If your video clip really needs to be *private,* don't put it on YouTube, or e-mail it, or otherwise share it.

6. **To change Date and Map Options, click Choose Options. Then enter the date the video was recorded and, if you'd like, select where it was recorded.**

   It's quick and fun to enter the date recorded — enter an approximate date if you're a bit hazy — and it's great to have the date with the video for future reference.

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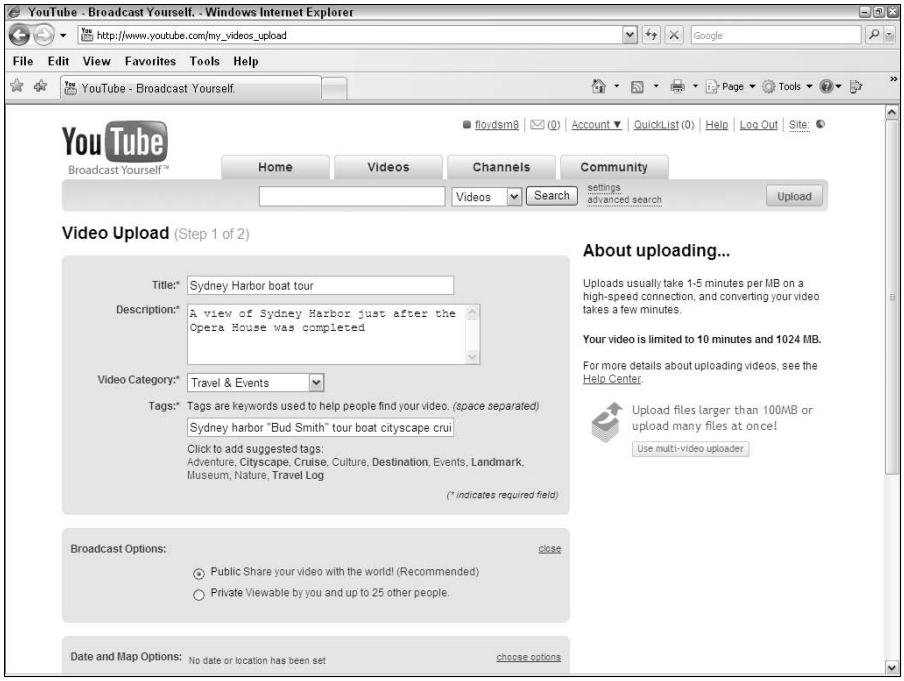

Figure 7-3: Get ready to upload your video.

I found it a bit time-consuming to specify the location for my video on Google Maps, but there are people who spend hours messing around with geocoding information so perhaps it's worth doing this as well.

7. **To change Sharing Options, click Choose Options.**

   Here you have some choices to make (but you knew that) . . .

   - You can change comments options so you can moderate or simply block comments; block comment voting; and moderate or block video responses to your own posting.
   - You can also block people from using YouTube to rate your video; to embed it in their Web page; and to view it from mobile phones or TV. However, people can still do these things themselves, without YouTube's help.
   - As with many sites, this seems like a lot of options, but it will not take you long to go through this once you've done it a couple of times.
   - If you're worried about straightforward, rude, or even obscene comments from viewers of your video, then be sure to block or moderate comments as needed — because YouTube users are often straightforward, rude, or even obscene. But unless the video is for work purposes or for family viewing with younger children, consider leaving all options open for now; interaction is what makes YouTube so much fun.

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8. **Select a video to upload.**

   To capture a video from a Web camera and then upload it, follow Steps 9 through 13 in this step list.

   To proceed with a video you already have, click the Upload a Video button. The Video Upload (Step 2 of 2) dialog box for a video upload appears, as shown in Figure 7-4. Here's the procedure from there:

   a. *Click Browse and select the video file to upload.*

   b. *Click Upload Video.*

      Wait until the upload completes before doing anything else. That process can take up to several minutes, depending on the size of the file and the speed of your connection. On a 56K modem (or on a bad broadband day), the upload may take as long as 3 minutes per megabyte. On upload, your file is automatically converted to YouTube's proprietary format, as described above. Eventually, the Video Upload — Upload Complete screen appears.

   c. *Go to Step 13 in this step list for what to do next.*

Figure 7-4: Find a fine file to feed fans.

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9. **To capture a video with a Web camera, click the Quick Capture button. (To proceed with a video you already have, go to Step 8.)**

   The Video Upload — Quick Capture (Step 2 of 2) screen for a camera capture appears (as shown in Figure 7-5), along with a request to allow access to your recording hardware (which is necessary in order to complete the process of recording-and-uploading).

10. **Click Allow to allow access to your camera and microphone.**

    The Record screen appears.

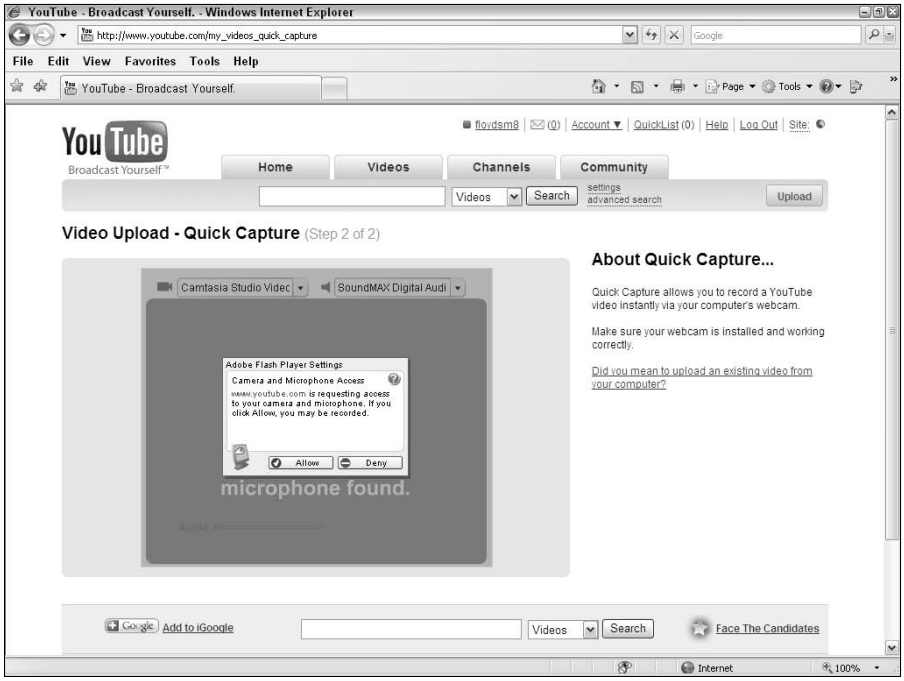

Figure 7-5: Capture a cute clip.

11. **Click Record, and wait until the server is ready. Then record up to 10 minutes of action into your Web camera, and click Stop when you're finished.**

12. **From the options that appear, choose what to do next:**

    - Click Preview to preview your video.
    - If you're happy with your clip, click Save.
    - If you want to redo, click Cancel, and then click Record again.

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- Repeat until you're happy with the result; click Save when you have it right.

The Video Upload — Upload Complete screen appears.

13. **Complete the upload.**

    a. *From the Upload Complete screen (see Figure 7-6), save the Embed code in a word-processing or similar file for later re-use.*

    b. *Wait until YouTube finishes processing the video, which may take up to several hours.*

    You'll receive an e-mail when the video is up on YouTube.

    c. *Click the link in the e-mail to view your video.*

Success — you're now on YouTube!

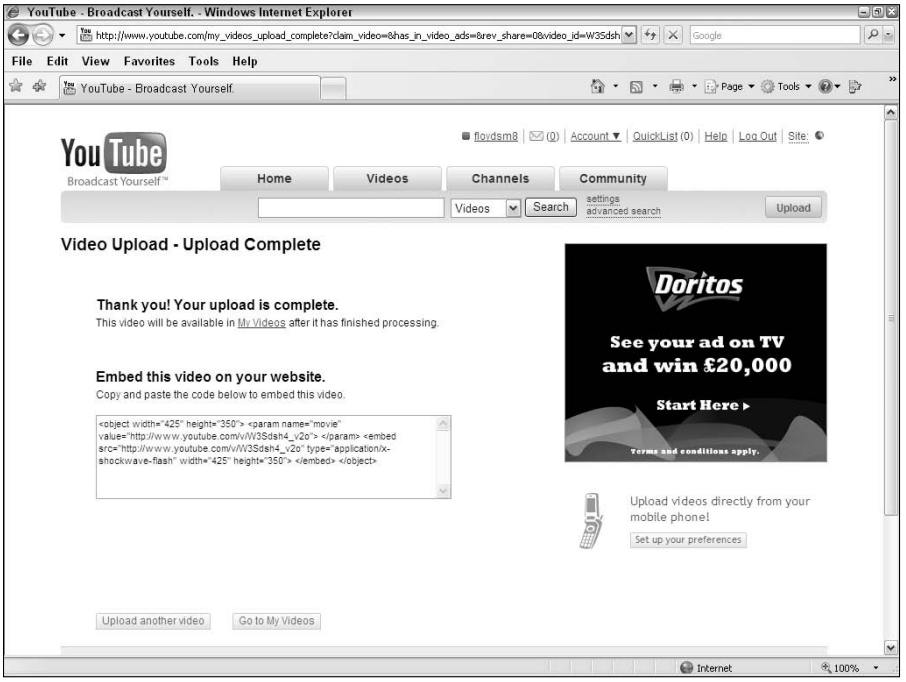

Figure 7-6: To capture is human; to embed, divine.

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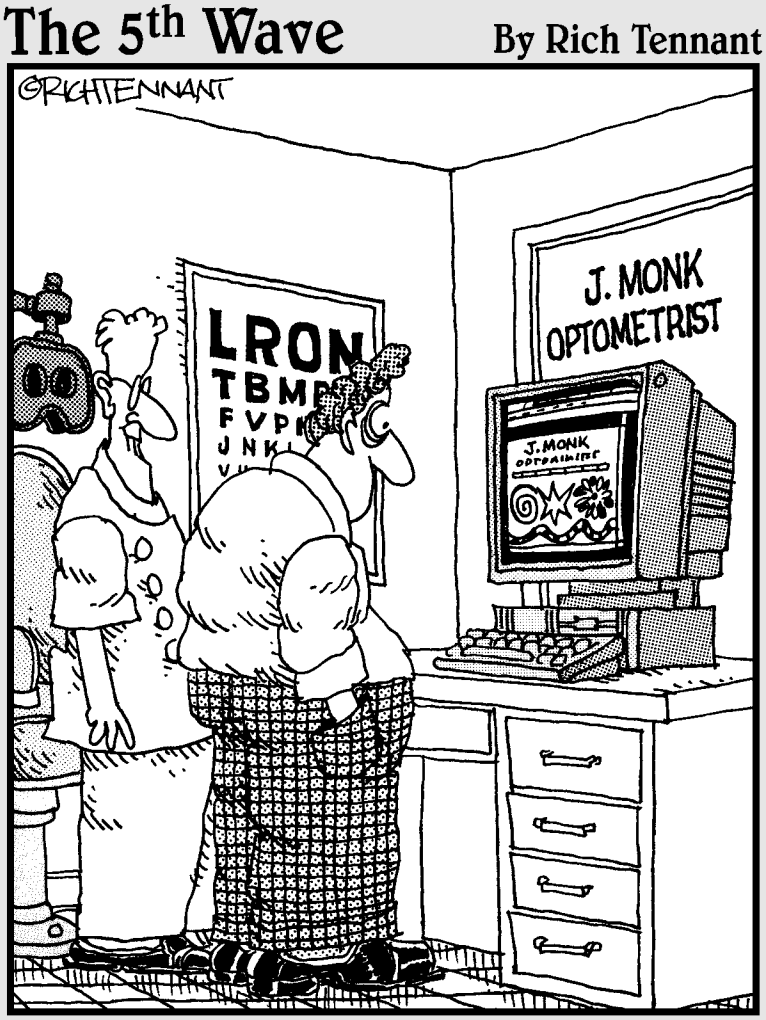
Part III

Your Site in WYSIWYG



"Games are an important part of my Web site. They cause eye strain."

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In this part . . .

A What You See Is What You Get, or WYSIWYG, tool will help you work on a screen that looks like your Web page and handle many of the messy HTML details for you. This book includes the excellent CoffeeCup Editor trial software so you can get started today.

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Chapter 8

Using a WYSIWYG Editor

In This Chapter

- Comparing WYSIWYG editing to plain text
- Introducing CoffeeCup HTML Editor
- Using CoffeeCup HTML Editor

You can use online tools, such as Google Page Creator discussed in Chapter 3, to create your initial Web page using a template. However, at some point, you will probably want to go further with your Web page than a template allows. To go beyond templates, you have to move away from the online tools and create your own Web page on your own hard drive. Then you can upload tried-and-tested Web pages to any number of different Web hosts, including Google itself.

This chapter describes how to create your initial Web page locally, on your own hard drive, using a WYSIWYG editor. As an example, I use the Visual Editor included in the tool on the CD-ROM, CoffeeCup HTML Editor.

The chapters in this Part describe how to improve your Web page and how to extend your Web page into a multipage Web site using CoffeeCup Visual Editor. Chapter 11 tells you how to publish one or more Web pages that are on your own machine onto the Web.

The next Part tells you how to create and improve Web pages using HTML on its own.

This chapter helps you choose the approach you want to use and then shows you how to create your initial Web page.

Google Page Creator lets you go pretty far with your Web page. However, it locks you into having your hosting done on Google. If you feel comfortable keeping your Web page on the same host for a long time to come, you may want to continue using these tools. The approach I describe in this book, however, gives you more opportunities to keep costs low and flexibility high. You can even edit your pages locally and then upload them to Google for hosting.

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Choosing WYSIWYG over Plain Text

You can use a couple of different approaches to create and edit Web pages on your own computer. One approach is to use a WYSIWYG Web page editor. WYSIWYG is pronounced "whizzywig," and stands for What You See Is What You Get. A WYSIWYG Web page editor is like a word processing program — what you see on-screen is at least close to what you get when you publish your Web page and look at it online.

The problem with this is that WYSIWYG doesn't work perfectly on the Web. Different Web browsers can interpret the same HTML tags differently. Also, users can have different browser settings, which means the same page can take on a different look for different users. This variability undermines your efforts to make your Web page look just so. To work around these problems, and to create Web pages that work well on the widest possible range of computers and browser versions and settings, knowing what's going on with the underlying HTML really helps.

For this reason, many Web page publishers work directly with HTML tags. Others work with a WYSIWYG editor, but frequently check what the underlying HTML-tagged text — usually just called "the HTML" — looks like.

Whether you work in HTML directly or in a WYSIWYG editor, your capabilities still reflect what HTML is capable of. The difference is in the ease of working (higher for WYSIWYG) and direct control (higher working directly in HTML).

I recommend that you either work directly in HTML or use a simple WYSIWYG tool that doesn't try to do too much for you, and look frequently at the underlying HTML. If you do want to use a tool, I recommend CoffeeCup Visual Editor, part of the CoffeeCup HTML Editor 2008 package included on the CD-ROM.

Working directly in HTML gives you a great deal of control and helps — okay, forces — you to learn HTML quickly. But there are problems too. Imagining what your Web page is going to look like is quite difficult when you're just looking at text and tags. You can easily make mistakes in the construction of your Web page when you're working directly with the tags — and easily get lost in looking at all that HTML-tagged text when you're trying to remember where to make an addition or change.

As a WYSIWYG tool, CoffeeCup Visual Editor works smoothly with CoffeeCup Code Editor, which lets you work directly with HTML code — as described in Part IV. This gives you the best of both worlds — the ease and speed of working in a WYSIWYG tool, along with the power and precision of being able to work with HTML code directly.

Figure 8-1 shows a simple Web page as it appears when being edited in the CoffeeCup Visual Editor (left) and a text editor (right). You may be able to tell

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just from looking at the picture which kind of environment you prefer to work in. If not, try both, using the instructions in this chapter, and see which one you prefer.

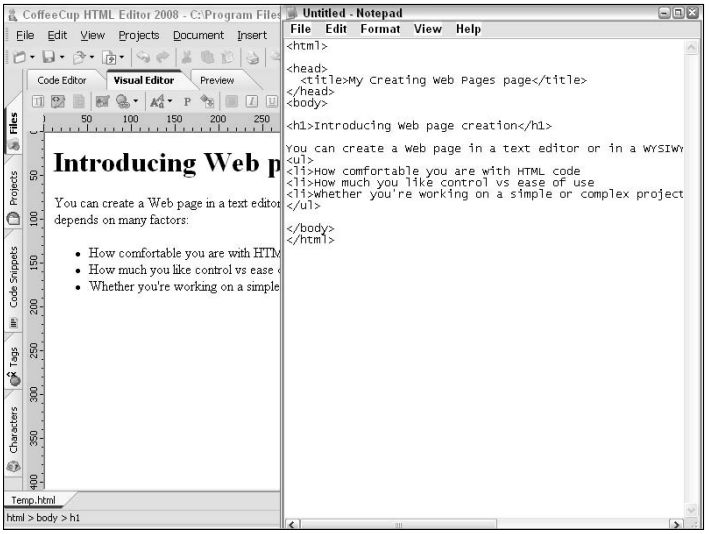

Figure 8-1: You can compose in a text editor or CoffeeCup HTML Editor.

Why drink from the CoffeeCup?

There are a lot of companies that thought it would be easy to create Web page authoring software — only a few of them have survived and thrived. CoffeeCup Software is one of those few. They've racked up a large number of awards for their dozens of different products, all relating to Web page creation one way or another, from Google SiteMapper, for search engine friendliness, to several Flash tools.

Software companies work in a lot of different ways. The CoffeeCup people have done it the hard way — creating free and low-cost tools, building an audience through word of mouth (and "word of mouse" online), and gradually creating a business around their products. Like a lot of technically based business, they seem to create tools they need for their own use, then turn them into products for others to use.

One very unusual feature of CoffeeCup programs is their lifetime licenses. Once you buy a program, you get free updates for life. Also, today, CoffeeCup programs fill a real gap in the market. Web authoring tools tend to be either unreliable freeware or big, complex, expensive professional tools designed for professional software developers. (Microsoft has even stopped selling its once wildly popular FrontPage program.) CoffeeCup is left standing in the middle, toward the higher end in capability but the lower end in price.

The HTML Editor is the original product from CoffeeCup, so it has over 10 years of development behind it. The new (at this writing), 2008 version has great reviews, well-trafficked message boards (no small thing among such tools), and a whole host of companion tools if your needs grow beyond the core program.

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Working within WYSIWYG

As a leading WYSIWYG Web pages tool, CoffeeCup HTML Editor has all the important basic features that you need to build basic Web pages. Using these features, you can:

- Create and edit Web pages without seeing HTML tags
- Drag and drop links to other Web locations without typing the URL or pathname
- Cut and paste graphics into your Web page, resize graphics, and add alternate text
- Create and edit tables
- Create and edit *forms* — interactive data entry fields commonly found on Web pages

You can also insert multimedia files and computer programs into your Web page. However, not all users can play back those files or run those programs because they may not have the appropriate browser or the right plug-ins installed.

If you add advanced elements, such as multimedia files or computer programs, into your Web page, be prepared to test your pages with several different browsers and to tell your Web visitors what to expect.

CoffeeCup HTML Editor supports forms, but it can't give you the CGI (short for Common Gateway Interface) scripts that you need to make the forms work. These CGI scripts process the data that the user enters into a form; if you can create CGI scripts, you're probably ready for a more advanced tool than CoffeeCup HTML Editor. However, if you don't want to mess with creating these scripts, you can get CGI scripts from others on the Web.

Plusses and minuses of CoffeeCup HTML Editor

CoffeeCup HTML Editor has most of the advantages of an HTML tool, with few of the disadvantages. Here are its six key advantages as an HTML tool:

- **CoffeeCup HTML Editor is free to try.** CoffeeCup makes HTML Editor available for free for 30 days — but the version accompanying this book gives you 90 days free. This is long enough to develop a site and stop — or to decide you want to keep using the software.
- **It's easy.** CoffeeCup HTML Editor is very easy to use. It leaves out some complex advanced functions in favor of drop-dead simplicity.

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- **Its functions match HTML tags.** The functions available in HTML Editor are the functions available in HTML — and only those functions. You can't do things in your Web page that aren't supported by Web browsers.
- **It uses "generic" HTML.** The only functions available in HTML Editor are those supported by all widely used versions of HTML. Web pages that you create with CoffeeCup are likely usable by all major Web browsers on all computer platforms.
- **It lets you see and edit HTML.** HTML Editor gives you one-click access to the HTML tags underlying your Web page, simply by moving between the Visual Editor and the Code Editor. You get ease of editing in WYSIWYG mode but can still always see and edit the underlying HTML-tagged text.

- **It's part of a whole suite of programs.** CoffeeCup HTML Editor includes several cool tools, but you can also get a whole bunch more from CoffeeCup. Nearly all of these are available as free trials — which allows you to do just about anything once or twice for free. If it becomes a long-term need, buy the software. Fair's fair.

These features of CoffeeCup HTML Editor place it comfortably between using a text editor and using more advanced HTML editors. The starting and ending points of that spectrum look like this:

- **Text editors:** Working directly with HTML tags can be frustrating and lead you to make mistakes in the look and layout of your page.
- **Advanced HTML editors:** These programs, such as Microsoft Expression Web Designer and Dreamweaver, may overwhelm you with complex functionality (and certainly will overwhelm you with their price).

I recommend that most beginning Web publishers use HTML Editor in Visual Editor mode and check the underlying HTML frequently to see what's really going on. As you get more knowledgeable with HTML, you may wish to buy and use a more advanced HTML editor — or go the low-tech route (as many Web professionals do much of the time) and use a basic text editor or the Code Editor side of CoffeeCup.

I recommend that you consider using CoffeeCup HTML Editor initially, even if you own a more advanced HTML editor such as Dreamweaver or FrontPage. The functionality of CoffeeCup HTML Editor is simpler, making it easier to learn the core features of HTML, and you can follow along better with this book.

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Taking a sip from the CoffeeCup

At this writing, the current version of CoffeeCup HTML Editor is called CoffeeCup HTML Editor 2008. This is also the version on the CD-ROM that comes with this book. Follow the directions in Appendix C, On the CD, to install the software.

To check for an updated version, go to `http://www.coffeecup.com/html-editor/`, shown in Figure 8-2. However, consider using the version on the CD-ROM for your initial work; it has a longer free trial period, and it is sure to match the descriptions and figures in this book. You can then upgrade to the newer version if you decide to purchase the software.

Figure 8-2: Find the latest version of CoffeeCup HTML Editor.

In order to run CoffeeCup HTML Editor, you need a computer running Windows XP or Windows Vista. It doesn't run on the Macintosh or Linux/Unix operating systems. However, the newer Macintosh computers and many versions of Linux/Unix can run alongside Windows XP or Vista. You can use these compatibility solutions to run CoffeeCup software.

Throughout the remainder of the book, I describe how to use CoffeeCup HTML Editor to make specific kinds of changes in your Web site. But before that, follow these steps to start HTML Editor and get oriented to using it:

1. **Start CoffeeCup HTML Editor.**

   Start the HTML Editor from the Start menu by choosing Start➪Programs➪CoffeeCup Software➪CoffeeCup HTML Editor 2008.

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The program opens to the Code Editor window, as shown in Figure 8-3.

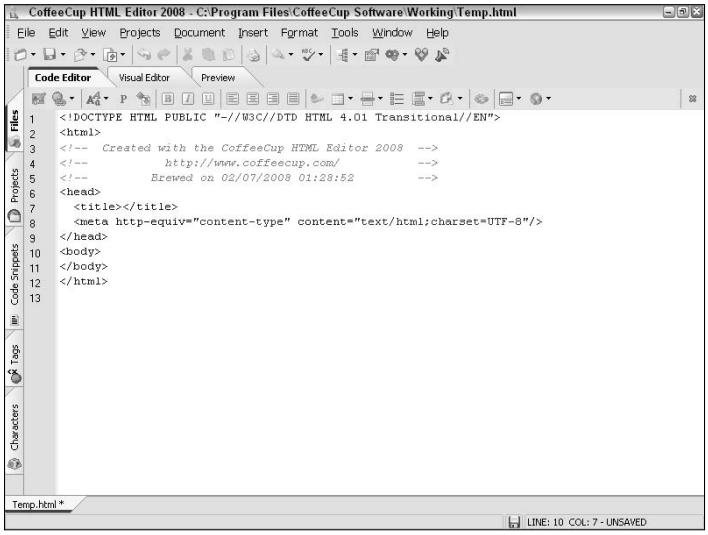

Figure 8-3: CoffeeCup gives you a busy starting page.

2. **Switch to the Visual Editor by clicking the Visual Editor tab.**

   A warning message appears.

   Like many Web editors, CoffeeCup HTML Editor has to change HTML code you write to make it compatible with some of the capabilities it supports in WYSIWYG mode. The reason for saving your code from the Code Editor is so you can return to it if necessary after CoffeeCup changes the version in the Visual Editor.

3. **Click Save & Continue. Save your HTML code — even if you haven't added to it — and click OK.**

   The Visual Editor window opens.

   Buttons along the top of the entry-window area are shortcuts to many of the functions in the Format and Insert menus, introduced in the next two steps. Consider entering a small amount of text (even sample text such as "The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy red dog") for experimentation. You can type in a single sentence, then copy and paste it repeatedly for experimental purposes.

4. **Pull down the Format menu and inspect the options.**

   The Format menu appears, as shown in Figure 8-4. It includes options you can apply to text. Options include changing the font (not to be done without some thought; see Chapter 9); making text bold, italic, or underlined; aligning it left, center, right, or fully justified; indenting text, and other effects.

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Consider trying formatting commands on individual characters, words, or a larger block of text.

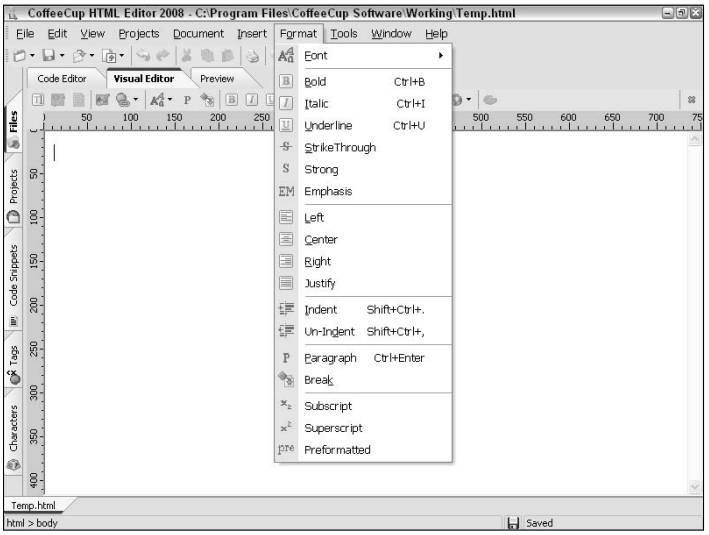

Figure 8-4: The Format Menu helps you specify the look of text.

5. **Pull down the Insert menu and inspect the options.**

   The Insert menu appears, as shown in Figure 8-5. It includes different things you can insert into your Web page. Options include inserting a link to another Web page; inserting an image; inserting a horizontal rule; and inserting a title for the Web page.

   Consider inserting various options among a few blocks of text. If you do this, note that inserting a link to another Web page works best if you select the text that you want to use as the clickable Link Text *before* choosing Insert➪Link.

6. **Pull down the remaining menus and inspect the options.**

   It's always good to begin to familiarize yourself with the options in a new program. For CoffeeCup HTML Editor, you'll see that many of the options have to do with managing a project; others relate to spell-checking, testing, and so on. (But try the Special Characters tab under the View menu for one particularly useful feature.) These capabilities, which for the most part allow you to polish your work and to collaborate with others, are not so important right now, but are very much appreciated by CoffeeCup users who work with the tool over time.

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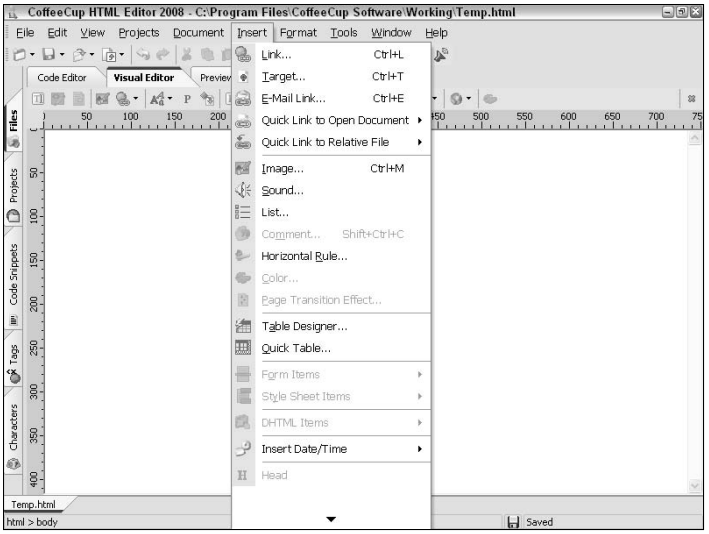

Figure 8-5: The Insert Menu helps you put things into your Web page.

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Chapter 9

Creating a WYSIWYG Page

In This Chapter

- Writing for the Web
- Formatting Web text
- Using HTML lists
- Entering text in HTML
- Entering text in SeaMonkey Composer

The previous chapter shows you how to get started in a mainstream WYSIWYG editor, CoffeeCup HTML Editor. This chapter shows you how to create your first Web page, put some text in it, and get the text formatted so it looks good.

This chapter draws on the discussion of using text in Web pages in Chapter 4. Review that chapter for information about how to write for the Web. Web writing is a bit different than other kinds of writing. It's also kind of fun, once you get used to it.

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Why bother with HTML basics?

Most Web-authoring tools try to hide HTML from the user; you can use one of these tools to create a Web page without knowing a thing about HTML. But CoffeeCup is one of many tools that present HTML right next to a WYSIWYG editor so you can see what you're doing *and* the on-screen results of your actions. Here are some advantages to learning HTML even as you do most of your work in WYSIWYG:

- **To understand how the Web works:** This understanding is pretty valuable if you're a heavy Web user (or a light one), especially if you plan to publish on the Web. Some of the Web's limitations, such as "what you see is not (exactly) what you get," are hard to understand if you don't know something about HTML.
- **To use free Web tools:** Many free Web tools enable you to enter HTML tags directly to jazz up your text. Knowing a few tags can go a long way.
- **To work directly in HTML:** Many Web pros tire of managing HTML tags by hand and start using a tool that hides the tags. Others swear by HTML. (Everyone swears *at* HTML, at least some of the time. But the only way to have a choice is to know some HTML.)
- **To do better work using your tool:** When you're using a tool that hides the gory details of HTML from you, knowing enough HTML to understand what's going on "behind the scenes" is an advantage.

Get Ready: A Refreshingly Brief Description of HTML

HTML is a specific way of adding descriptive tags to regular text so that all the formatting, linking, and navigational information you need in a Web page is in text form, contained in the same file with the regular text that appears on the Web page. HTML is designed to be something that humans can read *and* that machines can process, a kind of common ground for human-to-machine communication.

Suppose you want to add bold to a word in your text, such as

```
You can use HTML to specify that a word is bold.
```

To add bold formatting to a sentence using HTML, just take the regular sentence and add a couple of tags to specify where the bold starts and stops. Here's the previous line in HTML:

```
You can use HTML to specify that a word is <b>bold</b>.
```

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When you display the sentence with the HTML tags in a Web browser, the browser displays all the words, but not the *tags* — the information between angle brackets. The Web browser uses the tags to do extra things to the text, such as add formatting to it. In this case, the formatting is simple: Start using bold text immediately after the word "is," and stop using bold text immediately after the word "bold."

