



Microsoft® Expression® Web

reviewed by John Sanders, ORPCUG

Expression® Web® is a program that provides Web design to many users who, in the past, lacked the tools or knowledge to post sophisticated web sites. It takes the place of Microsoft FrontPage which was the Web design product offered for the last ten years. It takes advantage the many tools that have been added to current design features. In addition, Expression does not depend on some server-side features needed by FrontPage.

One of my first favorable surprises was that I could load the program on a computer using the Windows XP Pro operating system and I could also load the same program on a computer using the Vista operating system. When I read further, I found that it was actually designed to operate with both of these systems.

When you open Expression Web you will find there window contains five panes, a large pane in the middle and two smaller panes on either side. Any of these panes can be resized or moved, but I found that, in my learning experience, it was best to leave them in their original size and position. In addition, the two lower panes on either side have tabs that can change their operations.

In addition, the center pane can be divided into two displays, one above the other. In the lower part, you can display the web page as it will appear in the browser window, and in the upper part, you can display the corresponding coding. Since these two “track” together, I found that it was very useful in producing the product that I wanted. I am fairly familiar with HTML coding, and I could make changes directly in the coding when that was more convenient. I am not as familiar with style expressions, and this display helped me to become more familiar with these.

One of the side panes also helps forming the correct style statements without requiring much knowledge of their format. In addition, Expressions Web has the capabilities of extracting these style expressions into a leading Cascading Style Sheet; this capability eliminates much of the effort in the design of web pages that appear to be part of a set.

In addition, Expressions Web has all of the capabilities of FrontPage in producing reports about your Web Site and in mapping links among the various pages. It also highlights such items as broken or missing links within the structure. It also has the capability of importing and editing graphic files.

There are many features of Expressions that I have yet to try; however, it appears to offer many coupled features that will enhance the development of Web Sites in my future work.