

# The South Bay Mug

# MAGINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Feb 2007

## MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

### Take Freeway to the web

A web site is a collection of web pages linked to each other and to media files. Each web page is written in plain text using HTML "tags" that tell the browser how to display it. Media can include graphics, movies and music. All you need to create a web page is a text editor, but you must know HTML. Working with raw HTML offers the greatest power and flexibility. There are several text editors, like BBEdit (\$125) and Taco HTML Edit (free), that help by providing a library of tags and other support. Though HTML is easy to learn, modern web pages can be very complex and writing them in HTML is time consuming. That's where web-authoring software comes in. It eases the task by shielding you from the HTML code and providing a "page-layout" or WYSIWYG view.

**High-end:** Web-authoring software, like Adobe GoLive or DreamWeaver, has a user-friendly, page-layout interface with direct access to the underlying HTML code. Many web authors use BBEdit to tweak or fine tune pages they've created with other programs. These high-end programs are powerful and flexible but have a steep learning curve and are expensive (\$400).

**iWeb:** It's part of Apple's iLife package (\$79, but free with new consumer Macs) and is a template-based solution that is easy to use and incorporates some high-end features. You can publish the site directly to your iDisk (with a .mac account) or, using an FTP (file transfer) program, to any web server where you have access. It's a snap to master but not very flexible.

**Freeway:** Softpress.com sells two programs that fall between the extremes — Freeway 4 Pro, \$249, and Freeway 4 Express, \$89 (Download versions; boxed versions are a bit higher. Use

SBAMUG211206G for a 25% discount.). Both work like page layout programs and are easy to learn and use. I've been working with the Pro version, and like it. It's very powerful, though not quite as flexible as GoLive. Freeway 4 Express lacks some of the high-end features of the Pro version, but it's a good, easy-to-use way to create an attractive, uncomplicated web site.

Instead of directly editing the HTML files, as do most web-authoring programs, Freeway edits and stores the entire site, pages and media, in a single site document. When finished and ready for the web, Freeway "publishes" the site to create a site folder with HTML pages and web-optimized media that are uploaded. This provides automatic site management (no broken links) but disallows editing with another program. To modify the pages you must edit the site document with Freeway. Pages modified with other programs can't be opened with Freeway.

**Free Alternatives:** Nvu 1.0 is open source but unfinished. SeaMonkey, based on the old Netscape Communicator, includes a "Composer" module that's easy to use and looks a lot like Nvu.

**Server Space:** You need, a place (a server) that's connected to the Internet to "park" your site. Most ISPs give you free space. You can even host your web site on your own Mac but most people don't want to leave it running 24/7 or pay for a static IP address.

**Extras:** Use a graphic editor to prepare artwork. There are several along with many free utilities for resizing and editing files. An FTP program (I like RBrowser, free) is useful to manage your uploaded site.

See you on the web.



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