

## Book Review

### Stepping Up to Industrial-Strength Web Publishing A Review of **Dreamweaver 2 Bible**



*Dreamweaver 2 Bible, Joseph W. Lowery. Copyright 1999 by IDG Books Worldwide. \$39.99 US (\$56.99 CN), softbound, 1,034 pages plus companion CD-ROM. ISBN 0-7645-3322-3. Reader Level: Beginner to Advanced.*

Let's assume you began developing web sites using simple tools like Adobe PageMill® and you've outgrown them. Now you want to upgrade to an industrial-strength web authoring system like Dreamweaver™ 2 from Macromedia. Dreamweaver arrives, you open the box, and you find a well-written but suspiciously slim *Using Dreamweaver* book inside. The help system is somewhat slow, the CD-ROM only contains a copy of the aforementioned *Using Dreamweaver* manual, and support expires 90 days after you register your product. What do you do? You do what thousands of others do: Buy the Bible. There is no alternative to this comprehensive exposition of Dreamweaver features. With 34 chapters divided into 9 major sections, plus four Appendixes (including two on MAC and PC Web editors that Macromedia bundles with Dreamweaver), this book is a reference par excellence.

Although this “bible” is an excellent resource, it should instead have been called the “Dreamweaver 2 Encyclopedia.” More like an encyclopedia than a bible, this book explains how to use every Dreamweaver feature in exhaustive detail with lavish screen shots. That is an invaluable service and a compelling reason to buy the book. However, the book is light on motivational guidelines or any mention of “software sins.” That is, *Dreamweaver 2 Bible* explains how to use every Dreamweaver feature --even providing cautionary notes-- but doesn't explain why, or in what circumstances, you should use many of the features. That is an important omission, since you will soon learn after visits to discussion groups or by trial-and-error that some features are more appropriate than others, depending on whether you are starting your web development from scratch or are updating an existing site. And Dreamweaver-- like any complex software application-- sometimes sins, in a manner of speaking. Lowrey is a frequent contributor to various Dreamweaver discussion groups, yet does not seem to include answers to questions often asked there, such as: “How do I undo the

mistakes I made with Dreamweaver?" Unfortunately there is no listing in *Dreamweaver 2 Bible* of known shortcomings or workarounds, and we all know that those abound in even the best of products.

The companion CD-ROM contains code samples used throughout the book, plus many trial versions of Macromedia Fireworks, Flash, and Dreamweaver itself (in case you want to try before you buy). I would like to have seen an Acrobat version of the manual itself on the CD-ROM. The paper cover wears easily, and there's no searching like Acrobat searching.

### **Summary**

If, like me, you bought Dreamweaver 2 and need more information about the product than is in the introductory Dreamweaver manual supplied by Macromedia, you should consider this book. It won't answer all your questions, but *Dreamweaver 2 Bible* is a complete and authoritative Dreamweaver reference. Note that by the time you read this review, Dreamweaver 3 will be released

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