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# Foundations of Microsoft Expression Web

## The Basics and Beyond

*Create standards-compliant CSS and HTML  
web sites with Microsoft Expression Web*

Cheryl D. Wise

**Apress®**

# Foundations of Microsoft Expression Web

## The Basics and Beyond



Cheryl D. Wise

## **Foundations of Microsoft Expression Web: The Basics and Beyond**

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*This book is dedicated to my husband Steve and our two children,  
who were supportive even when writing this book interfered with our family life.*



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# About the Author



**CHERYL D. WISE**, founder and director of WiserWays, LLC, has been creating websites since 1994. A member of the Guild of Accessible Web Designers and a World Organization of Webmasters Certified Professional Web Developer, Cheryl first received the Most Valuable Professional (MVP) award from Microsoft for FrontPage in 2003 and received the award every year until 2007. In 2007, Cheryl's MVP award competency from Microsoft was changed from FrontPage to Expression Web. She teaches others to create standards compliant-accessible websites at Start to Web (<http://starttowebs.com>) and has been doing other online training since 2004.

She is also the author of *Introduction to Web Design with FrontPage 2003* (WiserWays: Houston, 2005) and is the owner of one of the best Expression Web resource sites on the Web—<http://by-expression.com>. You can contact her there.



# About the Technical Reviewer



■ **KATHLEEN ANDERSON** is a Microsoft MVP for FrontPage. She was the first woman to be honored with the FrontPage MVP award and is very happy that she is no longer the only one.

Kathleen has been using FrontPage for ten years and is known as the “FrontPage Database Wizard Queen” by her fellow FrontPage MVPs. She chairs the State of Connecticut’s Committee on Web Site Accessibility. She loves to teach people how to make accessible web sites with FrontPage and is looking forward to doing the same with Expression Web.





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I'd like to acknowledge Tina Clarke, a fellow Microsoft FrontPage MVP and prolific e-book writer who encouraged me to write this book and nagged me to complete it. Tina's support and constructive criticism helped make this book possible. Thanks also go to Pat Geary, Echo Swinford, and Sue Forrester for their encouragement and feedback; and to my editors at Apress, who were patient when my workflow didn't match their standard editorial process.



# Introduction

**T**his book is about more than just Microsoft Expression Web. For most people, a web editor is a means to an end—that end being a website that establishes a web presence. My goal in writing this book is for you to be able to use Expression Web to do more than just establish a presence: my hope is that you will be able to use Expression Web to create a website that fulfills the site owner’s goals.

The days of being able to create a website that only works in one dominant web browser or on Windows-based computers are gone. Today, a website must look good and function properly in a variety of web browsers running on Windows and Macs. In addition, many people are using other devices such as game consoles, PDAs, and cell phones to access the Internet. Your website must function in each of these. This is what the term “cross browser” means. Web standards are what make it possible for your cross-browser website to work on the wide variety of devices and browsers out there.

## What Is Expression Web?

Expression Web is a new web editor from Microsoft built with web standards and cross-browser output as its primary focuses. Unlike older web editors, Expression Web was not compelled to work around the limitations of earlier versions with proprietary browser output and bloated code. Instead, Microsoft has created a modern web editor that meets the needs of today’s Web. Web 2.0 sites are frequently updated and standards compliant, and employ user-friendly interfaces that provide a clear, well-organized, and visually appealing site.

Expression Web was designed to create standards-complaint websites out of the box, while at the same time providing tools to help effectively manage the look and feel of your website. Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), Dynamic Web Templates (DWT), and ASP.NET Master Pages are the foundation for creating and managing your website in Expression Web. Expression Web assists you in creating standards-complaint sites by writing the code to the specification of your choice, but it will not rewrite your code if you choose to use browser-specific code.

## Why This Book?

Many people whether they are new to creating websites or started creating them in the 1990s lack a foundation in web standards and CSS. Since Expression Web is focused on web standards and creating cross-browser websites, you must understand the basics of structured HTML and CSS to use its full potential. The early chapters of this book aim to give you the foundation you need to understand and use the tools in Expression Web to create and apply CSS.

Learning how to use a web editor without understanding how websites work will leave you with a less-than-satisfying website. In this book, I explain not just the how to use features in Expression Web but why you should or should not use some of those features. Along the way, topics such as accessibility and usability will be introduced and explored.

Once you have that foundation, the book moves on to more advanced topics of creating robust page layouts that work in a variety of web browsers, handling legacy browser issues, and creating contact forms. By the time you reach the end of the book, validating your forms and sending the results by e-mail, creating print stylesheets, and password protecting a section of your site will all be within your capabilities.

## What Is Not in This Book?

This book is not a manual. To cover every possible thing you can do with Expression Web would require a much longer book than this one. When you find a feature in Expression Web in this book, it will be for a real-world purpose.

## Who Is This Book For?

This book is for the web designer, not for the web developer. While this book does contain sample form-to-e-mail scripts in three server-side languages and simple form field validation and password protection scripts, this book does not go in-depth on the ASP.NET controls in the Toolbox. Instead, this book focuses on the design and maintenance of websites. Microsoft Expression Web is a tool that will make some aspects of creating a website easier—it is not a substitute for understanding how websites work. With this book, you will learn both the tools and the fundamentals of creating websites.

## How Is This Book Structured?

The best way to learn to create a website using any program is to actually use it, which is why each chapter includes exercises designed to reinforce the topics it explains. I recommend working through each of these exercises for hands-on experience. Working examples of the completed exercises can be viewed at <http://foundationsofexpressionweb.com>, and the complete source code can also be obtained from <http://www.apress.com/> in the Source Code/Download section. Sidebars will provide you with explanations of concepts and best practice tips for creating your website.

## Where Can I Find More Information?

Expression Web is a new program; as a result, features and bugs are still being discovered. If you have questions about something you find or don't find in the program, there are a few places I recommend checking: my site <http://by-expression.com> and the Microsoft Public Newsgroup/Forum (<news://msnews.microsoft.com/microsoft.public.expression.webdesigner> in Outlook Express or Windows Mail). Since URLs may change, a list of links to other places on the Web with Expression Web resources will be maintained at <http://foundationsofexpressionweb.com/links>.