

December 2005 Double Click Main Meeting

As Reported by Jim Macak

though donations are welcome. It's available at:

<http://www.titanium.free.fr/pgs/english.html>

Before the Break...

The meeting began with a Question and Answer session. It was more extended than usual because Steve Parker, our Beginner's SIG presenter, could not attend the meeting to conduct his Beginners session. (We hope to have Steve back for the February meeting.)

During the Question & Answer session, a member reported that the OnyX utility helped solve some problems he was having with a "slow" Mac and with opening certain files. Consequently, we took a quick look at OnyX during the meeting.

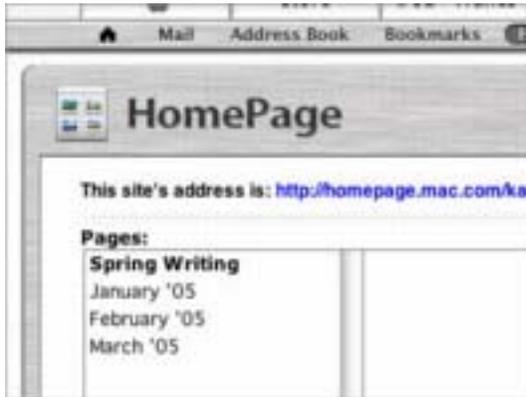
OnyX 1.6.5 is a maintenance, optimization, and personalization utility for Mac OS X. It also makes it possible to configure certain hidden parameters of the Finder, Dock, and Safari, to remove a number of files and folders that may become cumbersome (particularly cache files), preview the different logs and CrashReporter reports, and more.

Versions are available for OS X 10.2, 10.3 and 10.4. OnyX is Freeware,

The Main Presentation:

Part I.

Following the break, the main presentation of “**Creating Your Own Web Site**” began with Marc Wolfgram, Double Click member, demonstrating how easy it is to create a simple web page on Apple’s .Mac online service using the free “HomePage” tool, which is available, on-line to .Mac members.

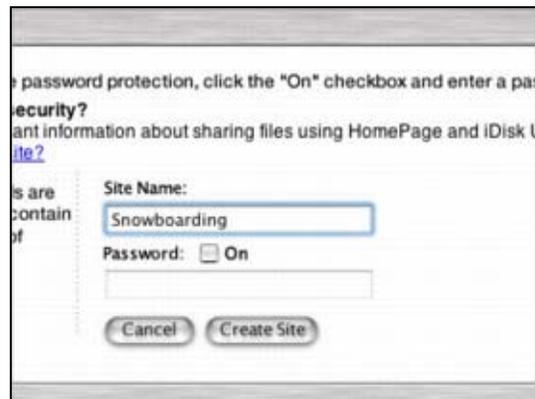


HomePage is an easy and quick way to create web pages. Without HomePage, a web designer of even a simple web page would have to learn a web coding language or buy special software just to create web pages. However, .Mac HomePage makes it easy to create and share a single web page, a complete website, or even several websites.

Using a drag-and drop interface, even a novice can create a simple web page very quickly.



When you create a web page in HomePage, you use professionally designed templates to display your text, pictures, and movies. Since HomePage uses the files you already have stored on your iDisk, you can share your files no matter where you are. Just choose from a variety of themes; add your own text, photos, and movies; publish your web page; and then send the web address to your friends and family.



For .Mac websites with multiple pages, to make it easy for your viewers to move from page to page, HomePage displays navigation links at the top of each page to every other page in that site. You'll never have to

worry about updating these links, because when you add a new page or move a page to a different site, the links are automatically updated.

http://www.macromedia.com/software/contribute/productinfo/mac_osx/



With HomePage, your web pages are automatically saved to your iDisk, your personal hard disk space on Apple's servers. This way, anyone with an Internet connection can access them anytime.

Using these capabilities of HomePage in conjunction with iPhoto, Marc quickly created a website of pictures that was immediately made "active" and could be viewed by anyone surfing the World Wide Web.

Marc also showed "Contribute," another website-building application. Although Contribute can be used to build web pages for your .Mac account, it can also be used to craft web pages that will reside on any other web server, such as your Internet Service Provider (ISP).

Here's more info about Contribute:

The Main Presentation:

Part II.

Jim Macak, Double Click's President, presented the second part of the main demo, showing how to create a web page "from scratch." Although one needs to learn at least the rudiments of web page coding to do this, there are benefits to getting "down and dirty" with your site's .html coding. Jim strongly recommended an introductory text on .html coding entitled *HTML for the World Wide Web with XHTML and CSS: Visual QuickStart Guide, 5th Edition*. It's available from Peachpit Press:

<http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321130073>

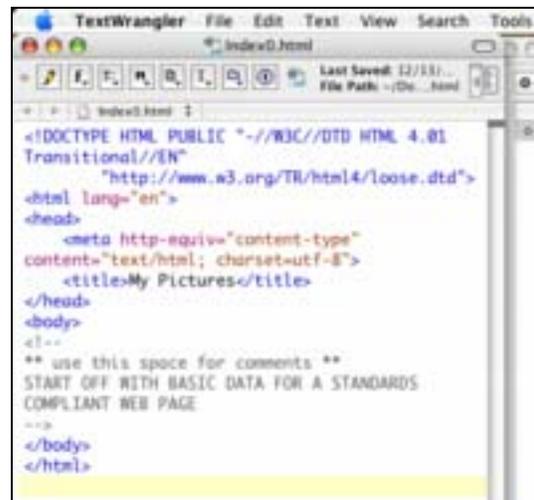
(Jim's full review of this book will be available on the Double Click website on the Newsletter Archive Page.)

