

Inside Microsoft FrontPage

Building dynamic Web sites with Microsoft FrontPage

Using folder lists and page tabs to navigate in FrontPage

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 2000/2002

Operating System: Microsoft Windows

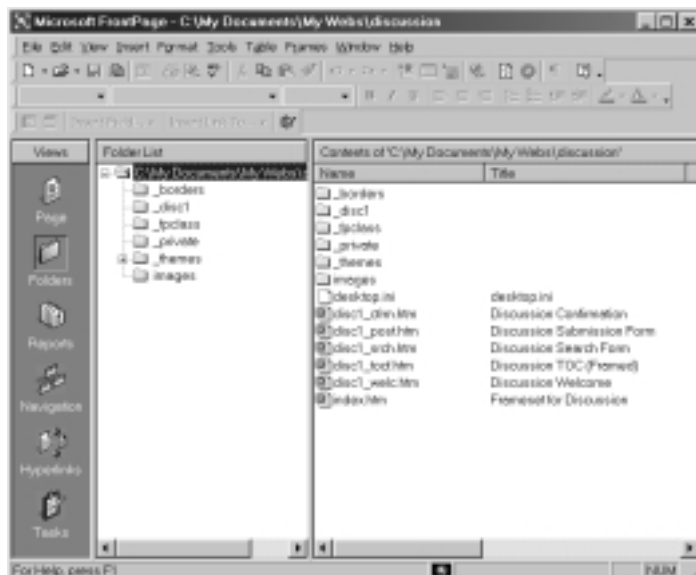
While it's not the most difficult aspect of using FrontPage, navigating between pages can be annoying. It's also a frequently used skill; after all, it's the rare Web that consists of a single page. In this article we'll show you a couple of quick ways to navigate between the pages in your Web.

Listing the lists

FrontPage displays your Web's content in a number of places, of which the Folder List and the Window menu are the most useful. If you're familiar with

these tools, you can still read on to learn how they differ. If you've been struggling to navigate between pages, the article will provide you with a good basic introduction.

We will begin by looking at the Folder List and show you how to access this feature in various FrontPage views. Next, we'll move on to FrontPage 2002's Navigation Pane, which gives you a slightly different view of your Web. Finally, we'll show you a couple of ways that you can navigate between open pages in FrontPage.



Working with all files

Perhaps the most useful list FrontPage provides is the Folder List. This list, which is an integral part of the Folders view shown in [Figure A](#), shows all the folders in your Web and lets you open them to view their contents on the right side of the window. As

Figure A: The Folder List always appears as part of the Folder view.

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in other Windows applications, an open folder icon indicates the currently selected folder.


What so many users don't realize is that the Folder List is also available in Page, Navigation and Hyperlink views. To make it visible, simply click the Folder List button () on the Standard toolbar.

Figure B shows the Folder List in Page view. Although the figure shows the same Web as **Figure A**, the Folder List looks a little different here. Instead of the folder contents appearing in a separate section of the FrontPage window, they're integrated with the folders themselves.

Note: You can resize the Folder List by dragging on its right border.

Regardless of which FrontPage view you're in, you can perform a number of operations on



Figure B: You can also access the Folder List from Page view.

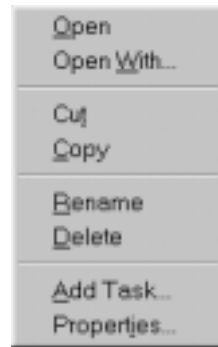



Figure C: You can right-click on a file to rename it, delete it or view its properties.

any file you see. Double-clicking on a file opens it in the associated editor, while right-clicking on a file brings up the shortcut menu shown in **Figure C**. (FrontPage 2002 displays a more extensive menu.)

Navigation in FrontPage 2002

The Folder List button in FrontPage 2002 () looks a little different than in FrontPage 2000. More importantly, it has a small down arrow next to it. When you click on this arrow in Page view (but not in the other views), you can choose between the Folder List described above and the new Navigation Pane. (When either the Folder List or the Navigation Pane is visible, you can toggle between the two lists with the buttons at the bottom.)

The Navigation Pane, shown in **Figure D**, displays your Web's navigation structure in tree form, much like the Folder List. Note that you'll only be able to access pages that you've added to the navigation structure. When you right-click on a file, you can access the same shortcut menu that you'd see in Navigation view.

