

Web-Page Design for Photographers



by Jack and Sue Drafahl

One of the joys of photography is sharing meaningful images with family and friends. Everyone enjoys passing around the family photo album, or viewing a slideshow of vacation photos, right? In recent years the Internet has become an increasingly popular method for digitally sharing images.

Software manufacturers realized this trend early on, and began incorporating tools for Web-page design in their programs. It's now common to find image-editing programs, video-editing programs, word-processing programs and photo database software that includes the capability of creating Web pages, Web albums, and Web slide shows.

Unfortunately, there is a bit more to the creation of Web pages than many of these general-purpose programs offer. That's where the fully dedicated applications come into play. Most of these specialty programs allow you to create pages from scratch, or use the Web output from other programs to

enhance your page. Programs like Macromedia Dreamweaver, Adobe GoLive, Microsoft FrontPage, and Ulead PhotoImpact 7 provide all the tools necessary for maximum flexibility in Web-page design and maintenance.

Many people are intimidated by the prospect of creating their own Web pages. Some consumers don't even realize that when they sign up for an Internet service they will often receive some small space for a personal Web page at no additional cost. Until we started researching Web design, we too fit this description. But with the help of user-friendly software, you can step up and accept the Web-page design challenge. Remember, if we can do it (www.jackand-suedrafahl.com) so can you.

Before we examine some popular Web-design programs, let's make sure everyone understands the key steps in creating a Web page:

Step 1 Check with your service provider to see if you

have free Web space, how much, and what, if any, special restrictions apply.

Step 2 Create a basic storyboard of what you would like to see on your page. If you need ideas, surf the Web in those areas you would like to emulate.

Step 3 Create a working directory for files that will be used in your Web page. Use subdirectories if it helps you locate the parts more easily. Create a second directory that will be a mirror version of your final Web page and all of its directories. This will include the HTML Web page files.

Step 4 Gather photos, text, animations, and any other components you'd like to include on your page. Make sure photos are resized to the final size you will use on your page, using a compression setting that keeps the file small, yet maintains sufficient image quality.

Step 5 Create your Web page, save the master files in your working directory, and export the final HTML file to the mirror (home) directory.

Most Web-design programs have a function that allows you to simulate the appearance of your page before it is up and running.

Step 6 Set up the remote site with your Internet provider. This

process is often facilitated by your Web-page design program. If so, it will prompt you to fill in blanks about your service provider, your e-mail address, new Web address, location of your Web space, login name, and password. If you need help, contact your Internet provider for assistance.

Step 7 Post the Web page files from your mirror site on your hard disk, to the remote site on your Internet provider. It's a good idea to start by posting just the home page to see if everything is flowing properly. Then, if all looks good, continue posting the remaining pages.

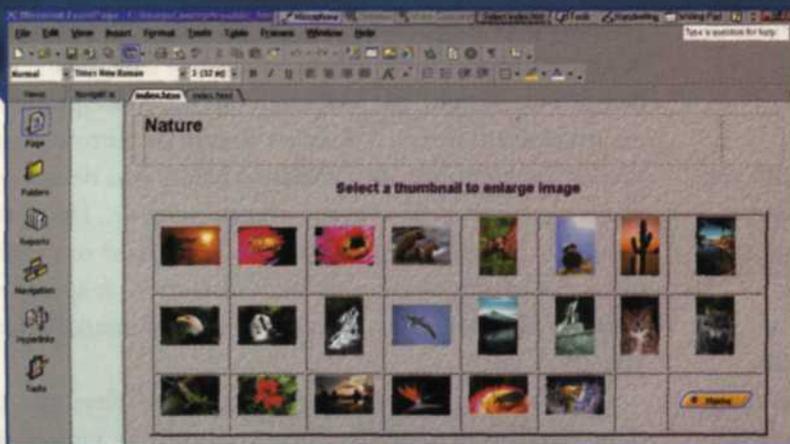
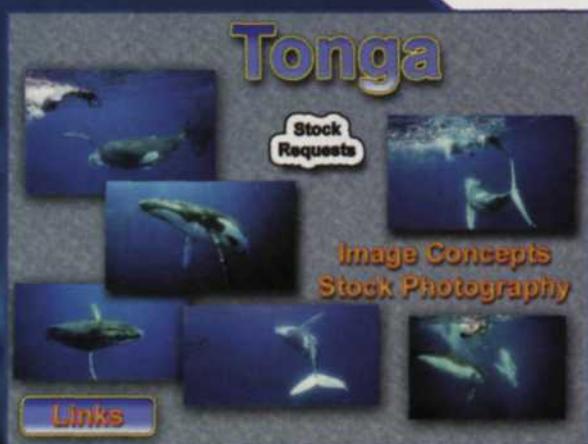
Step 8 Update your page on a regular basis. Most dedicated Web-page design programs enable you to synchronize your home site with the Internet provider site whenever you update information. You can also check both sites for errors, bad file links, and files that are "orphaned." Orphaned files occur when you make changes and post them to your remote site without removing the old files.

