

## reamWeaver - by Karl-Peter Gottschalk

It will come as no surprise to regular readers that we still favour GoLive CyberStudio 3.1.1 to build OMA in, each edition. CS 3.x is still the most Mac-like of the two front rank WYSIWYG Web page editors, for the pure and simple reason that it is created solely for the Mac by a small team of committed Mac-only software developers in GoLive, Inc.

### Choice is good!

But we believe, as does Steve Jobs, that choice is good and encourage the efforts of Macromedia in their ongoing development of DreamWeaver. With two major contenders battling it out on the Web page front we the users can only benefit. CyberStudio has sat at version 3.1.1 for it seems a while now, and is still plagued by sudden quitting problems especially when working with text.

It may be that GoLive's attention has been focused on bringing to fruition the GoLive Web Publishing System, an update we have been eagerly awaiting as it may prove to be the answer to multi-author, rapidly updated Web sites such as OMA.

Unfortunately the ongoing problems of version 3.1.1 are the source of much misery at many Web designer firms and publishers as you watch the program crash repeatedly throughout the day, regardless of how much system maintenance you perform. GoLive's eye seems to have slipped off the ball right now.

### DreamWeaver is on the catch-up

Luckily for us DreamWeaver 2 has just been released, and offers enough new and useful features to justify the new full digit version designation. It may even have become the new frontrunner,

although time and a deeper dive into its aspects will only tell. Come back within the week and we will tell you more.

What follows are first impressions only of DW2. As of the time writing we have been able to download the program, managed to finally get it running, and have skimmed through the most obvious features. There is a multipage features guide available on the Macromedia Web site, but their server traffic is too heavy to allow us to get through at the moment. The best stuff may well be underneath the surface.

### [Some launching problems though](#)

First off, I must mention the problems I had in getting the program to launch. On double-clicking the program icon a splashscreen appeared offering me the choice of purchasing the program now, or trying it for free before I buy. I clicked Try Out (or words to that effect) and got taken to a registration code dialog. I had no such code, so the program refused to go any further. Same result on numerous attempts.

The folks at Macromedia's Australian PR consultancy supplied us with a code later that day, but the above negates Macromedia's offering of a 30-day delimited trial version. If you cannot actually get it to launch without a registration code that you have to buy, why call it a trial version in the first place?

### [The visible difference](#)

Once I got past that hurdle, the most obvious visible difference between version 2 and its predecessor was in the toolbar, see Figure 1.

Coloured icons now instead of plain greyscale or black-and-white. A much nicer little addition to the working environment considering that DreamWeaver also seems to be fully Apple Appearance Manager compliant, or at least it accepts the ministrations of the Kaleidoscope 2.x control panel.

Next I cycled through the Preferences dialog to see if I could spot any changes there. I tried to set my browser preferences but when I browsed through my Mac's folders and chose Netscape Communicator 4.5 and clicked, the Preferences panel displayed utter gobbledygook and refused to accept my choice. I am stuck without being able to view any of my pages in a browser. Not good at all, Macromedia. Not good at all.

Besides being unable to see my pages in a Web browser, I am also unable to access the built-in help which is written in HTML and requires the browser to see it.

### [Another SNAFU](#)

So next I flipped through the launcher to see what stood out there. Nothing so far until I chose the HTML button and DreamWeaver's native HTML editor window popped up. Normally I would view and edit raw code in BBEdit but BBEdit 5 is the natural partner to DreamWeaver 2, and it had not arrived and was not included in this download. All looked OK until I clicked on some code, and then it all greeked out on me. See Figure 2.

This effect did not show up with much longer pages however.

Figure 2: Bizarre greeking behaviour. [Click on the image to view fullsize.](#)

### [An intriguing choice](#)

I was getting worried, wondering what other nasty surprises were in store in this ostensibly finalized product. So I looked at the Menu bar to see what changes were there. The new Commands menu caught my eye. The first two choices, Clean up HTML and Apple Source Formatting, were fairly self-evident. I chose Set Color Scheme and the dialog box popped up with a number of predetermined colour sets, made using the 216 Web-safe colours.

It is the same set of harmonised colours from Lynda Weinman and Bruce Heavin's books *Coloring Web Graphics* and *Coloring Web Graphics.2!* The rationale is that designers can refer to these colour sets when choosing colours for their projects, and avoid the boredom of using the same old default colour set all the time, or choose a main colour (chateaux, say) then Weinman and Heavin show you the harmonising colours for your active, unvisited and visited links that will still be readable against your background colour.

Evidently Web design guru Lynda Weinman has some kind of involvement with DreamWeaver's development now.

### [Hints of other things](#)

I am too hamstrung right now by DreamWeaver's failure to accept my browser choice to discover more of what is in this revision. But there are hints of other things that I will look at in the next iteration of this article.

The Commands menu looks intriguing, especially as third party Commands have started appearing on Web sites such as the DreamWeaver Depot, Joseph Lowery's DreamWeaver Bible book site, and others. It would appear to be as vital an addition as Objects and Behaviors, pushing the theme of DreamWeaver's extensibility further.

DW2's ability to handle SSIs, server side includes, is a thrilling new addition. OMA depends on SSIs to ease the page creation process by replacing hard coded page elements with a reference to an external includes folder via a link sitting within comments tags. You can change an includes

file and the elements update across the whole site in one fell swoop.

### Figure 3: Now this looks promising!

There is also a hint of a new templates feature, and if this is what I think it is then it will aid the process of many authors collaborating on large Web sites, such as this one. There is probably more buried in there, and we will tell you more about it shortly, such as what looks like a blatant borrowing of GoLive's Point-and-Shoot linking technology in what Macromedia calls Point To File.

Excellent if you have the monitor real estate to allow to you to have multiple windows open, enabling rapid crosslinking through mousework. DW2's XML import and export is also a welcome innovation, showing they are thinking in advance.

#### In summary

So there you have it. Some real problems that must be fixed fast such as the one with the browser choice, a major problem in trying to run DW2 as a trial version, and some promise of good things in there fully justifying a full digital increment in version number.

As soon as I get this program working right, or Macromedia replaces the file on their site with one that fixes these failings, I will go deeper into it.

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