Because HTML tags exist alongside the text that users see on your Web page, a document with HTML tags in it is called *HTML-tagged text.* A file with HTML-tagged text in it is called an HTML file — but it's really just a specific kind of text file.

An HTML file usually has the extension `.htm` or `.html` at the end of the filename. If you look at HTML-tagged text in a text editing program, you see the angle brackets and HTML commands; if you look at it in a Web browser, you see a Web page with formatting, links, and so on.

A document with no formatting — such as italic and other formatting added by a word processor — is called a *plain-text* document. HTML-tagged text documents are considered plain-text documents because they're made up only of text characters, even though some of the characters (the tags) carry formatting information. Word-processing documents that aren't plain-text documents have additional formatting codes embedded in them to tell machines how to display and print the text.

You can add HTML tags to regular text to create your own Web documents in any text editor or word processing program. (However, in a word processing program, you must explicitly save the Web document as a text file.) Or you can use a Web-editing tool that hides the gory details of HTML tags, such as the Visual Editor in CoffeeCup. (The Visual Editor creates an HTML-tagged text file, but displays to you what that file will look like in a Web page. It makes the HTML-tagged text available directly on the Code Editor tab.)

After you publish a few Web pages, you can take the time to find out more about HTML. At that point, you may want to see the full HTML appendix at the back of the book (Appendix B).

If you like to know everything that's going on before you roll up your sleeves and plunge into things, you may want to start by looking at *HTML, XHTML & CSS For Dummies,* 6th Edition, a comprehensive guide to HTML by Ed Tittel and Jeff Noble (Wiley).

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Examining the HTML script

Take a closer look at the term for which HTML is an acronym, HyperText Markup Language. You may already know that hypertext is text that has links in it. A *link* is just a connection to another file. So far so good. But what's a *markup language?* (It's not that confusing language that car dealers speak when they decide how high to jack up the price!) A markup language is simply a way to put information about a document — for example, information about hypertext links and formatting — in the document itself. Markup languages often use tags — labels placed within text that give display instructions. So HyperText Markup Language — HTML — is a specific way of using tags to convey information about a document.

Most tags in HTML come in pairs: One starts a change and the other ends it. In the following sample sentence, the first tag, `<b>`, means start displaying text in a **bold** typeface; the second tag, `</b>`, means stop using bold.

Here's how the sentence looks when "marked up" with HTML tags:

```
That's a <b>good</b> idea.
```

Here's how the sentence looks when displayed on-screen:

That's a **good** idea.

The browser reads the original, text-only sentence — `That's a <b>good</b> idea.` — and says to itself, "I display `That's a`, turn bold on, display **good**, turn bold off, and display `idea`." The person who created the original sentence puts in the HTML tags, the browser interprets them, and the user only sees the effect — in this case, the word **good** displayed in boldface type.

The `<b>` and `</b>` tags are *formatting tags* that describe how a browser displays text. Another kind of tag in HTML is the *linking tag.* (Links are the basis of hypertext.) Linking tags specify outside information brought into a document. Here's some complicated-looking HTML text that shows examples of formatting and linking tags:

```
To learn about <i>Pokemon</
    i>, the "pocket monsters"
    that were so popular
    with kids, go to the
    official Web site for <a
    href="http://www.pokemon.
    com">Pokemon</a>.
```

The text appears on-screen as follows:

To learn about *Pokemon*, the "pocket monsters" that were so popular with kids, go to the official Web site for Pokemon.

The `<i>` and `</i>` formatting tags specify that the first occurrence of the word *Pokemon* is displayed in italics. The `<a>` and `</a>` linking tags specify that second occurrence of the word `Pokemon` is displayed as an *anchor* — that is, the starting point of a link. On most browsers, as here, anchors are underlined. So what does the extra text — `href="http://www.pokemon.com"` — inside the `<a>` tag mean? `href` is short for *Hypertext REFerence.* If you click the anchor, your browser looks for the URL that serves as the hypertext reference, which in this case is the Pokemon Web-page address that appears after the equal sign.

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Viewing HTML documents

You can see HTML anytime you use the Web. Just pull up a Web page in your browser and choose View➪Source for Internet Explorer, or a similar command for other browsers. A new window opens, the contents of which are the HTML source code that underlies the Web page. Figure 9-1 shows the home page of the *For Dummies* site and its HTML source code as an example.

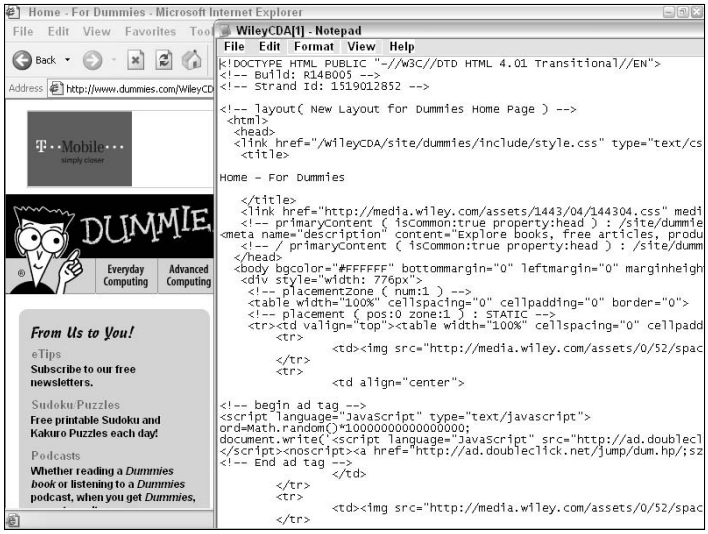

Figure 9-1: The For Dummies site is made of HTML-tagged text and graphics.

Having the ability to view a document's HTML code instantly does naturally lead to the temptation to "borrow" attractive documents from the Web, save them to your hard drive as HTML files, and then use them as templates for your own work — kind of a magpie approach to Web page building. But don't.

Borrowing someone else's material is okay for basic HTML formatting, but for more sophisticated formats that are distinctive and embody a great deal of work, *get permission before you use them* — or don't use them. Simply contact the Webmaster at the site you admire, describe how you want to use the format, and request permission. You may be surprised how many people say yes — without even exacting a promise from you that you hand over your firstborn.

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Setting up a Web page

When you first create a Web page, you need to do a certain amount of setup. Luckily, CoffeeCup enters the necessary HTML tags for you (in contrast to having to type them out yourself in a text editor, which Chapter 13 covers).

The needed tags are of five types:

- **Begin and end HTML:** Though your Web page will almost certainly work without them, you really should tell the Internet what protocol your page is made up of. You do this by framing the entire content of your Web page with the `<html>` and `</html>` tags at the beginning and end of the page.
- **Head and body:** The Web page is made up of two blocks of information. Head information is processed before anything visible shows up on the Web page (with one exception, next). The head area is surrounded by the `<head>` and `</head>` tags. Body information is everything you see on the Web page, including text, links, and more. Right after the closing `</head>` tag is the opening `<body>` tag, and the body area is terminated by the `</body>` tag — the last thing in the HTML file except for the `</html>` tag.
- **Page title:** The title of a Web page is meant to be descriptive information for different programs that crawl the Web, such as search engines. But some early Web browsers displayed the contents of the title at the top of a Web page, and now it's noticed by Web users — to the extent that it's important you get it right. The title is in the head area, and is surrounded by the `<title>` and `</title>` tags.
- **Meta tags:** Meta tags are "meta-information", that is, information about the Web page as a whole. For instance, CoffeeCup automatically inserts the standard information, `<meta http-equiv="content-type" content="text/html;charset=UTF-8"/>`. Meta tags were once used heavily by search engines, but now are less used or even ignored. The best way to use meta tags is for the information of yourself or others who might look at the HTML code to tell what the page is about; and if the meta tags help a search engine along the way, great.
- **Comments:** Comments are notes to yourself or future Web authors who might look at the HTML. CoffeeCup automatically inserts a few lines of comments, such as the following: `<!-- Created with the CoffeeCup HTML Editor 2008 -->`. You may wish to add comments in the HTML — there's no way to add them in the Visual Editor.

These tags are demonstrated in CoffeeCup later in this chapter, along with the commands and tags used for formatting Web text.

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Formatting Web Text

Whether you use a text editor (as described in Part IV) or a WYSIWYG editor (as described here), the capabilities that HTML makes available for formatting Web text are the same:

- **Headings:** You can specify six levels of headings in HTML, using the tag pairs `<h1>` and `</h1>` for the largest, top-level heading; `<h2>` and `</h2>` for the next level; and so on down to `<h6>` and `</h6>`, the lowest level of headings.

  What it means for you: The ideal way to use headings is as intended — `<h1>` for the most important heading and so on, down to `<h6>`. However, you may notice that the heading you're using seems too large in comparison to the text beneath it. Many people use `<h4>`, for instance, for what's really a second-level heading, or use text size commands and bolding to create their own header styles. Try using the intended headings first, and then use your own formatting if you really need a specific look.

- **Font sizes:** HTML allows you to specify font sizes that are larger or smaller than medium, or standard, size. You can go two sizes smaller or three sizes larger than medium. This formatting works even if users specify a font size or style in their browser setup or in Windows. (As people get older, and their eyes weaken, they resort to various tricks to make using the computer easier — as the author knows from experience.)

  What it means for you: You don't want your Web page to look like a hostage note, with all different styles and sizes of text mixed up, but font sizes can be a good way to make a point (with a larger font size) or fit a lot of text into a small space (with a smaller size).

  Using relative font sizes is one of the few formatting tricks that almost always work well in different Web browsers.

- **Character formatting:** You can make text bold or italic using the `<b>` and `</b>` tags to start and stop bold and the `<i>` and `</i>` tags to start and stop italic. You can also underline text, but I don't recommend it, because users can easily get confused — because HTML links are usually underlined.

  What it means for you: You should feel free to use bold and italic to emphasize your point, but don't overdo it. Structured use of bold and italic, such as the bold used to highlight items in this list, is one good solution. As for underlining, avoid using it on the Web — people confuse it with the underlining (and use of a color, usually blue) used for hyperlinks. See the "What color is your hyperlink?" sidebar for details.

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- **Advanced character formatting:** Using tags that aren't supported by all browsers currently in use, you can specify the fonts used in your Web page, as well as font colors. There are problems with doing this, though. Only a limited set of fonts is available for use on all Windows machines or all Macintosh machines. And there isn't much overlap between the specific fonts on Windows and Macintosh, so you won't get the specific effect you desire on the "other" platform. (You can specify backup fonts for use if the desired font isn't there.)

  What it means for you: I don't recommend using advanced character formatting because it's complicated and because, just when you start to depend on it, you find it doesn't work for some of your users. Stay away from this kind of formatting unless you're working at a professional level, with the design help and testing resources needed to make it work well for all your users.

Follow these steps to enter and format text in CoffeeCup:

1. **Start CoffeeCup and inspect the HTML in the Code Editor tab.**

   Note the beginning and ending HTML, head, and body tags as well as the Title tag.

2. **Move to the Visual Editor tab.**

   Save the Code Editor contents as prompted.

3. **Choose Insert➪Title.**

   The Page Title dialog box appears.

4. **Enter an appropriate title, such as My Home Page, and then click OK.**

5. **Move the cursor to a new line.**

6. **Type some text introducing your Web page.**

   When someone searches for your Web page by using a search engine, the search engine may display the Web page title, as described above, and the first few words that appear in the document. So make the first few sentences of text that follow the title an introduction to the entire page or Web site.

   In the document I created for this chapter, I typed:

   ```
   Sierra Soccer Club

   Sierra Soccer Club is a boys' soccer club that
   practices and plays at the highest altitude of any in
   the United States.
   ```

7. **Highlight text that you'd like to make a header.**

   In my document, I highlighted the words Sierra Soccer Club at the beginning.

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8. **Choose Format➪Font➪Header Sizes and the header size you want, from 1 (largest) through 6 (smallest).**

   The text will change to a header of the selected size. I chose header size 1 as this is the header for all the content that follows.

9. **Highlight other text that you want to format.**

   In my document, I highlighted the word "highest" in the middle of the first sentence.

10. **Click the toolbar button for the formatting style that you want: the B button for Bold, the I button for Italic, or the U button for Underline. Or choose Format➪Bold, Italic or Underline.**

    The highlighted text takes on the formatting you choose. In my example, I made the word "highest" bold.

    Any HTML styles — paragraph-level formatting commands — that you choose affect the entire paragraph of text in which the cursor rests.

Figure 9-2 shows the CoffeeCup Visual Editor tab with the text formatted as described here. Note that Header 1 may actually be too large for our purposes.

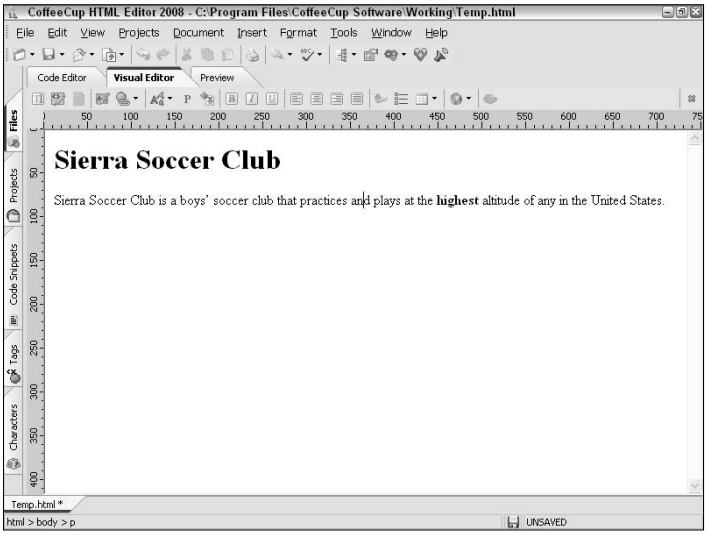

Figure 9-2: Take advantage of Web formatting options.

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What color is your hyperlink?

HTML allows you to use colored text on your Web page and to change the colors used for unvisited, visited, and active hyperlinks. ("Active" means the mouse pointer is over the link, but the mouse button hasn't yet been clicked.) I generally don't recommend this.

Why not? (This book is about all the things you *can* do on a Web page, after all!) The reason is that people are very used to monotone text, usually black, on a contrasting background. People have adjusted to the use of colored text on Web pages, but mainly in the form of standard hyperlink colors: blue for a link the user hasn't clicked yet, and purple for a recently visited link.

Some Web-page authors customize hyperlink colors to fit better with the color scheme of their Web pages. The problem is, research into making Web pages easier to use and less confusing has found that users subconsciously count on blue underlined text to indicated unvisited links and purple underlined text to indicate visited links. Any change in these colors, or any use of underlining or blue or purple text for other purposes, causes deep confusion.

So I recommend that you don't use colored text, don't change link colors, and don't use underlining except in links. (With the exception being if you have the time to come up with a really consistent, carefully thought through and highly usable alternative, which usually requires using a template or a professional level of attention.) The people who visit your Web page will have a better time using it as a result.

Using HTML Lists

People really like lists. David Letterman's Top Ten lists are the highlight of his *Late Night* show and have been the subject of several books. Everywhere you look, you see lists. Here are my top three reasons why lists are a good thing — in a list, of course:

- **Lists are interesting to look at.** Web pros are always telling people to use lots of white space to vary the appearance of their pages so they're not just featureless blobs of text. Lists do this; they break up text.
- **Lists are easy to scan.** As I mention earlier in this chapter, people are more likely to scan text on the Web than to read it carefully. Lists are very easy to scan. With the key points highlighted, people can go in depth by carefully reading the points that interest them, and then skim the ones that don't.
- **Lists make the writer get to the point.** When you write a list, you have to cut and condense what you're trying to say. You may end up editing a page of boring, monotonous text down to three or four points in a bulleted list. All this extra work you have to do greatly benefits the reader, especially the reader who's reading from a computer screen.

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HTML and Web-page editing programs based on HTML (such as CoffeeCup) offer three kinds of lists, but only two are used much.

- **Bulleted lists:** Bulleted lists are by far the most widely used kind of list on the Web. And why not? Bulleted lists are flexible and fun, both to write and, more importantly, to read. You start a bulleted list with the `<ul>` tag, which stands for *unordered list.* You end it with the `</ul>` tag. Each list item is preceded with `<li>`, which stands for — you guessed it — *list item.*

  List items don't have to have an ending tag, though you can add one (it's `</li>`, as you might expect). After your text, the browser expects to see either another `<li>` tag, for the next list item, or the `</ul>` tag to end the list.

  What it means for you: You can convert many, or even most, long blocks of text into a bulleted list — and make the text shorter, easier to read, and more interesting in the bargain. If you have to move existing text to the Web, consider "bulletizing" parts of it as a quick way to make it more Web friendly.

- **Numbered lists:** Numbered lists look weird when you create them in some Web editing programs — the program puts a number symbol (#) next to each item, and the number isn't assigned until the page displays. (CoffeeCup, fortunately, displays actual numbers.) Numbered lists are very useful, but are found much less often on the Web. Numbered lists begin with `<ol>` for *ordered list,* end with `</ol>`, and — like bulleted lists — use the `<li>` tag to mark the beginning of each list item.

  What it means for you: Any time you have a list that has an order in terms of importance, sequence in time, or any other reason, make it a numbered list. Putting your list items in numbered order makes the list even easier to scan than a regular, bulleted list.

- **Definition lists:** *Definition lists* give a term and then a definition for the term. They're rarely used, though finding a use for them in your Web page is a good exercise. A definition list starts with `<dl>` and ends with `</dl>`. Each term is preceded by `<dt>`, for *definition term,* and each definition is preceded by `<dd>`, for *definition data.* Again, if you'd like, you can close the tags by adding `</dt>` and `</dd>`, respectively, after the data.

  What it means for you: The appearance of definition lists in your Web page is a bit funny — some Web browsers put the term on one line and then the definition, indented farther in, on the next line. You can help the reader who's scanning find the terms easily by making them bold, as in the definition list you're reading here. People like definition-type lists, but not necessarily formatted the way most Web browsers do it. Use definition lists where you can, or use bold text and bulleted or numbered lists to create your own definition-type list.

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- **Lists within lists:** You can insert or *nest* one list inside another. The nested list can be the same kind of list, or a different kind, than the list that contains it.

  What it means for you: In the limited view offered on most users' screens, users have a hard time keeping track of where they are in the overall list if you start throwing sublists at them as well. I believe that putting one list within another is usually a case of something that's technically possible, but not editorially desirable. (I look forward to one of you proving me wrong by coming up with a good use for nested lists on a Web page.)

Follow these steps to create a list in CoffeeCup:

1. **Add the text for your list in the Visual Editor.**

   In the document I created for this chapter, here's what I typed:

   ```
   If you meet the following qualifications, you may be
   eligible to become a member of Sierra Soccer Club:

   Born in 2000 or 2001. Sierra Soccer Club has played
   together since its founding members were 5 and 6 years
   old and will stick together as they grow up. All our
   club members must be born in 2000 or 2001.

   Some soccer experience. If you have played in organized
   leagues before, or if you're a skilled school player,
   we may be able to help take your game to new levels.

   Good academic record. We are proud that our club mem-
   bers maintain good standing in school as well as in
   soccer.
   ```

2. **Highlight the lines that you want to make into a list.**

   In my document, I highlighted the lines that begin with these phrases:

   ```
   Born in 2000 or 2001

   Some soccer experience

   Good academic record
   ```

3. **Choose Insert➪List or click the List button in the Visual Editor.**

   The Insert List dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 9-3.

The Insert List dialog box is a good example of the benefits of using a WYSIWYG editor. It includes options for bullet styles that you might not have known were part of HTML, or for which you might have forgotten the details. With this dialog box, you're not only reminded of the button styles, but also can easily test how they look within your page.

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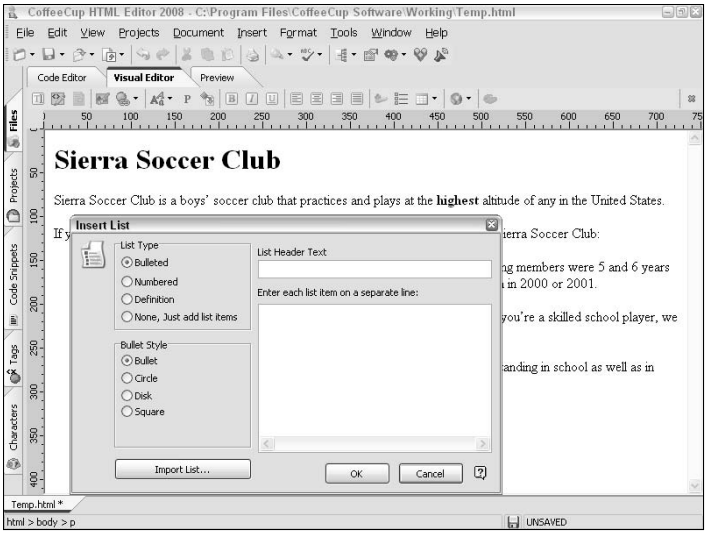

Figure 9-3: Insert List gives you all the list options.

4. **Choose the type of list you want and (optionally) the bullet style.**

   For this example, I've made a bulleted list of the list items for the soccer club members, and chosen the square bullet style. I then removed extra carriage returns so there would only be three bullets.

   Figure 9-4 shows the sample page with all the formatting described in the numbered steps in this chapter applied.

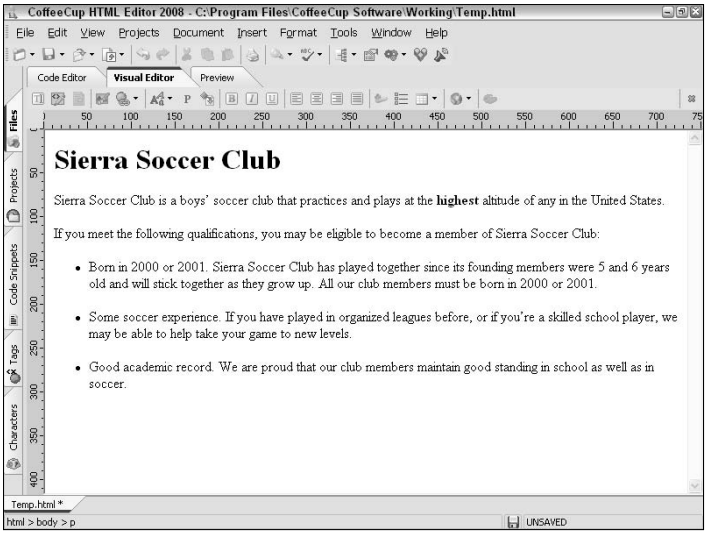

Figure 9-4: What you see is what you get.

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5. **To see the underlying HTML, click the Code Editor tab.**

   The HTML for your page appears, as shown in Figure 9-5.

When you're working in a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) tool such as CoffeeCup, you often want to look at the underlying HTML code. Doing so enables you to find out how HTML works and gives you the chance to make adjustments in the HTML tags that affect the way your page looks and works on the Web.

The only problem with looking at the HTML code in CoffeeCup is that you'll be prompted to save the HTML code, even if you haven't changed anything in the Code Editor. However, doing this does give you the opportunity to create a backup of the work you've done in the Visual Editor, even if that wasn't your original intent.

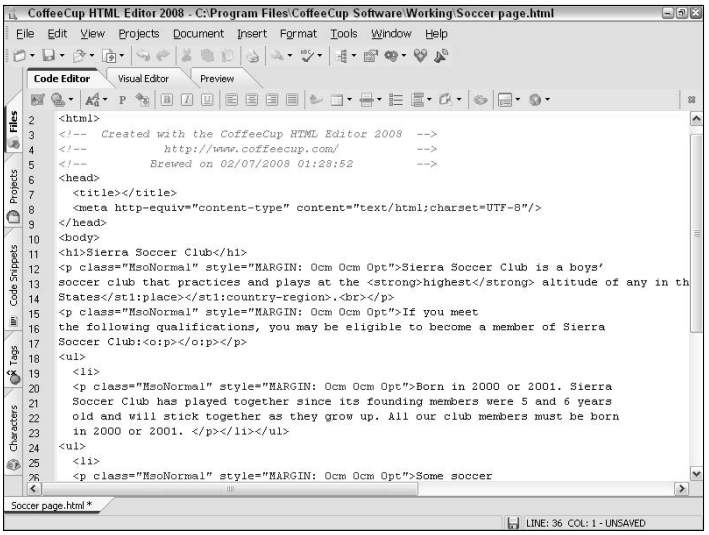

Figure 9-5: How the HTML works.

CoffeeCup or a more sophisticated package?

Although offerings change with time, you can usually get a free trial version of excellent Web-page editing software such as Microsoft Expression Web or Adobe Dreamweaver from the companies' Web sites, or an online download site such as CNET's `download.com` (at `www.download.com`, natch). Why use CoffeeCup instead of a free trial version?

- **Truly easy:** Because it's designed as an introductory program, CoffeeCup has only basic and intermediate features — not too much complexity, which you don't need most of the time, to make things confusing.
- **Far less expensive:** If you choose to pay for CoffeeCup, you'll only pay a small fee,

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and you'll only pay it once — CoffeeCup includes free lifetime updates.

- **Truly HTML-compatible:** As an introductory program, Composer only supports features that work on just about any Web browser out there. By contrast, using all the features in Microsoft Expression Web or Dreamweaver may mean that you add things that don't work in older browsers or across platforms.

In addition, of course, my argument is that you can better follow along with the instructions in this book if you're using the software that I use for many of my examples and figures — either straight HTML or CoffeeCup.

If you're sure that you're going to be using Expression Web or Dreamweaver soon, or if you already have a copy, you may want to use a trial version of the program that's in your future. Even then, you may want to use CoffeeCup for easy work and the full-featured program for advanced features. If you do work in a full-featured Web-page editor, most of the steps in the sections of this book dedicated to CoffeeCup will still work for you — you just need to substitute the specific commands for your program in place of the instructions and illustrations given for CoffeeCup.

Linking to Outside Web Pages

The secret of Web pages is hyperlinks. This is where the phrase "surfing the Web" comes from, with the ease of moving from one page to another and one site to another making the Web easy to use and fun.

This section shows you how to use one form of links: links to totally different Web sites. These are the simplest links, even though they're also the most powerful, allowing you to reach out to any Web site or any Web page on any Web server anywhere in the world.

Hyperlinks are so important that they're reflected in the names of the two key technical standards underlying the Web. *HyperText Transfer Protocol,* the `http` you see in a Web-page address, is the standard for file transfer used to support Web pages. (When you click a link to a new Web page, an HTML file is transferred to your machine, and links within the HTML file cause graphics to appear within the page.)

HyperText Markup Language, or HTML, is the standard for writing Web pages. While many HTML tags, such as the bold and italics tags (`<b>` and `<i>`) are for formatting rather than hypertext, the links described in this section, for linking to outside Web pages, are definitely hypertext markup.

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1 link, therefore 1 am

A hypertext link to an outside Web page has two parts: the text that appears as a hyperlink — most often underlined and displayed in blue — and the destination page that appears in the user's Web browser if the user clicks on the link.

The text is made into the starting point of a hypertext link by surrounding it with the `<a>` and `</a>` tags, with `a` standing for anchor. The link's two ends, the start that the user clicks on and the page that appears as a result, are both called anchors.

The destination of the link is called the `hypertext reference`, or `href` for short. So a link to another Web page in HTML looks like this:

```
Make your own cider with <a href="http://www.ciderspices.com">cider spices</a>.
```

Simple, isn't it? Part of the reason it's so simple is a couple of assumptions: If you use a domain name for a link, such as `www.ciderspices.com`, your Web browser looks for the `index.htm` or similarly named file first, so you don't have to include the filename in the link destination. And the browser further assumes that the destination is the top of a Web page unless you specify a location within the Web page. (I go into more detail on this when discussing links within a Web page and links to graphics and multimedia files in the next two chapters.)

A simple link in a CoffeeCup

Follow these steps to create a simple hypertext link in CoffeeCup's Visual Editor:

1. **In the Visual Editor, highlight the text that you want to make into a hyperlink.**

   In the document I created as an example for this book, I highlighted the words "soccer experience" in the second bullet point.

2. **Click the Links button or choose Insert➪Link.**

   The Insert Link dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 9-6.

3. **Enter the destination Web address, or URL, in the URL box.**

   Enter the full Web address, including the preceding `http://`, and check whether the address includes `www.` or not; a few Web addresses don't. Also make certain that the site ending really is `.com`, `.org`, `.co.uk`, and so on.

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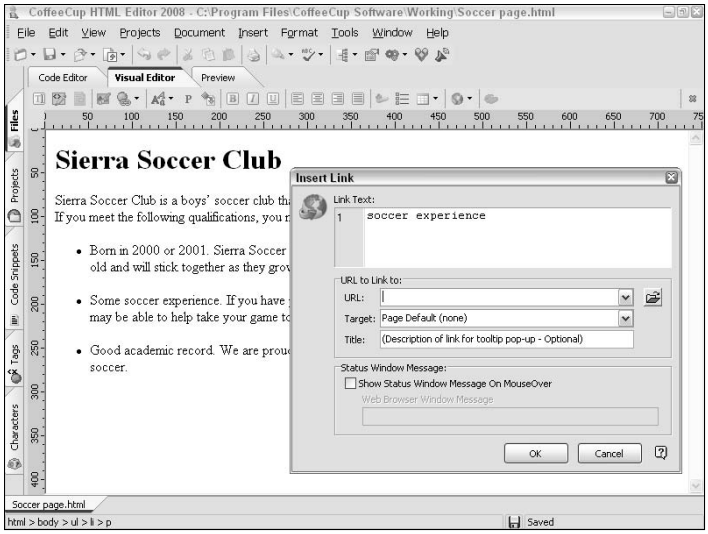

Figure 9-6: Insert Link helps you take your users anywhere.

You can open a Web browser to find or check the Web address you need while the Insert Link dialog box is open.

4. **Enter a title for the link in the `Title:` area.**

   The title for the link is text that appears when the user puts the mouse pointer over the link. (Text of this sort is called a *tool tip* from its use in computer programs.)

   If you leave this area blank, the URL will appear as the tool tip. Often this is self-explanatory, as in a link to a Wikipedia entry. You may wish to enter the URL, without `http://`, as the link title to make it a bit more comprehensible for the user.

   If the URL is long or confusing, enter a simple title that describes the page. For instance, the URL for the book *HTML For Dummies,* 5th Edition, on `www.dummies.com` is intimidatingly long and confusing:

   ```
   http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/Section/id-DUMMIES_SEARCH_RESULT.
            html?queryText=html%20for%20dummies
   ```

   I'd enter a tool tip such as `HTML For Dummies on dummies.com` instead.

5. **Click OK to accept the link URL and the link title, if any.**

   The text will appear as link text, underlined and in blue. (Unless you've changed the appearance of the links for this page.)

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Chapter 10

Graphics and Media, WYSIWYG Style

In This Chapter

- Gazing at images in a WYSIWYG editor
- Giving voice to your Web page by adding sound
- Livening up a Web page with video

In the early days of the Web, it was embedded GIF graphics files that really brought Web pages to life. Then came embedded JPEG files, and more recently downloadable sound files and embedded videos have kept making the Web more and more interesting, relevant, and useful.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7, describe how to create and use images, sounds, and videos (respectively). In this chapter, I show you how to actually put all these kinds of files in your Web page using a WYSIWYG editor, with specific examples using CoffeeCup. By the end of this chapter, you should be able to create very lively Web pages.

