

Comparison of Web Authoring Tools

(NetObjects Fusion, Microsoft FrontPage, and Macromedia Dreamweaver)

Introduction to Web Authoring Tools

It is easier than ever to create a Web site with an HTML editor, as software developers continue to add tools that let you develop advanced features with style. Today's Web authoring tools can provide the power to build an interactive, animated, state-of-the-art Web site suitable for anything from a personal Web page to a midsize business site. New Web designers don't need to know HTML to create discussion groups, pop-up windows, navigation bars, animated page transitions, Dynamic HTML, or a dozen other advanced features in order to integrate them into a site with an elegant and consistent design.

In this paper, three popular Web Authoring Tools will be introduced and compared. Three Web Authoring Tools are NetObejcts Fusion, Microsoft FrontPage, and Macromedia Dreamweaver. However, there has to be thought to keep in mind regarding these comparisons.

As newer versions of each program come out, the features that each offers become more and more similar. When the first versions of each software came out, there were distinctly different in the features that they offer. But current versions of Microsoft FrontPage 2000, Macromedia Dreamweaver 3, and NetObjects Fusion 5.0 now share many common features.

Types of Web Authoring Tools

Pure WYSIWYG (What You See Is hat You Get: pronounced "wiz-ee-wig") editor:

With a pure WYSIWYG editor, you work entirely in an interface that resembles a desktop publishing program. These programs are best suited for those wanting a great-looking site that's not very hard to build. [NetObjects Fusion](#) and Drumbeat are examples of WYSIWYG editors.

Pure code-based editor:

With pure code-based editor, you work directly with raw HTML tags and set your own rules about how to lay out and organize your code. You have total control over you code. HomeSite, HotDog Professional, HTMLed Pro, WebberActive, and WebEdit examples of pure code-based editors.

Compound editor (Pure WYSIWG editors + Pure code-based editors):

With a compound editor, you can accomplish most tasks in a WYSIWG editing mode but switch from the word processor-style editing window to a source code view to modify the page's underlying HTML. [Macromedia Dreamweaver](#), [Microsoft FrontPage](#), QuickSite, and Visual Page are examples of compound editors.

The Three Programs

1. Microsoft FrontPage

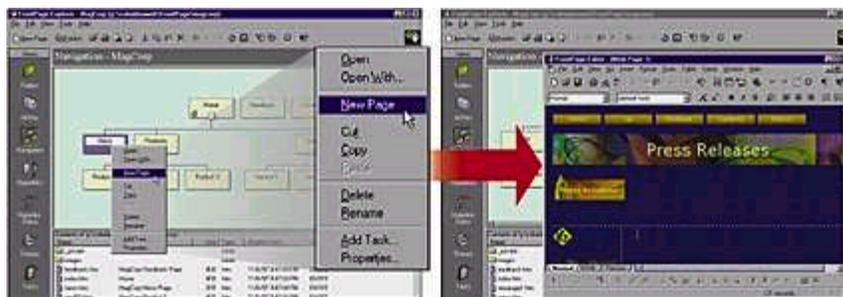


Microsoft FrontPage 2000 is a Web authoring tool that gives you everything you need to create and manage exactly the site you want, whether you're creating a personal Web page or a corporate Internet or intranet site.

Features:

- Microsoft FrontPage gives you excellent control over creating a site with a consistent look and feel. Its site management features are rated the best, including a graphical view of your site.

✓ For screen sample:



- Microsoft FrontPage lets you see a graphical map of your site, and you can easily add pages to it from there. Your new page comes template the look and feel you created for the rest of your site, saving lots of time.
- Microsoft FrontPage lets you use any combination of text- and graphics-based layouts and navigation tools. Graphic “themes” optionally apply a consistent look to sites’ banners, buttons, text and background. The program comes with 50 themes that consist of similar elements for bullets, font, images, navigation bars, and other page elements.