Working with open files

The best way to see a list of all the open pages in your Web is the Window menu, shown in **Figure E**. Although this menu appears in most Windows programs, users often forget about it—perhaps because it's so ubiquitous.

The Window menu lists up to nine open documents; you can access additional documents by choosing More Pages at the bottom. In addition to letting you quickly switch between pages, the menu also indicates which pages haven't been saved since you last edited them—just look for an asterisk (*) after each unsaved page's name.

If you've upgraded to FrontPage 2002, you've probably noticed that that version offers a handy alternative to the Window menu. In Page view, a series of folder-style tabs appear just above the page you're editing, and you can use these tabs to navigate between pages. As with the Window menu, unsaved pages are marked with an asterisk.

Note: FrontPage 2002 can display an unlimited number of page tabs. When it's necessary, small navigation buttons appear to the right of the last tab, allowing you to move between the tabs.

You can also use the keyboard to quickly move between open pages. To do so, press



Figure D: FrontPage 2002 introduces the Navigation Pane, an alternative to the Folder List.

[Ctrl][Tab] or [Ctrl][Shift][Tab]. (For more useful shortcuts, see the article, “Secret FrontPage keyboard shortcuts,” in the September 2001 issue of *Inside Microsoft FrontPage*.)

Folder flexibility

As we’ve demonstrated in this article, FrontPage gives you a variety of methods for navigating among the files in your Web. A little experimentation will help you determine which method works best for you. *

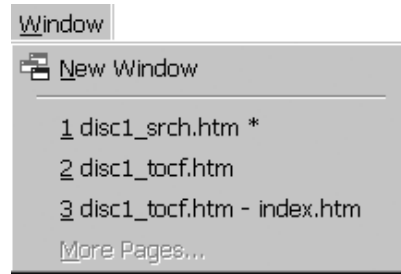


Figure E: The useful Window menu often seems hidden in plain sight.

Analyze your Web with FrontPage reports

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 2000/2002

Operating System: Microsoft Windows

Even moderately large Web sites can quickly outpace your ability as a webmaster to keep track of them. Over the course of weeks or months, you can easily end up with orphaned pages, broken hyperlinks, pages that load too slowly and other problems.

To help you identify these problems—or simply learn more about your Webs—FrontPage 2000 and 2002 offer a comprehensive set of reports. As we’ll see in this article, you can use these reports to identify slow-loading pages, review recently changed or added files, check hyperlinks and even (in FrontPage 2002) analyze visitor traffic.

Reporting live

If you’re already familiar with the reporting feature, you can still read this article to learn about the enhancements FrontPage 2002 makes to the reports, some of which are so subtle that you might miss them. If you’re totally unfamiliar with the reporting feature, you’ll find this article fairly comprehensive.

To use reports, you must first access them, so we’ll start by showing you the two ways you can access FrontPage’s reports. Once that’s covered, we’ll briefly introduce you to all of the reports and show you how to change some important report parameters, such as the definitions of “slow” pages and “older” files. Finally,

we’ll discuss the reporting enhancements found in FrontPage 2002.

Accessing reports

To get started, launch FrontPage and open an existing Web. Then, click the Reports button on the Views bar to switch to the view shown in Figure A. Note that two things happen at once when you click Reports: FrontPage displays the Site Summary report and it displays the Reporting toolbar. In FrontPage 2000, this toolbar floats

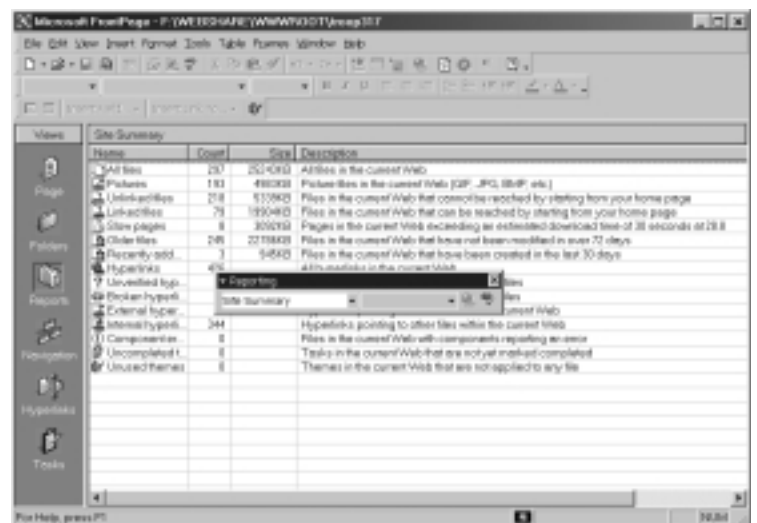


Figure A: The Site Summary report presents an overview of your Web.