Chapter 14 uses this same approach, showing you how to create Web pages "by hand" in Notepad. It looks pretty similar to this chapter; that's intentional. I figure at least some consistency helps shrink confusion.

In the early days of the Web, the only kind of media file that could be really included in a Web page was a GIF graphics file. Though the HTML file itself was text, any GIF file that was linked into the Web page via the IMG tag was displayed as if it were part of the page. JPEG graphics files were included via the `EMBED` command and were opened with one of a variety of "player" programs that contained the somewhat complex code needed to display a JPEG image.

Fairly quickly, browsers were upgraded to incorporate JPEG files, which can now be handled via the `IMG` command. PNG graphics files are now fairly widely supported, and even Windows BMP files are supported by Internet Explorer. But GIF and JPEG images remain the only ones that you can really count on including within the "flow" of a Web page.

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Web-page authors have had to put up with a certain limitation of standard Web browsers: They can't display or play back sound and video files; for that you need a *player* application such as Windows Media Player, QuickTime, or RealPlayer (to cite three common examples). Even the HTML for including a sound or video file isn't standardized. So if you're going to include these files in a way that most people can use, you have some tweaking and finessing to do. Fortunately, CoffeeCup helps you do it.

Including Images in WYSIWYG

Including images in a Web page isn't all that simple. The complexities of how to create the images themselves are covered in Chapter 5. Linking to images isn't all that easy either. (Similar considerations apply to sound and video, but they're less-used than images.)

There are three kinds of links you can use to include an image in a Web page:

- **Linking to a Web URL.** Most every image on the Web has its own URL. So, to include the image in your own Web page, you can just use the IMG tag and give the Web address of the image as the source. When the user sees your Web page, it will look like the image is part of it, even though it's hosted on a different Web site.

  Plusses and minuses: This is easy for you as a Web author, but you can't count on the image staying there forever. It also represents the image as your own when it actually belongs to someone else. Finally, it's much slower for the user than hosting the image on your own Web server.

  To find the URL of a Web image on a Windows machine, right-click it and choose Copy Shortcut. The URL will then be placed in the Clipboard, meaning you can paste it into a text editor, HTML program or other program.

- **Linking to the same folder as your Web page.** If an image file is in the same folder as the HTML file that links to it, you only need to give the name of the image file, no folder or path information.

  Plusses and minuses: This is very simple, like linking to a Web URL, fast and easy. When you transfer your files to a Web server, there's no problem with keeping the files in the same relative position. The only disadvantage is that the folder the Web page is in can get quite crowded, especially as many images are used over and over again by different Web pages. So you can end up with one folder containing all the Web pages and images in a site, which can be a mess.

- **Linking to a different folder on the same machine as the Web page.** The image file is on the same machine as the Web page, but in a different folder. The link contains either a relative pathway from the Web page to the image file, including moves up and down a tree of folders, or an absolute address relative to the root of the machine.

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Plusses and minuses: This is where a lot of problems occur. You have to describe the pathway from the HTML file to the image file, or the absolute location of the file on the machine, and this can easily change or get mangled when files are transferred to a Web server.

Using a WYSIWYG tool such as CoffeeCup solves many of the possible problems of keeping images in a separate file by automatically generating the path information between the files. CoffeeCup goes one step further and encourages you to arrange the files sensibly.

All the different possible ways of linking an HTML file to an image file are described in Table 10-1. Inspect it carefully now, and use it as a reference when you're creating links to image files. (There's one just like it in Chapter 14 for those hardy folks who've decided to use Notepad instead of CoffeeCup.)

Table 10-1 URL and Web Page Examples

Location of Target	*URL*	*Web-Page Example*	*Graphics Example**
Same folder	*filename*	`<a href="mycv.html">text</a>`	`<img src="myface.jpg">`
Subfolder at a lower level of the same path	*pathname/filename*	`<a href="subpages/mycv.htm">text</a>`	`<img src="grfx/myface.jpg>`
Folder on a different path	*pathname/filename*	`<a href="../theother-page/otherpage.htm>text</a>`	`<img src="../sharegfx/proface.gif>`
Different server, home page (index.htm or index.html)	*domainname*	`<a href="http://www.largedomain.com">text</a>`	`<img src="http://www.largedomain.com/good-face.jpg">`
Different server, interior page	*Domainname/pathname*	`<a href="http://www.largess.com/files/bud.htm">text</a>`	`<img src="http://www.largess.com/gifs/icon27.gif">`

(continued)

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Table 10-1 *(continued)*

Location of Target	*URL*	*Web-Page Example*	*Graphics Example**
Link within a page	Any of the above + *#anchor name*	`<a name="my anchor"></a>; <a href="http://www.largess.com#myanchor">Go to my anchor </a>`	Doesn't apply

** These examples leave out the alt option and other important graphics options, described later in this chapter.*

Follow these steps to enter and format text in CoffeeCup:

1. **Open the Visual Editor tab in CoffeeCup; move the cursor to the point where you want to insert the graphic.**

   The Visual Editor makes many aspects of linking to a graphic easier.

2. **Click the Image button or click the Insert menu and select Image.**

   The Insert Image dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 10-1.

   Move the dialog box to one side (if possible) so you can see the area where the image is going in.

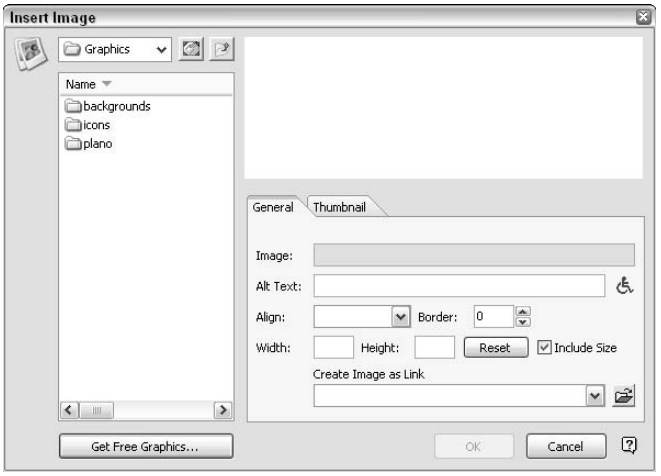

Figure 10-1: Insert Image gives you most of the options you need.

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3. **Navigate to the image you want to include and select it.**

   Chapter 5 describes how to create and find images of the right format, adjust image size, and so on. (However, see Step 10 for a quick-and-dirty way to resize an image.)

4. **If CoffeeCup asks you to copy the image to the working folder, say Yes to do so, or No to leave the image where it is.**

   In most cases, it's better to choose Yes; this will place the image in the same folder as the Web page, creating the simplest possible path from one to the other.

5. **Enter `alt` text at the Alt Text prompt.**

   `alt` text is very important for two reasons. `alt` text is read out loud by screen readers and other programs for visually disabled users. (The wheelchair image in the dialog box is the international symbol for disability, not specifically for wheelchair use.)

   `alt` text is also used as a tool tip, text that appears when the user mouses over the graphic. For both purposes, `alt` text should be a short, simple description of the image, such as the name of a person pictured — or a description, if the image is for the purpose of providing atmosphere.

6. **Choose how the image should be aligned relative to text.**

   The usual choices are for the image to be aligned to the left, with text flowing around it on the right, or on the right, with text flowing to the left of it. This is the magazine or newspaper look, with text and image integrated together.

   Other choices, such as `top`, `bottom`, and `middle`, place a single line of text next to the image and otherwise leave the image on its own. This nearly always looks strange.

7. **Enter a border size for a black border around the image.**

   Adding a thin black border around an image makes it appear sharper and clearer (especially small images). Experiment with border sizes around your image. The Insert Image box will show a preview to help guide you, as shown in Figure 10-2.

   There's an additional attribute that allows you to add blank space around an image that you may want to use; see Chapter 14 for the HTML code to use in the Code Editor to add this padding.

8. **Change the width and height if you want to resize the image in place.**

   Usually you should resize the image before putting it in your Web page. However, you can stretch or shrink the displayed image by changing the width and/or height here.

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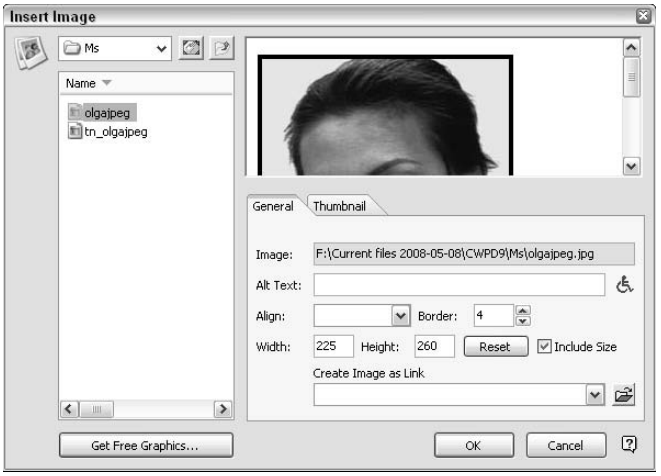

Figure 10-2: Use the preview to set a border around the image.

If you want to keep the image in proportion, change both dimensions by the same amount. For instance, if you want to resize the width from 180 pixels to 100 pixels, multiply the height by 100, divide it by 180, and use the result as the new height.

Leave the Include Size box checked so the image size will be included in the HTML code. This allows the Web browser to draw the Web page correctly before the image downloads, preventing different parts of the page contents from lurching about as different elements of the page download.

9. **To make the image a link, enter a URL, or browse to the destination file on your local machine or network.**

   You can link to a Web destination or use images to create an image-based menu.

10. **To create a smaller version of the image, click the Thumbnail tab, as shown in Figure 10-3.**

    You can choose the percentage for resizing, the file format, and the quality setting (for JPEG images).

    If you want to give the user the option of clicking the small image to see the larger version, click the Link to Original Image check box.

    This is a great feature for creating a thumbnail image, but also a fast and easy way of creating a smaller image "on the fly."

11. **Click OK to accept the image settings.**

    To change the settings later, click the image; the options will show up at the bottom of the Visual Editor area.

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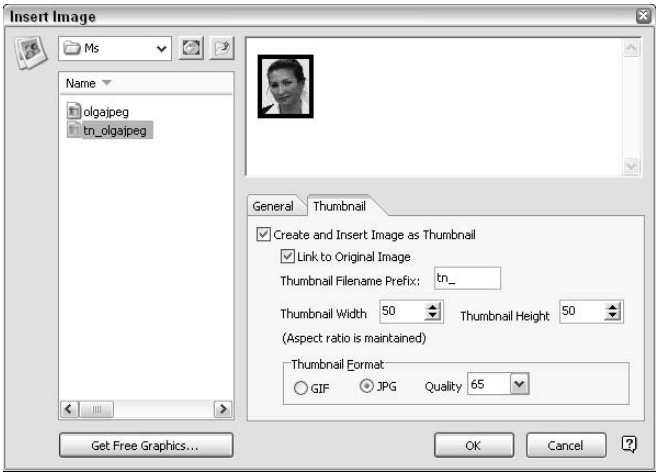

Figure 10-3: Create a thumbnail or just downsize the image.

Adding Sound to Your Page

Whether it's a good idea to add sound to your Web page, the plusses and minuses are discussed in Chapter 6. (Also described there are how to host a music file on MySpace.) I mention there that you can't, for instance, have background music for an entire site — sound is controlled one page at a time. But what are the actual mechanics of adding sound?

Because sound is not a standard part of the Web's definition, there are actually two contradictory ways to do it. Briefly, one is with the `bgsound` tag, and one is with the `embed` tag.

The `bgsound` tag works well and has useful options for controlling sound. However, it's not supported by all browsers.

The `embed` tag is one of the "wild cards" of HTML, not officially supported by the HTML standard at all — but supported by most browsers. One big problem with `embed`, from a standards point of view, is that the options (officially called attributes) for `embed` are different for different players. Each player is controlled by a single company — Microsoft, Apple, and Real Networks, for the three major players — and this is not a very standards-friendly situation.

The user can stop sound from playing by clicking the browser's Stop button; you may wish to let your users know this in text on your Web page; many (even most) users don't know it.

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Given this confusion, CoffeeCup does an excellent job of supporting the embedding of sounds, but it's still a mess. Follow these steps to add sound to a Web page in CoffeeCup:

1. **Open the Visual Editor tab in CoffeeCup; move the cursor to the beginning of the text.**

   This will put the HTML code for embedding the sound at the beginning of the BODY area of the Web page, where it will be easy to find if you need to modify it.

2. **Choose Insert➪Sound.**

   The Insert Sound dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 10-4.

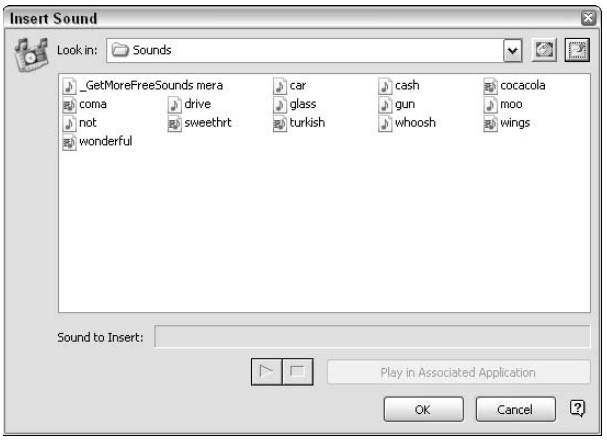

Figure 10-4: Choose a sound to please — or annoy? — your page's visitors.

3. **Navigate to the sound file you want to include — one of the sample files included with CoffeeCup (as shown in the figure) or another sound — and select it.**

   The pathway to the file shows up next to the Sound to Insert prompt.

4. **To preview — or "pre-hear" — the sound file, click the green triangle. To open the application that's associated with that type of sound file on your machine, click Play in Associated Application.**

   The sound file will play — without showing the application, if you click the green triangle, or while showing the application, if you click the Play in Associated Application button.

5. **Click OK to accept the sound.**

   A small image will appear in the Web page and the sound will now play whenever the page is opened.

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The HTML code generated by CoffeeCup will actually play the same sound twice. To correct this, and to set other options, follow the next steps.

6. **Click the Code Editor tab.**

   The code for playing the sound, both an `embed` tag and a `bgsound` tag, will appear.

7. **Correct the code to make the sound play only once.**

   There are three solutions to this:

   - Remove the `embed` tag. This way the sound will only play — once, not twice — on the (many) browsers that support `bgsound`. Users whose browsers don't support `bgsound` won't hear anything and won't know what they're missing.
   - Remove the `bgsound` tag. This way the sound will play — only once, not twice — on the (many) browsers that support `embed`. Users whose browsers don't support `embed` won't hear anything and won't know what they're missing.
   - Surround the `bgsound` tag with the `<noembed>` and `</noembed>` tags. These tags allow the `bgsound` tag to only execute on browsers that don't support the `embed` tag; you only hear the sound once, but you miss the `loop` option of the `bgsound` tag. Speaking of which . . .

For the `bgsound` tag only, you can add `loop="3"`, for instance, for the sound to play a total of three times, or `loop="infinite"` if you want the sound to keep playing. (This can be, well, infinitely annoying.)

Adding Video to Your Page

The whys and wherefores of adding video to your Web page are discussed in detail in Chapter 7, along with the specifics of how to upload a video to YouTube.

You can host a video on your own site or on YouTube. If you use YouTube, you get the advantage of using Google's massive server and processing capabilities — Google owns YouTube — for compressing your video and serving it, all free of charge to you. If you host video on your own site, you may have to pay fees if download activity gets too high.

If a video hosted on a server you pay for "goes viral" — suddenly getting hundreds or thousands of hits — the download charges could scale rather dramatically as well.

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YouTube even helps with the mechanics of putting the video in your Web page — which can be done with the same code, wherever it's hosted, except for the contents of the hypertext reference. For every video on YouTube, the code is provided to link to embed that video in your Web page. However, it's not that hard to do the same thing yourself.

Here's a quick example of how to include a video in your Web page, wherever it's hosted:

1. **Open the Code Editor tab in CoffeeCup; move the cursor to wherever you want the video to appear in the Web page.**
2. **If the video is hosted on YouTube, go to the relevant YouTube page and copy the code for the video from there. Paste it into your Web page. Otherwise, type in the following:** `<embed src="path">`**.**

   If the video is in the same folder as your Web page, the path is just the filename; if the video is on the Web, the path is its URL (of the video, not the page it's on; find this by choosing View➪Source for the Web page hosting the video). If the file is in a folder on your machine, include the path to it.

   You can figure this out by linking to a graphic in the same folder, using the Insert Image command described earlier in this chapter, then copying the path generated in the dialog box but substituting the video's filename.

3. **Test the video in your Web page.**

   Try the video in your Web page.

   If you're having no luck successfully including the video in your Web page, or if you're worried about download charges, then upload the video to YouTube or another host. Provide a "normal" link to the Web page that hosts the video on your Web page. Users can then return to your site after they've viewed the video.

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Chapter 11

Laying Out Your Site in WYSIWYG

In This Chapter

- Using mailto links
- Linking your Web page internally
- Creating a navigation bar

One of the trickiest things in creating Web pages is going beyond "just putting up a page" to creating a full site. The questions around designing a multiple-page site never get fully answered, even by the experts. (That's oddly reassuring, as it leaves room for creativity.)

In this chapter, I demonstrate how to use links to create first a complex page, then a full site, complete with basic navigation.

Using mailto Links

Oddly, `mailto` links are one of those "simple" things that actually have some complexity to them — complexity that's easy to work around if you know how.

A `mailto` link is a link that has as its destination an e-mail address. If your system is set up properly — a big if — clicking an e-mail link brings up an open e-mail message, already addressed to the e-mail address described in the `mailto` link. (If you're really clever, the subject line of the e-mail can also be pre-filled.) The user just has to enter the content of the e-mail and click Send. See Figure 11-1 for an example of a link and the resulting e-mail message.

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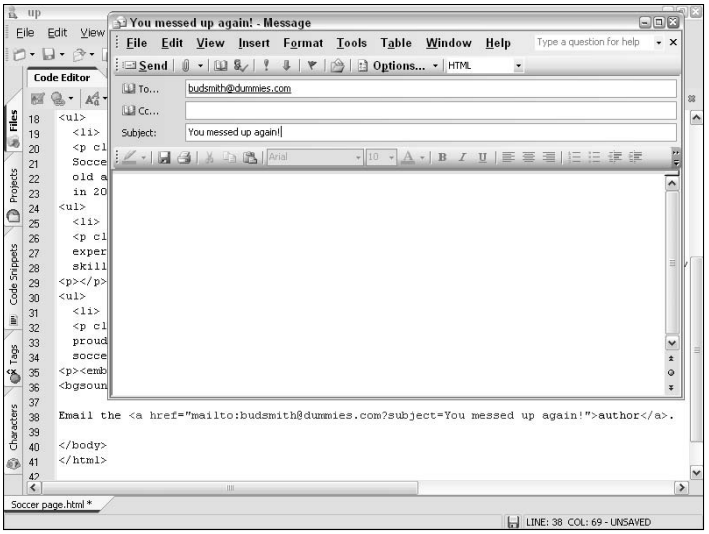

Figure 11-1: `Mailto` links make creating e-mail easier.

True enough, `mailto` links are cool, a nice "hack" that makes a difficult problem — getting an e-mail address exactly right — much easier. Unfortunately, there are a few "buts" to take into account before using e-mail links. Here are the problems with them:

- `mailto` **links often don't work at all.** Many people don't have their systems set up correctly (that is, so their main e-mail program is recognized by the system and "called" when a `mailto` link is clicked). The result of clicking a link might be that an unused e-mail tool is started, or even that the system asks the user to *find* the e-mail program on the hard drive — not something most people want to do (for one thing, it's annoying).
- `mailto` **links often don't work in the way that's wanted.** Different people use different e-mail programs for different purposes. The same person may do e-mail work primarily in Outlook, using his or her job's domain name, may handle personal e-mail through Hotmail or Gmail — possibly through a Web browser window, possibly also in Outlook.

  The mailto link can't "know" which e-mail program or source domain the user wants at any given point, but it often guesses wrong. It may (for example) strike the user as strikingly inappropriate to bring up the "work" e-mail when the present objective is to book a vacation. This problem can even contribute to getting the user into difficulty: It's easy to miss an e-mail reply that goes to the "wrong" account or use the "work" e-mail application for inappropriate personal purposes. (Try saying that three times fast!)

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- `mailto` **links often aren't what the user expects.** When users click a "Contact Us" link, for instance, they want and expect a page of contact information with, ideally, one or more names, addresses, and phone numbers, as well as Web links and e-mail addresses. If, instead, a pre-filled e-mail message to a discouraging address (such as `contact@wewontanswer.com`) comes up, the user feels cheated.

Luckily, there's a way to use `mailto` links that maximizes their advantages and minimizes their problems. Just follow these rules, which work together to "tame" `mailto` links and make them friendly:

- **Never use** `mailto` **links in navigation.** Users expect navigational links to lead to Web pages. Don't surprise them. Use `mailto` links within Web pages, where the user expects them.
- **Provide alternatives to e-mail contact.** Don't make e-mail the only way to contact you unless you absolutely have to. Everyone knows that e-mails (especially e-mails to anonymous addresses such as `contactus@...`) often go unanswered. So make the e-mail route just one way to get in touch. (And if you really want to be effective, promise a time frame in which the e-mail will be answered and stick to it.)
- **Signal that the** `mailto` **link is present.** Use wording coming up to the `mailto` link that indicates that's what the users will get when they click. Something like this: "To complain, call us at 1 800 555-1212 or send us e-mail…."
- **Spell out the e-mail address as well.** Many users are aware that clicking a `mailto` link doesn't work for them. By spelling out the e-mail address as well as providing it in a link, you give them another way to accomplish your shared purpose, which is for them to send you an e-mail. (You also signal that the adjacent e-mail link is just that.)

So a proper use of `mailto` links is within a Contact Us or other page, in a form like the following:

> To respond, send e-mail to `wewanttohear@ourcompany.com`.

This will signal the user that clicking the link, e-mail, will bring up an e-mail message addressed to `wewanttohear@ourcompany.com` — and give them a workaround if they want to use the e-mail address themselves.

Creating a `mailto` link in CoffeeCup is just like creating a regular link, only simpler. Follow these steps:

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1. **Open the Visual Editor tab in CoffeeCup; move the cursor to the spot where you want to insert the `mailto` link. If the text you wish to use for the e-mail link is already present, select it.**
2. **Choose Insert➪E-mail Link or click the Link button and choose E-mail Link.**

   The Insert E-mail Link dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 11-2.

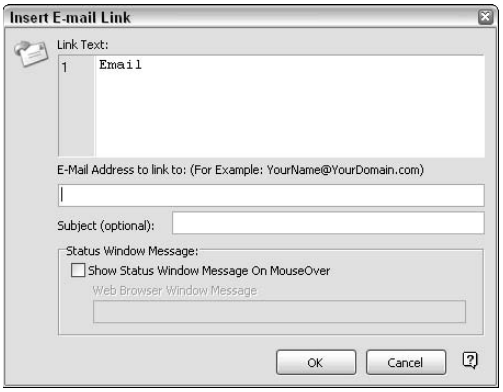

Figure 11-2: Insert E-mail gives you all the options you need — and more.

3. **If the Link Text: area is not already filled in with text you selected before opening the dialog box, enter the link text you want to use.**
4. **Enter the e-mail address you want the link to link to.**

   Be sure to get the e-mail address right, and test it after you finish. Nothing is more frustrating to the user than a bad e-mail address in a `mailto` link.

   If there's background work that needs to be done — for instance, if you want to use a generic e-mail address such as `contact@`, but behind the scenes you want to link that to a few people's e-mail In boxes — do that work now so the link works as needed from the beginning, even during testing.
5. **Optionally, enter a Subject line for the e-mail.**

   This can be convenient for both you and the users, but can be changed by the users (or can be ignored completely if users send e-mail to the designated address themselves). So don't count on it working for all e-mails you receive from this `mailto` link.
6. **Optionally, click in the check box to show a status window message when the users move their mouse over the linked text. Then enter the message.**

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This option makes a message appear in the status-bar area in the user's Web browser; if you don't enter anything here, the word `mailto:` and the destination e-mail address will appear instead. Unfortunately, most users have the status-bar area turned off (that's the default in recent versions of Internet Explorer, the most popular browser) and, if they do have it on, they expect to be able to see link destinations there when they mouse over a link. So it's probably best not to use this option.

7. **Click OK to accept the e-mail link properties.**

   The appropriate HTML code is added to your Web page.

Internal Links within a Web Page

One of the most productive uses of hyperlinks is to create sets of links that, at first, don't seem all that "hyper": links within a Web page.

One of the cleverest elements of Web pages is that, while they're quite limited in the horizontal dimension — users won't accept having to scroll left and right to read a page — they can be very long indeed in the vertical dimension (up and down). Like an ancient scroll, a Web page can "unroll" to be very long indeed.

But only if you make things easy on the user. You can help a user navigate within a given Web page by using *internal links* — links that go to a specific spot within a Web page.

Internal links are useful for creating a Web site that's made up of a single Web page, divided into sections. Such a page is also a great precursor to a full Web site with multiple Web pages and navigation.

An internal link has two parts:

- **A destination anchor:** This is in the form `<a name="targetname"></a>`. Note that there is no text surrounded by the beginning and ending anchor tags. This HTML code simply gives a name to the spot in the Web page where it appears. It's invisible to the user. When a link has the target as a destination, the Web page scrolls upward or downward so that the line is the destination.
- **A source anchor:** This is in the form `<a src="#anchorname">text</a>`. This is a typical anchor, but the destination is within a page, as shown by the # character. The source may also include a Web-page name, in which case the target after the # character is a destination anchor within the Web page. If the source doesn't include a Web-page name, the destination must be within the current page.

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A classic example of internal links in a Web page that's part of a full site is the familiar FAQ (for Frequently Asked Questions) page. Generally, the questions are all listed at the top, followed by each question with its accompanying (often quite lengthy) answer. Links within the page make it easy to go back to the top of the page whenever you're done reading one of the answers.

Follow the instructions here to create an internal link in a Web page in CoffeeCup:

1. **Open the Visual Editor tab in CoffeeCup; enter some text that includes destinations that you want to link to.**

   The Visual Editor makes the sometimes complicated task of inserting internal links easier. But whether using the Visual Editor or not, it's easier to create the destinations first, then the links that go to them.

2. **Move the cursor to a spot that you want to be the destination of a link.**

   Usually this will be the beginning of a line of text, often a header.

   If you don't have the content of a Web page ready yet, you can just create headers and links; then your navigation system will be ready as you fill in the content.

3. **Choose Insert➪Target.**

   The Insert Target dialog box appears, as shown in Figure 11-3.

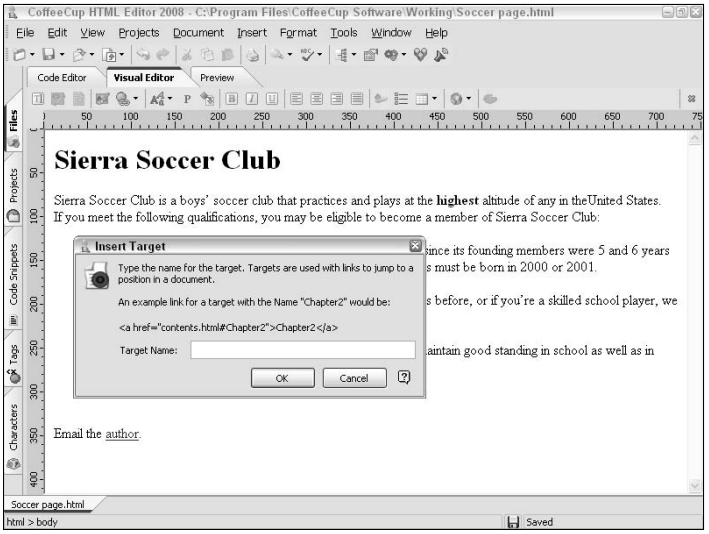

Figure 11-3: Choose your destination with Insert Target.

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4. **Enter a target name.**

   The target name should include some key phrase or words from the text just following the target, but the target name should have no spaces.

5. **Click OK.**

   "Hidden" HTML — HTML that can't be seen in the Visual Editor or in the Web page visible to the user — is inserted, in the following form: `<a name= "anchorname"></a>`. This HTML code simply gives a name to the spot in the Web page where the HTML occurs — a spot that can now be linked to.

6. **Repeat for additional internal links.**

   Create all the additional links you need — if necessary, type in headers or other markers for the internal links to be associated with.

7. **Confirm the internal anchors.**

   To confirm that the internal anchors have been created, choose Insert➪Quick Link to Open Document and the currently open document. (You can also choose the Link button as the starting point.) The currently defined internal anchors will display, in their order within the document.

The link targets given names in this way are often referred to as anchors, even though technically the beginnings of links are anchors as well. Creating and using these kinds of *anchors* (link destinations) is another area where using a WYSIWYG tool such as CoffeeCup provides a big advantage. Inserting, finding, and using link destinations directly in HTML-tagged text is quite complicated, but in an HTML tool, it's fairly easy with a little planning.

Creating a Navigation Bar Using Text

Navigation bar is a broad term for an area of a Web page that the user recognizes as set aside for links among Web pages. Each separate link or choice in a navigation bar is called a *tab,* whether or not it actually looks like a tab as used in a paper file.

Many more complex sites actually have two or more navigation bars — a *primary navigation bar* for the main areas of the site, which is often graphical and may run down the left side of the site, and a *utility navigation bar* for useful functions such as a site map, contact information, and copyright or legal information. (These functions may be housed on Web pages below the top level of navigation for the site as a whole, or may be separate from the site hierarchy and accessible only via the utility navigation bar.) The utility navigation bar is often text-based (or at least relatively simple) and found in the upper right or across the bottom of each page of a site.

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Creating a simple text navigation bar is useful as a precursor to the primary navigation, which may need design input to look good and work well, and also to learn how to create secondary navigation like that often used for simple functions. Even a simple text navigation bar can help enforce useful practices of site design and usability, right from the beginning of creating a multiple-page site.

A text navigation bar is a consistent visual element that appears on every page of the site and that always has the same appearance, the same words, and the same links. It's not an exaggeration to say that a navigation bar of some sort, even a simple one consisting of text, is the difference between a Web *site* and an unconnected mass of Web pages. Creating a navigation bar forces you to start thinking hard about how your site is going to be organized.

Here's an example of a simple text navigation bar for a "personal professional" site, a kind of online super-résumé:

Home | Résumé | Memberships | Publications | Personal | Contact me

Each tab is underlined to reflect that it's a link to that page or multi-page area of the site. Note that the Home tab, as I'll call it, is not underlined. The idea is that, when you're on the home page, you can't click Home to go to the home page — because you're already there.

When you click the word Résumé on the text menu to go to the Resume page, however, the text navigation bar should change to reflect where you are — it's no longer possible to click Résumé, while Home is linked again:

Home | Résumé | Memberships | Publications | Personal | Contact me

To implement this arrangement, you create a "model" navigation bar with *all* the tabs linked — but it's never used in quite that form. For each page on your site, you copy the navigation bar to the page, and then remove the link from the tab that the page in question belongs to.

Follow these instructions to create a text navigation bar:

1. **Open a new, empty page in the Visual Editor tab in CoffeeCup.**
2. **Type in a line of text representing the elements of your site, with a word or two for each page or area.**

   Use the vertical bar to separate the tabs. Examples for a personal/professional site look like this:

   Home | Résumé | Memberships | Publications | Personal | Contact me

   If the vertical bar character is not accessible from your keyboard, it should be available from the Symbol or similar menu. In Microsoft Word, choose Insert➪Symbol to bring up the Symbol dialog box and select the vertical bar character.