Tutorial:

<http://www.trainingtools.com/online/FrontPage2000/index.htm>

FAQ:

<http://www.microsoft.com/office/enterprise/prodinfo/pi-suiteproducts.htm#MicrosoftFrontPage>

Sample Web site:

<http://www.bestbuy.com/>

2. NetObjects Fusion



NetObjects Fusion 5.0 is a Web authoring tool that is the solution for small business Web sites, from planning, building, and managing your site to promoting and growing your online business quickly and effectively.

Features:

- It is a true WYSIWYG tool than an HTML editor. You can drag images, text, and other objects anywhere on the page and simply drop them in.
- NetObjects Fusion was the first program to remove the tedious hand coding from creating pixel-precise page layouts in HTML.
- The visual NetObjects Fusion 5.0 environment makes building Web sites fast and easy. You can build or update a site by simply dragging and dropping text, graphics, and multimedia.
- NetObjects Fusion includes a dazzling set of 55 graphics styles for buttons, navigation bars, borders, and other visual elements.
- NetObjects Fusion lets you easily transform plain text links into graphic icons with a simple property box which you can put choices of decision. You can reuse these graphics across your site to create consistent navigation that is stylish as well.

✓ For screen sample:



- NetObjects Fusion also lets you add externally created HTML pages to a site, so you can manage them with NetObjects Fusion's tools while editing them with an external text editor. The interface has the quality of the top publishing tool. You simply select the objects you want to "draw" from the palette including images, navigation bars, applets, Shockwave files, and sound clips and place them anywhere on the page.

On-line guide:

<http://www.netobjects.com/products/html/nf5onlineguide.html>

FAQ:

<http://www.netobjects.com/products/html/nf5qa.html>

Sample Web site:

<http://www.leasesource.com/>

3. Macromedia Dreamweaver

Macromedia Dreamweaver 3 is a Web authoring tool that is the solution for professional Web site design and production.

Features:

- For hand-coding, Dreamweaver calls up an external HTML source editor. A quick click of Dreamweaver's External Editor button, and you are editing source code. Switch back to Dreamweaver, and it integrates your changes into the WYSIWYG view automatically.
- Macromedia Dreamweaver keeps the HTML code you graphically create as pristine as if you did it by hand.
- Dynamic HTML: Animation made easy. Macromedia Dreamweaver's timelines help you create your layers on Web pages and define events to create Dynamic HTML. Producing your effects is a simple matter of dragging and dropping the browser object you want to move.

✓ For screen sample:

**FAQ:**

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/productinfo/faq/>

Tutorial:

<http://www.trainingtools.com/online/dreamweaver/index.htm>

Sample Web site:

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/gallery/collection/>



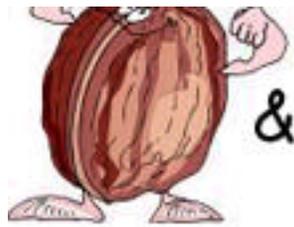
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Platforms & Cost

Note: This table contains information of the latest versions of three software programs.

Software	Price	Platforms
Microsoft FrontPage 2000	\$149	PC (Windows 95 or later/ NT 4.0 or later) Macintosh (System 7.5 operating system or later)
Macromedia Dreamweaver 3	\$299	PC (Windows 95 or later/ NT 4.0 or later) Macintosh (System 7.6.1 operating system or later)
NetObjects Fusion 5.0	\$299.95	PC (Windows 95 or later/ NT 4.0 or later) Macintosh (System 8.1 operating system or later)



