

Dynamic links drive data to the Web

Web Page Software
Adobe GoLive 5

by Bob Connolly and Jason Lee



The battle between Adobe's web-authoring application GoLive and Macromedia's Dreamweaver is causing quite a stir among web developers. Both applications have evolved into one-stop shops for web site creation that include database connectivity. The explosion of e-commerce web sites is responsible for driving this revolution of database-driven content where the data originates from database applications created by companies such as Oracle.

This evolution has been a blessing for people that have little programming experience in languages such as CGI. At the same time, veteran developers who have years of experience in traditional web site development using text-based HTML editors might be beginning to feel threatened that their skills may no longer be needed.

Traditionally, designers in a high-end web site development situation create the artwork and pass it off to experienced HTML programmers who have some knowledge of connecting web sites to other applications such as databases for e-commerce fulfillment. To compare this to the printing industry, we must think back about fifteen years to the time when writers, designers and film houses were creating printed content without the aid of modern desktop publishing tools. In a fashion similar to the way DTP was developed, Adobe, Macromedia and other companies which are now producing these desktop publishing applications are

re-inventing the way high-end web site development companies create sophisticated Internet sites.

DYNAMIC WEB SITES

The buzzphrase in the web community now is "dynamically linked database-driven web sites". High-end Internet developers are usually capable of producing sites where content can be updated by clients using their preferred database application instead of having a web site developer author it in HTML. One such example might be a product catalogue where pricing is constantly changing. In some cases, a fulfillment company can change prices on a web site because they have access to the product database, and not just the web site. Remember, a dynamically linked web site gets its information from a database that may reside somewhere other than the web site host.

Up until now, creating this communication between web applications and database applications has been a very difficult procedure. With GoLive 5, Adobe has brought to market a very powerful application for the creation of dynamically linked database-driven web sites without the need to learn programming languages, using a point-and-click, drag-and-drop interface.

GOLIVE'S DYNAMIC LINKS

Adobe GoLive 5 now has built-in dynamic link capabilities — version 4 required a download — allowing you to visually create dynamic web pages with Dynamic Link for ASP (Active Server Pages). This allows you to seamlessly connect to and deliver content from any ODBC-compliant database with no programming knowledge or server-side installation requirements.

Simply create your web page content in GoLive with a custom template. One click of the mouse inside the Dynamic Link palette links the content on your web page to a specified database, com-

plete with a Live Preview based on the actual database content. The ASP code is automatically generated by Dynamic Link. When it's time to update the templates, the dynamic bindings will not be broken.

If you work in an environment where you must co-exist with die-hard programmers, you will be happy to learn that GoLive 5 incorporates 360Code technology.

So what the heck is that?

360CODE — COMPLETE CONTROL OVER SOURCE CODE

Whether you work in a mixed environment where designers and coders work side by side or you're a web designer who speaks JavaScript fluently, GoLive 5 has just made your life much easier. You can freely move HTML pages and JavaScript (including any custom markup language) between the visual environment of GoLive and any text-based HTML editor (such as BBEdit) with no impact on the content and structure of the document's HTML source code.



GoLive's **SMART OBJECTS** lets you perform simple editing functions on images from within the application.

SMART OBJECTS - A NEW WAY TO EDIT YOUR CONTENT

Adobe has also built editing capabilities called Smart Objects right into the application. Photoshop, Illustrator, and LiveMotion objects provide drag-and-drop functionality and integration to accelerate your workflow by working directly with the original application source files.

For example, if instead of a JPEG or GIF graphic you place a native Photoshop (PSD) file with its image icon in the Layout Grid you may use Photoshop 5.5's familiar "Save for Web" feature (which is now built into GoLive 5) to easily edit



Adobe has added Photoshop's **SAVE FOR WEB** feature to the new version of GoLive.