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3. **Select the text links and click the Center button.**

   The text menu will be centered.

4. **To link the Home tab to the home page of your site, select the word Home (not the spaces to either side). Choose Insert➪Link. (You can also start with the Link button.)**

   The Insert Link dialog box appears.

5. **Type in the URL: simply the filename of the home page, `index.htm`, as shown in Figure 11-4. Click OK.**

   You're returned to the Visual Editor.

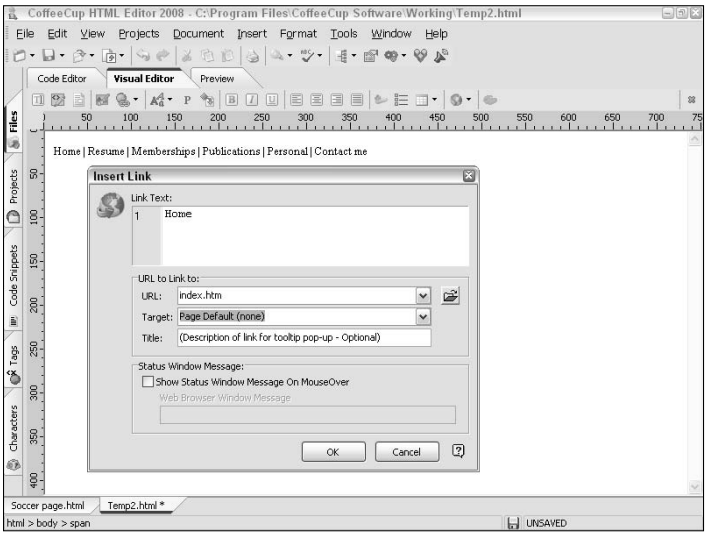

Figure 11-4: Create the links you need.

6. **For the remaining phrases, repeat this process: Select the tab name (which might have a space within it, but don't select the space before or after); link it to a Web page by name; click OK.**

   By doing it this way, you can put your navigation feature in place; the pages don't even have to exist yet. (When you do create them, however, you must match the names in the text menu exactly.)

   Make the filenames you define here similar to the phrases in the tabs, but don't use spaces or capital letters in the filenames. If you do, the links could break when your Web site is moved to a server for hosting.

   When you're done, you should have a fully linked text menu — every tab linked to a page, even if the page content doesn't exist yet.

   Consider keeping a copy of the complete menu, with all links in place, on your home page or in a working page — so if you make changes later, it will be easier to update the text menu.

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7. **Save the page repeatedly using each of the filenames you've defined. As you proceed, delete the link from the tab representing the page you're about to save, removing the underline and link color from it.**

   This will give you the beginnings of your site: a set of pages, each with the text menu present and linked appropriately.

   You can remove the link from a piece of text by deleting the linked text and then retyping the text, with no link.

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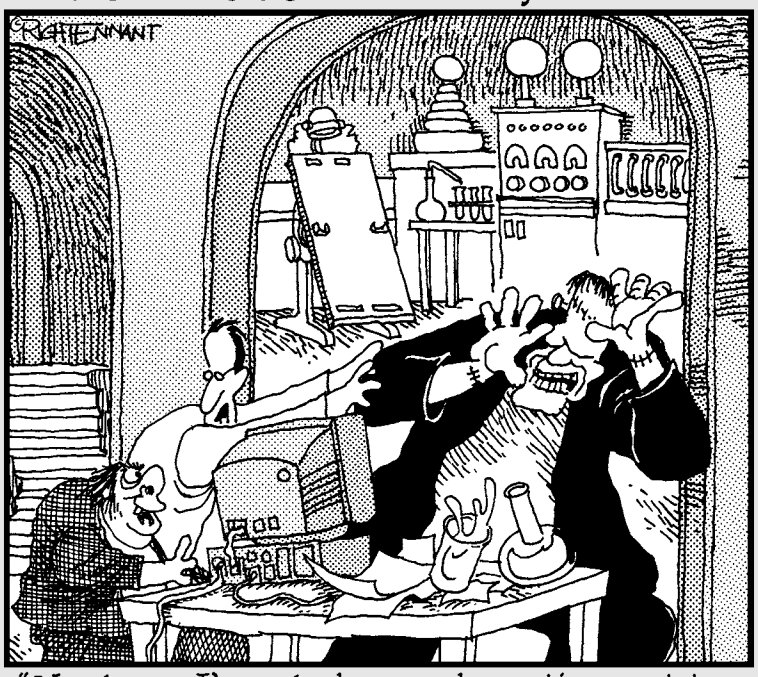
Part IV
Your Site in HTML

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant



"You know, I've asked you a dozen times not to animate the torches on our Web page!"

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In this part . . .

It's always fun to "get right down to the bare metal" in any endeavor, and HTML is no exception. Use free tools available on your computer, such as Windows Notepad, to work directly in HTML, giving you total control over your Web page —and the ability to grow it into an effective Web site.

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Chapter 12

Using a Text Editor

In This Chapter

- Using a text editor (compared to using a WYSIWYG editor)
- Introducing Notepad
- Using Notepad for HTML

The way to really get control of your Web pages is to create and test your Web pages on your own hard drive before uploading them to the Web. Then you can upload tried-and-tested Web pages to any number of different Web hosts, including Google itself. And the way to really, *really* get control is to create or edit Web pages directly in HTML.

Using online tools such as Google Page Creator (discussed in Chapter 3) is a bit like riding a tricycle. Using a WYSIWYG editor, as described in Chapters 8 through 11, is like using training wheels on a bicycle. Using a text editor is like riding on just two wheels, keeping your balance yourself. You can go farther and faster — but it's also more work, and you can crash more spectacularly.

This chapter describes how to create your initial Web page locally, on your own hard drive, using a text editor. As an example, I use Notepad, the text editor included in every version of Windows. If you use a Macintosh, the Simpletext program included with every version of MacOS fills the same role.

The previous Part describes how to create and improve Web pages using a What You See Is What You Get, or WYSIWYG, editor. The chapters in this Part describe how to improve your Web page and how to extend your Web page into a multipage Web site — using Notepad and straight HTML (look, Ma, no hands!). Chapter 15 tells you how to publish one or more Web pages created in a text editor from your own machine onto the Web.

This chapter helps you choose the approach you want to use and then shows you how to create your initial Web page.

As with using a WYSIWYG editor, using a text editor leaves you free to choose your own host for your Web pages. It also adds a powerful tool to your arsenal of Web-page creation and Web-editing techniques.

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The good news is, there's no wrong answer; the bad news is, there's no single, simple *right* answer either. Professional Web-page authors often work in a combination of tools: a text editor, a WYSIWYG tool, and a Web browser for previewing. The question isn't really which approach you're going to use in the long run, but how you want to start. Starting in a text editor is a tough school, but a good one.

Choosing Plain Text over WYSIWYG

You can use a couple of different approaches to create and edit Web pages on your own computer. One approach is to use a text editor. A text editor is only partly like a word-processing program: It lets you enter upper- and lowercase letters, digits, and punctuation, but (unlike a word processor) it doesn't give you any way to add formatting such as **bold** characters or bulleted lists.

A core part of HTML (which stands for "HyperText Markup Language," remember) is to "mark up" your text — which means adding formatting to it. So if you're using HTML in a text editor, you're using HTML tags to do part of what a word processor does — to add formatting.

You may have been using computers long enough to remember that early versions of today's word processors worked the same way. In the once-popular WordStar, for instance, you would put special characters before and after a word to make it (for instance) bold. The first versions of Microsoft Word were notable for their heavy reliance on WYSIWYG word processing rather than WordStar-style markup.

What you don't get in a text editor is a preview of what the formatting looks like when it's in effect — and that's the core of WYSIWYG. Using a text editor to work in HTML, however, you can get close. Just enter your text in the text editor, add HTML tags for markup, then save the file and open it in Internet Explorer or another Web browser. What you see when you view your HTML code in IE will truly be what users will get when they view the same Web page in the same Web browser.

While interactive previewing on your own machine is a great way to see what your HTML will really do, this doesn't protect you from all potential problems with your published Web page. In particular, when you transfer your Web page to a host machine, the links that worked so well on your own machine may not work on the new machine. Looking for and fixing these "broken links" is a key concern of Web publishing.

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Previewing a Web page in one browser gives you an excellent idea of what it will look like for your Web page visitors — but only the ones who are using the same browser, with the same settings. You must test in a variety of browsers to get good coverage, and always be aware that there's almost always some combination of a Web browser and settings that will cause some user somewhere to have trouble with your Web page.

I recommend that you either work directly in HTML or use a simple WYSIWYG tool that doesn't try to do too much for you, and look frequently at the underlying HTML. If you do want to use a tool, I recommend the CoffeeCup HTML Editor 2008 package included on the CD-ROM and described in Chapters 8 through 11.

Though working directly in HTML in a text editor ramps up your learning curve and gives you a great deal of control, frequent previewing is a tough way to keep on top of the effect your coding will have. It's also very easy to get lost in the HTML-tagged text when you're trying to remember where to make an addition or change.

Figure 12-1 shows a simple Web page as it appears when being edited in a text editor (left) and previewed in Internet Explorer (right). You can see how the same HTML-tagged text looks when seen as HTML and rendered as a Web page.

When you work in a text editor and preview in a Web browser, you'll quickly figure out why so many professional Web-page authors have large screens, multiple screens, or a combination of the two. You want to have enough screen room to put the text-editor window next to the Web browser window, without overlap. A modern, "panorama"-style laptop screen with 1280 x 800 resolution gives you plenty of width for this, though each window is a bit short. Try to get a screen with at least 1280 x 1024 resolution.

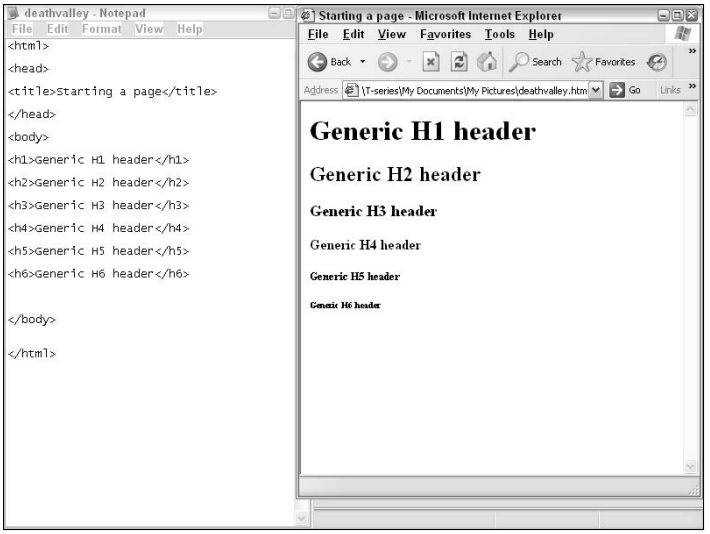

Figure 12-1: Composing in a text editor and previewing in a Web browser.

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Why train in a text editor?

Working in a text editor is great training for drilling the nuts and bolts of HTML into your consciousness, even into your unconscious. (It doesn't even hurt. Much, anyway.)

Every computer you'll ever have access to is likely to include a text editor. So you've got what you need to create or fix a Web page anywhere you are in the world.

You also avoid the problem of having your lovely HTML code messed with when you use a WYSIWYG editor. Most such tools rearrange your HTML code when you bring it into WYSIWYG mode, and the code that such tools create is unlikely to look much like your own. Using a text editor is a "purer" working environment.

However, even the bravest of "bare metal" HTML tweakers have learned their own tips and tricks to make life easier.

One trick is that you can also edit text in a word processor. It's a distracting environment, but the excellent spell-checkers, flexible search-and-replace, and powerful formatting tools in a word processor can help you to tame large or complex HTML files. You just have to remember to always copy and paste the text in and out, without saving — or Word may add its own idea of HTML to your file.

You can also make the initial job of creating HTML files easier by keeping "cut and paste" examples of Web code handy or viewing and retrieving examples from Web-authoring sites as needed.

And knowing enough about how to use an HTML editor to switch into one when needed is always a great help. The CoffeeCup HTML Editor package on the CD is a great tool for such a requirement.

Working within a Text Environment

When you begin using a text editor such as Notepad, it's a good idea to create a sample Web page that includes the major kinds of formatting, so you can cut and paste from it into your own Web page in progress. Some features to include in such a Web page include

- The `html`, `head`, and `body` tags that form a framework for every Web page
- Links to other Web pages on other Web sites
- Links to graphics that accompany your Web page, including size commands and alternate text
- A simple table, or perhaps a few

It's not uncommon for Web-page authors who use a text editor for most of their work to switch to a WYSIWYG tool for creating, filling in, and editing tables, and then switch back to a text editor for their remaining work.

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No matter how you edit, if you add advanced elements (such as multimedia files or computer programs) to your Web page, be prepared to test your pages with several different browsers — and to tell your Web visitors what to expect.

As with WYSIWYG HTML tools, you can create HTML forms in a text editor, but this won't give you the CGI (Common Gateway Interface) scripts that you need to make the forms work. These CGI scripts process the data that the user enters into a form. However, if you don't want to mess with creating these scripts, you can get CGI scripts from others on the Web and, after a bit of trial and error, modify them as needed for your Web site.

Plusses and minuses of Notepad as a text editor

Notepad has the advantages of any text-editing tool, with few disadvantages. Here are its four key advantages as a text-editing tool:

- **Truly basic.** You don't need to do much to learn Notepad. You do have to learn some things about working in a text editor rather than a WYSIWYG tool, but these aren't imposed by Notepad; they're fundamental to how you're working. If you work in a more powerful tool, any problems you experience could be in your HTML or they could be in the tool.
- **No formatting codes.** Notepad is utterly incapable of putting hidden formatting codes into your file.
- **Ubiquitous.** Notepad is available on any Windows machine. And because it's so basic, even non-Windows machines are likely to also have basic, Notepad-like tools handy.
- **Popular.** Working in Notepad is a popular way to create and edit Web pages, so it's easy to get help from other Web-page authors — anyone who knows HTML well. If you work in a WYSIWYG editor or a more powerful text-editing tool, the only people who can help you are fellow users of that tool.

I recommend that most beginning Web publishers use HTML Editor in Visual Editor mode and check the underlying HTML frequently to see what's really going on. As you get more knowledgeable with HTML, you may wish to buy and use a more advanced HTML editor — or go the low-tech route (as many Web professionals do much of the time) and use a basic text editor or the Code Editor side of CoffeeCup.

I recommend that you consider using CoffeeCup HTML Editor at least occasionally in tandem with editing your Web page in a text editor. The back-and-forth will actually help you learn faster and get more done.

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Do I have to use Notepad?

The choice of text editor is up to you. Although I recommend using Windows Notepad, due to its extremely widespread availability, there are many replacement programs for Notepad that have earned fans of their own. There are also Notepad replacements for non-Windows platforms. To see some well-regarded ones, visit CNET's `download.com` site. Search for "notepad replacement" under Windows or Mac software, as your needs dictate. You'll see many highly rated programs, blog posts with reviews, and more.

Hitting the high notes in Notepad

In order to run the one and only Windows Notepad, follow the instructions below. If you want to run a replacement instead, consider using Notepad for the steps below, then repeating them with your replacement program, just to be sure you're completely on top of both programs. (As you may want to use Notepad when using a random Windows machine at a friend's house, Internet cafe, or other location.)

When following the steps below, and in other uses of Notepad, don't open WordPad instead of Notepad. WordPad stores its own hidden formatting codes among the text characters you type, just like Word (but without most of the nice features).

And don't worry about the Font feature in the Format menu in Notepad, a not particularly welcome addition in recent versions of Notepad. The Font option allows you to apply different fonts and a few formatting options (character size, bolding, and so forth) to *all the characters in the document* — not selectively to some characters, words, or paragraphs, and not others. You might even want to use this feature to make your HTML-tagged text easier to read overall, but it's useless for clever tricks like putting your HTML tags in one color and regular text in another. The Font feature in Notepad is so simplistic precisely because Notepad doesn't store hidden formatting codes within the underlying text; the font and other text characteristics are program settings rather than true formatting of the text. That keeps the text itself blessedly plain — and easy for many different platforms to use.

Okay, after all that, it's brass-tacks time. Follow these steps to get started using Notepad as an HTML-editing tool:

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1. **Start Windows Notepad.**

   The details may vary slightly across different versions of Windows, but they'll be very close to the following: Start by clicking the Start button (the Vista version sports a Windows symbol, but displays the word Start when you mouse over it.) Choose Start➪Programs➪Accessories➪Notepad.

   The program opens.

2. **Click Save & Continue. Save your document under any name you choose, but don't use the suffix `.txt`; instead, add the suffix `.htm` to the filename.**

   This may seem contradictory, but it works: The file will be saved as a text file, with no formatting codes; the suffix `.htm` signals to your Web browser (and, after you upload your file, to Web servers and so on) that the file is a Web page.

   It's not your fault if you find this confusing; the role of a filename extension *is* confusing, and Windows makes matters worse by hiding the extension from most views of the file or filename.

   Right-clicking on a file and choosing Properties will reveal the file's suffix.

3. **Pull down the Format menu and inspect the options.**

   The Format menu appears, as shown in Figure 12-2. The Font option, which brings up the Font dialog box also shown in Figure 12-2, lets you change the displayed font, font size, and formatting (narrowly speaking: bold, italic, or bold italic only).

   The Notepad Format works differently from any Format menu in any other program you're likely to use. It changes the way all the text in the currently open file looks on-screen — regardless of whether that text is selected at the time you choose the Format command — and includes options you can apply to text. Options include changing the Font (not to be done without some thought; see Chapter 9) and making text Bold, Italic, or Underlined.

   If you open your Notepad text file on a different machine, it will display using the font, font style, and size in use by that copy of Notepad, neither knowing nor caring what settings you were using in the copy of Notepad you last edited the file in.

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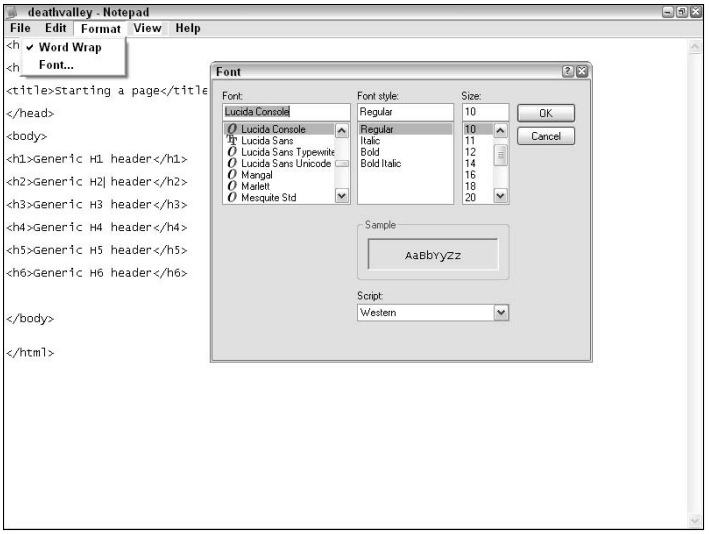

Figure 12-2: The Format menu and Font dialog box only change the look of your text.

4. **Pull down the other menus and inspect the options.**

   There are very few other options to worry about. And if it occurs to you that the Font option should appear under the View menu (since it only affects the look of the text), I would have a hard time arguing with you.

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Chapter 13

Creating a WYSIWYG Page

In This Chapter

- Writing for the Web
- Formatting Web text
- Using HTML lists
- Entering text in HTML

The previous chapter shows you how to get started in Windows Notepad as an example of a simple text editor. This chapter shows you how to create your first Web page in a text editor such as Notepad, put some text in it, and get the text formatted so it looks good.

This chapter draws on the discussion of using text in Web pages in Chapter 4. Review that chapter for information about how to write for the Web. Web writing is a bit different from other kinds of writing. It's also kind of fun, once you get used to it.

What the HTML You'll See in a Text Editor

HTML is designed to be something that humans can read *and* that machines can process, a kind of common ground for human-to-machine communication. You begin with regular text, characters that appear directly on your Web page, and add descriptive tags so all the formatting, linking, and navigational information you need is in text form, contained in the same file with the regular text that appears on the Web page.

Suppose you want to add bold to a word in your text, such as you might see in a book, or on the screen of a word processor:

```
You can use HTML to specify that a word is bold.
```

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Why bother with HTML basics?

Using a text editor makes the workings of HTML even clearer than using a tool such as the HTML editor within CoffeeCup. To an even greater degree, using HTML in a text editor helps you understand how the Web works, how to use free Web tools that allow you to enter HTML tags directly, and how to use other tools that hide HTML to a greater or lesser degree.

To add bold formatting to a sentence using HTML, you start with the regular sentence and add a couple of tags to specify where the bold starts and stops. Here's the previous line in HTML:

```
You can use HTML to specify that a word is <b>bold</b>.
```

When you display the sentence immediately above in a Web browser, the browser displays all the words, but not the *tags* — the information between angle brackets. The Web browser uses the tags to do extra things to the text, such as formatting it as bold text. In the case of this single-line example, the formatting instruction is simple: Start using bold text immediately after the word "is," and stop using bold text immediately after the word "bold."

HTML tags exist alongside the text that users see on your Web page, so a document with HTML tags in it is called *HTML-tagged text.* A file with HTML-tagged text in it is called an HTML file.

An HTML file usually has the extension `.htm` or `.html` at the end of the filename. If you look at HTML-tagged text in a text editing program, you see the angle brackets and HTML commands; if you look at it in a Web browser, you see a Web page with formatting, links, and so on.

A document with no formatting — such as italic and other formatting added by a word processor — is called a *plain-text* document. HTML-tagged text documents are considered plain-text documents because they're made up only of text characters, even though some of the characters (the tags) carry formatting information. Word-processing documents that aren't plain-text documents have additional formatting codes embedded in them to tell machines how to display and print the text.

You can add HTML tags to regular text to create your own Web documents in any text editor or word-processing program. (However, in a word-processing program, you must explicitly save the Web document as a text file.) Or you can use a Web-editing tool that hides the gory details of HTML tags, such as the Visual Editor in CoffeeCup. (The Visual Editor creates an HTML-tagged text file, but displays to you what that file will look like in a Web page. It makes the HTML-tagged text available directly in the Code Editor.)

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When you work in a text editor, such as Notepad, you work directly with HTML from the very beginning. So you might find yourself looking frequently at the full HTML appendix at the back of the book (Appendix B).

If you like to know everything that's going on before you roll up your sleeves and plunge into things, you may want to start by looking at *HTML, XHTML & CSS For Dummies,* 6th Edition, a comprehensive guide to HTML by Ed Tittel and Jeff Noble (Wiley).

Viewing HTML in Web pages

You can see "pure" HTML anytime you use the Web. Open any Web page in your browser and choose the right command — View➪Source for Internet Explorer or a similar command for other browsers. A new window opens, displaying the HTML source code that underlies the Web page. Figure 13-1 shows a page from the *For Dummies* site and its HTML source code as an example.

What HTML really, really means

HTML is an acronym for HyperText Markup Language. The tags described here are the "Markup" part; the tags are also used to specify hyperlinks to other documents, which is the "HyperText" part.

The way a browser works is described by a mathematical construct called a "finite automaton." Such a construct reads text like a tickertape, one character at a time. It can neither store what has already been read nor look ahead beyond the character just in front of it.

Let's see how this works with a Web link, known in HTML jargon as an *anchor.* Here's an example:

```
The <a href="www.
   ninjaturtles.com">Teenage
   Mutant Ninja Turtles</
   a> are becoming popular
   again.
```

The browser begins by reading the first half of the sentence — `The <a href="www.ninjaturtles.com">Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles` — one character at a time, and says to itself, "I display `The`, begin a link, store the destination, `www.ninjaturtles.com`, and display the following words in blue and with an underline: `Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles`.

The browser then reads the rest of the sentence — `</a> are becoming popular again.` — again, one character at a time. The browser notes the end of the link, denoted by the close anchor tag `</a>`, and displays each remaining character in normal text.

The anchor tags `<a>` and `</a>` serve as *linking tags,* denoting a hyperlink. They also, in order to do their job, serve as *formatting tags,* changing the way the text they enclose is displayed. The change in how the enclosed text is displayed signals the link to the user.

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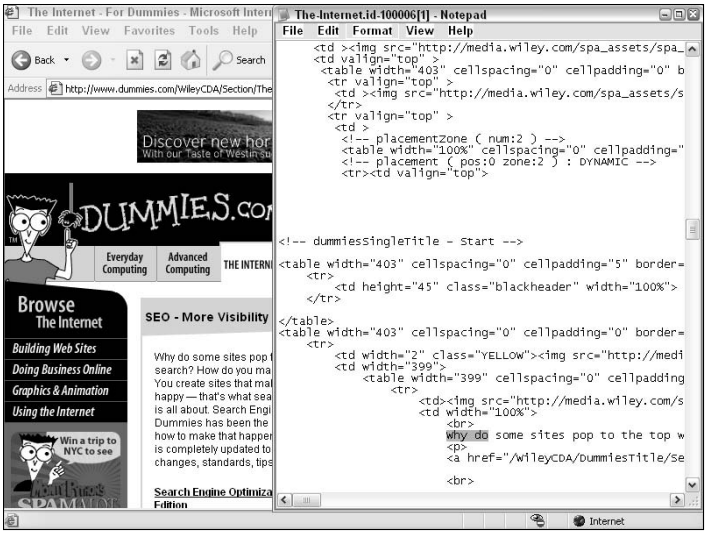

Figure 13-1: The For Dummies site is made of HTML-tagged text and graphics.

Resist any temptation to "borrow" the HTML from attractive pages on the Web directly. At some point in doing this, you might cross the line into violating the author's copyright. Instead, use existing HTML as a reference, contributing to your efforts to create your own Web page design.

When in doubt, contact the Webmaster at the site you admire, describe how you want to use their code or formatting, and request permission. It's not uncommon to get a positive response — just hope you don't get asked to toss your car keys into the bargain.

Setting up an HTML page

When you first create a Web page, you need to do a certain amount of setup. Working directly in HTML using Notepad, you must enter the needed tags yourself (the CoffeeCup HTML Editor in Chapter 9 sets them up for you, but we're all adventurers here, right?).

The tags you have to create in Notepad are of five types, each serving a distinct function:

- **Begin and end HTML:** Though your Web page will almost certainly work without them, it's good form to begin and end your Web page with the `<html>` and `</html>` tags.

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- **Getting a Head:** Your Web page begins with "head" information, which is information that describes the entire page. With one exception, it's processed before anything visible shows up on the Web page. Surround the head area with the `<head>` and `</head>` tags.
- **Granting your page a title:** The title of a Web page was originally meant to be descriptive information for search engines and other programs that crawl the Web. But early Web browsers began displaying the title at the top of a Web page, and now it's noticed by Web users, so it's important you get it right. The title, in the head area, is surrounded by the `<title>` and `</title>` tags.
- **Growing a Body:** Body information is everything the user sees on the Web page, including text, formatting, and links. The opening `<body>` tag comes right after the closing `</head>` tag. The body area is terminated by the `</body>` tag, and the entire Web page is then closed by the `</html>` tag.
- **Meta tags:** Meta tags are "meta-information," that is, information about the Web page as a whole. For instance, CoffeeCup automatically inserts the standard information, `<meta http-equiv="content-type" content="text/html;charset=UTF-8"/>`. Meta tags, once used heavily by search engines, are now less used or even ignored. Today, the best way to use meta tags is for the information of yourself or others who might look at the HTML code to tell what the page is about. If meta tags help a search engine along the way, great.
- **Comments:** Comments are notes to yourself or future Web authors who might look at the HTML. A typical comment is something like `<!-Created in December 2008 by Bud Smith>`. While it's a good idea to add comments in HTML if you do it consistently, there's also a school of thought that says it's better to put the energy into good, clean, understandable HTML code and a better page design.

These tags are demonstrated in Notepad later in this chapter, along with the commands and tags used for formatting Web text.

Create a model HTML page that you can open anytime you want to start a new Web page without re-entering the "same old" initial tags. To make sure the model HTML page stays unchanged, right-click on the file icon and choose Properties from the menu that appears. In the Properties dialog box that appears, check the Read-only check box. This will ensure that, when you open, change, and then save the file, you're forced to save it under a new name, leaving the original file unchanged.

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Formatting Web Text

Whether you use a WYSIWYG editor, as described in Part III, or a text editor, as described here, the capabilities that HTML makes available for formatting Web text are the same:

- **Headings:** There are six levels of headings in HTML that you can use, with the tag pairs `<h1>` and `</h1>` used for the largest, top-level heading; `<h2>` and `</h2>` next, down to `<h6>` and `</h6>` for the lowest (very small) level of headings.

  What it means for you: The intended way to use headings is to start with `<h1>` for the most important heading right down to `<h6>` for the lowest level. This kind of usage makes life easier for visually impaired people who use screen readers (which read Web pages aloud). However, the highest-level headings are very large in comparison to regular text. As a result many people use `<h4>`, for instance, for what's really a second-level heading, or use text size commands and bolding to create their own header styles. Try using the intended headings first, and then use your own formatting if you really need a specific look.

- **Font sizes:** HTML allows you to specify relative font sizes that are larger or smaller than medium, or standard, size. You can go two sizes smaller or three sizes larger than medium. This formatting works even if users specify a font size or style in their browser setup or in their operating system (Windows, Mac, and so on). (As people get older, and their eyes weaken, they resort to various tricks to make using the computer easier — as the author knows from experience.)

  What it means for you: You don't want your Web page to look like a hostage note, with all different styles and sizes of text mixed up, but font sizes can be a good way to make a point (with a larger font size) or fit a lot of text into a small space (with a smaller size). Using relative font sizes is one of the few formatting tricks that almost always work well in different Web browsers.

- **Character formatting:** You can make text bold or italic using the `<b>` and `</b>` tags to start and stop bold and the `<i>` and `</i>` tags to start and stop italic. You can also underline text, but I don't recommend it, because users can easily confuse text that's underlined for emphasis with text that's underlined because it's an HTML link. The same holds true for using any unexpected colors in your hyperlink text — it's potentially confusing. Best not to go there (see Chapter 9 for a discussion of why).

  What it means for you: Use bold and italic to emphasize your point, but don't overdo it. Structured use of bold and italic, such as the bold used to highlight items in this list, is one good solution.

- **Advanced character formatting:** You can specify the fonts used in your Web page, as well as font colors. But different fonts are available on

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Windows and Macintosh computers, so you have to be clever about how you do this. (You can specify backup fonts for use if the desired font isn't there.)

What it means for you: I don't recommend using advanced character formatting when you're starting out because it's complicated and because it won't work for some of your users. You may want to postpone using this kind of formatting until you're working at a professional level, with the design help and testing resources needed to make sure your pages work well for all your users.

Create a model Web page with examples of different kinds of headers, character formatting, and so forth. Then copy and paste from it into your Web page in progress, modifying the model to create your "real" Web page. The model page gives you a way to preview different formats before committing to them and allows you to build your Web page in blocks. Unfortunately, once your Web page is built, all the HTML tends to run together!

Follow these steps to enter and format text in Notepad:

1. **Open Notepad. Enter the beginning and ending** `HTML`**,** `HEAD`**, and** `BODY` **tags.**

   Make sure to spell the tags correctly and check for matching open and closing tags.

2. **Between the** `<head>` **and** `</head>` **tags, add the tags** `<title>` **and** `</title>`**.**

3. **Enter an appropriate title, such as New Home Page, then click OK.**

4. **Move the cursor to a new line after the opening** `<body>` **tag.**

5. **Type some text introducing your Web page.**

   When someone searches for your Web page by using a search engine, the search engine may display the Web page title (as described earlier) and the first few words that appear in the document. So make the first few sentences of text that follow the title an introduction to the entire page or Web site.