Keep in mind that the foregoing is an abbreviated description of a complex process. If you take it one step at a time, you will eventually get there. Once you do, you will have a great time updating and expanding your Web page. Here's a brief synopsis of four dedicated programs that can help.

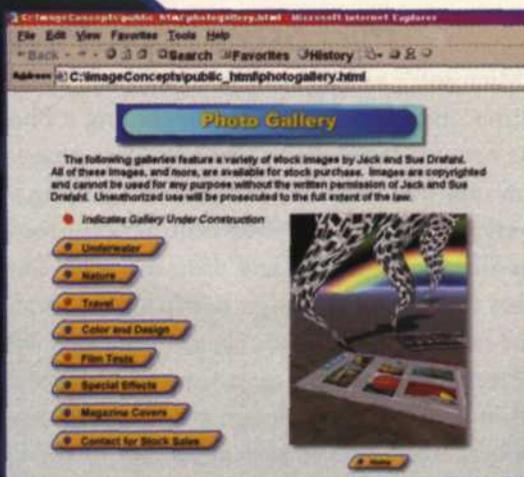
Adobe GoLive 5

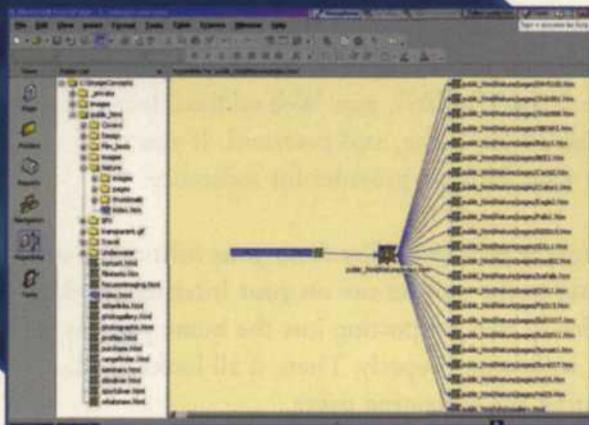
Adobe GoLive 5 is designed for all levels of Web page creators. It provides total control over source codes, interactive editors for streaming media (QuickTime objects and flash files), and support for all the Web technologies. The program integrates with other Adobe programs such as Photoshop, LiveMotion and Illustrator. LiveMotion is a companion product that allows you to create dynamic animations with high-quality sound and video. You can drag and drop files from any of these programs directly into GoLive and easily work with the original source file.

The program has an excellent site-management capability that enables you to check, modify, and update your remote site. You can also create parallel sites that will work with older browsers. It also has a powerful site-reporting section,

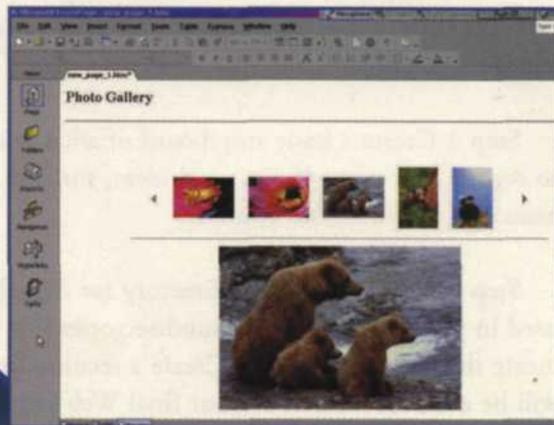


There's no reason to be intimidated by the prospect of creating your own Web page. Today's easy-to-use software programs automate the Web-design process and offer templates for creating photo galleries.