somewhere near the middle of the window; in FrontPage 2002, it's anchored below the Formatting toolbar.

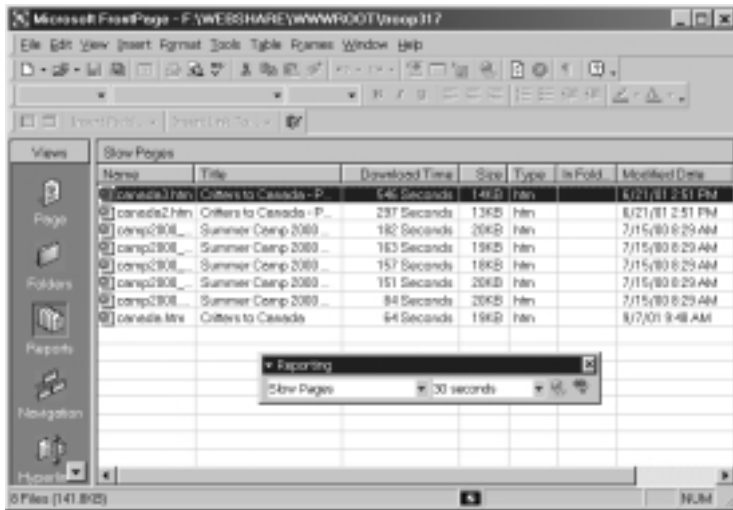


Figure B: All the files in this report take more than 30 seconds to download.

As its name implies, the Site Summary report gives you an overview of your Web, including the number of pages it contains, how much space it consumes on the server, and how many hyperlinks it includes. This report is useful by itself, but it's really just the beginning. You can double-click on most of the line items—single-click in FrontPage 2002—to access a report that provides more detail on that item.

Note: FrontPage's reports only look at those files that are currently visible in the FrontPage environment. If you have files saved in hidden directories that you want included in reports, choose Web Settings from the Tools menu. In the Web Settings dialog box that appears, switch to the Advanced property sheet, enable the Show Documents In Hidden Directories check box (Show Hidden Files And Folders in FrontPage 2002), and click OK.

For example, double-click on the Slow Pages line item now (single-click in FrontPage 2002). As shown in Figure B, FrontPage displays any files in your Web that take longer than 30 seconds to download at 28.8 Kbps.

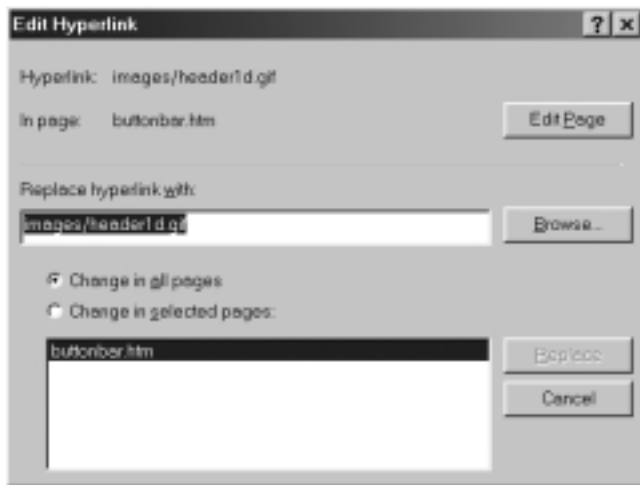


Figure C: By double-clicking on a broken hyperlink, you can access this dialog box and fix it.

Working with a report

The files are automatically listed in order of their estimated download time. However, you can sort the report by any column; to do so, just click the column header. (Clicking the same column header again reverses the sort order.)