   In the document I created for this chapter, here's what I typed:

   ```
   Death Valley Hockey Club

   Death Valley Hockey Club is a girls' field hockey team
   that practices and plays at the lowest altitude of any
   in the United States.
   ```

6. **Surround the text that you'd like to make a header with the** `<h1>` **and** `</h1>` **tags.**

   In my document, I highlighted the words Death Valley Hockey Club at the beginning.

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7. **Identify other text that you want to format.**

   In my document, I selected the word "lowest" in the middle of the first sentence.

8. **Surround the text with the tags that support the formatting you want, such as `<b>` and `</b>` for bold or `<i>` and `</i>` for italic.**

   The surrounded text will take on the appropriate formatting. In my example, I made the word "lowest" bold.

9. **Save your file with the extension `.htm` to specify that it's an HTML file.**

   Do this early when working in Notepad so you remember to enter the suffix `.htm`; if you don't, Notepad will use the `.txt` filename extension, and your document won't automatically be treated as a Web page.

10. **Open the file in a Web browser to preview its appearance.**

    Carefully check that each tag you use in the HTML file has the desired effect in the actual displayed Web page. HTML ignores tags it doesn't understand, so if you type `<n>` instead of `<b>`, for instance, the only ill effect will be a lack of bolding (the `</b>` tag you follow it with has no effect); a lack of formatting such as bolding is easy to miss when quickly checking a page, unless you compare your tags with their desired effects.

Figure 13-2 shows Notepad and Internet Explorer with the text formatted as described here. Note that Header 1 may actually be too large for our purposes.

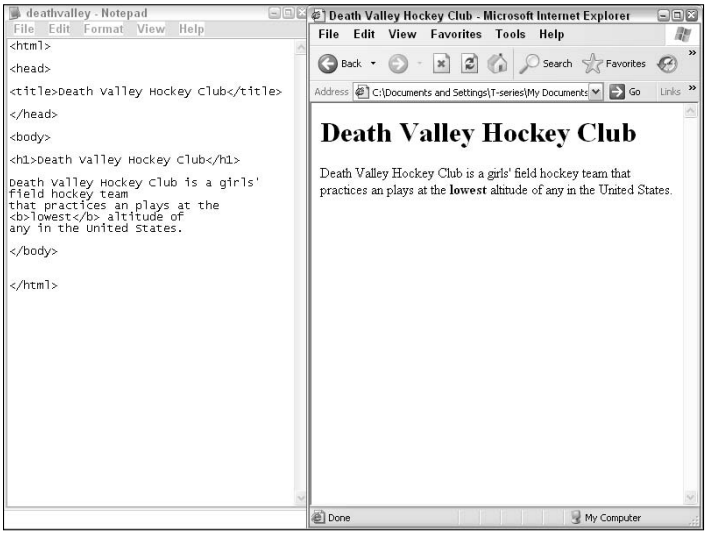

Figure 13-2: Use HTML formatting options.

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Creating HTML Lists in Notepad

As mentioned in Chapter 9, people really like lists such as the Top Ten lists on David Letterman's *Late Night* show. They're interesting to look at, easy to scan, and inspire you to write short, punchy phrases.

HTML offers three kinds of lists, two commonly used and one not so much.

- **Bulleted lists:** "Bulletizing" your text is the quickest way to improve it for the Web. A bulleted list, which HTML refers to as an *unordered list,* is easy to read and easy to write. Start a bulleted list with the `<ul>` tag and end it with the `</ul>` tag. Precede each list item with `<li>` for *list item;* no closing tag is needed. The `<li>` or `</ul>` that follows also ends the list item.
- **Numbered lists:** Numbered lists are useful and should be used more than they are, as they add variety and impose order. Use numbered lists for items that can be ordered in importance, sequence (such as steps), and wherever else you can. A numbered list begins with `<ol>` for *ordered list,* ends with `</ol>`, and — like bulleted lists — uses the `<li>` tag to mark the beginning of each list item.
- **Definition lists:** A *definition list* specifies a term and then the definition of the term. Use definition lists to add more variety — but test the look first, as you may find it a bit odd. Use bold formatting of the term to help. Start you definition list with `<dl>` and end it with `</dl>`. Precede each term in the list with `<dt>`, for *definition term.* Then precede the definition, following the term, with `<dd>`, for *definition data.*
- **Lists within lists:** Inserting a list within another one is called *nesting* it, a favorite programmer's trick when writing code. It may not be your favorite trick, as doubly nested lists can be confusing. You can nest the same or different kinds of lists. A bulleted list within another one will display with a different style of bullets.

Follow these steps to create a list in Notepad:

1. **Add the text for your list in Notepad.**

   In the document I created for this chapter, here's what I typed:

   ```
   If you meet the following three qualifications, most
   important first, you may be eligible to become a member
   of Death Valley Hockey Club:

   8 to 12 years old. Death Valley Hockey Club has girls
   from 8 to 12 years old as members. You must have been
   8, 9, 10, 11 or 12 on January 1st of this year.
   ```

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```
Good in school. We need you to show us you're a good
student, and to maintain your academic standing
throughout your time with us.

Some sports experience. We would like you to have some
previous organized sports experience in any sport.
```

2. **Surround the lines that will make up the list with the list tags,** `<ul>` **and** `</ul>` **for an unordered (bulleted) list, or** `<ol>` **and** `</ol>` **for an ordered (numbered) list.**

   In my document, I put the `<ol>` tag before the line that begins `8 to 12 years old`, and the `</ol>` tag after the period following the words `in any sport`.

3. **Precede each list item with the** `<li>` **tag.**

   In my document, I put the `<li>` tag before the lines that begin:

   ```
   8 to 12 years old

   Good in school

   Some sports experience
   ```

With new standards such as XML and XHTML in place, it's considered good form to always close off tags, which means that it's now recommended that you use a closing `</li>` tag after each item. This is good advice, yet there's never enough time to do all one would like to do, and this recommendation may fall into that category.

4. **If you like, for a bulleted list, change the bullet style by adding an additional element, called an attribute, to each** `<li>` **tag.**

   With the attribute added, each `<li>` tag will read in one of three ways:

   `<li type=disc>`**, a filled-in circle or bullet,** the same as if you don't specify the attribute at all

   `<li type=square>`**, a square**

   `<li type=circle>`**, an open circle**

   As the example used here is a numbered list, the bullet style options don't apply.

In a good WYSIWYG HTML editor, such as CoffeeCup (see Part III), all the options — including obscure ones like bullet type — are presented to you as options in menus and dialog boxes, so you don't have to remember what the options are (or even that they exist); you just choose them when you need them. This is one advantage a WYSIWYG editor has over working in a text editor such as Notepad.

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5. **Save your document — adding `.htm` to the filename, if you're saving it for the first time — and open it in a Web browser window (or refresh the window if you already have this document open).**

   The list appears in the edited Web page, as shown in Figure 13-3.

The Insert List dialog box is a good example of the benefits that can come from using a WYSIWYG editor. It includes options for bullet styles that you might not have known were part of HTML, or might have forgotten the details of. With the dialog box, you're not only reminded of the button styles, but also can easily test how they look within your page.

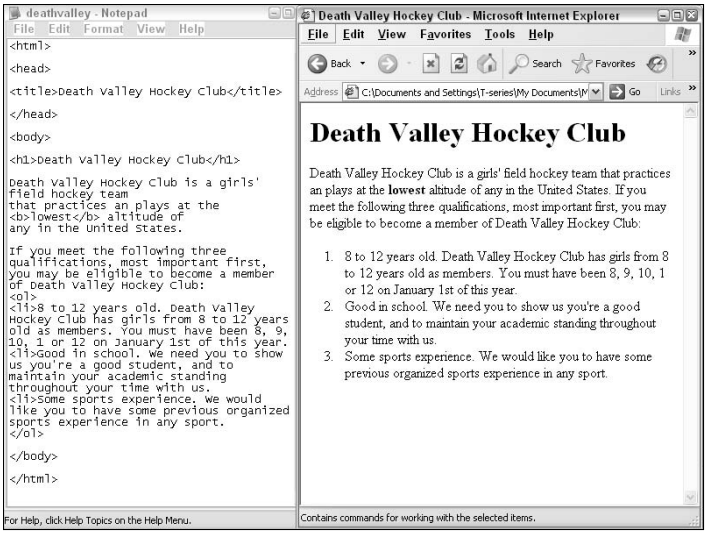

Figure 13-3: HTML has your number.

External Web-page Links

Regardless of the method you use to create your Web page, the secret of moving smoothly from one Web page to another is the use of hyperlinks.

In this section I show you how to create links to totally different Web sites, the simplest kind of links — but the most powerful, as they can take you almost instantly to a page from another computer anywhere on Earth.

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Notepad or a more sophisticated package?

Notepad is at the simplest end of the range of ways to edit a Web page, and other options are tempting. Only Notepad, though, is free and available on any Windows PC without downloading, versions, updates, and such. It's a good idea to learn how to work using HTML in Notepad now so you always have the option of doing so later on.

Don't think, just link

If you're building a hypertext link to an external HTML page by hand (so to speak), you should know it's built a bit like an iceberg: It has a visible part (the link text, which appears as blue, underlined text by default) and an invisible-but-impressive part that's normally hidden (the specification of just which file clicking on the link will lead to). The visible part is the friendly, appealing bit; the invisible part will work for you too, but only if it's constructed just right.

Text in an HTML document is made into the starting point of a hypertext link by surrounding it with the `<a>` and `</a>` tags, with `a` standing for anchor. The link's two ends, the start that the user clicks on and the page that appears as a result, are both called anchors.

The destination of the link is called the `hypertext reference`, or `href` for short. So a link to another Web page in HTML looks like this:

```
Make your own cider with <a href="http://www.ciderspices.com">cider spices</a>.
```

Oddly enough, this is almost as simple as it looks, and here's why:

- If you use a domain name for a link, such as `www.ciderspices.com`, the first thing your Web browser looks for is `index.htm` or a file with a similar name); you don't have to specify a filename in your link's destination.
- The browser also assumes that the destination is at the top of a Web page unless you specify a location within the Web page.

That said, the next order of business is to hand-craft a link in Notepad.

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So why's everybody all hyper?

Hyperlinks are more than just hype; they're the key to hypertext, which is reflected in the names of the two key technical standards underlying the Web: *HyperText Transfer Protocol,* the `http` you see in a Web page address, and HTML (HyperText Markup Language). See Chapter 9 for a closer look.

A simple link in Notepad

Follow these steps to create a simple hypertext link in Notepad:

1. **Find the text that you want to make a link.**

   In the document I created as an example for this book, I highlighted the words "Death Valley" in the text before the numbered list.

2. **Surround the text with the `<a>` and `</a>` tags.**

   Getting the end tag in right away will prevent you from forgetting it.

3. **Enter the destination Web address, or URL, by adding `href=`*`url`* to the `<a>` tag (where *`url`* is a full Web address).**

   Enter the full Web address, including the preceding `http://`, and check whether the address includes `www.` or not; a few Web addresses don't. Also make certain that the site ending really *is* `.com`, `.org`, `.co.uk`, or whatever it's supposed to be.

   In up-to-date Web browsers, you can open an additional tab to check your Web address while leaving the first tab for previewing your Web page.

4. **Enter a title for the link by adding the `title` attribute.**

   The title for the link is text that, in some browsers, appears when the user puts the mouse pointer over the link.

   If you leave this area blank, the URL will appear as the title. Often the URL is self-explanatory, as in a link to a Wikipedia entry. You may wish to enter the URL, without `http://`, as the link title to make it a bit more comprehensible for the user.

   If the URL is long or confusing, enter a simple title that describes the page. For instance, here's the long-winded URL for *HTML, XHTML & CSS For Dummies,* 6th Edition on the For Dummies site:

```
http://www.dummies.com/WileyCDA/DummiesTitle/HTML-XHTML-CSS-For-Dummies-6th-
                Edition.productCd-047023847X.html
```

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Using a tool tip — `HTML, XHTML, & CSS For Dummies on dummies.com` — saves your visitors some hassle and you some screen real estate.

Being able to see the URL or title when you mouse over a link is very good for usability. However, in Internet Explorer, the URL or title appears in a strip at the bottom of the screen called the Status Bar — and the Status Bar, in recent versions of IE, is turned off by default. There's not much you can do about this for your users, but at least you can turn on the Status Bar yourself — choose View➪Status Bar in Internet Explorer to turn it on.

5. **Save the Web page to your hard drive and open it in a Web browser to preview and test the link.**

   The text will appear as link text, underlined and in blue, as shown in Figure 13-4, with the URL showing in the Status Bar. Clicking on it should bring up the target page.

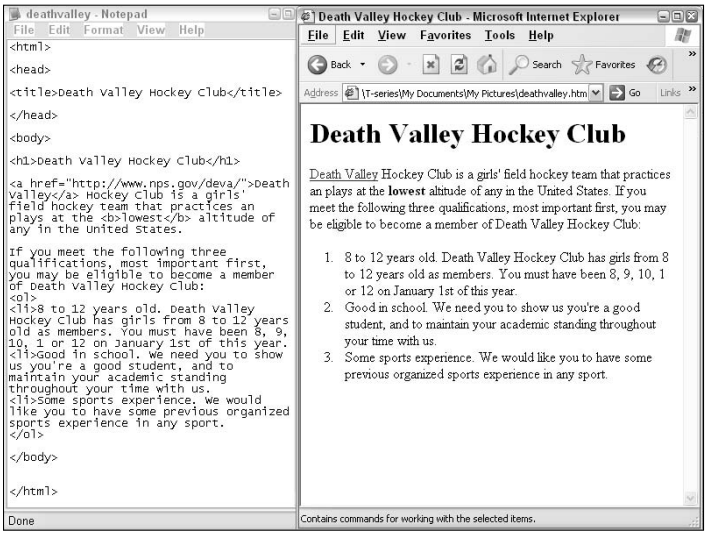

Figure 13-4: You think then you link.

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Chapter 14

Graphics and Media in HTML

In This Chapter

- Building links to external files
- Adding images using HTML
- Using HTML to add a sound
- Playing videos in HTML

The first Web pages supported only one kind of media besides text: GIF graphics files. JPEG images had to be opened in a separate viewer. Now downloadable sound files and embedded videos keep making the Web more and more interesting, relevant and useful.

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7, you learn how to create and use images, sounds and videos, respectively. In this chapter, I show you how to actually put all of these kinds of files in your Web page using Windows Notepad as one example of a text editor. By the end of this chapter you should be able to create very lively Web pages in Notepad.

In case you're wondering, Chapter 10 goes about creating Web pages in much the same way, using the CoffeeCup HTML editor; don't worry if you've read that chapter and feel some déjà vu. Whichever approach you start with, you'll have a consistent idea of the steps involved in Web-page creation.

In the early days of the Web, the `IMG` command could handle only GIF files. Soon, though, Web browsers were upgraded to include the extra code needed to display JPEG images as well. Before that, JPEG graphics files were included via the `embed` command and were opened with one of a variety of "player" programs that contained the somewhat complex code needed to display a JPEG image.

PNG graphics files are now fairly widely supported, and even Windows BMP files are supported by Internet Explorer. But GIF and JPEG images remain the only ones that you can really count on including within the "flow" of a Web page.

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Unfortunately for us, the Web-page authors, sound and video files aren't included as a standard part of what a Web browser can display or play back. For sound and video files to be standardized, Web browsers would have to include playback code, instead of depending on a separate player engine such as Windows Media Player or the QuickTime player. Not even the HTML for including a sound or video file is standardized. So including these files in a way that most people can use them is hard work and not completely reliable.

Including Images in a Text Editor

Including images in a Web page isn't all that simple, and it is in some ways harder in a text editor than in a WYSIWYG editor such as CoffeeCup. The complexities of how to create images are covered in Chapter 5. Creating links from your Web page to images isn't all that easy either. (Similar considerations apply to sound and video, but they're less-used than images.)

There are three kinds of links you can use to include an image in a Web page:

- **Linking to a Web URL.** Like every Web page, every image on the Web has its own separate URL. (A URL is just a path to a file, and each image is a separate file, so therefore has its own URL.) To include an image out on the Web in your own Web page, you just use the `IMG` tag and give the Web address of the image as the source. When the user sees your Web page, it will look like the image is part of the page, even though it's hosted on a different Web site.

  Plusses and minuses: Linking to images that are already out there is easy for you as a Web author, but you can't count on the image staying there forever. Doing this also represents the image as your own when it actually belongs to someone else. Finally, it's much slower for the user than hosting the image on your own Web server.

  To find the URL of a Web image on a Windows machine, right-click on the image and choose Copy Shortcut. The URL will then be placed in the Clipboard, meaning you can paste it into a text editor, HTML program, or other program.

- **Linking to the same folder as your Web page.** If an image file is in the same folder as the HTML file that links to it, you need only to give the name of the image file, with no other folder or path information.

  Plusses and minuses: This is very simple; like linking to a Web URL, it's fast and easy. And when you transfer your files to a Web server, there's no problem with keeping the files in the same relative position. The only disadvantage is that the folder the Web page is in can get quite crowded, especially as many images are used over and over again by different

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Web pages. (Also, Web authors find themselves keeping older versions of a file, or alternate versions, in the Web browser.) So you can end up with one folder containing all the Web pages and images in a site, plus working versions of the files, which can be a mess.

- **Linking to a different folder on the same machine as the Web page.** In this way of doing things, the image file is on the same machine as the Web page, but in a different folder. The link typically contains a relative pathway from the Web page to the image file, including moves up and down a tree of folders. The link can also be to an absolute address relative to the root of the machine.

  Plusses and minuses: This is the most common kind of linking, as people like to keep different types of files in different folders, but is also where a lot of problems occur. You have to describe the pathway from the HTML file to the image file, or the absolute location of the file on the machine, and the relative or absolute location can easily change or get mangled when files are transferred to a Web server.

Using a text editor such as Windows Notepad exposes you directly to naming hassles. Follow the recommendations in this chapter to manage them more easily.

All the different possible ways of linking an HTML file to an image file are described in Table 14-1 (a duplicate of which appears in Chapter 10 for the folks using a WYSIWYG HTML editor). Inspect it carefully, use it as a reference when you're creating links to image files, and (oh, yeah) double-check your typing in Notepad to make sure it's accurate.

Table 14-1 URL and Web-Page Examples

Location of Target	*URL*	*Web-Page Example*	*Graphics Example**
Same folder	*filename*	`<a href="mycv.html">text</a>`	`<img src="myface.jpg">`
Subfolder at a lower level of the same path	*pathname/filename*	`<a href="subpages/mycv.htm">text</a>`	`<img src="grfx/myface.jpg>`
Folder on a different path	*pathname/filename*	`<a href="../theotherpage/otherpage.htm>text</a>`	`<img src="../sharegfx/proface.gif>`

(continued)

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Table 14-1 *(continued)*

Location of Target	*URL*	*Web-Page Example*	*Graphics Example**
Different server, home page (index.htm or index.html)	*domainname*	`<a href="http://www.largedomain.com">text</a>`	`<img src " http://www.largedomain.com/goodface.jpg">`
Different server, interior page	*domainname/pathname*	`<a href=" http://www.largess.com/files/bud.htm">text</a>`	`<img src = "http://www.largess.com/gifs/icon27.gif">`
Link within a page	*Any of the above + #anchor-name*	`<a name="myanchor"></a>; <a href=" http://www.largess.com#myanchor">Go to my anchor</a>`	Doesn't apply

** These examples leave out the ALT option and other important graphics options, described later in this chapter.*

Follow these steps to add images to your Web page in Windows Notepad:

1. **Open your HTML file in Windows Notepad. Move the cursor to the point where you want to insert the graphic.**
2. **Enter the `<img>` tag where you want the image to appear.**

   Note that the `<img>` tag has no closing tag.
3. **Within the `<img>` tag, add the SRC attribute and the pathway, filename, and extension of the file. (An example is `src=bigpic.jpg` for a JPEG file in the same folder as the HTML page.) Refer to Table 14-1 for examples of different kinds of pathways to files.**

   JPEG files sometimes end with the extension JPG and sometimes with the extension JPEG — the same file could be called `bigpic.jpg` or `bigpic.jpeg`. If you get it wrong, the link won't work.

   To find out which extension a given file uses, right-click on the file icon in Windows Explorer, choose Properties, open the Details tab, and note the extension.

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4. **Again within the `<img>` tag, add the `alt` attribute and alternate text for the image. (An example is `alt="Grass in Death Valley"` for a scenic image.)**

   `alt` text is very important for two reasons. `alt` text is read out loud by screen readers and other programs for visually impaired users. It can also appear in place of the image when the page is viewed on a device that doesn't support graphics, like some mobile phone Web browsers, or even a PC with graphics display turned off.

   `alt` text is also used as a tool tip, text that appears when the user mouses over the graphic.

   For both purposes, `alt` text should be a short, simple description of the image, such as the name of a person pictured — or a description, if the image is for the purpose of providing atmosphere.

5. **Then, still within the `<img>` tag, specify how the image should be aligned relative to text.**

   An example is `<img align="left">`.

   - The usual choices are for the image to be aligned to the left, with text flowing around it on the right, or on the right, with text flowing to the left of it. The values for this are `"left"` and `"right"`. This is the magazine or newspaper look, with text and image integrated together.
   - Other choices, such as `"top"`, `"bottom"`, and `"middle"`, place a single line of text next to the image and otherwise leave the image on its own. This nearly always looks strange.

6. **To add a black border around the image, add the `border` attribute and specify how many pixels wide it should be.**

   - An example is `<img border="2">`. Several combinations of image options are shown in Figure 14-1.
   - Adding a thin black border around an image makes it appear sharper and clearer, especially for small images. Experiment with border sizes around your image.

   There's an additional attribute that allows you to add blank space around an image that you may want to use; see step 7 for the HTML code to use in the Code Editor to add this padding.

7. **To add a blank area around an image, add the `hspace` and/or `vspace` attribute and specify the number of pixels of horizontal and vertical padding, respectively.**

   The blank area is called *white space,* or *padding.*

   - An example is `<img hspace="2" vspace="2">`.

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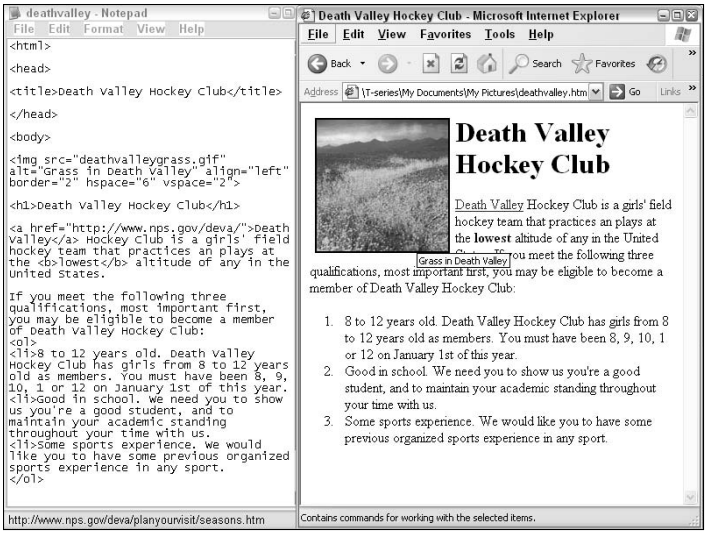

Figure 14-1: HTML lets you do a lot with an image.

- It's often necessary to add a small amount of padding around an image to keep text from flowing too closely to it. The amount of padding needed can depend on whether an image is near a headline, another image, or such, which can vary as a user makes the browser window wider or narrower. So this attribute is usually specified on a trial-and-error basis.

- Adding more than two or three pixels of padding is likely to make the image appear to float oddly in a "puddle" of blank space around it. Keep the number of pixels of horizontal and/or vertical space very few in most cases.

Figure 14-2 shows various `hspace` and `vspace` settings for the same image.

8. **Add the `height` and `width` attributes to specify the image size, in pixels, or to change the width and height if you want to resize the image in place.**

   Here's an example: `<img height="100" width= "50">`.

   - It's usually better to modify the image itself in a graphics program before putting it in your Web page. However, you can stretch or shrink the displayed image by changing the width and/or height here.
   - If you want to keep the image in proportion, change both dimensions by the same relative amount. For instance, if you double the width, also double the height.

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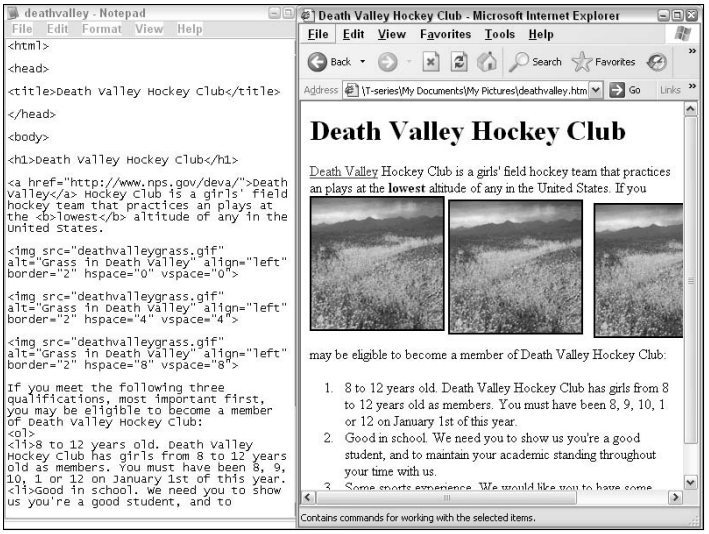

Figure 14-2: Don't get lost in hspace and vspace.

- Even if you don't resize the image using `<img>` tag attributes, it's good practice to specify the `<img>` tag attributes that fit the image as it is. Why? By "telegraphing" the image size in the `<img>` tag, you give the browser the information it needs to set aside space for the image when downloading the page. This prevents different parts of the page contents from lurching about as different elements of the page download.

9. **To make the image a link, surround it with the `<a>` and `</a>` tags, and add the `href=` attribute to the `<a>` tag to specify the link, as described in Chapter 13.**

   You can link to a Web destination or use images to create an image-based menu.

10. **Save the file and preview the results in your Web browser.**

    An example is shown in Figure 14-3.

Adding Sound to Your Page

The plusses and minuses of adding sound to your Web page, as well as how to host a music file on MySpace, are discussed in Chapter 6. But what are the actual mechanics of adding sound?

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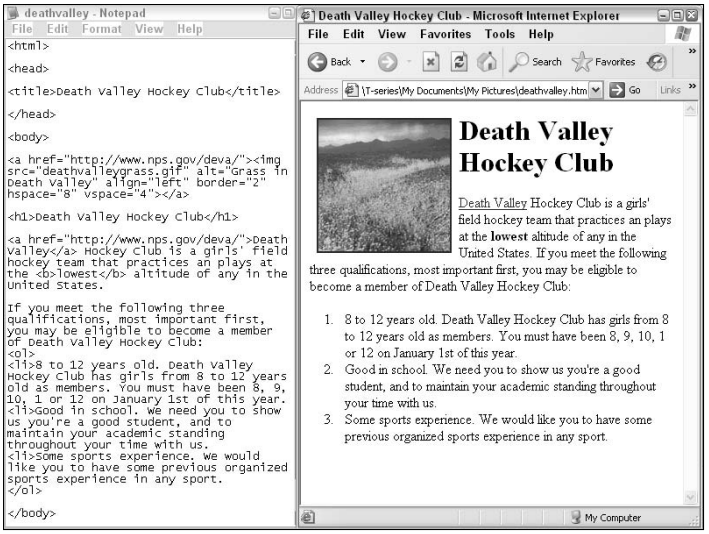

Figure 14-3: Repeatedly check your image attributes in your Web browser.

Because sound is not a standard part of the Web's definition, there are actually two competing ways to do it: with the `<bgsound>` tag and with the `embed` tag.

The `<bgsound>` tag works well and has useful options for controlling sound, but it's not supported by all browsers.

The `<embed>` tag is not officially supported by the HTML standard at all, but it works in most browsers. `<embed>` has different options — different HTML attributes — for different media players, such as Windows Media Player or Apple QuickTime. This is a standards-unfriendly situation.

You may want to share a tip with your Web page's users: They can stop sound from playing in your Web page by clicking the Stop button in their browsers.

Follow these steps to add sound to a Web page in a text editor:

1. **Open your Web page in Notepad.**
2. **Enter the `<embed>` tag and a link to the sound file you want to use, as follows: `<embed src="`*pathname/filename*`">`, where `"`*pathname/filename*`"` is a link to the sound file.**

   The rules for creating the link to a sound file are the same as for a link to a graphics file, as shown in Table 14-1. The simplest way to be sure you have the link right is to place the sound file in the same folder as the Web page; that way the link is simply the filename.

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3. **Save the file in Notepad and open or refresh it in your Web browser. The sound should play.**

   It's important to test the link right away to be sure it will work.

4. **If the sound doesn't play, experiment to make sure you have the path right, and that sound plays on your machine.**

   Here are a couple of places to start:

   - To make sure you have the link right, put the file in the same folder as your Web page and simplify the link. If this fixes the problem, experiment with having the file where you want it and constructing the link properly, using Table 14-1 as a guide.
   - To make sure that sound playback works on your machine, navigate to the file in Windows Explorer and click on it. It should play. If not, identify and fix the files affecting sound playback on your machine.

You can also use the `<bgsound>` tag instead of `<embed>`. (The linking part is the same.) Each will fail to work on some Web browsers and each has options the other lacks; some of the plusses and minuses of each are described in more details in Chapter 10. I tend to favor `<embed>` as it's also useful for video clips and its options, such as showing or not showing a visible player for the file.

Adding Video to Your Page

Chapter 7 describes the plusses and minuses of using video in your Web page and steps you through uploading a video to YouTube.

When you add video to your Web page, the video file can be stored on — that is, be hosted on — your own Web server, some other Web server or, in particular, YouTube. YouTube offers free hosting for videos you upload to YouTube, which can potentially save you a lot of trouble compressing the video, worrying about performance of the server storing the video, and paying for the many megabytes downloaded. (YouTube supports virtually unlimited video downloading for free.) You get the advantage of using the massive server and processing capabilities of Google, YouTube's owner, free — if you don't mind the YouTube logo stamped into the lower-right corner of every frame of your video.

If you host a video on your own site and it becomes a hit, you could be "hit" with very large charges for file transfer. If you link to a video on someone else's site (besides YouTube) and thus drive many hits to it (while making it appear to be on your site), that's very rude of you and you may be found out and charged.

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Almost every video on YouTube includes a box with the code you paste into your Web page to play the video there, surrounded by your own content. This code is customized for playback in Flash, a specialized media playback tool:

