

Web Site WIZARDRY

**CD-ROM
INCLUDED**

**Master the Art of
Creating Interactive
Web Sites That
Come Alive!**

 **Marianne Krcma**


**CORIOLIS
GROUP
BOOKS**

Web Site WIZARDRY

Marianne Krcma

 **COROLIS GROUP BOOKS**

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Introduction

What This Book Is

If you've been surfing the Web for a while, maybe even experimented with publishing a basic Web page or two, and are interested in learning the skills that really make a Web site stand out, this book is for you. If you've ever been blown away by a site and wondered, "How'd they do that?", this book is *definitely* for you. I've gone to the source, sat at the virtual feet of the Web wizards—the Michaelangelos and Edisons of the Net world—and returned with the knowledge you need to help make your Web site great.

This book is a collection of tips, techniques, shortcuts, secrets, and a few horror stories gleaned from those Web wizards and supplemented by my own experience. A basic knowledge of and access to the Web (preferably through Netscape Navigator on a Windows-based PC) and some basic software are all you need to take advantage of this information. Everything else is provided in these pages and the included CD-ROM.

What This Book is Not

If you are looking for a basic book on the Web, one that shows you things like how to understand a URL, how to "surf," and how to send email over the Net, put this book back on the shelf. It's not for you—yet. There are lots of other great books out there that teach basic Web concepts, including the *Explorer* series from the Coriolis Group. Get one of those and enjoy.

If you're wondering what the heck a "URL" is and, for some reason, you've already *bought* this book, don't panic. (And don't return it; I need the money!) Instead, just set it aside temporarily and spend some time experimenting with the Web, checking things out, finding some great Web sites, and maybe some that you don't like very much, and trying your hand at some basic HTML. Then, when you're bursting with eagerness to put up a really "kewl" Web site of your own, take this book back out and prepare to produce some powerful pages.

This book deals primarily, although far from exclusively, with HTML, the "language" of the Web. You won't find the absolute basics of HTML here, though. First of all, it's very simple to learn the basics on your own (really!), especially with the HTML editors and add-ons available today. There are even programs

and Web sites that will generate a basic Web page for you, such as the Web Wizard shareware program that you can download from <http://www.halcyon.com/> and the Create a Home Page site that you can find at <http://theinter-net/www/future21/create1.html>. With these tools, you just answer a few questions, and they take care of the tedious things like constructing basic links and indicating headings.

This leads to the second reason why this book doesn't spend time on the absolute basics of Web-site building: I wanted to concentrate on the "wow" stuff because it's more fun for me to research and write, and presumably more fun for you to read and experiment with. My goal is to give you the tips and techniques that will really impress your spouse, friends, and boss.

What's on the CD-ROM

The CD-ROM is divided into four main directories: Samples, Libraries, Tools, and Acrobat. The Samples directory contains subdirectories for each chapter. Within each subdirectory are all the files needed to follow the examples in that chapter—all the HTML files, graphics, sounds, CGI scripts, Java classes, etc. This is done so that you can open a particular Web page locally from the CD-ROM (using File|Open File in Browser from Netscape, for example) and have it look pretty much like it does in the book.

The Libraries directory contains these subdirectories:

- @ Graphics
- @ Sounds
- @ CGIs
- @ Shockwave
- @ Java
- @ VRML

Some of the files in these directories are repeats of the ones in the Samples directories, gathered here by category for your convenience. Others are from examples that didn't make it into the book, but which you might find useful. Still others are particularly cool examples of particular Web elements that were either donated to me by the creator especially for this book or were acquired from the public domain.

To the best of my knowledge, you can freely use everything in the Libraries directories **on your Web pages only**, *except* those in a Shockwave directory. Also, you cannot disassemble Java, Director, Shockwave, or VRML files that contain images or sound that I didn't create. (To see which ones these are, refer to the particular chapters; anything that I didn't create is credited to the author.) In other words, these Java, Director, Shockwave, and VRML files need to stay whole and intact. You can't, for example, pull a particular graphic from one of the Pop Rocket games to reuse because it is copyrighted by its creator. You **do not** have the right to sell anything in the Libraries directories unless the creators specifically say you can (and none of them do, as far as I know).