You can also change the width of a column by dragging on the right edge of its column header. If necessary, FrontPage displays a horizontal scroll bar at the bottom of the window.

Besides changing a report's appearance, you can often change its content. Notice that the Reporting toolbar includes a Report Setting dropdown list that currently displays 30 seconds. By clicking on that list, you can change your slow-page threshold.



Figure D: In FrontPage 2002, you can filter your reports by a variety of criteria.

Many of FrontPage's reports include parameters that you can change from the Reporting toolbar, and most allow you to sort by any column or resize the columns as we did earlier. Another feature the reports share is that you can double-click on most report items to take action. For example, if you double-click on a filename in the Slow Pages report, FrontPage opens that file in the appropriate editor. In the Broken Hyperlinks report, on the other hand, double-clicking a hyperlink allows you to fix it, as shown in Figure C.

Filtering the data

In FrontPage 2002, you can also filter the contents of almost any report to home in on particular information. At the right edge of each column header is a small triangular button called the AutoFilter button. Clicking this button brings up a pop-up menu that lists all the values that appear in that column. For example, a report's Type column would list such values as HTM, HTML, GIF and JPEG. To filter by one of those values, simply select the value from the list; the AutoFilter button turns blue to remind you that filtering is active. (This is important because FrontPage preserves your filtering options even after you close the program.)

The pop-up menu also includes an All option, which removes filtering, and a Custom option, which lets you set more elaborate filtering criteria. **Figure D** shows the Custom Auto-Filter dialog box that appears when you select Custom.

Using other reports

You can switch to another report by choosing its name from the Reporting toolbar's Reports dropdown list. In addition, you can choose Reports from the View menu and then select the report you want from the submenu that appears.

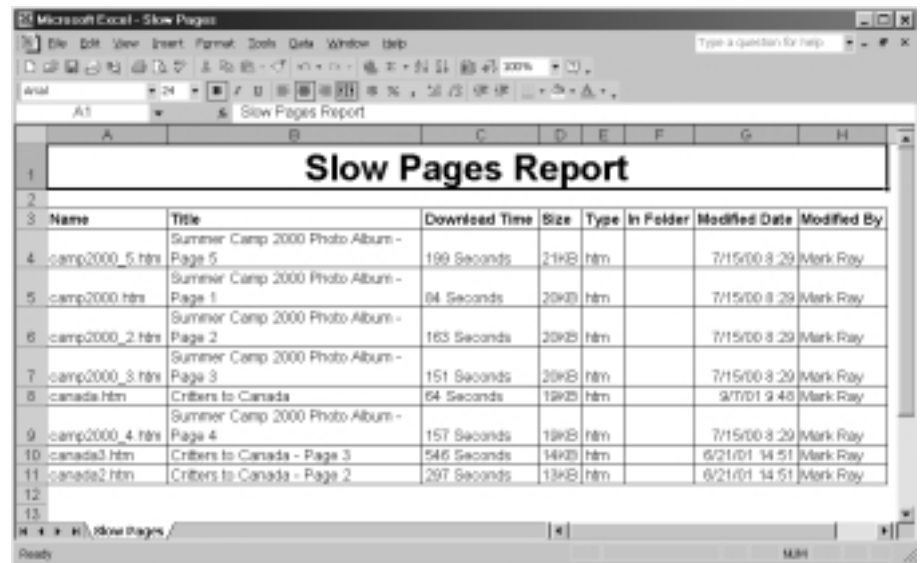
Table A describes the reports that are available in both FrontPage 2000 and 2002. FrontPage 2002 also includes 13 usage reports, which are described in the article "Usage analysis comes to FrontPage" in this issue.

Exporting reports in FrontPage 2002

One of the major limitations of the reporting feature in FrontPage 2000 is that there's no way, short of using a screen-capture utility, to use the data outside FrontPage's Reports view. Microsoft addressed this limitation—at least to some extent—in FrontPage 2002. You still can't print a report, but you have two other options for manipulating the data.

