

Adding Dynamism to Web Sites:
A Review of **Building Dynamic HTML GUIs**

Steven Champeon and David S. Fox. Copyright 1999 by IDG Books Worldwide. \$39.99 US (\$56.99 CN), softbound, 711 pages. ISBN 0-7645-3267-7. Reader Level: Intermediate to Advanced.



Review summary: ★★☆☆☆

If you have been involved with web development for six to twelve months, you've probably mastered your web development tool and have begun to ask, "Is that all there is?" You want to move beyond mere brochure-ware to creating dynamic but well-designed interfaces to web information. Where do you turn? **Building Dynamic HTML GUIs** is a good place to start for a comprehensive introduction to this subject. This book promises to help you create elegant, fast-loading user-friendly interfaces, to build sites that are cross-platform and compatible with all browsers, and to do this quickly by using reusable code. The authors warn that to make best use of their book you should be familiar with JavaScript and programming in general, know HTML, and you should be familiar with Cascading Style Sheets.

The book begins with a 114-page section on User Interface history and design. I found this to be a bit of overkill, and it did not cover some of the most obvious web usability questions, such as the common use of complex tables delivering overwhelming numbers of information chunks. Nonetheless, this context-setting is important and the authors then move to their categories of web dynamism: nouns (the document object model), verbs (client-side scripting, primarily JavaScript), adjectives and adverbs (cascading style sheets), then tying these web metaphors into web-sentences and web-paragraphs (effective web pages).

This book does a good job at delivering on its promises. Still, its emphasis is HTML delivered on full-featured clients and the use of JavaScript. There are

only passing references to XHTML (the standard bridging HTML to XML), XML itself, or newer thin clients such as wireless devices.

The book contains no companion CD of examples, but the authors developed and continue to expand an excellent companion web site: <http://www.dhtml-guis.com>. Here you'll find all the code from every chapter, including the ability to try it out directly on their site.

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