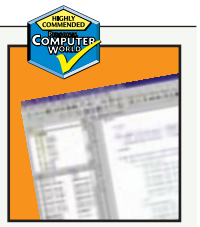
Table of features



Product	GoLive 4	FrontPage 2000	Fusion 4	Dreamweaver 2	HomeSite 4.0
Manufacturer	Adobe	Microsoft	NetObjects	Macromedia	Allaire
Price (inc VAT)	£229.13	£119	£233.83	£269.08	£88.13
Price (ex VAT)	£195	£101.28	£199	£229	£75
Telephone	0131 458 6842	0345 002000	01753 705077	0181 358 5857	01638 569600
Website	www.adobe.co.uk	www.microsoft.com	www.netobjects.com	www.macromedia.com	www.allaire.com
Frame creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Form creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Link Verification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cascading Syle Sheets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DHTML Tools	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Database Integration	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Integrated FTP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bundled Image Software	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
WYSIWYG interface	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raw code editing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Layer handling	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗
Pre-defined templates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Tags-on view	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
Edit remote server pages	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
Publish to any server	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓

Product	HoTMetaL 5.0	PageMill 3	HomePage 3.0	VisualPage 2	Web Page Con. Kit 5
Manufacturer	SoftQuad	Adobe	FileMaker	Symantec	MediaGold
Price (inc VAT)	£116.33	£92.83	£82.24	£62	£49.99
Price (ex VAT)	£99	£79	£69.99	£52.77	£42.54
Telephone	0181 387 4110	0131 458 6842	0845 603 9100	0171 616 5600	0171 372 9762
Website	www.softquad.co.uk	www.adobe.co.uk	www.filemaker.co.uk	www.symantec.co.uk	www.mediagold.com
Frame creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Form creation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Link Verification	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Cascading Syle Sheets	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
DHTML Tools	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
Database Integration	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Integrated FTP	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bundled Image Software	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓
WYSIWYG interface	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Raw code editing	✓	✓	✓	✓	Via shell
Layer handling	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗
Pre-defined templates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tags-on view	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Edit remote server pages	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Publish to any server	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Registering a domain

If you're reading this near a radio, flick it on and tune to a commercial station. Don't read any more of this page until you've listened to the next set of adverts...

Done that? Good. So, of the five or six ads you've just heard, how many had phone numbers you remember and could scribble on the top of this page right now? Probably not more than two. So now you can see it's only the simple, easily-remembered numbers that are effective. The same is true of web addresses. It's all very well getting 20MB of free space with your ISP account, but if it has an address as long as a thesis, it'll soon be forgotten and probably ignored.

Sticking with the phone number analogy, if someone has the memorable number you want, there's very little you can do about it. Once it's gone it's gone for good, and if you're not prepared to pay big money you might as well forget it. The same is usually the case with Internet domain names. Unscrupulous users are cashing in on this by cyber-squatting – registering a domain they know someone else will want for the sole purpose of selling it back to them at a higher price later. Although some corporates have taken registrants to court to try to win back the names they see as rightfully theirs, the law is decidedly grey in this area. An attempt has been made to look at the legal history of such cases, and more details can be found at www.patents.com/pubs/jmls.sht.

This piece was written at the beginning of September and on the day it was completed, 10,372,304 domains had been registered worldwide, of which 6,410,871 were .com domains and 372,684 ended with a more homely .co.uk. With the few memorable names that remain going at a rate of several thousand every week, you can see why it's so important to get the name you want before someone else gets there first. In fact, there's a good chance the name you're after has already gone. So, before you finish reading, check out Nominet at www.nic.uk if you're looking for a domain ending .uk or go to www.networksolutions.com for a .com, .net or .org address.

If your name is already registered, we can do nothing but commiserate. You could, of course, try a variant, such as hyphenating, pluralising or adding some extra letters or numbers to your name, but otherwise you're going to have to think of an alternative. Once you've found one you're happy with, it's time to bag it. You could do this directly through the naming authority on one of the two addresses mentioned above, but as it's highly unlikely you'll be a member of either (unless you're very rich), it'll be cheaper to do it through someone who is. For a list of members of Nominet, the UK naming authority, check out www.nic.uk /members.html and follow one of the links. Almost all of these will be able to register a .com, .net or .org address for you too.