```
<object width="425" height="344"><param name="movie"
              value="http://www.youtube.com/v/HhcLUF59Oh4&hl=en&fs=1"></param>
              <param name="allowFullScreen" value="true"></param>
              <embed src="http://www.youtube.com/v/HhcLUF59Oh4&hl=en&fs=1"
              type="application/x-shockwave-flash" allowfullscreen="true"
              width="425" height="344"></embed></object>
```

Flash was originally used mostly for animations but is increasingly used as a container for video and audio.

Here I'll demonstrate how to include a video in your Web page, wherever it's hosted.

1. **Open your Web page in Notepad.**
2. **Specify the path and filename that allow access to the video you want to use.**

   Here are some commonly used hosting options:

   - If your video is hosted somewhere other than YouTube, type in the following, using the actual path and filename:

     ```
     <embed src="pathname/filename">
     ```

   - If the video is hosted on YouTube, go to the relevant YouTube page and copy the code for the video from there. Paste it into your Web page. (For more about hosting videos on YouTube, see Chapter 7.)
   - If the video is in the same folder as your Web page, the pathname is just the filename; if the video is on the Web, the pathname is the URL of the video. (Find the URL by choosing View➪Source for the Web page hosting the video.)
   - If the file is in a different folder on your machine than the Web page, include the path to the video. (Refer to Table 14-1 for examples.)

3. **Add the size of the video to your Web page.**

   It's a two-step process:

   a. *Specify the size of the video using the* `<object>` *tag:*

      ```
      <object width="xxx" height= "yyy">
      ```

   b. *Add the same* `width` *and* `height` *attributes to the* `<embed>` *tag.*

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The `<object>` tag tells the user's Web browser that there is something in the Web page, at this spot, of the size you specify. The `width` and `height` attributes do roughly the same thing. Specifying the size in both ways, as YouTube does, is a way to make sure that the Web browser sets aside space for the video when it first displays the Web page.

4. **Save the file and open it in a Web browser. Try the video.**

   See the previous section of this chapter, on including an audio file, for what to do if the video doesn't play.

   If you you're having trouble successfully including video in your Web page, or if you're worried about download charges, then upload the video to YouTube or another host. On your Web page, you can provide a "normal" link to the Web page that hosts the video. Users can click the link to see it and then return to your site after they've viewed the video.

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Chapter 15

Laying Out Your Site in HTML

In This Chapter

- Adding `mailto` links in HTML
- Setting up internal links in HTML
- Creating a text navigation bar

Even experts have trouble telling people exactly how to go from "just putting up a page" to creating a full Web site. That's because the needs and abilities of people vary so much for each site they create.

In this chapter, I demonstrate some steps along this route: how to use links to create a `mailto` link, a complex page, and a full site, complete with basic navigation.

Using mailto Links in HTML

Although `mailto` links seem simple, actually they have some complexity to them. Here's how to work around it.

A `mailto` link is a link with an e-mail address as its destination. Instead of bringing something into your Web browser (the way most Web links work), it brings up something *outside:* an e-mail message, pre-addressed as specified by the destination given in the `mailto` Link. (If you're really clever, the subject line of the e-mail can also come up already filled in.) The user just has to enter the content of the e-mail and click Send. (See Figure 15-1 for an example of a link and the resulting e-mail message.)

At least this is what's *supposed* to happen. It only works if the user has a default mail program set up in Windows or some other operating system, *and* if the default program is the one the user wants for that particular e-mail message.

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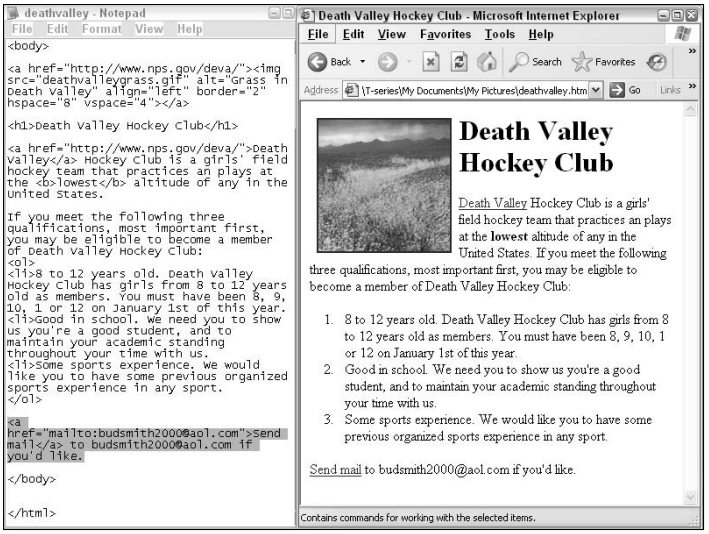

Figure 15-1: Used correctly, `mailto` links can make creating mail easier.

Often this is not the case. It's quite common for users never to see Outlook Express except when they click a `mailto` link — especially if the manufacturer set up Outlook Express as the default program for that computer, and the user never changed it to full Outlook, Lotus Notes, or the Web-based e-mail program he or she uses.

The other problem is that many users juggle different e-mail systems for different purposes. A user might use Lotus Notes for work but occasionally book a vacation (for instance) on that work computer. For that purpose, someone might want a personal e-mail account (such as a Hotmail account), to appear in response to a `mailto` link.

Also, users know what happens when they click a link: Another Web page comes up. It can be disconcerting when an e-mail message comes up instead. This is even more the case if the `mailto` link is used in navigation — the users think they'll be moved around the site, perhaps reaching a page with all sorts of contact information, and instead they get a partly pre-filled e-mail message that they suspect might never reach a human being.

Here are a few quick hints that should help you use `mailto` links productively:

- **Provide means of contact other than e-mail.** Always provide a phone number; many users are visiting your Web page just to find one. If you "hide" it (as the users will see it) and offer only a cold, impersonal electronic replacement, you'll just make them angry.

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- **Don't use `mailto` links in navigation.** Instead of having a Contact tab in navigation, backed only by a `mailto` link, provide a full page of contact information.
- **Use the words around the `mailto` link to identify it; spell out the e-mail address in the text so users can copy and paste it if they prefer.** A proper use of a `mailto` link is within a Contact Us page, for instance, that includes an address and a phone number as well. The `mailto` link should be in a form like the following:

  To reach us by e-mail, click here to send an e-mail message to `yeswecan@thecompany.com`. We'll respond within two business days.

  This will signal users that clicking the underlined link (here) will bring up an e-mail message addressed to `yeswecan@thecompany.com` — while also providing a workaround if they want to copy the e-mail address to paste it into a message themselves.

Although the usability concerns around using one can be complicated, creating a `mailto` link in HTML is simple. Just follow these steps:

1. **Open your Web page in Windows Notepad.**
2. **Create the text in which you want to insert the e-mail link.**

   See above for some ideas on getting this right.
3. **Surround the link text, such as `e-mail us`, with the beginning and ending anchor tags, `<a>` and `</a>`.**

   Entering the closing anchor tag in the beginning ensures that you don't forget later.
4. **Add the `mailto` link as a value for the `href` (hypertext reference) attribute, in the following form:**

   ```
   href="mailto:username@website.com"
   ```

   Be sure to get the e-mail address right, and test it after you finish. Nothing is more frustrating to the user — and quicker to make you look bad — than a bad e-mail address in a `mailto` link.
5. **Optionally, enter a Subject line for the e-mail. To do so, add a subject to the `mailto` value, as follows:**

   ```
   href="mailto:username@website.com?subject=Mail from the site"
   ```

The Web browser will be able to recognize that spaces in the subject line don't mean the end of the value for the attribute, as the spaces are included within the quotation marks around the `mailto` value. But if you forget the quotes, expect problems with how the `mailto` link works.

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The subject line can be very convenient for you when you receive the e-mail, but you have to be aware that the user can change it. Because of this, it might be better to create a specific e-mail address used only for this link than to count on the subject line remaining the same for every e-mail sent from this link.

6. **Save the file and open or refresh the Web page in a Web browser. Test the e-mail link, including sending an e-mail, as shown in Figure 15-2. Make sure the message is received where you intend it to go.**

   If you don't discover any problems, your users will!

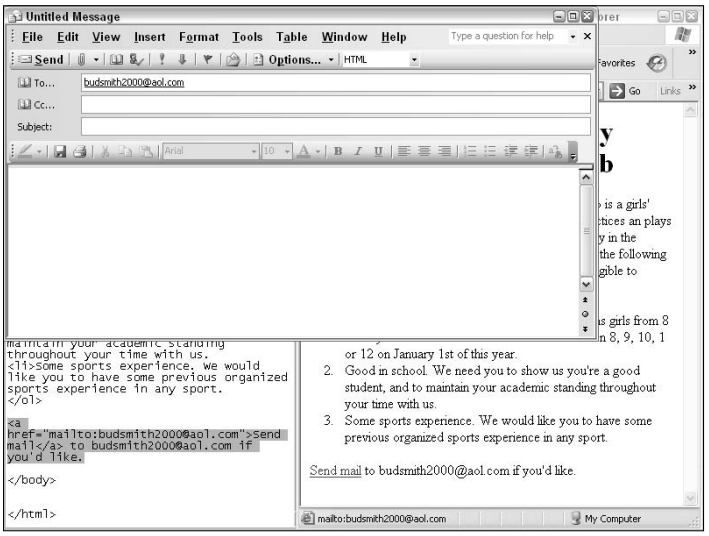

Figure 15-2: A view of the `mailto` code, Web page, and mail message.

Internal Links within a Web Page

Compared to the drama of using a hyperlink to go to a whole new Web site, using a hyperlink to move the user to a new location in the same Web page might seem a bit of a letdown.

But a great advantage of Web pages is that they're vertically just about unlimited, like an ancient scroll. And users are accustomed to moving up and down in long documents, including long Web pages. So a structured way to use this characteristic is welcome.

Having everything about a given topic in one long Web page can be quite helpful to users. They know which page to go to for that topic — and most

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of them know how to use the search option in their Web browser to get to a particular phrase or word they remember.

Now usability people will tell you that people don't like to scroll unless they're sure of the benefits of doing so. But *internal links* — links that go to a specific spot in a Web page — can use the vertical dimension of the Web page without the user having to scroll. He or she simply clicks links. (Possibly even unaware that they are moving around in a Web page, not moving between one Web page and another page.)

To create an internal link, you have to create a *destination anchor.* The destination anchor marks the spot in the page that the users go to when they click an internal link.

The destination anchor is in the form `<a name="targetname"></a>`. You create your own memorable name to help you organize the page. Note that there is no text surrounded by the beginning and ending anchor tags. This HTML code simply gives a name to the spot in the Web page where it appears.

The destination anchor is invisible to the user. When the user clicks on a link to the destination anchor, the Web page scrolls upward or downward to that line destination.

The link to the destination anchor is a normal link, but the value of the SRC attribute includes the character # followed by the target name of the destination anchor, as in `<a href="planets.htm#mars"></a>`. (That # can be the hardest part of the whole process to remember, so pay special attention to it.)

You can certainly create a link to an internal anchor that, instead of being on the same page, is on another page. The other page can be on your own site or a distant site. However, users are so accustomed to links going to the top of a page that I suggest alerting them, in the text preceding the link, so that they'll be going to a destination within a page. Here's what that looks like:

> To learn more about ancient Greek cooking oils, you can visit a great page on the subject. To go directly to the entry on Greek cooking oils, in the middle of a long page about cooking oils, click here; to start at the top of the page and survey the entire cooking-oil topic, click here instead.

Wordy, but effective.

A classic example of internal links in a Web page that's part of a full site is an FAQ page, for Frequently Asked Questions. Generally, the questions are all listed at the top (see Figure 15-3), with the rest of the page containing a question, its answer, the next question, its answer, and so on. Links within the page go down

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to each question and, from the end of each answer, back up to the top of the page.

Follow the instructions here to create an internal link in a Web page in HTML:

1. **Open your Web page in Windows Notepad. Move the cursor to a spot that you want to be the destination of a link.**

   Usually this will be the beginning of a line of text, often a header.

   If you don't have the content of a Web page ready yet, you can just create headers and links; then your navigation system will be ready as you fill in the content.

2. **At the target destination, enter the destination anchor, such as the following:**

   ```
   <a name="UKpolitics"></a>
   ```

   Note there's no text between the beginning and ending anchor tags.

   Make sure the destination is near a recognizable point in your Web page, such as a header, so the link makes sense to you and to users.

3. **Repeat for additional internal links.**

   Create all the additional links you need — if necessary, type in headers or other markers for the internal links to be associated with.

4. **Test the links by linking to them.**

   Here's a typical instance:

   ```
   <a href="#ukpolitics">British politics</a>
   ```

   Create links to each of your destinations, either because you need them now or, if not, to test them.

5. **Save the file and open it in a Web browser. Test the links and fix any that need repair.**

   Internal links cause many problems; it's best to make them your ally, rather than a source of frustration, by getting them working right from the start.

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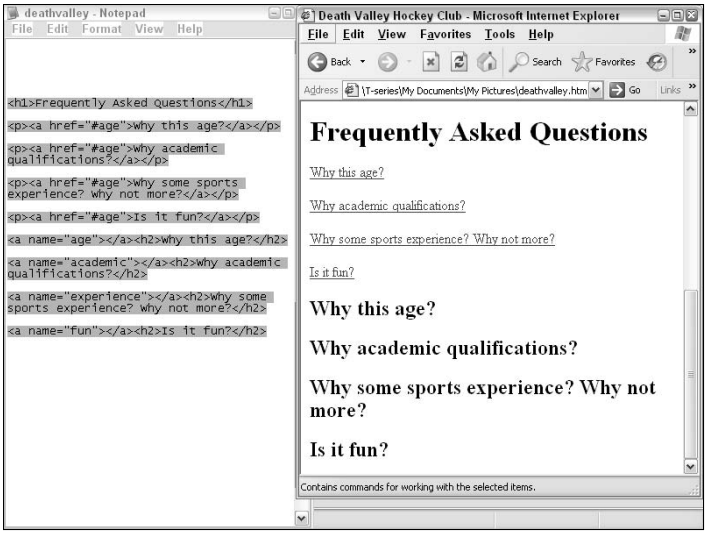

Figure 15-3: HTML and the results for a set of internal links.

The link destinations for internal links are often referred to as anchors, even though technically both the beginnings and endings of links are anchors. While a tool such as CoffeeCup, as described in Part III, is good for managing internal anchors, some other tools can't handle them. So if you use a different WYSIWYG tool for Web-page creation, you may still find yourself managing internal anchors directly in HTML.

Creating a Text Navigation Bar

A *navigation bar* is an area of a Web page set aside for links among the pages that make up a site. Each separate link or choice in a navigation bar is called a "tab," whether or not it actually looks like a tab as used in a paper file. A site might have multiple navigation bars that cover content, perhaps in main navigation, and tools or supporting elements, such as a site map and legal reminders, in a secondary navigation bar.

A navigation bar of any type is a consistent visual element that appears on every page of the site and that always has the same appearance, the same words, and the same links. It's not an exaggeration to say that a navigation bar of some sort, even a simple text one, is the difference between a Web site and an unconnected mass of Web pages. Creating a navigation bar forces you to start thinking hard about how your site is going to be organized.

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Web-page authors use simple, text-only navigation bars for all purposes during site development — and for several purposes even after creating the graphical main navigation:

- To echo main navigation at the bottom of each Web page.
- For secondary (or tertiary or — get ready for this one — quaternary) navigation functions on complex sites.

Even the simplest text navigation bar can help enforce useful practices of site design and usability right from the beginning of creating a multiple-page site.

Here's an example of a simple text navigation bar for a small consulting business:

Home | Services | Memberships | Publications | Experience | Contact me

Each tab is underlined to reflect that it's a link to that page or multipage area of the site. Note that the Home tab, as I'll call it, is not underlined. The idea is that, when you're on the home page, you can't click Home to go to the home page — because you're already there. So the area of the site you're already in is not linked.

When you click the word Experience on the text menu to go to the Experience page, the text navigation bar should change to reflect where you are — it's no longer possible to click Experience, while Home is linked again:

Home | Services | Memberships | Publications | Experience | Contact me

To implement this, you create a "model" navigation bar with *all* the tabs linked — but it's never used in quite that form. For each page on your site, you copy the navigation bar, and then remove the link from the tab that the page in question belongs to.

Follow these instructions to create a text navigation bar:

1. **Open a new, empty page in Windows Notepad. Save it under a name of your choice with `.htm` as the extension, such as `navbar.htm`.**
2. **Type in a line of text representing the elements of your site, with a word or two for each page or area.**

   Use the vertical bar to separate the tabs. You may find it on your keyboard, or choose Examples for a personal/professional site:

   Home | Services | Memberships | Publications | Experience | Contact me

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If the vertical bar character is not accessible from your keyboard, it should be available from the Symbol or similar menu in a word processing program. (There's no such option in Notepad.) You can then copy and paste the vertical bar into Notepad.

3. **Center the navigation bar on the page by using the `center` attribute of the paragraph tag, like so:**

```
<p center>Home | Services | Memberships | Publications | Experience |
          Contact me</p>
```

The text menu will be centered. Note the closing paragraph tag — always a good idea, but especially so in this case, to stop the centering.

4. **To link the Home tab to the home page of your site, surround the word Home with the `<a>` and `</a>` tags. (Exclude the blank spaces to either side). Add the `href` attribute like so: `<a href="home.htm">`.**

The Insert Link dialog box appears.

5. **Repeat for the remaining phrases — link to the relevant page on your site.**

The pages don't have to exist yet, though of course the links won't work until the pages are there. Whenever you create a page, the name must match the name in the text menu exactly.

On some Web servers, capitalization matters — the `BudSmith.htm` file is different from the `budsmith.htm` file — so use all lowercase to avoid problems. Also, don't use spaces in the filenames. If you do, the links could break when your Web site is moved to a server for hosting.

When you're done, you should have a fully linked text menu — every tab linked to a page, even if the page doesn't exist yet.

Consider keeping a copy of the complete menu, with all links in place, on your home page or in a working page — so if you make changes later, it will be easier to update the text menu in one place, then copy and modify it onto all the pages involved.

6. **Copy the menu to each Web page of your site, or create a new file (for any pages that don't yet exist) and put the menu in it. As you proceed, delete the link from the tab representing the page you're about to save.**

Adding this basic (but vital) feature will give you the beginnings of a true site, not just a bunch of pages.

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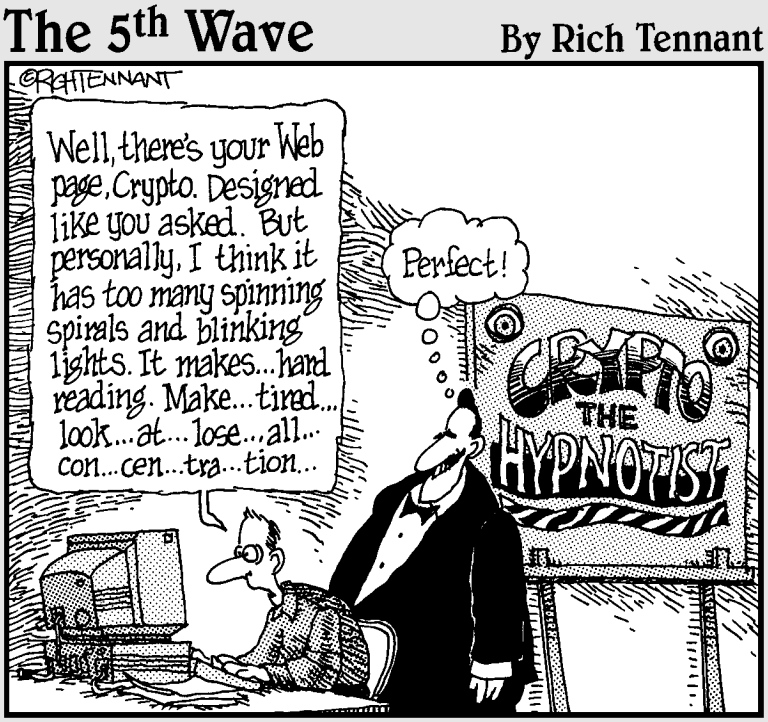
Part V
The Part of Tens



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In this part . . .

My Top Tens give you a cache of dos and don'ts for creating Web pages so you can look like a pro your first time out on the Web.

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Chapter 16

Ten Web-Publishing Dos and Don'ts

Life today is complicated, and so is fiction. Batman has gone from a do-gooder to a "dark knight" (mostly appearing, of course, on dark nights), lately seen in prison right alongside the evil Joker. Ambivalence crops up everywhere.

In the spirit of helping you solve, or avoid, knotty problems, I offer a mixed list of light and dark — ten (plus a couple extra) essential dos and don'ts. Use them to make your site stronger from the start and to help you resist the temptation to let it become hard to use or to fall behind the times.

DO Think About Your Target Audience

Who is your Web site targeting? A little thought along these lines can make your pages much more appealing to your visitors. Before you begin creating your Web site, choose the right look and feel, and a style of presentation that is appropriate for your audience.

For instance, if your target audience is your family, keep your site simple and fun — but if it's a business site, keep the personal stuff well separate.

Include links that *your visitors* find interesting, not just the ones that *you* find interesting — unless "all about you" is the point of your page, of course.

Use good sites as models. Many top-rated sites have settled on relatively simple designs. Identify what works in a site you like. Is it . . .

- The use of color and the layout of the Web page?
- The fact that the site loads quickly?
- The well-organized content?

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Google is a good example of a site that is well-focused around a key observation: Speed matters. The Ford site, which could hardly be more different, also does a good job for its customers — by giving cars pride of place.

Research other media, such as newspapers and magazines that have an audience similar to yours (check the articles and the ads to determine this), to find good and bad examples.

But don't overcomplicate things. Stick to basic HTML that works for everyone; try more advanced technologies on "leaves" of your site, on individual pages, before extending their use across your site.

If you want and need to offer something a bit more exciting like a QuickTime movie, help your site visitors by plainly labeling it and offering them any needed support, such as a link to the QuickTime download page on Apple's Web site.

DON'T Forget the Basics

Your site may be the greatest thing since sliced bread, but if you forget to include contact information for yourself in the site, how will you find out that you misspelled "bureaucracy" all over the place?

Similarly, don't put the order form for your spiffy new number-crunching widget five levels down in the "Fruit Bat Guano Statistics — 1876" Web page. If your customers can't find it, they can't buy it.

More basics:

- Have a useful, search-engine-friendly title (the `title` tag) for each page.
- Include your e-mail address on your Web page or Web site.
- If you create a Web site of more than 5 to 7 pages, add a site map.
- Make the important information prominent.
- Include a copyright notice, usually in this form: © 2008 MyCo Inc.

DO Think Before You Create

When creating Web pages, a surprising number of people just jump in and start throwing around text and HTML tags with no clue about where they're

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going or what they want to accomplish. That approach is fine if you just want to play around; in fact, it can be a lot of fun. But if you want to make a good impression on the Web, sitting down and thinking about a few things ahead of time really pays off.

Sketch your ideas on paper. Then describe them to someone else and ask for feedback. This prep work forces you to consider things that you may not think about otherwise:

- Page layout
- Graphic design
- Relationship between pages
- Target audience
- Content structure
- Link grouping

Remember that your Web pages are available and accessible to the whole world. Think a bit about foreign audiences. Do you use colloquialisms that may not be understood by international Net surfers? How do your pages look to your colleagues who view them through a slow Net link? (Fast Internet connections are still very expensive in some places.) Should you include content in multiple languages? Will your humorous or risqué content offend someone in another country or culture?

When you become a Web publisher, you also become a global citizen, and your Web pages play on a global stage. Think through the accessibility and meaning of your pages in advance.

All these issues and more, when properly considered and acted on, can make your site a first-class Web-surfing experience.

DON'T "Borrow" without Asking

Make sure that content you get from the Web to use on your own Web page is labeled as being freely available for reuse, or else get permission to reuse it.

If a Web page doesn't explicitly say that its content can be freely borrowed, assume that it's copyrighted or otherwise protected — which means you should ask before borrowing any of it.

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You can easily peek at the HTML source of any Web page, and that's legitimate, and a good way to figure out new design techniques. But you can also easily grab any content that exists on the Web, even privately owned content that belongs to others. However, the fact that you can easily grab others' content does *not* make doing so right or legal. It's also not necessary.

You can find a great deal of public-domain content, and getting permission to use some private content is not all that hard to do. Many people are happy to let you use their content as long as you provide proper attribution and reciprocal links so that they can gain exposure to new Web users who visit your pages. In the process, you may just gain new friends or business contacts, as well as avoid legal problems down the road. (And in case you get tempted to borrow quietly, keep in mind that word of unethical practices gets around quickly on this amazing global network.)

DO Use Links to Outside Sites

No matter how great your content is, you're wasting the most important feature of the Web if you don't include links to sites outside your own. No matter what your topic, you can find complementary sites out there. Giving your visitors links to those sites is not only courteous — it's also part of the foundation on which the Web was built.

If you research your links carefully and organize them well, your links can be a valuable resource for others. In your own Web surfing, you've probably found that one of the best experiences on the Web is the serendipity of stumbling upon some cool site that you had no idea existed. Give your visitors that same experience. Point them to the outside world. That's why it's the Web and not the Hole.

You can use as many links as you like, as long as they fit within a structure. Beginners often organize their pages in ways that make their sites hard to navigate. If your site has more than 5 to 7 pages, you should put some thought into how your visitors navigate it. Nobody likes wandering from page to page with no idea what is where. Likewise, users don't want to follow multiple links to find one piece of information.

Keep the relationship between your pages simple. Make clear which links are internal to your own site and which go out to other sites. Provide a site map or a common menu. And make navigation work consistently throughout the site.

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DON'T Abuse Graphics and Multimedia

A prime attraction of the Web is that it's designed to present graphical information. Include pictures, icons, bars, and graphical menus in your Web page. Go ahead, try out transparent GIFs. Multimedia is a great addition, too, where appropriate; one or two sound files, a QuickTime movie, even a simple animated GIF can really liven up a site.

Yet the biggest mistake that some beginning Web authors — and some experts — make is overusing graphics and multimedia on a page. Keep in mind that not everyone has a cable modem or DSL connection wired directly to his or her home PC; many folks around the world still receive Web pages via a more limited 56K or slower dialup connection. For most pages, keep your page size — including both text and graphics — under 50 KB.

People also forget that each separate graphics file linked to in your Web page, no matter how small, generates a separate download request. Because of the nature of IP-based networking (IP is Internet Protocol), a random file access can fail, requiring another request, or take a long time. So it can take a page with a lot of different graphics in it a while to "settle down" even over a fast connection.

Here are ways that you can keep down your page size without sacrificing design flexibility:

- Resize photos and convert them to JPEG format.
- Use simple icons and banners — images without very many colors or complex textures — in GIF format.
- Combine several different small graphics into one physical graphic that includes the white space — a lot of visual impact for one graphics access.
- Lay out your site to limit the amount of graphics on any one page; add pages if you need to display more graphics.
- Use `<alt>` tags to provide text alternatives to meaningful graphics; leave out the `<alt>` tags for designer elements that improve the look but don't add to the content.
- Use thumbnail icons to give access to larger images.

The bottom line is that sites that carefully use graphics and multimedia are much more interesting than purely text-oriented ones. Give it a go. But be prudent.

All these strategies make your pages more interesting, yet quick to download. Your Web-surfers will thank you.

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DO Test Your Pages

You can find so-called "easy-to-use" Web server packages on the market, and Web server capability is now built into many Macs and PCs. But even with these efforts, buying (or using your existing PC), setting up, and maintaining a Web server can become the most expensive, most complicated, and most frustrating part of Web publishing.

Luckily, you can put your content on someone else's Web server using the free services I describe in this book, or you can use an inexpensive paid service while you figure out the other tricks of the trade. Then, as your knowledge and experience grow, consider setting up your own Web server.

No matter where your pages are, you need to test them. Testing your pages is easy. You probably don't send out a memo without spell-checking it. Similarly, you should not put up your Web pages without testing them. That means looking at your pages on your own machine before testing them on the Web — follow links, see how graphics and text fit together, and so on.

Also, looking at your pages in different browsers doesn't hurt. If you can't do it, ask a friend or even a stranger to help. And, of course, don't forget to spell-check your pages.

After you upload your files to the Web, test again on your own machine, your friends' and neighbor's machines, any machine you have access to — you may be surprised by the differences you see. And if you really want a shock, ask a couple of friends or family members to go to your site and click around on it, telling you what they think as they go along; the way they use your site is almost certain to be different from what you expected.

DON'T Break Netiquette Rules

Lapsing into poor *netiquette* — the etiquette, or "Miss Manners" rule book, of the Internet — is too easy to do, and it can bring you a lot of negative attention. If you make any serious offenses against good Internet practices, your Web service provider's server may remove your pages. And you can even get into legal problems.

Avoid the following dubious practices:

- *Spamming,* or sending unwanted e-mail to publicize your site or sell things

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- *Flaming,* or being fervently disparaging of other people or other Web pages
- Posting offensive material on your page without some kind of warning label

Netiquette is an amorphous and evolving area of online behavior, so you may want to join a Web-oriented newsgroup where you can ask questions before publishing. Also, check out this site for in-depth info:

