Supplement to Apple Media Arts

Enhancing the Workflow

In today's fast-paced world, the people responsible for publishing the most timely print and web content are streamlining their production processes with integrated applications that enhance workflows, eliminate many of the barriers between job tasks, and create more dynamic ways of working together.

Workflow for the Web

Web Designers Streamline Methods to Keep Pace with Television

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The Comedy Central web site, including its popular sections for *The Daily Show* and *South Park,* is created almost exclusively with Macromedia products. Macromedia's integrated suite of software is at work behind many of today's most popular web destinations. The designers of these interactive sites rely heavily on features like automatic HTML generation to quickly add graphics and animations to web pages. And Macromedia products all share common tools and palettes to make it easy to learn a new product.

The daily demands of a television network might prove overwhelming for the typical webmaster. But the creators of Comedy Central's award-winning web sites are finding the time-saving virtues of Macromedia software critical to meeting TV viewers' expectations of lively content. Using these integrated solutions in a continuous workflow, web designers can quickly create media-rich cyber experiences that seem as fresh and new as cable programming.

Sure, every webmaster strives to keep pages fresh and interesting. But when you're creating sites for a large cable network like Comedy Central, the trick isn't finding compelling content. The real challenge is keeping up with hit shows that encourage millions of devoted TV viewers to visit their web sites on a daily basis.

"It's terrific to handle sites for *South Park* and *Dr. Katz,*" says John Lee, the designer of Comedy Central's most dynamic web sites. "But remember, we're also responsible for *The Daily Show,* so we've got to make sure the site is timely and relevant."

The Daily Show on a Daily Basis
Because *Daily Show* on-air host Jon Stewart pokes fun at politics and pop culture with today's most popular celebrities, the program's web pages must change daily to showcase the different faces and topical remarks that have become a hallmark of the television show.

To stay ahead of this grueling pace, designers at Comedy Central leverage the suite of professional web tools from Macromedia, including Fireworks, Flash, Director, Dreamweaver, and Generator. The seamless integration of the applications has resulted in a smoother

exchange between artists and programmers. It's a production process that rivals the working relationships often associated with print or broadcast media.

"With tight deadlines, we can't afford to fracture our workflow by using too many different tools," says Lee. "It would take all day to crunch down each GIF file checking its size, and preview it with a bunch of separate utilities."

With Fireworks, the Comedy Central staff can manipulate text in layers and reuse many elements, often editing parts of an image without altering the entire file. And because Fireworks can export the HTML code needed for rollovers or image maps, graphics files are ready to be handed over to page designers for immediate placement in web pages.

Lee finds similar time-saving features in Macromedia's Flash and Director products. Their drag-and-drop behaviors and approachable object-oriented scripting language accelerate the production of animations and games.

After all media is optimized for the web, Lee uses Dreamweaver to collect the elements. "We use Dreamweaver templates," he explains,

Workflow for the Web continued…

"We need a single, seamless environment for web graphics production. Do it once, and it's done."

Art director John Lee, Comedy Central

"just popping content in and out, adding a Flash or Director file, putting our Fireworks files into a complex table." Within minutes, he has finished web pages that are ready for posting. The advanced features of Dreamweaver help keep Comedy Central's site from becoming unwieldy. "The site management tools let me see how the pages are branching out or if any links are broken."

Critical Links to Data
Best of all, Dreamweaver provides support for Apple's WebObjects software, the market-leading server application that is used to connect web pages to vast corporate databases. Already, WebObjects has been employed to create dynamic Internet applications for more than

3,000 of the world's largest organizations, including the American Automobile Association, Adobe, Standard and Poor's, and the U.S. Postal Service. Now hundreds of professional web programmers can use the visual design environment of Dreamweaver to radically streamline the process of building a WebObjects-powered site. The ability of these sites to link to data warehouses means everyday web users can receive customized information from vast government, financial, news, or e-commerce sites.

The close integration of Macromedia solutions has saved Lee such a great amount of time and frustration that Comedy Central now uses Fireworks and Dreamweaver as the exclusive tools for graphics and page production. This remarkable suite of products has bridged the divide between designers and programmers—erasing many of the distinctions between their tasks—and made it easier to speed web content to their loyal television audiences.

macromedia®

Freehand can quickly create vector graphics and illustrations for use in Flash.

Fireworks optimizes images for the web and integrates with your HTML editor.

Movies and tutorials created in **Director** can add interactivity to any web site.

Flash can animate graphics files and display them through a popular player built into web browsers.

Dreamweaver is a design and HTML tool for building and managing large web sites.

Generator dynamically automates and personalizes web site graphics from live data.

Dreamweaver Supports WebObjects
Professional web programmers can now use Macromedia Dreamweaver to access the powerful features of WebObjects when building dynamic, database-driven web sites.

For More Information
The Comedy Central web site is located at www.comedycentral.com.

Take a closer look at Macromedia's web and multimedia tools at www.macromedia.com.

To find out more about WebObjects, visit the Apple web site at www.apple.com/webobjects.

Visit www.dreamweaver.com for 17 precoded modules to help you insert WebObjects content into your web pages.