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Strength & Weakness

Software	Strength	Weakness
<p>Microsoft FrontPage</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft FrontPage is appropriate for text-heavy sites. • Microsoft FrontPage is in many ways the jack-of-all-trades of the WYSIWYG HTML editors; it does a little bit of everything, and does it well. Other products may surpass it in one way or another, but few can match its sheer breadth of feature. • Microsoft FrontPage has strength of site management. Site tools such link verification and find-and-replace are exceptionally useful for developers maintaining large site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Microsoft FrontPage lacks fusion's pixel-level graphics control. • Microsoft FrontPage does not have powerful JavaScript effects.
<p>Macromedia Dreamweaver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the best features of Macromedia Dreamweaver is its "Roundtrip HTML" editing, which lets you create Web pages using either graphical tools or a raw HTML coding editor without any difference in the output. • Macromedia Dreamweaver is an extraordinarily flexible site-building package that offers rock-solid integration with multimedia formats like Flash, Shockwave, and RealVideo; out standing support for JavaScript, XML, and DHTML; and some of the best table-management and formatting facilities in the business. • One of the strengths is the ability to design with layers, providing pixel-level control over content placement. • Macromedia Dreamweaver provides best the support of JavaScript effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first version did not have powerful site management features (no graphical view of the site). However, Macromedia Dreamweaver 2 & 3 added the function of graphical view of the site (this is what I meant by the all software adding features that compensated their weakness, so they became increasingly similar). • The Interface of Macromedia Dreamweaver is cluttered which means you have many separate windows with different functions.

<p>NetObjects Fusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For effortless and visually spectacular Web sites, NetObjects Fusion will get the job done. • NetObjects Fusion strength is in graphics and layout. • Ease of use has always been one of the strong points of NetObjects Fusion, now those same functions and new enhancements have become even better than ever. • NetObjects Fusion lets you create almost anything viewable in a browser, including most current HTML features. The program is far better suited to graphics-rich rather than text-intensive Web sites. • For creating graphics-rich Web sites without HTML coding, NetObjects Fusion still surpasses all rivals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most outdated feature of the interface is its inability to display multiple views of a site in separate window. You cannot open more than one site at the same time, and the program makes you jump around its various views from site structure, page editor, style sheet selector, file listing, and publish setting. But it surpasses any other product by offering customizable navigation bars. • Earlier versions did not have source code view. However, the latest version includes source code view. • Earlier versions did not support Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). However, the latest version supports CSS.
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Guide for Choice

Different users have different needs, and each of the new products has features aimed at specific group users.

Software	Target User
Microsoft FrontPage	Those who are less experienced webmasters than those who use Macromedia Dreamweaver
Macromedia Dreamweaver	Those who want to be able to tweak HTML code, which NetObjects Fusion intentionally hides as a way of appealing to its less-technical target audience
NetObjects Fusion	Those who have no interest in editing HTML code as the program locks you into a proprietary way of working

Comparison of easiness:

[NetObjects Fusion](#) is an easiest tool to use, [Microsoft FrontPage](#) is the second easiest one, and [Macromedia Dreamweaver](#) is the most difficult one to use among three programs.



Rating

Software	By CNET	By Winplanet.com	By ZDNet
Microsoft FrontPage	Ease-of-Use: 6 Flexibility: 8 (Total Score: 10)	Features: 5 Speed: 4 Value: 4 Usability: 4 Overall: 4 (Total Score: 5)	POWER Simple page creation: Excellent Complex creation: Good Site management: Excellent Server-site code: Excellent EASE Simple creation: Excellent Complex creation: Excellent Site management: Excellent Server-site code: Excellent
NetObjects Fusion	Ease-of-Use: 9 Flexibility: 7	Features: 5 Speed: 5 Value: 5 Usability: 5 Overall: 5	POWER Simple page creation: Excellent Complex creation: Good Site management: Excellent Server-site code: Excellent EASE Simple creation: Excellent Complex creation: Excellent Site management: Excellent Server-site code: Good
Macromedia Dreamweaver	Ease-of-Use: 8 Flexibility: 8	Features: 5 Speed: 4 Value: 5 Usability: 4 Overall: 5	POWER Simple page creation: Excellent Complex creation: Excellent Site management: Fair Server-site code: Fair EASE Simple page creation: Excellent Complex creation: Excellent Site management: Good Server-site code: Fair



Download

Macromedia Dreamweaver for PC:

<http://download.cnet.com/downloads/0-10092-108-29998.html?tag=st.dl.10092.upd.10092-108-29998>