GoLive 5 now includes support for an expanded list of **W3C FILE FORMATS**, including **SVG, Flash, Apple QuickTime Streaming and RealNetworks G2.**

and optimize images directly within GoLive. No more switching between applications for simple tasks like resizing images. GoLive always links to the corresponding source files when more advanced edits are required, streamlining your workflow with the convenience of knowing that the original source files and applications are always just a single click away. If a change is made to the PSD file within Photoshop — such as deactivating a layer — and it is saved, GoLive will automatically update the image within the layout window.

WEBDAV

GoLive 5 not only includes a cross-platform site file to share information in mixed environments, but it also offers new services to promote a cooperative web environment, with support for the WebDAV (Web Distributed Authoring and Versioning) standard protocol. Designers working in teams can improve their productivity and streamline collaboration with secured files. Users can also lock down files currently in use so fellow colleagues do not simultaneously modify them. Once you finish changes to a page, you can unlock it and make it available to the group for further edits.

W3C STANDARDS AND EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

GoLive 5 provides comprehensive support for current W3C standards including CSS, DHTML, WebObjects 4.5, and Scalable

Vector Graphics (SVG), Adobe's open standard vector graphics format. GoLive also provides support for Flash (SWF), Apple QuickTime Streaming, and RealNetworks G2.

GOLIVE VS. DREAMWEAVER

Many of the features of GoLive and Dreamweaver are similar. Both are focused on creating robust web sites without the need to know HTML code.

But one feature which, for now, puts GoLive far ahead of Dreamweaver is its QuickTime Editing Application. Adobe is clearly thinking interactive digital video will be a very important part of the future Internet.

We are all aware of the leaps and bounds that are being made with high-speed Internet access. In the very near future, many households will have high-speed broadband connections through ADSL, cable, wireless connections, or direct satellite. With this added bandwidth, video will drive many web sites; most notably, interactive video will play a major role.

Adobe sees the marriage of Premier, LiveMotion and Photoshop as a key element when creating interactive video using QuickTime's wired-sprite technology.

In layman's terms, content produced using these applications can be authored in QuickTime using GoLive's robust built-in QuickTime Authoring Editor.

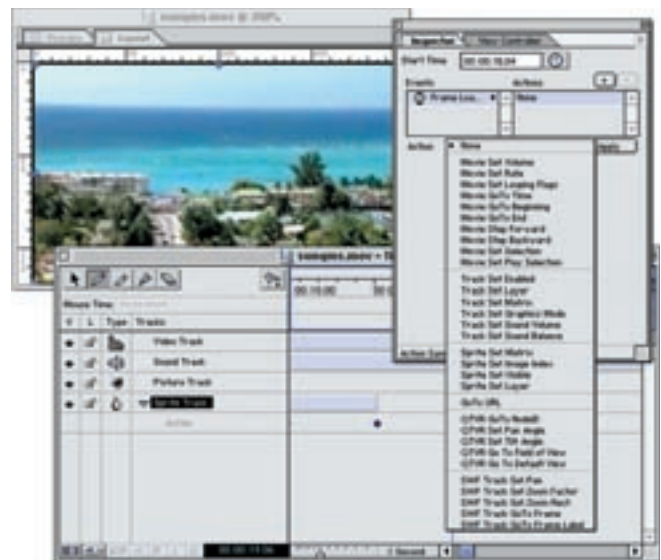
ENHANCED QUICKTIME INTERACTIVE EDITOR

If you are familiar with editing in Adobe Premier using the timeline, then you should find it quite simple to master the skills needed to make video interactive using the QuickTime editor. By adding audio and video tracks using a drag-and-drop action, you place your media files (including digital QuickTime video and/or Flash [SWF] objects) onto the stage of the on-board interactive editor and visually queue the tracks in an intuitive QuickTime timeline. It's like working with a standalone QuickTime authoring application combined with the power of GoLive's authoring and site-management capabilities.

ADDING INTERACTIVITY

The following is a list of tracks that can be embedded into a QuickTime movie using GoLive's QuickTime editor:

- The Picture Track allows pictures to be imported for slide show presentations, or for use as background images for videos.