Jim explained that he would create a simple web page that one might use to show family snapshots. The page would show "thumbnails" of small versions of the pictures and provide links to larger versions of the same pictures.

Jim first gathered the images that were to be used into a folder. The same folder will be used to hold the files of code for the web pages.

Jim used a text editor to write the code for the web pages. He recommended "TextWrangler" for this purpose as it provides automatic coloring of different types of web code, making it easier to edit as one writes the programming for the web page. TextWrangler is freeware and is available from Barebones Software:

<http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/>



```
TextWrangler File Edit Text View Search Tools
Index0.html
Last Saved: 12/11/...
File Path: /Dr.../html

<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01
Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html lang="en">
<head>
  <meta http-equiv="content-type"
content="text/html; charset=utf-8">
  <title>My Pictures</title>
</head>
<body>
<!--
** use this space for comments **
START OFF WITH BASIC DATA FOR A STANDARDS
COMPLIANT WEB PAGE
-->
</body>
</html>
```

Jim explained that the first line of your .html code for creating a website should be a "DOCTYPE" declaration. The DOCTYPE serves to tell a user's web browser what version of the html coding language is being used on that particular web page. Jim emphasized the importance of following web coding standards and that the use of a properly declared DOCTYPE is a necessary first step towards a standards-compliant web page.

Recommended DOCTYPE

declarations are listed here:

<http://www.w3.org/QA/2002/04/valid-dtd-list.html>

and information about choosing a DOCTYPE is here:

<http://www.htmlhelp.com/tools/validator/doctype.html>

Following the DOCTYPE declaration is the html code for the web page. (On a web server, each web page gets its own file that starts with the DOCTYPE declaration and ends with the last line of html code for that web page.) The html code portion of the web page's file consists of two parts: a "head" and a "body." The head contains web page information such as the title of the page, other information like copyright, keywords, author, etc., and the declaration of any scripting languages and/or stylesheets.

The html body contains the actual code that specifies the content of the web page to a user's browser. Jim built up the body of the sample web page step-by-step, starting with a simple page headline, or "header." He added code to center the header on the page, and then added some explanatory text to the page.



Next the code for displaying four small pictures was added and some spacing was added to separate the images. Jim then coded for the centering of the images on the page.

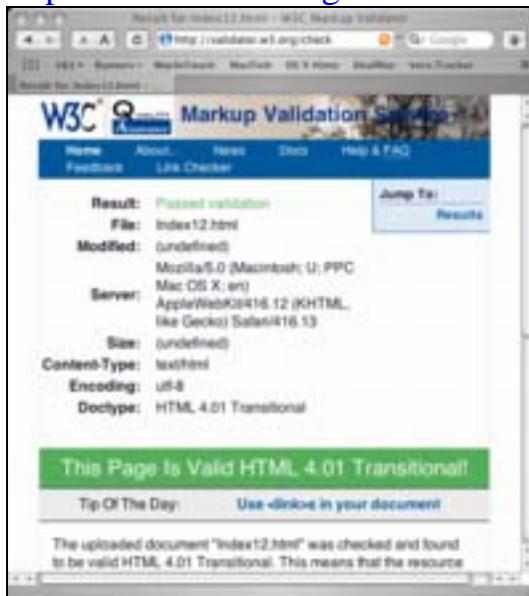


Now that the thumbnail pictures were placed on the "Home" web page, the next step was to turn each small picture into a clickable link to its full-sized counterpart on another web

page. Jim showed how to add code to turn an image into a link to another page. He then created a second document for the linked web page that would be used to display the larger image and then he showed the link “in action.” Finally, he added a “Back” link to the large picture page so the user could easily return to the Home page and demonstrated that the web pages worked as intended.

Once your web coding is completed, you can check the validity of your code at some websites that offer service. Jim recommended a site provided by the World Wide Web Consortium for this purpose:

<http://validator.w3.org/>



W3.org also offers online tutorials for standards-compliant web coding at:

<http://www.w3.org/2002/03/tutorials>

Having completed and validated your web page coding, the next step is to upload the code and image files to the hosting service for your website. Jim recommended a freeware program, “Cyberduck,” for this purpose. Learn more about it here:

<http://cyberduck.ch/>

Jim again encouraged those who are interested in learning how to write web pages to use a book such as *HTML for the World Wide Web*. (That work is available in the Milwaukee County Library system.)

Having “hand-coded” the “Family Pictures” website, Jim then showed the opposite approach, using iPhoto’s built-in method of producing web pages for sharing pictures. This capability is available as an option within iPhoto’s “Export...” command under the “Share” menu.



Thus, we saw four different ways to create a website for the display of “family pictures.” The easiest method of doing so is the iPhoto way, but this approach offers the fewest options for site customization. As the complexity of creation of the website increases, so do the options for customizing the website. Thus, the .Mac (with HomePage) and Contribute methods offer a middle ground of complexity and customization, whereas the “roll your own code” method of website creation is the most difficult but ultimately offers the most creative and customization potential.

Jim Macak

Jim is President of Double Click, Inc, the Macintosh Users Group of Milwaukee, WI. He is an Apple Certified Help Desk Specialist and provides Macintosh help and consulting services as “YourMacDoc.”
<www.yourmacdoc.com>