

Hands-On Lesson

to accompany

Curriculum Webs

A Practical Guide to Weaving the Web into Teaching and Learning

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Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 2003

LESSON 1:

Introducing your software

Composer

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Goals for this lesson

- Recognize the value of learning how to use software to create and manage curriculum webs.
- Navigate the views, panels, and palettes in your software.
- Be able to find help and other resources when you need them.

Web pages are built using a set of codes known as **HyperText Markup Language**^{*}, or HTML. It is possible to construct web pages in “raw HTML” using a simple text editor such as Notepad.

The HTML Appendix in *Curriculum Webs* provides the information you need to begin creating raw HTML pages. However, it is much easier to create web pages using web page editing software. These packages simplify the process of web page creation and editing. They automate important tasks and make it easy to format and modify web page elements.

Many word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software packages allow you to save files as HTML. This means that you can use the familiar menus and commands of productivity software for writing and formatting your web pages, then have the software create the HTML codes. Microsoft Word and PowerPoint, for example, have powerful HTML creation capabilities.

The easiest way to create and manage web sites is with what-you-see-is-what-you-get (**WYSIWYG**) web page editors.

These Hands-On Lessons provide a basic introduction to using four popular web page editors to create curriculum web. The four packages are:

- Macromedia Dreamweaver
- Adobe GoLive
- Microsoft FrontPage
- Netscape Composer.

^{*} Terms in **boldface** are defined in the Glossary in *Curriculum Webs*.

Choosing your software

The first three of the packages—Dreamweaver, GoLive, and FrontPage—contain powerful tools for managing a web site. These tools allow you to create templates and apply them to multiple pages, controlling their look and feel. They also allow easy and efficient site-wide changes to navigation or other web page elements.

Netscape Composer is only for web page editing. It does not contain the same site management tools as the other three packages. However, Netscape Composer, unlike the others, is free and easy to use, especially for beginning web design. Composer lacks some capabilities of the others, but it is perfectly possible to build an effective curriculum web with it.

Composer is included with a suite of software that includes Netscape Navigator, a web browser, and Netscape Messenger, an email client. You may already have Composer installed on your computer. If you have Netscape Navigator, the browser, look at the menu bar. If you have a menu choice “Communicator” or “Tasks” then you have Composer installed.

Because of its ease of use and widespread availability, Composer is worth knowing how to use. Even if you purchase and learn one of the other packages, you may want to use Composer to make quick changes to individual pages or to update pages when you are away from your own computer (for example when you’re in a computer lab).

GoLive, Dreamweaver, and FrontPage are designed to support higher-end web development. They have many features that go beyond what we can teach you here. We hope to give you enough to give you the confidence to spend some time exploring the menus and palettes and to try things. Playing with software is the best way to learn it.

Trial versions of two of the packages described here—Dreamweaver and GoLive—can be downloaded from the companies’ web sites. These trial versions generally give you 30 days of unlimited use, and then expire. As your trial period ends, you should consider purchasing the package, if you plan to continue to develop web pages. FrontPage is available in a trial version, but only by ordering the CD from the Microsoft web site. Most of the packages are available at an educational discount, for students and teachers. Contact the publishers to find out about educational pricing. Composer, again, is always free.

These are the publishers’ web sites:

Macromedia Dreamweaver:	http://www.macromedia.com
Adobe GoLive:	http://www.adobe.com
Microsoft FrontPage:	http://www.microsoft.com
Netscape Composer;	http://www.netscape.com

Some conventions we follow

In order to convey as much information to you as possible in the Hands On Lessons, we have adopted a number of conventions in how we tell you what to do in the lessons:

- When we use the word “folder,” we refer to folders and directories on your local computer. When we use the word “directories,” we are referring to those on the server. (These words are often used interchangeably.)
- When we use the word “press,” we always mean to press a certain key on the *keyboard*. If we want you to hold down one key while you press another key, we use the plus sign: For example: Press Ctrl+C. Press the Control key, and continue holding it while you press and release the C key.
- When we want you to click your mouse button, we will always use the word “click,” as in “Click on the Site View button.” If this is the first time we mention a particular button, and it is unusual, we will include an image of the button.
- When we want you to make a selection from a menu, we use the word “use,” as in “Use File|Save As...” (The vertical bar, |, indicates that you should click on the word “File” in the menu bar and then choose “Save As...” from the menu that appears.)
- When we want you to either click your right mouse button (on a Windows-compatible computer) or press Command while clicking (on a Macintosh computer) we use the term: “right-click.” (We don’t bother to say “or Comman-click on the Mac” every time.)
- When we ask you to “choose” something, you should use whichever method is appropriate. “Choose” is our generic word. We also use it when we expect

you to know at that point where to click or what to press to make something happen.

- Words that are shown in **boldface** are defined in the glossary in *Curriculum Webs*.