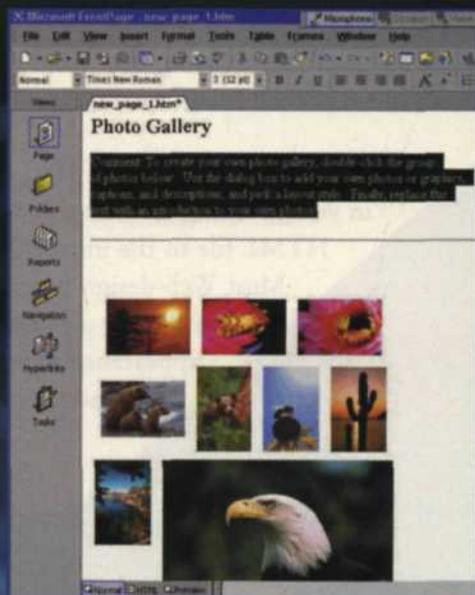




It's important to do a thorough job of editing and checking your work before uploading the finished Web page to your Internet provider's remote site. Some programs, like Microsoft FrontPage, can display Web page links and directories in an organizational chart to help you check for errors and missing pages (left).



to help you analyze and improve your site. GoLive is available for Windows and Macintosh at \$284 new, \$95 upgrade, and \$140 competitive upgrade. For more information visit www.Adobe.com.



Macromedia Dreamweaver

Dreamweaver is a extensive Web-page design program that allows you to create your entire Web page from scratch, or modify and update one created in another program. The features in Dreamweaver are virtually endless. You can design complex pages from page layouts, create vector graphics directly on screen, drag and drop cells, and have total control over source code. You can check the page for errors before it is posted onto your remote site and you have the choice of synchronizing the whole site, or just selected parts.

A new JavaScript Debugger allows you to see how JavaScript is executing in different types of browsers. You can optimize your graphics by jumping to Macromedia Fireworks, and then back to Dreamweaver where the edited images are updated. The program handles a variety of still and animated objects such as Flash, Shockwave, GIF, JPEG, png, and rollovers. More information on Dreamweaver is available at www.macromedia.com. It is available for Windows and Macintosh for \$299 new and \$149 for an upgrade.

Microsoft FrontPage

Microsoft's newest version is dubbed FrontPage 2002 and features several improvements, including a Photo Gallery. This new function allows you to collect images and insert them into one of several professional-looking layouts. FrontPage also boasts PowerPoint drawing tools such as AutoShapes, Word Art, and drop shadows. The program allows you to totally design new pages or import pages from other sources and upgrade them to the new Web standards.

FrontPage also includes a Central Commerce Manager Add-in that helps you design your page to display and sell products. You can also take advantage of the Usage Analysis Report that enables you to determine which pages are getting

the most hits and exactly how many individuals visited your site. FrontPage allows you to monitor your site's performance to identify any problems quickly. For further information on FrontPage, see the Web site at www.microsoft.com. Available for Windows for \$169 retail, with an upgrade for \$89.95.

Ulead PhotoImpact 7

Ulead's approach to Web design is different, as PhotoImpact 7 combines site design with a powerful image-editing program. It has extensive control over Web component design, but lacks some of the more powerful site-maintenance features. A massive library of buttons, textures, shapes, backgrounds, and rollovers helps you design just about any type of Web page you can imagine. There are hundreds of special effects that can be applied or modified using the editing portion of PhotoImpact 7. A special album program also helps you locate images or animated effects for your Web page.

The final page can be saved as a master Ulead file, and then exported to both the home site, and the remote site. If you want to know more about this program, you can check out www.ulead.com. This software is only available for Windows and is \$99.95 for a boxed copy and \$59.95 for a boxed upgrade. ■