The Tools directory contains the shareware and freeware programs and utilities that help you perform the Web wizardry you'll learn in this book. Here are just a few of the programs included in the Tools directories:

- © The GIF Construction Set, for making animated GIFs
- © GoldWave, a sound editor
- © The HTML Color Reference
- © Kenn Nesbitt's WebEdit, an HTML editor
- © Mailto Formatter
- © MapThis
- © Paintshop Pro, an all-purpose paint program
- © Programmer's File Editor
- © WinZip
- © CuteFTP

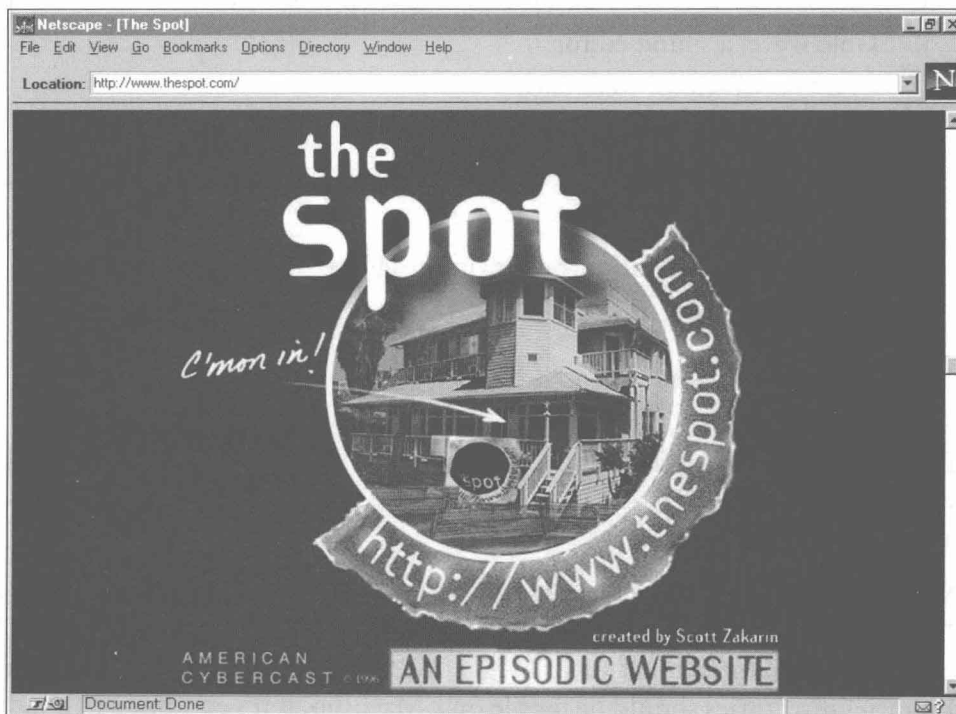
For information on installation, usage, copyright, and registration, see the individual programs. Also, if you like the shareware programs, please register them according to their authors' instructions.

Most of the files on the CD-ROM should be usable on any Windows-based PC with the appropriate hardware. (For example, to play the audio files, you'll need a sound card and speakers.) In fact, many of the files in the Samples and Libraries directories should be usable on a Mac, too, if it's equipped to handle files in PC formats. The Acrobat directory contains an annotated gallery of cool Web pages. Since black-and-white book pages don't do justice to them, they're presented as a .PDF file. The Tools directory contains the reader program you need to view them.

"How do you know this stuff?"

In the computer classes that I teach, people often ask, "How did you find out about all this stuff?" or similarly, "How do you remember all this stuff?" The answer is simply that it's in my interest to know and remember computer "stuff." In other words, I get paid for doing that, just like other people get paid for managing finances, administering to the sick, or operating heavy machinery. The need to pay my bills provides a powerful incentive to continually expand my knowledge base, and therefore my client base. So, I'm constantly combing through technical books and journals, taking classes, talking to computer professionals, and trying out new computer programs and procedures.

Computers—and specifically the Internet—might not be your livelihood, though. Maybe you're in marketing and want to explore the use of the Web as a marketing vehicle. Maybe you're a college student with some free time, free access



Have you surfed The Spot? Millions of Web users have.

to the Web, and the desire to express your views on the state of the world to the world. Maybe you're an artist seeking a new artistic medium. Maybe you *are* a computer professional who is suddenly confronted with the need to be up-to-speed on all the latest Web wizardry, by a boss who wants a site up and running *yesterday*.

Whatever your circumstances, as you surf the Web, it's easy to be intimidated by some of the creative, interesting, and downright amazing sites out there today, such as The Spot, a world-famous Web site that chronicles the lives of a group of Generation X'ers. You might find yourself thinking, "I could never do that," or, "It would take forever to build a site like that."

Remember, though, that few of these super-cool sites existed as little as 18 months ago, at least not in their present forms. Certainly, some of the people who put these whiz-bang sites up are true computer geniuses, but many more are just a little further along the learning curve than you. They just had a more pressing need, a little sooner than you, to try their hands at some Web site wizardry. You can get there, too, with some basic tools and some imagination. Plus, you can benefit from the wisdom of the Web pioneers, which is gathered in this book.

I'm definitely not any kind of Web über-wizard, although I do happen to know people who are. I'm just someone with the time and motivation to learn about building Web sites, and the opportunity to pass this information along to you. Take advantage of the pearls of Web wisdom that the people interviewed for this book have so generously contributed. Use the tricks and shortcuts they reveal. And let me know how it goes! You can email me at krcma@coriolis.com. I look forward to hearing from a whole new generation of Web-site wizards.

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1 LAYING A GOOD FOUNDATION