As with most things, you would do well to shop around. The cost of .com, .net and .org addresses currently runs to $70 a pop (£48), while .uk addresses have just been reduced to £5 each. Anything on top of that is profit for the agent through which you are registering, so check whether it includes web space and email forwarding. If it doesn't, you may be able to find a better deal elsewhere.

For a more technical overview of the domain registration process, how it works and how it is organised, check out some of the links at http://207.238.20.162/dns.htm.

▲ NETWORK SOLUTIONS DEALS WITH THE REGISTRATION OF ALL .COM, .NET AND .ORG URLS
◀ NOMINET HANDLES REQUESTS FOR ALL WEBSITES ENDING IN .UK

Editor's **Choice**

Ease of use and a good selection of features combine to make the best tools.

Most people have a set idea of how web authoring should be done and fall into one of two camps – text-based or WYSIWYG. For the former, the editor of choice was traditionally Windows Notepad, and if you spend long enough on the net you'll probably even come across some sites with a 'Created with Notepad' button at the foot, boasting the author's talents. The vast majority of users, however, would rather never see a single line of code, and the WYSIWYG editors that form the majority of packages on the market make this possible. Web authoring has advanced further than visual application programming in this respect.

Another important consideration is whether you will need any of the extra features offered by the more expensive authoring tools. NetObjects Fusion 4, for example, is a good buy for users generating ecommerce sites, but may be too expensive and too powerful for a small business or home user. Likewise, Microsoft FrontPage 2000 includes a range of powerful features such as database integration and chat forum wizards, but if you take advantage of these features you are forced to choose a host that supports FrontPage extensions, which is usually a chargeable extra. You'll also be tied to using FrontPage exclusively as its upload protocol is written to interact specifically with servers that have extensions installed.

▲PAGEMILL'S STRENGTH LIES IN IT BEING INCREDIBLY VERSATILE AND EASY TO USE

▲DREAMWEAVER ALLOWS YOU TO GENERATE PRECISELY LAID-OUT PAGES QUICKLY AND EASILY

With this in mind, we have picked two products to receive Editor's Choice gongs – one from the high-end business category and the other from the small-business or home-user category. Before we do, however, we award Allaire HomeSite a Highly Commended accolade. This editor now incorporates a WYSIWYG mode, but stays true to its text-based roots to appeal to the extensive base of users who prefer to edit their HTML in the raw. Its authors have worked hard to incorporate many of the features of a visual package, such as toolbars and attribute palettes, without alienating a dedicated audience that has little alternative. Although HoTMetaL tries to bridge the gap between visual and code-based scripting with its tags-on view, we feel that HomeSite's no-nonsense, clutter-free coding window deserves recognition.

The first of our Editor's Choice awards, then, goes home for the second year running with Macromedia for Dreamweaver 2. It may not include some of the features of FrontPage, but it is a far more polished product and is both quicker and easier to use. Dreamweaver works equally well in table and layer mode, allowing you to generate precisely laid-out pages, while in the background it writes clean, well-organised code. Its round-tripping interaction with the bundled Allaire HomeSite lets you look behind the scenes to keep a close eye on your code, while the intuitive, all-encompassing Property Inspector is not matched by any other context-sensitive palette on the market.

Our second Editor's Choice award goes to Adobe, but for PageMill rather than its newer package, GoLive. PageMill has always been easy to use and users who have tried other visual web-authoring tools will not fail to be amazed at just how versatile it is. Put quite simply, if you can imagine doing something in any particular way, you can bet the PageMill authors imagined it too and included that as an option. The getting-started guide is alarmingly slim, but you soon realise Adobe could easily have got away with leaving it out of the box altogether, and besides, there are more than 200 pages of electronic reference on the installation CD.

Users will not fail to be amazed at just how versatile PageMill is