Macromedia Dreamweaver for Mac:

<http://download.cnet.com/downloads/0-10235-108-30008.html?tag=st.dl.10235.upd.10235-108-30008>

NetObjects Fusion for PC:

<http://download.cnet.com/downloads/0-10092-108-17274.html?tag=st.dl.10092.upd.10092-108-17274>

NetObjects Fusion for Mac:

<http://download.cnet.com/downloads/0-10235-108-19386.html?tag=st.dl.10235.upd.10235-108-19386>

Microsoft FrontPage for PC:

<http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/trial/default.htm>

Note: I could not find the site that you can free download Microsoft FrontPage. This is a site that you can get a 45-day trial version of CD by filling out a form.

References & Description of References

<http://www.builder.com/Authoring/WysiComparo/>

In this site, you will get lot of information about WYSIWYG editors. This site provides information about three programs, including description, rating, free download guide, etc. Especially, you can check how each software is used in order to create the same site.

<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/features/htmlauthor/open.htm>

This site provides information about Web Authoring Tools including description of Web Authoring tools, types of tools, examples of program, features of the programs, rating, etc.

<http://www.netobjects.com/products/html/nfmacinfo.html#>

This site includes information about NetObjects Fusion for Mac computer.

<http://www.builder.com/Authoring/WysiComparo/ss08.html>

You can down load PC version of PC and Mac versions of Macromedia Dreamweaver, and PC and Mac version of NetObjects Fusion in this site. Also, this site includes more information about three programs.

<http://www.netobjects.com/products/html/nf5freehost.html>

This site is home page of NetObjects Fusion.

<http://www1.netobjects.com/products/html/nf5customers.html>

In this site, you will have lots of links leading you to Web-sites that were created by using NetObjects Fusion.

<http://coverage.cnet.com/Content/Reviews/Compare/Webtools/>

This site contains information about the brief comparison between NetObjects Fusion and Microsoft FrontPage.

<http://www.winplanet.com/winplanet/reviews/1457/1/>

This site contains the review of NetObjects Fusion, including rating.

<http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/>

This site is home page of Microsoft FrontPage.

<http://www.winplanet.com/winplanet/reviews/511/1/>

This site contains the review of Microsoft FrontPage, including rating.

<http://www.zdnet.com/computershopper/stories/reviews/0,7171,2403941,00.html>

This site contains information about Microsoft FrontPage.

<http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/gallery.htm>

This site provides examples of sites, which were created by using Microsoft FrontPage.

<http://www.trainingtools.com/online/FrontPage2000/index.htm>

This site contains tutorial for Microsoft FrontPage 2000.

<http://www.microsoft.com/office/enterprise/prodinfo/pi-suiteproducts.htm#MicrosoftFrontPage>

This site contains FAQ info of Microsoft FrontPage 2000.

www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver

This site is home site of Macromedia Dreamweaver.

<http://www.winplanet.com/winplanet/reviews/493/1/>

This site contains the review of Macromedia Dreamweaver, including rating

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/gallery/collection/>

In this site, you will have lots of links leading you to Web-sites that were created by using Macromedia Dreamweaver.

<http://www.macromedia.com/software/dreamweaver/productinfo/faq/>

This site contains FAQ info of Macromedia Dreamweaver 3.

<http://www.trainingtools.com/online/dreamweaver/index.htm>

This site contains tutorial for Macromedia Dreamweaver 2.

<http://www.microsoft.com/frontpage/mac/macupd.htm>

<http://www.microsoft.com/Office/ORK/005/005.htm#ORK005C2>

<http://www.microsoft.com/Office/ORK/005/005.htm>

<http://www.ida.liu.se/~miker/hints/archive/0076.html>

<http://www.elec.ucl.ac.be/Apple/1997/msg00496.html>

These sites include information about Microsoft FrontPage 1.0 for Mac computer.

--an article written by students in EDC 385g Multimedia Authoring class at UT - Austin