Table A: FrontPage 2000 and 2002 reports

Report	Description
Site Summary	An overview of the entire Web
All Files	Lists all files in the Web (like the All Files view in FrontPage 98)
Recently Added Files	Files you've added in the last x days
Recently Changed Files	Files you've changed in the last x days
Older Files	Files that haven't changed in the last x days
Unlinked Files	Files that can't be reached from links on the home page
Slow Pages	Pages that load in more than x seconds at a given connection speed
Broken Hyperlinks	Links FrontPage hasn't verified or has found to be broken
Component Errors	FrontPage component problems
Review Status	Lists the review status (e.g., Code Review, Legal Review) of all your files
Assigned To	Indicates to whom you've assigned files
Categories	Lists category assignment(s) of each file
Publish Status	Indicates whether you've marked files to be published
Checkout Status	Indicates whether files have been checked out



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet titled "Slow Pages Report". The table contains the following data:

Name	Title	Downloaded Time	Size	Type	In Folder	Modified Date	Modified By
camp2000_5.htm	Summer Camp 2000 Photo Album - Page 5	189 Seconds	21KB	htm		7/15/00 8:20	Mark Ray
camp2000.htm	Summer Camp 2000 Photo Album - Page 1	84 Seconds	20KB	htm		7/15/00 8:20	Mark Ray
camp2000_2.htm	Summer Camp 2000 Photo Album - Page 2	163 Seconds	20KB	htm		7/15/00 8:20	Mark Ray
camp2000_3.htm	Summer Camp 2000 Photo Album - Page 3	151 Seconds	20KB	htm		7/15/00 8:20	Mark Ray
canada.htm	Critters to Canada	84 Seconds	19KB	htm		9/7/01 9:48	Mark Ray
camp2000_4.htm	Summer Camp 2000 Photo Album - Page 4	157 Seconds	19KB	htm		7/15/00 8:20	Mark Ray
canada3.htm	Critters to Canada - Page 3	546 Seconds	14KB	htm		6/21/01 14:51	Mark Ray
canada2.htm	Critters to Canada - Page 2	297 Seconds	13KB	htm		6/21/01 14:51	Mark Ray

Figure E: You can save almost all reports as HTML documents.

The easiest option is to right-click on the report and choose Copy Report from the shortcut menu. This copies the report to the Windows Clipboard as an HTML table. You can then paste the data into a new HTML document (or a Word or Excel document) to format and print it.

The other option is to choose Save As from the File menu. A standard Save As dialog box appears, prompting you to save the report as an Excel HTML file, as **Figure E** shows on the previous page.

Changing report parameters

We showed you earlier how to change report parameters on the fly from the Reporting menu. You can also make your changes permanent in the Options dialog box.

For example, let's say that you only develop Web pages for a corporate intranet, where 100 percent of your users have ISDN or T1 connec-

tions. In that environment the default settings of the Slow Pages parameter (30-second load time at 28.8 Kbps) don't make sense.

To change the parameter, choose Options from the Tools menu to open the Options dialog box. Then, switch to the Reports View property sheet, as shown in **Figure F**. Here, as you can see, you can change the definition of a slow page. For the intranet example, you might set the number of seconds to 10 and the connection speed to ISDN.

In this dialog box, you can also change the definitions of recent and older files. (The recent-files setting affects both the Recently Added Files and Recently Changed Files report.) You can also change two parameters related to FrontPage 2002's usage reports. Any changes you make in this dialog box override changes you've made via the Reporting toolbar. The settings are also preserved when you close the program.

Tuning up your Webs

FrontPage's built-in reports are a great way to monitor your site for the sorts of problems users are likely to encounter. As long as you review the reports regularly—and act on your findings—you can quickly identify and correct most common Web site problems. *

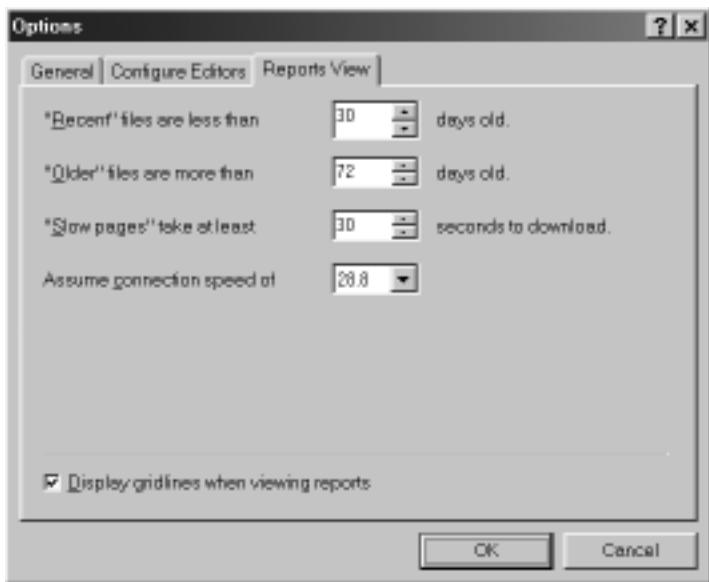


Figure F: Change the report parameters to fit your needs. FrontPage 2002 includes additional options not shown here.