Using drag-and-drop you can add, revise and control the activity of QuickTime presentations using GoLive's **QUICKTIME EDITOR.**



ADOBE GOLIVE 5

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Macintosh
PowerPC-based Macintosh computer
Apple System Software version 8.6 and 9.0
48 MB of available RAM
70 MB of available hard-disk space
CD-ROM drive

Windows

Intel Pentium 200 MHz (or faster) or compatible processor
Microsoft Windows 98 or Windows NT 4.0 (or later) with Service Pack 3
48 MB of available RAM for Windows 98
64 MB of available RAM for Windows NT 4.0
50 MB of available hard-disk space
CD-ROM drive

PRICING AND AVAILABILITY

US\$299.00
Upgrade from GoLive 4.0, GoLive (CyberStudio) 3.x and Adobe PageMill, US\$99.00
For registered owners of Macromedia Dreamweaver or Microsoft FrontPage, US\$149

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- The Effect Track can perform many different transition effects (such as wipes, blends, or dissolves) from one JPEG picture to another utilizing QuickTime's built-in effect module. Rather than rendering 30 JPEG frames of one picture into the next, QuickTime generates the effects in real time using only two frames, resulting in a movie download that is much smaller and faster.

- The Sprite Track can have elements animate across the movie and allow them to have behaviors. For example, a sprite can be used as a button to stop or play a movie, and provides for interactivity such as launching additional web pages.

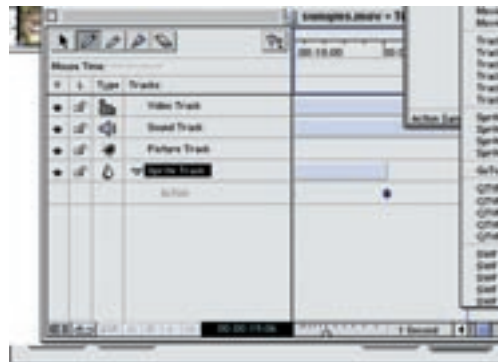
- The HREF Track is a timing track that runs in synch with the video. It resembles the time-code track usually found on professional videotape. This track can be divided into sections and programmed to launch web pages automatically by the movie, or launch a site when the viewer clicks on the mouse. For example, a particular scene in the digital video can automatically trigger a new browser window to display text-based information which provides additional detail for the viewer.

- The Text Track displays text by using the text module built inside QuickTime which is generated by the computer rather than including the text as bitmap graphics (usually used for subtitles). It can be turned on and off according to the user's preferences. As well, this text can be hyperlinked so that it will launch other web sites.

- The Instrument Track (aka MIDI Track) allows MIDI files to be played during a video. A MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) file generates sound by the client's computer, which is usually a very small file that is easily downloaded. The MIDI file can be used as background music or sound effects and can be combined with audio tracks that contain spoken narration. This is the most efficient way to provide high quality sound using low bandwidth.

- The Flash Track (known as SWF) usually consists of small vector files which are often used to provide animation. Because of their small file sizes, they download quickly and are ideal to provide interactivity by controlling playback of the digital video.

- The Folder Track groups multiple tracks together so the timeline's track listing can be better organized. This feature is not found in any other QuickTime authoring application and is a real life-saver if you have many tracks and wired sprites that you have to manage. Since any of these tracks can be placed inside a folder track, it is easy to organize a complicated layout.



GoLive 5 makes it possible to perform many different types of transitions with JPEGs, or create interactivity using *SPRITES*.

IT'S A WRAP

Adobe GoLive 5 is a good choice for those of you who want to build highly interactive web sites that contain links to custom-made databases.

If you are a seasoned programmer, it might be time for you to learn Photoshop and start developing the content that will be used to provide images for the site. If you are a digital video producer, GoLive 5 is an excellent way to author interactive digital video.

But most important, if your main tool is Photoshop and you want to enter the world of web site creation to build simple web pages, or highly interactive database-driven Internet web sites, Adobe GoLive 5 is exactly what you need. ■

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The **TEXT TRACK** lets you use text for subtitles or to hyperlink to other web sites.