```
www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html
```

Yet, within the bounds of netiquette, you still need to publicize your site. Nothing is more frustrating than putting up a site that no one visits.

Fortunately, publicizing your site is not hard. Add your site to the popular indexes, for example, through the Submit-It site at `www.submit-it.com`. (Like many other such services, the Submit-It site charges a fee.)

You can also send e-mail to appropriate blogs, put out a press release, send e-mail to friends and business contacts, or shout from the rooftops.

DO Ask for Feedback

Put your e-mail address on your home page and ask for comments. You'll be amazed by what people say about your pages. (Some of the comments may even be complimentary!) People who have never before seen your site can offer a good, fresh perspective and give you feedback on things that you may not have previously thought about.

After you have your site working the way you want it to, experiment. Try weird things. Keep asking for feedback. Never be afraid to figure out complex and hard stuff. (It's only complex and hard because you don't understand it *yet!*)

Everyone can benefit from outside input. Criticism by your prospective audience is not only useful, it's also educational. You can learn a lot about what people expect and want. Criticism can't hurt anything but your pride, and listening to it almost always improves your site.

Whether from outside input or your own research and ideas, you can find so much neat stuff out there that can make your Web-publishing efforts even more exciting — JavaScript, multimedia, new browsers and publishing tools, Net-based games, and online business infrastructure. All this new stuff *is* understandable and usable by normal folks like you and me. Don't be intimidated. You can use all of it. (If you've come this far, you've got what it takes!)

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DON'T Let Your Site Get Stale

A static site is a boring site. True, it works for some purposes, but in general, if you want people to keep revisiting your site, you must keep it updated. The best sites are those that continually provide new and interesting content. Include pointers to information that's frequently updated, such as "Thought for the day" or "Links to new, cool sites." Let users know how often to expect updates and be sure to showcase new content. A "New" icon next to recently added or updated content can work wonders.

You can easily add a blog piece to your site. Some packages make this automatic; or, use your knowledge of HTML to easily update your site with new commentary every few days.

In addition to updating your site, update yourself! Broadening your knowledge of Web design, new trends and technologies, and what's "cool" at the moment can only help improve your site.

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Chapter 17

Ten Places to Host Your Page

Where to host your Web site is always a good question. And these days, with so many different kinds of Web services, the very definition of a Web site is under question.

Is a Facebook page a Web site? Is a set of photos you've unloaded to Flickr? Literally speaking, yes.

But a true standalone Web site, built from the ground up, not only offers you more choices — it can also knit together all your other online involvements in a coherent whole, a kind of control panel for your online life.

So here are ten places to host "real" Web sites — though I include two blogging sites, as blogs can so easily be expanded into complete sites.

Google Page Creator

Google Page Creator is a very flexible page creation service, described in Chapter 3. It will hold your hand in setting up a simple site — or simply give you space to put up as complicated and customized site as you want.

How to use it: Go to `pages.google.com` and log in or sign up for an account.

Network Solutions

Network Solutions is the original provider of Web URLs and still one of the biggest. Network Solutions also offers easy-to-use Web-page creation tools and Web hosting. It's on the expensive side, and they are quite good at selling services. But there's a lot of functionality available.

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If you look for a Web URL on Network Solutions, they can apparently "lock down" the URL for a few days — so if you search for it again, it seems to be gone, but actually it's just being held. Consider doing your domain name searches at another site, such as `www.123reg.com`, to avoid this.

How to use it: Go to `www.netsol.com` and look at the services on offer.

Fasthosts

Fasthosts is a U.K.-based hosting provider that's like a slightly less polished — and slightly less expensive — Network Solutions. I've used their services and like them.

How to use it: Go to `www.fasthosts.co.uk` and check out what's available.

AOL

Say what? Yes, America Online. AOL may be well known as a business failure, a company that once was big enough to merge with Time Warner and is now being sold off in chunks to various other companies around the world, but there's more to the story.

They developed good Web-page creation services at their peak, and the offerings are still there.

How to use it: Go to `www.aol.com` and look carefully at the offerings; there are several levels of service available, so check carefully before committing.

Yahoo!

Yahoo! is one of the original founding companies of the Web, and many people still weave in and out of the Yahoo! site and various Yahoo! services several times a day. And they have good Web-page creation offerings that fit with their other services. The leader is GeoCities, which was bought by Yahoo! some years ago and is still a major player in free Web pages.

How to use it: Go to `www.yahoo.com` and sign up for an account, then look at some of their existing Web pages and sites. Or go straight to `www.geocities.com` if you want to skip the Yahoo! site, though you'll still need a Yahoo! account to use GeoCities.

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Blogger

Blogger is a very early provider of free blogging. Since being purchased by Google a few years ago, they've stabilized their platform and have grown steadily. (Using Blogger is described in some detail in Chapter 4.)

How to use it: Go to `www.blogger.com` and see what's there, though you'll need a Google account to use Blogger.

WordPress

WordPress is gradually emerging as the serious alternative to blogger. Word Press offers free services, but many of its users pay at least something — more, it seems, than on many other blogging sites — and they seem happy to do so. Don't expect total ease of use, though; a business whose catchphrase is "code is poetry" hardly shies away from offering power tools.

How to use it: Go to `www.wordpress.org` and give a careful look around before committing.

MobileMe

If you are a Mac user or an iPhone owner, you simply have to consider MobileMe, which until recently was called .Mac ("dot-Mac"). MobileMe will cost you — $99 a year in the U.S. — but more than a million users say it's worth it. MobileMe offers not only Web-page creation and hosting but all sorts of related services such as calendaring, e-mail, and more. All in the easy-to-use interface you expect from Apple.

Apple — and its users — suffered serious teething problems in the transition from .Mac to MobileMe; a very small percentage (but still a large number) of users lost some stored e-mails. The optimistic view of the aftermath can be summed up as, "they've gotten that out of their system"; the pessimistic view, "once bitten, twice shy."

How to use it: Go to `www.apple.com/mobileme` and look at the offerings carefully; consider not only the cost but the hassle of transitioning to MobileMe from products, many of them likely to be free, that you already use.

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Weebly

Weebly is based on Ajax, the Web 2.0 technology that's helping bring many sites to life with interaction and animation. Weebly is relatively new, but already quite popular. Consider it seriously, especially if you like social-networking tools such as Facebook, Flickr, and YouTube.

How to use it: Go to `www.weebly.com` and see if you like the look of their users' pages more than what you see at the better-established competitors.

Ning

Different from the rest, Ning is actually for *creating your own social network,* not just your own Web site. If you like Facebook but have exhausted all its capabilities and want to do more, or want a Web page that's anything but boring, consider Ning.

How to use it: Go to `www.ning.com` and try the idea of being a social-networking guru on for size.

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Chapter 18

Ten Ways to Make Your Page a Site

Creating a Web page is a real thrill, but once the excitement dies down, you might be left feeling a bit anxious. How to convert your fun Web page into an interesting and enduring site?

Here are ten techniques for making the leap to a lasting, interesting Web site you'll be proud of.

Specialize

The tendency when you create a Web page is to mention several things, or even everything that interests you. It's your Web page, so it should be about you, right?

Maybe, but when you expand to a Web site you should consider specializing. People go to Web sites for what the site offers, and people expect the site to be like a mosaic, with each page contributing to an overall picture. Unless you're so famous, or so fascinating, that people really want to build up a picture of you just because you're you, they probably want to learn about some company or topic. Focus your efforts into a coherent site with a single overarching theme. (Even if you keep the focus on yourself, consider choosing an aspect such as your career, family, or creative use of the online world across various other sites.)

Let Go of Your Tool

Tools such as Google Page Creator are great for getting started. You do everything online, so there's no worry about getting your pages hosted; they're hosted for you even as you're creating them.

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However, the only way to have real flexibility in the design and development of your site is to move away from online tools and templates to your own chosen approach. The quickest way to get there is to move to a more independent model: developing your site on your own computer, and then uploading files to the Web to bring them to life.

Copy Your Page to Your Hard Drive

Even if you leave your page or site in an online tool for a while, you can still benefit from keeping, and working on, a local copy. It's nerve-wracking to be working in an online tool with little or no backup, knowing you can wreck your site with a few poorly chosen keystrokes and mouse clicks.

Copy your Web site to your hard drive, a page at a time, and then work on the copy of your site that lives on your own computer. This will increase your understanding and capability very quickly. Then copy and paste from your work on your own machine into the tool that makes changes in your live site. Soon you'll be ready to bypass the tool and upload entire pages (and their graphics) files directly to your Web host.

Use FTP

The all-too-frequently seen FTP, or File Transfer Protocol, has done more to discourage Web-page authors than perhaps any other aspect of Web publishing. With FTP, you have to log in to a remote site, and then transfer files in a process that feels more like trying to keep up with the nerds in the computer lab than, say, updating your Facebook profile.

Still, you have to learn it. Use the tools available on your host (which are just FTP with a pretty face) or download an FTP program from CNET's excellent `download.com` site to get going, and take the time to learn how to use it. You'll be glad you did.

Get a URL

Having your own URL — that is, an independent Web address for your site, not `mysite.geocities.com` but `www.mysite.com` — is a big step that will make your site feel very "real" indeed. You don't need to do this on Day 1; in fact, getting a URL can actually distract you from getting started. But as your Web page takes on a life of its own, getting and using a URL becomes a

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necessary step in your site's growing up. Use the services described in the previous chapter to find and purchase a URL and, if needed, Web hosting.

Add a Blog

I was slow to warm to blogs — I even found the name offputting. But they've proven themselves to be the single simplest and best way to steadily expand a site with fresh content. (Blogging will do a lot to give you ideas for other, structural additions to your site as well.)

You can even blog from your mobile phone. Use the tools in Chapter 17 (or other tools) to add a blog to your site, and keep using them so your site gradually expands and improves.

Add Other Tools

Many Web hosts offer fun tools to add to your site, such as online polling, message boards, news feeds, and such. Or use RSS — Really Simple Syndication — to bring in news or other information. There are hundreds of things you can do; look around at sites you like and figure out how to add your favorite features from those sites to your own site. (If nothing else, this effort will make you steadily better at Web searching.)

Add Navigation

Keep working on your site navigation — extending it, improving it, or making it easier to use. Navigation is what makes a Web site hold together, like the covers and binding of a book. Unlike a hard-copy book, however, a Web site can gradually improve, especially as you refine your navigation to make your Web site better and better with time.

Quote Others

Bring in quotes, contributions, and material written or drawn by others. Link to relevant videos on YouTube. (Even if you have to create them yourself — but include the comments others make about your video on YouTube.) Keep getting in outside opinion.

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Keep Plugging Away

Keep adding little things here and there. It took months before my wife and I got the site for her business, at `batcs.co.uk`, into decent shape — but, to my worry, something was still missing. As we gradually added press coverage, information about courses, and a few frequently asked questions, suddenly the site seemed to become more solid, real, and interesting. We reached a tipping point in which there was enough valuable content to be interesting, and even a bit impressive. Keep plugging away at the details, adding content and functionality, and you will too.

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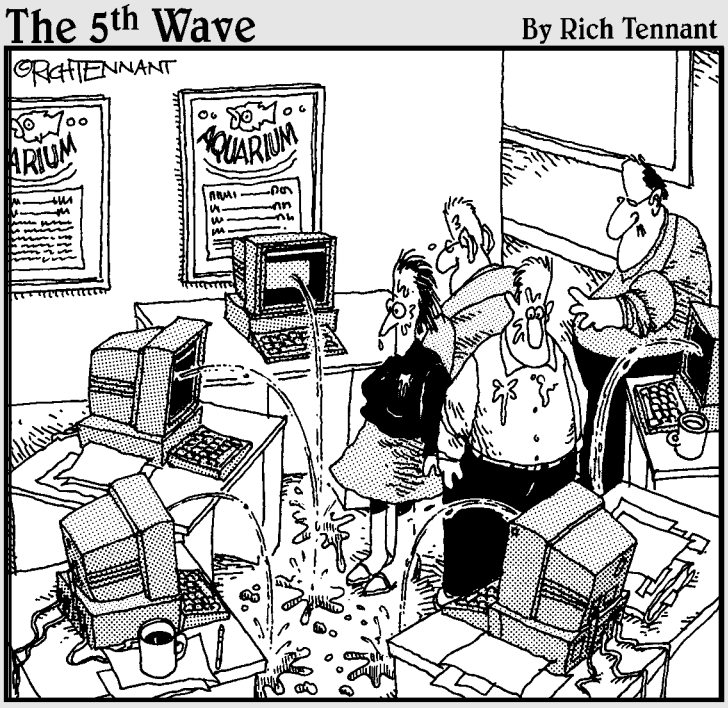
Part VI
Appendixes



"Okay, I think I forgot to mention this, but we now have a Web management function that automatically alerts us when there's a broken link on The Aquarium's Web site."

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In this part . . .

Often appendixes are the miscellaneous extra bits of a book — but these are useful enough that they deserve their own section: A glossary of Web-publishing terms, a guide to basic HTML tag definitions, and all you need to know about the CD-ROM included with this book.

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Appendix A

Web Words Worth Knowing

This glossary defines important terms used in this book. To see where a term is used in the book, check the index.

56K. 56 kilobits per second, a standard speed for dialup Internet access used by most current modems. Actual online access speeds are limited by U.S. government regulation to a top speed of about 53 Kbps, and your 56K modem may not achieve even that speed reliably, depending on the quality of the connection you get when you dial in.

absolute address. A description of a file's location that starts with the domain name, machine name, or disk name on which the file is located. See also *pathname* and *relative address*.

ActiveX. A Microsoft technology for distributing executable files called *ActiveX controls* (programs that can change your file system directly) over the Internet. ActiveX is powerful, but it only works on Windows — and it triggers warning messages from security software even on that operating system, so beginning Web authors should avoid it.

anchor. One end of a link between two files. When you look at a Web page, the underlined, colored text that you see is an anchor at one end of a hypertext link. Clicking the text brings up another Web page, which is the anchor at the other end of the link.

animated GIF. A GIF graphic that includes several slightly different images in sequence. Browsers that support animated GIFs display the graphics one at a time to create an animation.

attribute. In HTML, an attribute is a qualifier added within an HTML tag. The attribute modifies the tag's purpose. For example, in the tag `<IMG SRC="budpic.jpg">`, the attribute is `SRC` (short for "source"). See also *tag*.

blog. Short for "Web log," a form of Web site in which the author's frequent postings are recorded, usually with the newest posting first. Site visitors are often allowed to comment. Web logs use special software to prevent the user from having to set up or manage the Web page.

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broadband. Any kind of fast Internet access, whether by cable modem, DSL, or other connection significantly faster than the 56K top speed of a modem. Broadband connections are typically "always on" and do not require dialing in.

browser. A program used to look at World Wide Web documents. Mosaic was the first popular browser, followed by Netscape Navigator; Microsoft Internet Explorer is the current market leader.

bulleted list. See *unordered list.*

cable modem. A form of broadband access to the Internet that uses a cable TV connection. (If the local cable company that serves your house offers this service, it's worth a look.)

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). A language used to control the look of a Web page (colors, fonts, and so on), whereas HTML is used to control the structure of the content (headings, paragraphs, and so on).

clickable image map. A graphic that includes areas called *hot spots,* which, when clicked, take you to different Web pages or different locations within a Web page. Some large Web sites use clickable image maps on their home pages to entice the users to move farther into the site.

Common Gateway Interface script (CGI script). A kind of program often used to transfer data from an HTML form to an application. The CGI script runs on the server that hosts the Web page with the form. See also *form.*

compression. Storing a file in less space than previously required. *Lossless* compression creates a file from which the original file can be exactly re-created. *Lossy* compression eliminates some (hopefully less important) data from the original file in order to allow the compressed file to be smaller.

definition list. A type of HTML list in which terms occupy a column on the left side of the screen and definitions occupy a wider column on the right side.

DHTML (Dynamic HTML). DHTML is not a markup language (as is HTML); the term refers to the use of three languages together in Web design: HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.

domain name. A name that represents a Web site to the outside world. In the United States, the domain name can end in `.com` (for businesses), `.edu` (for educational institutions), `.org` (for nonprofit organizations), or the prestigious `.net` (for organizations that are part of the structure of the Web itself). Newly added suffixes, which haven't necessarily caught on yet, include `.biz` and `.firm`. When visiting a domain that was created for an organization outside the United States, you may see different suffixes that have been added to represent a country or region. For example, `.uk` signifies that the domain

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was created for the United Kingdom. The part of the domain that precedes the suffix, such as `stanford` in `stanford.edu`, is either the name of the group that puts up the Web site, or a name that attracts people to the site. Domain names can start with `www` if desired, but it's not always necessary.

DSL. Digital Subscriber Line, a type of *broadband* Internet access that uses a phone line. (Not available in some areas, but worth serious consideration if it's available to you.)

electronic mail (e-mail). A message sent over a network from one computer user to another computer user. The most popular service on the Internet. Used as a noun ("I just got an e-mail.") and a verb ("E-mail me on that, will you?"). Also used as singular ("I just deleted an e-mail.") and plural ("I just deleted all my e-mail.").

embed. To place a reference to a file of a type not directly supported by the HTML specification in a Web page, using the `embed` HTML command. Multimedia files are the ones most commonly embedded. The file is then played back by a helper program such as RealPlayer, QuickTime, or Windows Media Player.

File Transfer Protocol (FTP). An Internet service for transferring files between different machines, including those that run different operating systems. It's a commonly used mechanism for uploading Web pages to a Web site.

firewall. Hardware, software, or a combination that protects a network from unauthorized access while allowing authorized access.

form. An HTML-defined way to specify text boxes and pull-down menus to enable users of a Web page to enter data. The data from the form must be processed on the Web server by a program such as a *CGI script*.

freeware. Software that can be used for free, though often with a license that contains some restrictions on its use. See also *shareware*.

Graphic Interchange Format (GIF). Can be pronounced "jiff" or (my preference) "giff." A format for encoding less complex images, such as computer-generated graphics, for transfer among machines. GIF format is the most popular means for storing images for transfer over the Internet and is supported by all graphical Web browsers. An image stored in GIF format is often referred to as "a GIF." See also *JPEG, transparent GIF*.

Graphical User Interface (GUI). Software that enables users to interact with a computer by using a mouse and keyboard to manipulate images and menus on the computer's screen. The Windows and Macintosh user interfaces are both examples of GUIs.

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hexadecimal. What the witch did to her accountant so her tax bill would be more favorable. (Just kidding.) Actually, a way of counting that uses 16 "digits," 0 through 9 plus A through F, instead of the 10 digits that common decimal numbering uses. Hexadecimal numbers are often used to describe values stored inside a computer — in particular, colors used in Web pages.

In hexadecimal numbering, 0 through 9 have their normal values, but A represents 10, B represents 11, and so on through F, which represents 15. Place values are also different; each successive place represents the next greater power of 16. For example, 2F in hexadecimal translates to 47 in decimal; the 2 represents two 16s, and the F represents fifteen 1s.

hit. This is what you hope your Web site will become. Also, a successful connection, file transfer, and disconnection between a Web client and a Web server. Accessing a single, text-only page generates one hit; accessing a single page with three graphics on it generates four hits. Hits can be counted fairly easily and are a crude measure of the popularity of a Web site. When you see a site that advertises "a million hits a week," remember that the number of hits may be many times greater than the number of different people who visited. See also *Web client* and *Web server.*

home page. A Web page that you intend users to come to directly when they visit your Web site. If a Web site has multiple pages, the home page usually serves as the front door to the rest of your site, and the guide to all the other pages housed there.

HTML 4.01. Currently the most broadly used version of *Hypertext Markup Language,* invented by Tim Berners-Lee (now, not coincidentally, Sir Tim Berners-Lee) in the late 1980s. All browsers available today support this version of HTML, though different browsers may interpret some tags differently.

Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). The language used to annotate, or "mark up" text documents so they can be formatted appropriately and linked to other documents for use on the World Wide Web. See *tag.*

Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP). The agreed-upon format used by Web programs to exchange messages among World Wide Web servers and between Web servers and clients.

image map. See *clickable image map.*

Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN). Sometimes jokingly spelled out as "It Still Does Nothing," this special type of phone line is available to many businesses and homes as a *broadband* connection option that supports faster transmission of data than standard phone lines.

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Internet. The hardware and software that together support the interconnection of most existing computer networks, allowing a computer anywhere in the world to communicate with any other computer that's also connected to the Internet. The Internet supports a variety of services, including the World Wide Web.

Internet Protocol (IP). The networking specification that underlies the Internet. IP's most important feature is its support for routing of the packets — small chunks of information that make up a communication — across multiple connections to the final destination.

Internet service provider (ISP). A company that offers connection to the Internet and support for Internet services such as the World Wide Web. An ISP may also provide Web site storage space and related services to customers.

intranet. An internal network used for distributing information broadly within an organization, but not to the general public. Many intranets work just like the Internet and World Wide Web, only on a smaller scale.

Java. A programming language that supports the creation of distributed programs, called *applets,* whose functionality can be easily and flexibly split between a client computer and the server that it's connected to. Java provides a way for the Web to support easy sharing of programs and data and, unlike ActiveX, Java is cross-platform. Java has become less widely used within Web pages, but it is widely used on Web servers and corporate networks.

JavaScript. Largely unrelated to Java (except through their common parent, C), JavaScript is often used to add interaction or some dynamic quality to a page (a calculator, a menu) through lines of text commands placed in the document or in a separate, linked file.

Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG). A format for storing compressed images. JPEG images were once supported by helper applications but are now directly supported by nearly all browsers. JPEG is the best format for most photographs. See *GIF.*

link. A connection between two documents on the Web, usually specified by an *anchor* in an HTML document.

mirroring. Keeping a copy of data on additional servers to make data available more quickly and to a greater number of simultaneous users.

MP3 and MPEG. Formats created by the Motion Picture Experts Group (or MPEG) for storing compressed sounds (MP3) and movies (MPEG). These files can be played back by a variety of helper applications but are not directly supported by browsers. See *JPEG.*

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multimedia. Literally means "many media," and in this sense, a Web page with graphics is multimedia. However, multimedia is usually understood to mean either more than two types of media or, alternatively, time-based media such as animation, sound, or video and space-based media such as 3-D and virtual reality. On the Web, multimedia is also used to mean any extension of the Web beyond the basics of text, hyperlinks, GIF graphics, and JPEG graphics. Multimedia is beyond the basics, so it usually requires a special plug-in or player to support it.

newsgroup. An ongoing exchange of electronic messages about a specific topic, such as pets, restaurants, or Web authoring. To access newsgroups, users must use special software called news reader software, which is available on the Web and also included as a feature of current browsers.

numbered list. See *ordered list.*

online service. Also referred to as a "traditional" or "proprietary" online service to differentiate from the Internet, which is seen as an "open" online service. Traditional online services, such as America Online and CompuServe, package access and content into a single branded product. The Internet and the Web have eroded the boundaries between online services by allowing cross-service functionality, such as e-mail between subscribers of different online services. The online service providers are further eroding these boundaries by offering Internet access, Web access, and Web-authoring support.

ordered list. A numbered list. A type of HTML list in which each item is given a number, in sequence, when the list displays. The author of the list can rearrange the items as needed, and the numbers adjust accordingly because the numbers are assigned only when the list appears onscreen. See *unordered list.*

page-description language. A defined format for specifying the appearance of a document when displayed or printed. Adobe's PostScript, used by many programs and in many laser printers, is a page-description language; it's not a structural markup language such as HTML or SGML.

pathname. A description of the location of a file. Pathnames can be specified by absolute addressing or relative addressing.

plug-in. A small program that works with a Web browser to allow multimedia files to be displayed in a Web page, or that otherwise extends the capabilities of the browser.

protocol. An agreed-upon format for exchanging data, such as *FTP* (file-transfer protocol).

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QuickTime. A multiplatform standard from Apple Computer, Inc., for multimedia. See also *multimedia, QuickTime plug-in,* and *QuickTime VR.*

QuickTime plug-in. A *plug-in* for Firefox and Microsoft Internet Explorer that supports user interaction with QuickTime and QuickTime VR content embedded in a Web page. See also *QuickTime* and *QuickTime VR.*

QuickTime VR. A multiplatform standard for image-based virtual reality. See also *QuickTime* and *QuickTime plug-in.*

relative address. The path from a base document, such as an HTML document, to another document on the same computer, such as another Web page on the same site. See also *pathname* and *absolute address.*

shareware. Software that can be used for free for a limited period of time, after which the user is requested (though usually not forced) to pay a fee for continued use. See *freeware.*

shrink-wrapped software. (No, this is not software developed and packaged by psychiatrists.) Shrink-wrapped software is sold as a product and packaged in a box (rather than offered as a download over the Internet); the user pays up front before taking possession of the software. See also *freeware* and *shareware.*

site management. Capabilities in a Web-authoring package that help authors work on characteristics of an entire Web site, instead of just one page at a time. Site-management capabilities include maintenance of links between Web pages (and offering notification when links are no longer functional), spell-checking, built-in uploading of Web pages to a server, and easy search and replace across an entire site.

standard. An agreed-upon way to do something, such as building a computer system (for example, the IBM-compatible standard) or exchanging data (for example, the ASCII standard). Many different standards exist, ranging from those created by a single manufacturer for its own purposes (the DOS standard) to those created by internationally recognized standards bodies such as ISO (the International Standards Organization). In other words, in computing, the definition of standard is not very standard.

Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). A full-featured specification for describing the content and structure of documents but not their exact appearance when displayed. *HTML* is a subset of SGML.

syntax. A fee paid for moral or legal violations (no, wait, that's a "sin tax"). In computer languages and protocols, the syntax is the ordering of the elements that make up the instructions to the computer, as with *HTML.*

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system operator (sysop). Pronounced "siss-op." A person responsible for some part of the operations of a computer system, including online services. A sysop's responsibilities can vary from the technical, such as backing up a computer hard drive, to the nontechnical, such as monitoring a newsgroup for inappropriate or irrelevant content and removing it if found.

tag. Part of an HTML document that contains information besides the actual document content, such as formatting information or an anchor. For example, the `<b>` tag starts bolding the characters that follow it, and the `</b>` tag ends bolding. So to make a word or phrase bold, surround it with the `<b>` and `</b>` tags.

text editor. A program that allows text to be entered and edited but not formatted for display. Text editors save their files without proprietary formatting information, so the files are portable across different application programs and different computer systems. Examples are Notepad (Windows), BBEdit (Macintosh), and vi (Unix).

thumbnail. A small graphical image that serves as a preview of a larger image.

Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP). A communications *protocol* that was developed under contract from the U.S. Department of Defense in the 1970s to connect different systems and different networks. TCP/IP is the protocol on which the Internet is based.

transparent GIF. A file stored in Graphic Interchange Format and modified so that one color — usually, the color of the area around the objects of interest — is assigned transparency. This capability makes the rectangular frame around the objects seem to disappear so that the graphic appears to float over the page on which it appears.

Uniform Resource Locator (URL). A specification for identifying any file on the Internet. The URL is made up of the name of the protocol by which the file should be accessed, the name of the server that the file is stored on, and the pathname of the file on the server. Here is a sample URL for an HTML file named `MyCruise`, to be accessed by using the Web protocol `http`, which is stored on a server called `www.bigweb.com` in the `Travel` directory:

```
http://www.bigweb.com/Travel/MyCruise.html
```

If no filename is given at the end of the path, a default file, typically `index.htm` or `index.html`, is returned.

unordered list. A bulleted list. A type of HTML list in which each item is displayed next to a symbol such as a bullet.

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Web authoring. Creating documents for use on the World Wide Web. This process includes creating text documents with HTML tags, as well as creating or obtaining suitable graphics and sound or video files for inclusion in the Web page — and putting them in.

Web browser. See *browser.*

Web client. A computer that connects to the World Wide Web and downloads Web pages and other data from it.

Web page. An online text document that uses HTML tags to specify formatting and includes links from the document to other content, including documents, graphics, and sound or video files.

Web publishing. The entire process of creating and maintaining a Web site, from creating text documents with HTML tags and graphics, to putting the documents on a server, to revising the documents over time.

Web server. A computer that connects to the World Wide Web and hosts HTML-tagged text documents, graphics, and multimedia files to be downloaded by *Web clients.*

Web site. One or more linked Web pages accessed through a *home page.* The URL of the home page is made available to users on other Web sites, and often through other advertising and marketing means as well.

wiki. A Web site that can be cooperatively updated to capture the knowledge of a number of people and share it — with the original authors and possibly with others. The most famous example is Wikipedia (`www.wikipedia.org`), an extensive and popular online encyclopedia maintained via modified wiki principles.

word processor. A program for creating and editing text files with formatting. Files created by a word processor contain formatting codes and cannot be used on the Web unless specifically saved in *text-only* or *plain-text* format, without the proprietary codes that word processors embed in the file to indicate formatting.

World Wide Web (also known as the Web). An Internet service that provides files from servers linked by *Hypertext Transfer Protocol* (HTTP). The Web specification allows formatted text and graphics to be viewed directly by a Web browser and allows other kinds of files to be opened separately by helper applications specified in the Web browser's setup. After e-mail, the Web is the most popular Internet service, partly because it can also be used to access other Internet services, such as newsgroups and FTP.

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Appendix B

A Quick Guide to HTML Tags

One of the best resources on the Web is *The Bare Bones Guide to HTML.* At this writing, this excellent reference lists nearly all the tags in the most widely supported version of HTML, Version 4.0, plus Netscape extensions.

This site was developed and is maintained by Kevin Werbach, a Harvard Law School graduate and former FCC attorney in Washington who has invested a lot of time and thought in Web authoring. You can find out an awful lot about Web authoring from the thoughts, resources, and examples on the *Bare Bones Guide* home page at `http://werbach.com/barebones`.

The Bare Bones Guide lists tags from the different versions of HTML, with notes describing which version of HTML a given tag supports. I thought that splitting the HTML tags into separate tables, organized by the version of HTML they support, would help you zero in on the ones you need.

In the version of *The Bare Bones Guide* in this book, I include only HTML tags from HTML versions through Version 4.0. For frames only, I use HTML 4.0 tags; see Table B-26 at the end of this chapter. I do this because HTML 4.0 tags are the most commonly used by the broad range of Web pages and Web browsers out there. The online version of *The Bare Bones Guide to HTML* lists tags up to the current version of the HTML standard at the time that you access the site.

The original *The Bare Bones Guide to HTML,* from which I adapted this version, is copyrighted (©1995–2008) to Kevin Werbach. You can reproduce the original, as long as you include this statement:

> *Copyright ©1995–2008 Kevin Werbach. Distribution is permitted, as long as there is no charge and this document is included without alteration in its entirety. This Guide is not a product of Bare Bones Software. More information is available at* `http://werbach.com/barebones`.

For more on HTML, you may also want to visit the World Wide Web consortium, the organization with the most responsibility for Web standards. A good starting point is the HTML4 area at `www.w3.org/TR/html4/`.

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Just a few things to keep in mind about *The Bare Bones Guide to HTML:*

- **It's not affiliated with Bare Bones Software,** makers of the BBEdit text editor for the Macintosh (`www.barebones.com`).
- **I got Kevin's permission to use it.** And it's everywhere (see the accompanying sidebar), but it's handy to have in this book.
- **HTML is not case-sensitive.** You'll notice that Kevin uses UPPERCASE characters in HTML tags. I decided to use lowercase characters throughout this book, in keeping with current HTML standards.

Versions of HTML

The tags in this table are part of the HTML 4.0 standard and are supported by all up-to-date browsers. So if you aren't worried about ancient history — in Web terms, that's anything that happened more than a year ago — and aren't worried about the stubborn few users of your Web pages who may still have old browsers, you can ignore this section and go straight to the tables. But if you really want to know the details, read on.

The versions of HTML I describe in this appendix are

- **HTML 2.0:** All browsers available today support this basic version of HTML. However, some tags are interpreted differently by different browsers. For example, a top-level heading, marked by an `<H1>` tag, may be formatted somewhat differently in different browsers.
- **Netscape Navigator 1.0, 1.1:** These early versions of Netscape Navigator fueled the first huge surge in the growth of the Web. These were the first browsers to provide support for centered text, floating graphics, and colored text and backgrounds by using new "extensions" to HTML 2.0. Other browsers and HTML 3.2 have adopted many of the features and new tags introduced by Netscape in Netscape Navigator 1.0 and 1.1.

Twenty-two world languages in *The Bare Bones Guide*

Online, you find versions of *The Bare Bones Guide* in English in plain text, formatted text, and table versions, as well as translations into additional languages: Chinese (two versions), Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian (three versions), Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, and Turkish.

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- **HTML 3.2:** This is a widely supported version of the HTML standard. Many of the ideas originally included in the HTML 3.0 proposal, such as tables and paragraph alignment, were first supported by Netscape Navigator 1.0 and 1.1.
- **Netscape Navigator 2.0:** This years-old used version of Netscape Navigator implements a few minor features, plus a major one: frames, which are specific areas within the browser window that contain different content and can be updated separately.
- **HTML 4.0 and later browser versions:** HTML 4.0 is the latest standardized version of HTML. It includes some features that were introduced by Microsoft and Netscape in their own browsers. However, HTML 4.0 includes some complex features that are not consistently implemented in current browser versions.

Over time, browsers are updated and improved to support a wider range of tags. However, a few users still have the old version of their browser. So don't assume that just because a new version of a browser supports specific tags, all users of that browser will upgrade and gain the ability to view those tags correctly.

How to Use This Appendix

To use this appendix when creating your own pages, start with the first table, a basic list of HTML 2.0– and HTML 3.2–compliant tags that work with almost any browser. If you use only the tags in this list, your pages will be as widely usable as possible. Then you can selectively spice up your pages by using tags from the different sets of HTML extensions listed in the later tables. You can also use this list to create separate versions of your pages: one version for all browsers and another for browsers that support the specific extensions that you use.

This appendix includes HTML tags that I did not discuss in the text of this book. To find out more about a specific tag, experiment with it in your Web text and your browser. If you need more information than you can get by experimenting, buy a more advanced book on HTML, such as *HTML 4 For Dummies,* 5th Edition, by Ed Tittel and others (Wiley).

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Reading the Tables

Within the tables you may see some tags that are not preceded by a dash, followed by tags preceded by a dash, such as

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Preformatted	`<PRE></PRE>`	Display text spacing as-is
- Width	`<PRE WIDTH=?></PRE>`	Width in characters

The tags with descriptions that start with a dash are actually options within other tags. These optional tags modify the effect of the tag that they appear with. You will always see the option listed with the tag that it modifies, so that you can see how to use it in your own HTML-tagged text.

The use of the dash symbol to indicate optional tags and other symbols in the tables are described in Table B-1.

Note: In order to align columns correctly, some tags are broken. At the points that these tags break, I placed a downward, left-curving arrow (↵) to indicate the break.

Table B-1 Symbols Used in the Tables

Symbol	***Meaning***
URL	URL of an external file (or just filename if in the same directory)
?	Arbitrary number (for example, `<H?>` means `<H1>`, `<H2>`, `<H3>`, and so on)
%	Arbitrary percentage (for example, `<HR WIDTH=%>` means `<HR WIDTH=50%>`, and so on)
***	Arbitrary text (for example, `ALT="***"` means fill in with text)
$$$$$$	Arbitrary hexadecimal number* (for example, `BGCOLOR="#$$$$$$"` means `BGCOLOR="#00FF1C"`, and so on)
|	Alternatives (for example, `ALIGN=LEFT|RIGHT|CENTER` means pick one of these)
- *Option*	An option within a tag

**For an explanation of hexadecimal numbering, see Appendix A.*

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Widely Supported Tags

The tags in Table B-2 through Table B-10 are in all versions of HTML since 2.0 (in some cases) or 3.2 (in others) and should work in all browsers.

Table B-2 Generally All HTML Documents Should Have These Tags

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Document Type	<HTML></HTML>	Beginning and end of file
Title	<TITLE></TITLE>	Must be in header
Header	<HEAD></HEAD>	Descriptive info, such as title
Body	<BODY></BODY>	Bulk of the page

Table B-3 Structural Definition: Apearance Controlled by the Browser's Preferences

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Heading	<H?></H?>	The HTML 2.0 specification defines six levels
Block Quote	<BLOCKQUOTE>	Usually indented </BLOCKQUOTE>
Emphasis	<EM></EM>	Usually displayed as italic
Strong Emphasis	<STRONG></STRONG>	Usually displayed as bold
Citation	<CITE></CITE>	Usually italics
Code	<CODE></CODE>	For source code listings
Sample Output	<SAMP></SAMP>	
Keyboard Input	<KBD></KBD>	
Variable	<VAR></VAR>	
Author's Address	<ADDRESS></ADDRESS>	

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Table B-4 Presentation Formatting: Author Specifies Text Appearance

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Bold	`<B></B>`	
Italic	`<I></I>`	
Typewriter	`<TT></TT>`	Displayed in a monospaced font
Preformatted	`<PRE></PRE>`	Displays text spacing as-is
- Width	`<PRE WIDTH=?>` ↵ `/PRE>`	Width in characters

Table B-5 Links and Graphics

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Link	`<A HREF="URL"></A>`	
Link to Target	`<A HREF="URL#***"></A>`	If in another document
	`<A HREF="#***"></A>`	If in current document
Define Target	`<A NAME="***"></A>`	
Display Image	`<IMG SRC="URL">`	
- Alignment	`<IMG SRC="URL" ALIGN` ↵ `=TOP|BOTTOM|MIDDLE|` ↵ `RIGHT|LEFT>`	HTML 3.2 and beyond only
- Alternate	`<IMG SRC="URL" ALT="***">`	
- Imagemap	`<IMG SRC="URL" ISMAP>`	Requires a script

Table B-6 Dividers

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Paragraph	`<P>`	See Table B-14 for more info
Line Break	` `	A single carriage return
Horizontal Rule	`<HR>`	HTML 3.2 only

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Table B-7 Lists: Can Be Nested

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Unordered List	`<UL><LI></UL>`	`<LI>` before each list item
Ordered List	`<OL><LI></OL>`	`<LI>` before each list item
Definition List	`<DL><DT><DD></DL>`	`<DT>` = term, `<DD>` = definition

Table B-8 Special Characters: Must All Be Lowercase

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Special Character	`&#?;`	Where ? is the ISO 8859-1 code for the character
<	`<`	
>	`>`	
&	`&`	
"	`"`	
Registered TM	`®`	
Copyright	`©`	

See a complete list of special characters at `www.bbsinc.com/symbol.html`.

Table B-9 Forms: Generally Require a Script on Your Server

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Define Form	`<FORM ACTION="URL" METHOD=GET|POST></FORM>`	
Input Field	`<INPUT TYPE="TEXT|PASSWORD|CHECKBOX|RADIO|IMAGE|HIDDEN|SUBMIT|RESET">`	
- Field Name	`<INPUT NAME="***">`	
- Field Value	`<INPUT VALUE="***">`	
- Checked?	`<INPUT CHECKED>`	Check boxes and radio buttons
- Field Size	`<INPUT SIZE=?>`	In characters
- Max Length	`<INPUT MAXLENGTH=?>`	In characters
Selection List	`<SELECT></SELECT>`	

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Table B-9 *(continued)*

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Name of List	`<SELECT NAME="***">`↩ `</SELECT>`	
- # of Options	`<SELECT SIZE=?>` ↩ `</SELECT>`	
- Multiple Choice	`<SELECT MULTIPLE>`	Can select more than one
Option	`<OPTION>`	Items that can be selected
- Default Option	`<OPTION SELECTED>`	
Input Box Size	`<TEXTAREA ROWS=? COLS=?>`↩ `</TEXTAREA>`	
- Name of Box	`<TEXTAREA NAME="***">ccc` `</TEXTAREA>`	

Table B-10 Miscellaneous

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Comment	`<!-- *** -->`	Not displayed by the browser
Prologue	`<!DOCTYPE HTML`↩ `PUBLIC"-//IETF//`↩ `DTD HTML 2.0//EN">`	
URL of This File	`<BASE HREF="URL">`	Must be in header
Relationship	`<LINK REV="***"`↩ `REL="***"HREF="URL">`	In header
Meta Information	`<META>`	Must be in header

Other Widely Used Tags

The tags in Table B-11 through Table B-17 work with nearly all the browsers currently in use. For a frequently updated list of widely used tags, see *The Bare Bones Guide to HTML* at the URL listed at the beginning of this chapter.

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Table B-11 Structural Definition: Appearance Controlled by the Browser's Preferences

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Align Heading	`<H? ALIGN=LEFT|CENTER|RIGHT></H?>`	HTML 3.2 Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Heading tag
Division	`<DIV></DIV>`	HTML 3.2
- Align Division	`<DIV ALIGN=LEFT|RIGHT|CENTER|JUSTIFY></DIV>`	HTML 3.2
Large Font Size	`<BIG></BIG>`	HTML 3.2
Small Font Size	`<SMALL></SMALL>`	HTML 3.2

Table B-12 Presentation Formatting: Author Specifies Text Appearance

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Subscript	`<SUB></SUB>`	HTML 2.0
Superscript	`<SUP></SUP>`	HTML 2.0
Center	`<CENTER></CENTER>`	Netscape 1.0. widely implemented; for both text and images

Table B-13 Links and Graphics

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Dimensions	`<IMG SRC="URL" WIDTH= "?"HEIGHT= "?">`	HTML 3.2. Image width and height in pixels

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Table B-14	Dividers	
Tag Name	***Tag***	***Notes***
Paragraph	`<P></P>`	HTML 3.2. Paragraph tag, `<P>`, redefined as a container tag, `</P>` is optional
- Align Text	`<P ALIGN=LEFT|CENTER|RIGHT|JUSTIFY></P>`	HTML 3.2
- No Line Breaks	`<P NOWRAP></P>`	Internet Explorer only

Table B-15	Backgrounds and Colors	
Tag Name	***Tag***	***Notes***
Tiled Background	`<BODY BACKGROUND="URL">`	HTML 3.2
Background Color	`<BODY BGCOLOR="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 3.2. Color order, red/green/blue
Text Color	`<BODY TEXT="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 3.2. Color order, red/green/blue
Link Color	`<BODY LINK="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 3.2. Color order, red/green/blue
Active Link	`<BODY ALINK="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 3.2. Color order, red/green/blue
Visited Link	`<BODY VLINK="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 3.2. Color order, red/green/blue

You can find more info at `www.werbach.com/web/wwwhelp.html`.

Table B-16	Tables	
Tag Name	***Tag***	***Notes***
Define Table	`<TABLE></TABLE>`	HTML 3.2
- Table Border	`<TABLE BORDER></TABLE>`	HTML 3.2. Either on or off
- Table Border	`<TABLE BORDER></TABLE>`	HTML 3.2. Can set the border width in pixels

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Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
-Cell Spacing	`<TABLE CELLSPACING=?>`	HTML 3.2
- Cell Padding	`<TABLE CELLPADDING=?>`	HTML 3.2
- Desired Width	`<TABLE WIDTH=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Width Percent	`<TABLE WIDTH=%>`	HTML 3.2 Percentage of page
Table Row	`<TR></TR>`	HTML 3.2
- Alignment	`<TR ALIGN=LEFT|RIGHT|CENTER|JUSTIFY VALIGN=TOP|MIDDLE|BOTTOM>`	HTML 3.2
Table Cell	`<TD></TD>`	HTML 3.2. Must appear within table rows
- Alignment	`<TD ALIGN=LEFT|RIGHT| CENTER VALIGN=TOP|MIDDLE|BOTTOM>`	HTML 3.2
- No Line Breaks	`<TD NOWRAP>`	HTML 3.2
- Columns to Span	`<TD COLSPAN=?>`	HTML 3.2
- Rows to Span	`<TD ROWSPAN=?>`	HTML 3.2
- Desired Width	`<TD WIDTH=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Width Percent	`<TD WIDTH=%>`	HTML 3.2 Percentage of table
- Desired Height	`<TD HEIGHT=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Height Percent	`<TD HEIGHT=%>`	HTML 3.2 Percentage of page
Table Header	`<TH></TH>`	HTML 3.2. Same as data, except bold centered
- Alignment	`<TH ALIGN=LEFT|RIGHT|CENTER|JUSTIFY|CHAR. VALIGN=TOP|MIDDLE|BOTTOM>`	HTML 3.2
- No Line Breaks	`<TH NOWRAP>`	HTML 3.2
- Columns to Span	`<TH COLSPAN=?>`	HTML 3.2

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Table B-16 *(continued)*

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Rows to Span	`<TH ROWSPAN=?>`	HTML 3.2
- Desired Width	`<TH WIDTH=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Width Percent	`<TH WIDTH=%>`	HTML 3.2. Percentage of table
- Desired Height	`<TH HEIGHT=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Height Percent	`<TH HEIGHT=%>`	HTML 3.2. Percentage of page
Table Caption	`<CAPTION></CAPTION>`	HTML 3.2
- Alignment	`<CAPTION ALIGN=TOP|BOTTOM>`	HTML 3.2. Above/below table

Table B-17 Miscellaneous

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Script	`<SCRIPT></SCRIPT>`	
- Location	`<SCRIPT SRC="URL"></SCRIPT>`	
- Type	`<SCRIPT TYPE="***"></SCRIPT>`	
- Language	`<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="***"></SCRIPT>`	
Java Applet	`<APPLET>`	HTML 3.2
- Applet Name	`<APPLET NAME="***">`	HTML 3.2
- Alternate Text	`<APPLET ALT="***">`	HTML 3.2
- Applet Code Location	`<APPLET CODE="URL">`	HTML 3.2
- Code Base Directory	`<APPLET CODEBASE="URL">`	HTML 3.2
- Applet Window Height	`<APPLET HEIGHT=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Width	`<APPLET WIDTH=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
- Horizontal Offset	`<APPLET HSPACE=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels

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Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Alignment	`<APPLET↵ ALIGN=[left|↵ right|top|↵ middle|bottom]>`	HTML 3.2
Applet Parameter	`<PARAM>`	HTML 3.2
- Parameter Name, Value	`<PARAM NAME="applet↵ name", VALUE="↵ parameter value">`	HTML 3.2
3.2 Prologue	`<!DOCTYPE HTML↵ PUBLIC"- //W3C//DTD↵ HTML3.2 FINAL//EN">`	HTML 3.2

Less Frequently Used Tags

Some Netscape Navigator-only tags were slow to be adopted by non-Netscape browsers. However, most of the tags in Table B-18 through Table B-26 can be used with up-to-date browsers. HTML 4.0-specific tags are only supported by relatively recent browsers.

Table B-18 Structural Definition: Appearance Controlled by the Browser's Preferences

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Defined Content	`<SPAN></SPAN>`	HTML 4.0
Quote	`<Q></Q>`	HTML 4.0. For short quotations
- Citation	`<Q CITE="URL"></Q>`	HTML 4.0
Insert	`<INS></INS>`	HTML 4.0. Marks additions in a new version
- Time of Change	`<INS DATETIME=":::"></ INS>`	HTML 4.0
- Comments	`<INS CITE="URL"></INS>`	HTML 4.0
Delete	`<DEL></DEL>`	HTML 4.0. Marks deletions in a new version

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Table B-18 *(continued)*

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Time of Change	`<DEL DATETIME=":::"> </DEL>`	HTML 4.0
- Comments	`<DEL CITE="URL"> </DEL>`	HTML 4.0
Acronym	`<ACRONYM></ACRONYM>`	HTML 4.0
Abbreviation	`<ABBR></ABBR>`	HTML 4.0

Table B-19 Presentation Formatting: Author Specifies Text Appearance

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Blinking	`<BLINK></BLINK>`	Navigator 1.0. Most derided tag ever
Font Size	`<FONT SIZE=?>↩ </FONT>`	HTML 3.2. Ranges from 1–7
Change Font Size	`<FONT SIZE=+|-?>↩ </FONT>`	HTML 3.2
Base Font Size	`<BASEFONT SIZE=?>`	HTML 3.2. From 1–7; default is 3
Font Color	`<FONT COLOR=↩ "#$$$$$$"> </FONT>`	HTML 3.2
Underline	`<U></U>`	HTML 2.0
Strikeout	`<S></S>`	HTML 2.0
Select Font	`<FONT FACE="***"> </FONT>`	HTML 4.0

Table B-20 Links, Graphics, and Sounds

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Target Window	`<A HREF="URL"↩ TARGET="***"></A>`	HTML 4.0
Action on Click	`<A HREF="URL"↩ ONCLICK="***"></A>`	HTML 4.0
Mouseover Action	`<A HREF="URL"↩ ONMOUSEOVER="***"></A>`	HTML 4.0

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Tag Name	*Tag*	*Note*
Mouseover Action	`<A HREF="URL"↩ ONMOUSEOUT="***"></A>`	HTML 4.0
- Alignment	`<IMG SRC="URL"↩ ALIGN= LEFT|RIGHT|↩ TEXTTOP|ABSMIDDLE|↩ BASELINE| ABSBOTTOM>`	Navigator 1.0. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Display Image tag
- Image Map	`<IMG SRC="URL"↩ USEMAP="URL">`	HTML 3.2. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Display Image tag
- Map	`<MAP NAME="***">↩ </MAP>`	HTML 3.2. Describes the map. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Display Image tag
- Section	`<AREA SHAPE="RECT"↩ COORDS="#,#,#,"HREF=↩ "URL"|NOHREF>`	HTML 3.2. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Display Image tag
- Border	`<IMG SRC="URL"↩ BORDER=?>`	HTML 3.2
Runaround Space	`<IMG SRC="URL"↩ HSPACE= ? VSPACE=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels
Low-Res Proxy	`<IMG SRC="URL"↩ LOWSRC= "URL">`	
N1.1 Client Pull	`<META HTTP-EQUIV=↩ "Refresh" CONTENT=↩ "?; URL=URL">`	HTML 2.0
Embed Object	`<EMBED SRC="URL">`	Navigator 2.0. Insert object into page
- Object Size	`<EMBED SRC="URL"↩ WIDTH ="?" HEIGHT=↩ "?">`	Navigator 2.0, Internet Explorer
Object	`<OBJECT></OBJECT>`	Navigator 4.0
Parameters	`<PARAM>`	Navigator 4.0

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Table B-21 Dividers

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Clear Text Wrap	`<BR CLEAR=LEFT|RIGHT|ALL>`	HTML 3.2. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Line Break tag
- Alignment	`<HR ALIGN=LEFT|RIGHT|CENTER>`	HTML 3.2. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Horizontal Rule tag
- Thickness	`<HR SIZE=?>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Horizontal Rule tag
- Width	`<HR WIDTH=?%>`	HTML 3.2. In pixels. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Horizontal Rule tag
- Width Percent	`<HR WIDTH=?%>`	HTML 3.2. As a percentage of page width. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Horizontal Rule tag
- Solid Line	`<HR NOSHADE>`	HTML 3.2. Without the 3-D cutout look. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Horizontal Rule tag
No Break	`<NOBR></NOBR>`	Navigator 1.0. Prevents line breaks
Word Break	`<WBR>`	Navigator 1.0. Where to break a line if needed

Table B-22 Lists: Can Be Nested

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Bullet Type	`<UL TYPE=DISC|CIRCLE| SQUARE>`	HTML 3.2. For the whole list. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Unordered List tag
	`<LI TYPE=DISC|CIRCLE| SQUARE>`	HTML 3.2. This and subsequent list items. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Unordered List tag

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Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Numbering Type	`<OL TYPE=A|a|I|i|1>`	HTML 3.2. This and subsequent list items. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Ordered List tag
	`<LI TYPE=A|a|I|i|1>`	HTML 3.2. This and subsequent list items. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Ordered List tag
- Starting Number	`<OL START=?>`	HTML 3.2
- Count	`<OL VALUE=?>`	HTML 3.2 For the whole list. Option within the HTML 2.0–compliant Ordered List tag

Table B-23 Forms: Generally Require a CGI Script on Your Server

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- File Upload	`<FORM ENCTYPE=↵ "multi part/form-↵ data"></FORM>`	HTML 4.0
- Wrap Text	`<TEXTAREA WRAP=OFF|↵ VIRTUAL|PHYSICAL>↵ </TEXTAREA>`	HTML 2.0
Button	`<BUTTON></BUTTON>`	HTML 4.0
- Button Name	`<BUTTON NAME="****">↵ </BUTTON>`	HTML 4.0
- Button Type	`<BUTTON↵ TYPE="SUBMIT|↵ RESET|BUTTON">↵ </BUTTON>`	HTML 4.0
- Default Value	`<BUTTON VALUE="****">↵ </BUTTON>`	HTML 4.0
Label	`<LABEL></LABEL>`	HTML 4.0
- Item Labeled	`<LABEL FOR="****">↵ </LABEL>`	HTML 4.0
Option Group	`<OPTGROUP LABEL="****">↵ </OPTGROUP>`	HTML 4.0

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Table B-23 *(continued)*

Tag	*Tag Names*	*Notes*
Group Elements	`<FIELDSET></FIELDSET>`	HTML 4.0
Legend	`<LEGEND></LEGEND>`	HTML 4.0. Caption for fieldsets
- Alignment	`<LEGEND↩ ALIGN="TOP|↩ BOTTOM|LEFT|↩ RIGHT"></LEGEND>`	HTML 4.0

Table B-24 Tables

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Table Alignment	`<TABLE ALIGN=LEFT|↩ RIGHT|CENTER>`	HTML 4.0
- Table Color	`<TABLE BGCOLOR="$$$$$$">↩ </TABLE>`	HTML 4.0
- Table Frame	`<TABLE FRAME=VOID|↩ ABOVE|BELOW|HSIDES|↩ LHS|RHS|VSIDES|BOX|↩ BORDER></TABLE>`	HTML 4.0
- Table Rules	`<TABLE RULES=NONE|GROUPS|↩ ROWS|COLS|ALL></TABLE>`	HTML 4.0
- Desired Width	`<TD WIDTH=?>`	HTML 4.0. In pixels
- Cell Color	`<TD BGCOLOR="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 4.0
- Desired Width	`<TH WIDTH=?>`	HTML 4.0. In pixels
- Cell Color	`<TH BGCOLOR="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 4.0
Table Body	`<TBODY>`	HTML 4.0
Table Footer	`<TFOOT></TFOOT>`	HTML 4.0. Must come before `<THEAD>`
Table Header	`<THEAD></THEAD>`	HTML 4.0

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Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Column	<COL></COL>	HTML 4.0. Groups column attributes
- Columns Spanned	<COL SPAN=?></COL>	HTML 4.0
- Column Width	<COL WIDTH=?></COL>	HTML 4.0
- Width Percent	<COL WIDTH="%"></COL>	HTML 4.0
Group columns	<COLGROUP></COLGROUP>	HTML 4.0. Groups column structure
- Columns Spanned	<COLGROUP SPAN=?> </COLGROUP>	HTML 4.0
- Group Width	<COLGROUP WIDTH=?> </COLGROUP>	HTML 4.0
- Width Percent	<COLGROUP WIDTH="%"> </COLGROUP>	HTML 4.0

Table B-25 Frames: Define and Manipulate Specific Regions of the Screen

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
Frame Document	<FRAMESET></FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0. Instead of <BODY>
- Row Heights	<FRAMESET ROWS= #,#,#,> </FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0. Pixels or percent
- Row Heights	<FRAMESET ROWS=*> </FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0. * = relative size
- Column Widths	<FRAMESET COLS= #,#,#,> </FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0. Pixels or percent
- Column Widths	<FRAMESET COLS=*> </FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0. * = relative size
- Borders	<FRAMESET FRAMEBORDER= "yes|no" </FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0
- Border Width	<FRAMESET BORDER=?> </FRAMESET>	HTML 4.0

(continued)

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Table B-25 *(continued)*

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Border Color	`<FRAMESET ORDERCOLOR= "******"↵ </FRAMESET>`	HTML 4.0
Define Frame	`<FRAME>`	HTML 4.0. Contents of an individual frame
- Display Document	`<FRAME SRC="URL">`	HTML 4.0
- Frame Name	`<FRAME NAME="***"|↵ _blank |_self|↵ _parent|_top>`	HTML 4.0
- Margin Width	`<FRAME MARGINWIDTH=?>`	HTML 4.0. Left and right margins
- Margin Height	`<FRAME↵ MARGINHEIGHT=?>`	HTML 4.0. Top and bottom margins
- Scroll bar?	`<FRAME SCROLLING=↵ "YES |NO|AUTO">`	HTML 4.0
- Not Resizable	`<FRAME NORESIZE>`	HTML 4.0
Borders	`<FRAME FRAMEBORDER="yes|no">`	HTML 4.0
Border Color	`<FRAME BORDERCOLOR="#$$$$$$">`	HTML 4.0
Inline Frame	`<IFRAME></IFRAME>`	HTML 4.0. Takes same attributes as `FRAME`
Dimensions	`<IFRAME WIDTH=? HEIGHT=?></IFRAME>`	HTML 4.0
Dimensions	`<IFRAME WIDTH="%" HEIGHT="%"></IFRAME>`	HTML 4.0
Unframed Content	`<NOFRAMES></NOFRAMES>`	HTML 4.0 For non-frames browsers

Note: *Frame tags introduced prior to HTML 4.0 are not supported by all browsers.*

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Table B-26 Miscellaneous

Tag Name	*Tag*	*Notes*
- Prompt	`<ISINDEX PROMPT="***">`	HTML 2.0. Text to prompt input
Base Window Name	`<BASE TARGET="***">`	HTML 2.0. Must be in header
Other Content	`<NOSCRIPT></NOSCRIPT>`	HTML 4.0. If scripts not supported
Base Window Name	`<BASE TARGET="***">`	HTML 4.0. Must be in header
Bidirect Off	`<BDO DIR=LTR|RTL></BDO>`	HTML 4.0. For certain character sets

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Appendix C

About the CD-ROM

In This Appendix

- System requirements
- Using the CD with Windows
- What you'll find on the CD
- Troubleshooting

This handy appendix gets you started using the book's CD to create and improve your Web site (which is, after all, why you got the book, right?). You'll find system requirements, installation instructions, and an overview of the CoffeeCup trial software included on the disc. Enjoy! (Well, okay, *install.*)

System Requirements

Make sure that your computer meets the minimum system requirements shown in the following list. If your computer doesn't match up to most of these requirements, you may have problems using the software and files on the CD. For the latest and greatest information, please refer to the ReadMe file located at the root of the CD-ROM.

- A PC running Microsoft Windows
- An Internet connection
- A CD-ROM drive

If you need more information on the basics, check out these books published by Wiley Publishing, Inc.: *PCs For Dummies* by Dan Gookin, as well as *Windows XP For Dummies* and *Windows Vista For Dummies,* both by Andy Rathbone.

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Using the CD

To install the items from the CD to your hard drive, follow these steps:

1. **Insert the CD into your computer's CD-ROM drive.**

   The license agreement appears.

   Note to Windows users: The interface won't launch if you have autorun disabled. In that case,

   a. *Choose Start➪Run.*

      For Windows Vista, choose Start➪All Programs➪Accessories➪Run.

   b. *In the dialog box that appears, type* ***D*:\Start.exe**.

      Replace *D* with the proper letter if your CD drive uses a different letter. If you don't know the letter, see how your CD drive is listed under My Computer.

   c. *Click OK.*

2. **Read through the license agreement and then click the Accept button if you want to use the CD.**

   The CD interface appears. The interface allows you to browse the contents and install the programs with just a click of a button (or two).

What You'll Find on the CD

Well, if you hold it up to the light at an angle, you'll see lovely rainbow patterns on the surface . . . oh, you want to know what *files* you'll find on the CD after you put it in your computer's CD or DVD drive? Okay, then, here goes.

The CD holds three very useful programs from the nice people at CoffeeCup Software: **HTML Editor, Visual Site Designer,** and **Website Color Schemer.**

These three programs are described in some detail in Part IV, which steps you through creating your Web site in CoffeeCup software. What follows is a brief description of each program to help you make up your mind as to whether you want to install one, two, or all three of them.

These programs are Windows-only. If you have a Macintosh (or a Linux box, for that matter), you'll have to use something else that supports Windows. I'm sorry not to have Mac tools here, but the market for low-cost Mac tools is very slender — partly because there are fewer Macs (I know, more all the time), but also because so many Mac users already have a higher-priced tool. One

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strong alternative is the online suite that Apple offers, for a small price, to Mac owners. Another favorite you may want to check out is BBEdit, at `www.barebones.com`.

Now for a word about CoffeeCup Software, which is one of the cooler Windows-only software companies around. There has been ongoing upheaval in the world of free or inexpensive Web-page creation software, chronicled over the many editions of *Creating Web Pages For Dummies* going back more than ten years. I even skipped including a CD in the previous edition of the book (call it sheer exhaustion).

That's because my horses kept getting shot out from under me, to use a metaphor from Westerns. FrontPage Express, for example — a nice little free program from Microsoft — disappeared. Netscape Navigator became Mozilla, then Firefox, losing Web-authoring capability along the way. Even a program whose creation was led by a former Apple coworker of mine, and that I wrote a whole book about — Pagemill — was hoovered up by Adobe, and then disappeared.

Most Web page authors have been affected by these changes. Microsoft FrontPage, the most popular Web page creation tool ever, was often available for US$100 or so. It's now been pulled from the market, replaced with Microsoft Expression Web — a much more powerful but more complicated tool that costs hundreds of dollars, and that's part of a suite that costs several times more.

About CoffeeCup

All this time, CoffeeCup has been making good software, steadily improving it, listening to users, and ending up with what is now widely considered great software. True techies, yet customer-friendly, they create tools they'd like to have, buff them up to make them into products, release them to users, then steadily upgrade them.

Again it's like a Western: When the smoke clears, they are among the last ones standing with capable, easy-to-use, sensible tools that do what the vast majority of us need, plus some nice extras that are bundled into the main tools, offered separately, or both.

CoffeeCup combines highly rated software with good technical support and great licensing terms. You can use any of their programs for free for several weeks, and then pay a reasonable fee to buy them permanently. And that really does mean forever — once you pay to make the program your own, you get free upgrades for life! (No, I don't work for CoffeeCup. But their software sure serves the purposes of this book.)

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The three programs included on the CD are just a few of the many made by CoffeeCup, all of which share free trial versions, a reasonable purchase price, and lifetime free upgrades.

To learn more about the company and to see the latest versions of CoffeeCup programs, visit their Web site at `www.coffeecup.com`.

However, you should try using the program versions on this book's CD first. Why? Well, for openers, they have a longer free licensing period than the versions available online. And the CD versions exactly match the figures and instructions in the book, so you don't have to figure out why and how things look different (because they won't).

The standalone Web Site Color Schemer even comes with a long free licensing period. Then, when you reach the end of that time frame, you get a code to use. The code converts a downloaded, new version of Web Site Color Schemer to a fully paid-for one, at no cost to you.

CoffeeCup HTML Editor

CoffeeCup HTML Editor combines two tools that work together like two sides of a coin. The Code Editor allows you to write "pure" HTML while using menus and toolbar buttons. It organizes and "pretties up" your HTML code, a real boon when you set a page aside for a while, then have to come back to it and figure out what's going on.

At any point, you can switch to the Visual Editor. This lets you work in a version of what your Web page will look like when it's actually published, just like a word processor does for your printed documents. Changes you make in one Editor automatically appear in the other.

CoffeeCup HTML Editor even includes CSS support, an advanced feature which, among other good effects, pulls even old greybeards like myself kicking and screaming into the modern era. (And me kicking and screaming is not a pretty site — pun intended.)

CoffeeCup HTML Editor draws positive reviews from the big magazines and Web sites, including from reviewers who actually know how to use Microsoft Expression Web, Dreamweaver, and such — as well as glowing user comments year in and year out. Its customers include a wide range of people who want to stay close to their code but still be productive, without spending a lot of money — all of which describes a large and growing range of people.

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CoffeeCup Visual Site Designer

CoffeeCup Visual Site Designer breaks the user's dependency on pure HTML. It lets you design a page using drag and drop and free-form text entry. It creates nicely formatted, sensible HTML behind the scenes — but doesn't let you edit it directly in the tool like the CoffeeCup HTML Editor does.

CoffeeCup Visual Site Designer includes Web site templates, graphics, page backgrounds, and more. It really makes it easy to create a polished Web page.

This book emphasizes staying close to the code, at least while you're learning. But Visual Site Designer is another big step in productivity and only a small step away from the code.

What you can do, and how you do it, are still determined by the capabilities of, and even the spirit behind HTML. You can always bring the HTML code into a text editor or CoffeeCup HTML Editor and give it a good, long working over.

CoffeeCup Color Schemer

CoffeeCup Color Schemer was probably created by one of the talented Web programming gurus at CoffeeCup in about, well, two cups of coffee. Then, of course, it's been gradually improved until it's a powerful, flexible tool that just about anyone can both use and have fun with.

CoffeeCup Color Schemer lets you build a Web site design using any color on the famous color wheel (of millions of colors) along with colors you "pick" from any graphic on your computer's screen, including, amazingly, icons on your desktop. And it shows you what the colors look like in combination.

Color Schemer is one of the few tools out there that gives an ordinary Web user-turned-site-designer a fighting chance of actually creating a decent-looking Web page from colors you select yourself.

Color Schemer is built into CoffeeCup HTML Editor, so you don't need to download Color Schemer if you use the HTML Editor.

But if you don't use the other tools, Color Schemer is a standalone tool worth having, even if — especially if — you're a purist who works in straight HTML typed into a text editor. (Or chiseled into solid rock with a hammer and a die-punch, if a text editor isn't basic enough for you.)

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Troubleshooting

I tried my best to pull together programs that work on most computers with the minimum system requirements. Alas, your computer may differ, and some programs may not work properly for some reason.

The two likeliest problems are that you don't have enough memory (RAM) for the programs you want to use, or you have other programs running that are affecting installation or running of a program. If you get an error message such as `Not enough memory` or `Setup cannot continue`, try one or more of the following suggestions, and then try using the software again:

- **Turn off any antivirus software running on your computer.** Installation programs sometimes mimic virus activity and may make your computer incorrectly believe that it's being infected by a virus.
- **Close all other running programs.** The more programs you have running, the less memory is available to other programs. Installation programs typically update files and programs; so if you keep other programs running, installation may not work properly.
- **Have your local computer store add more RAM to your computer.** This is, admittedly, a drastic and somewhat expensive step. However, adding more memory can really help the speed of your computer and allow more programs to run at the same time.

Customer Care

If you have trouble with the CD-ROM, please call Wiley Product Technical Support at 800-762-2974. Outside the United States, call 1-317-572-3993. You can also contact Wiley Product Technical Support at `http://support.wiley.com`. Wiley Publishing will provide technical support only for installation and other general quality control items. For technical support on the applications themselves, consult the program's vendor or author.

To place additional orders or to request information about other Wiley products, please call 877-762-2974.

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