How these lessons are organized

There are 12 Hands-On Lessons; one for each chapter in *Curriculum Webs*. Most of the lessons tie directly into the content of a particular chapter, although we don't follow this rule religiously. (Some of the final chapters in the book are more conceptual than technical; the lessons that accompany these chapters provide further extensions of technical concepts introduced in earlier chapters. Here are the titles of the lessons:

- 1: Introducing your software
- 2: Creating your first web page
- 3: Working with text, layout, and links
- 4: Creating a simple web-based lesson
- 5: Setting up a new site
- 6: Designing a curriculum web with a consistent page format
- 7: Dealing with images
- 8: Using layers and simple behaviors
- 9: Creating a navigation bar
- 10: Building a frameset
- 11: Creating a simple feedback form
- 12: Extending your software

There are four versions of each lesson, one for Dreamweaver, GoLive, FrontPage, and Composer. Because Composer cannot manage a complete web site, use layers or behaviors, create a navigation bar, build a frameset, or create forms, there are no lessons 5, 8, 9, 10, or 11 for Composer.

Familiarizing yourself with the software

In this section, we describe the views, panels, and palettes that each software package uses to organize its functions.

Netscape Composer

Netscape Composer's screen includes only one view, since Composer is only a web page editor and not a web site management package. The screen is shown in Figure 1-1. There is the typical menu bar, and two main toolbars. In this screenshot, the standard toolbar has been set to show words and icons. (It can show either just words, just icons, or both. Netscape's settings are listed under Edit | Preferences.)

Under Composer's standard toolbar is the formatting toolbar. Its icons are nearly self-explanatory. At the lower left of the editing window are a set of tabs that control of various views in Composer. The "Normal" view allows for editing like a word processor. The "Show All Tags" view is helpful if you are learning HTML or want to tweak individual HTML tags. (Double-clicking on the tags that show allows you to enter specific **attributes** if you know HTML.) The "<HTML> Source" tab allows you to see the HTML and edit it directly. (See below). The "Preview" tab allows you to see what your page will look like in Netscape Navigator (the browser) when someone browses to the page.

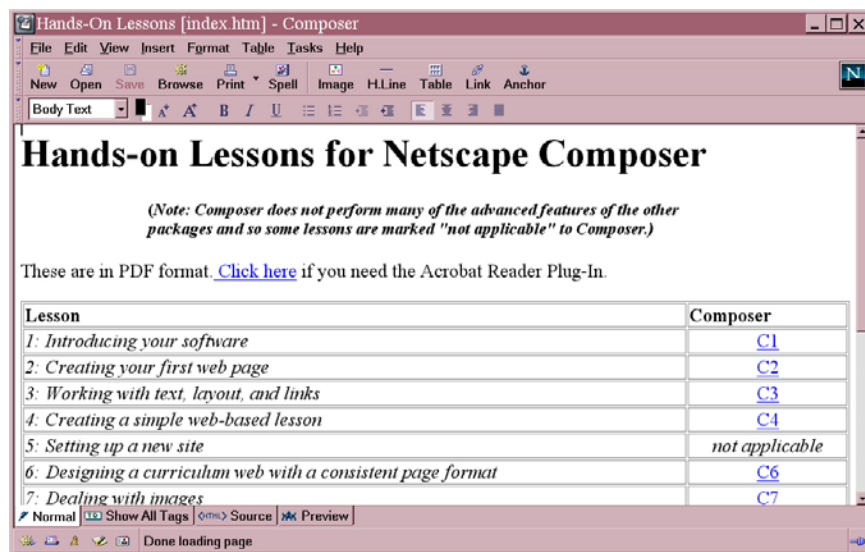


Figure 1-1: The entire Composer screen.

The buttons at the very bottom left of the Composer screen are used for launching the other components of Netscape Communicator, including the browser (called “Navigator” and email client (called “Messenger”). We do not cover these other components in the book or in the Hands-On Lessons.

Looking at the HTML code

It is often helpful to be able to see the HTML code (otherwise known as the **source code**) that your software is generating, or to be able to edit the HTML directly. You may want to copy HTML code from another web page and paste it directly into a page you are working on. Each of the packages will let you look at or edit the HTML code.

Composer

- Use View | View HTML Source.
- You can edit the HTML code directly from the HTML Source view, and then use the Preview tab to see the results. Very handy!

Accessing built-in help

Composer

- Use Help | Help Contents

Accessing online help

Below we have given the main web site for the companies that produce the software. On our companion web site, <http://curriculumwebs.com>, we give more specific URLs for locating help on these software packages.

Composer

➤ <http://www.netscape.com>

ACTIVITY: Using Help to answer questions

Find out how to do the following steps in your software:

1. How do I change the background color of a page?
2. How do I insert a link to an external site?
3. How do I add a column to a table I've created?
4. How do I change the background color of one cell in a table?
5. How do I center a table?
6. How do I change the color used for links?