

What it's about.

The Introduction

The following sections are meant to provide you with a general overview of what this book is about and how it is organized. You probably don't want to read this book from beginning to end, so this will help you to find the specific topics that are of interest to you.

There are two different versions of Xara Web Designer, so we will also provide a point-by-point overview of the differences between these versions

Web Design

In the past everything was different but rarely better, especially when it had to do with computer technology. It used to be that a website designer had to distinguish between the "design", i.e. page layout, color concept, headers, logos, photos, drawings etc., and the "technology", i.e. programming the website. A very good imagination and a lot of technical knowledge were required to bring both of these aspects together into a successful result.

But Xara Web Designer takes a different, simpler approach. The program offers a wide variety of graphic design possibilities that can easily be tried out without having to worry about how the design will be converted into HTML code. This is because Xara Web Designer takes care of that automatically. These days the only thing necessary is a good imagination and even that can be helped along by experimenting with the pre-made templates.

About This Book

Our book is meant not only to show you what to pay attention to when working with Xara Web Designer but also to explain how it can be used to get optimal results. Whether for beginners who are looking for a quick introduction or advanced users who are looking for answers to very specific questions, this book has something for everyone. No prior knowledge is required; you can get started right away.

In the first chapter we will provide you with an overview of the program installation process and the basic working method (see page 11). In the second chapter we will go deeper into the various working techniques (see page 19). These first chapters are intended to get you familiar with Xara Web Designer and to help you understand how to make the best use of the program.

After that there is a chapter about developing concepts for websites (see page 59). And because the technology is so simple, once a good concept is established the website is basically half done. The final part of this chapter explains the fastest way to implement (see page 85) a concept. This will be shown by taking one of the included templates and working with it to create a unique, customized website.

In the next chapter we will create (see page 157) a website completely from scratch. A bit of patience is required here, but it is a good way learn about all of the numerous design options in Xara Web Designer. It is also a good opportunity to put to use all of the information from the preceding chapters. We recommend reading the "easier" chapters first before trying a very specialized design such as nested pop-ups.

And speaking of pop-ups... Pop-ups and mouseover effects are two of the most important design tasks for web designers and it's for this reason that we have dedicated (see page 199) an entire chapter to them. The same goes for photos – a website without photos appears sterile and unattractive, like a room without windows. So we've given them their own chapter (see page 221) as well.

Websites are not alone in the online world and that's why we have a section that explains how they can be linked (see page 250). This will show you how to embed YouTube videos into your website or other sites, for example. To do this we'll use the included "widgets".

Then we'll expand on the important topic of Flash animations (see page 273) which can be added in a similar way as widgets by using placeholders. This has to do with (almost) everything that moves on a website.

And of course, for anyone interested in designing commercial websites a chapter about online shops cannot be left out (see page 305). We'll show you all of the most important applications.

When the website is finished and "online", i.e. can be found on the Internet, it should get as many visitors as possible. To provide assistance with this we've created a separate chapter on search engine optimization (SEO) (see page 339).

The final chapter deals with some important legal issues that you should be aware of to avoid receiving any nasty letters from lawyers (see page 357).

A glossary is also provided to help find the most important technical terms (see page 361).

A note about the illustrations in the book: They show the program version Xara Web Designer Premium and were created using Xara Designer Pro, the "big brother" of all Web Designer programs.

Special features in the Premium version

With the standard version of Xara Web Designer you can do almost all of the editing that is described in this book. However, some features are only available in the Premium version. Normally the illustrations show the Premium version. We will let you know if a certain procedure is not possible in the standard version of Xara Web Designer.

To clearly show the differences between the versions, here is a list with all of the features that are exclusively available in Xara Web Designer Premium:

- Freehand and Brush Tool (see page 30) for drawing lines and shapes
- QuickShape Tool (see page 32) for automatically creating specific shapes such as stars or polygons
- Extrude Tool (see page 51) for creating 3D effects
- Find and replace feature in the Text Tool (see page 40)
- More fills and more options for using fill types
- More transparency (see page 44) and more options for using transparency types
- Bevel Tool (see page 47) and Mold Tool (see page 48) for adjusting the form of shapes in more detail
- Feather controller including various types
- Red Eye Tool (see page 236) and Panorama Tool for editing photos
- Content Aware Scaling (see page 231) and zooming of photos
- Masks for cropping or editing shapes or bitmaps
- "Combine Shapes" function
- Advanced insert options
- Name, Line and Frame Galleries (see page 275)
- More color models and the possibility of creating named colors
- Animations (Flash and GIF) including export
- Web presentations
- Various advanced FTP options including the possibility of adding several profiles
- Support for header code and sitemaps (see page 347)
- Playback of H.264 videos using an HTML5 player
- HTML5 vector graphic export
- Print function
- Import of graphics from the Internet
- Screenshot function

Note: Xara regularly offers special deals for updating Xara Web Designer to the Premium version. If you register your product with Xara, you will be notified automatically about these special offers (see page 14).