Usage analysis comes to FrontPage

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 2002

Operating System: Microsoft Windows

Before the appearance of FrontPage 2002, FrontPage users could only analyze their visitor traffic with hit counters—a notoriously unreliable technique—or with third-party software such as WebTrends Log Analyzer. While some Web presence providers offer usage reports as part of their hosting packages, others do not,

and programs like WebTrends can cost hundreds of dollars. Now, however, FrontPage 2002 has added usage analysis to the array of offerings in the Reports view. While FrontPage's built-in usage reports may not be as robust as those created by dedicated log-analysis programs, they have one major advantage: they're free.

Note: To use FrontPage 2002's usage reports, your server must be running the FrontPage 2002 Server Extensions or SharePoint Team Services. Also, the usage reports are only available for root Webs.

The same yet different

If you're familiar with FrontPage's reporting feature, you won't have much trouble working with the usage reports since they rely on a similar interface. However, you'll want to read on to learn how to enable the tracking of usage data.

If you've never used any type of log-analysis software, this article will introduce you to some of the key data that FrontPage's usage reports include. We'll begin by introducing you to the Usage Summary report, which highlights key data. Next, we'll explain what each of the other reports tracks and why the information is important. Finally, we'll show you how to modify a couple of key report parameters. As you'll discover, the information FrontPage's usage reports provides is both more accurate and more comprehensive than hit counters.

Flipping the switch

Unlike FrontPage's other reports (which are discussed in the article "Analyze your Web with FrontPage reports" in this issue), the usage reports rely on data that's collected on the server. Since data collection isn't turned on by default, the first thing you must do is to turn it on.

If you're not the server administrator, you'll need to contact your Web presence provider for assistance. Make sure that the latest server extensions are installed and ask that data collection be enabled.

If you're the server administrator, you can do the job yourself by choosing Tools | Server | Administration Home to access your Web's administration page. Enter your username and password and then scroll down to the Configure Usage Analysis Settings section, where you'll find a Change Usage Analysis Settings link. Click that link, and the page shown in [Figure A](#) appears.

Here, you can turn on data collection and also specify how frequently—and when—the raw data should be processed. We recommend processing usage data at midnight each day; that way, you'll easily be able to analyze day-by-day traffic.

You can also register to be notified by email each time usage analysis occurs. However, if you select this option, you'll probably end up turning it off after a while since the email messages don't tell you anything more than the



Figure A: Besides enabling data collection, you can specify when usage analysis should occur.

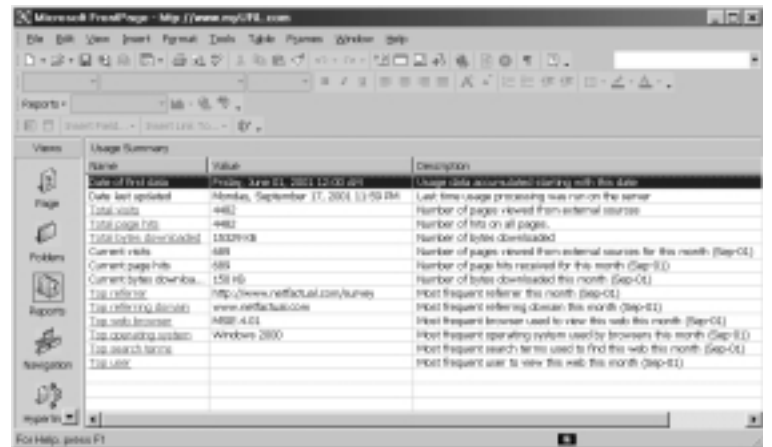


Figure B: The Usage Summary report offers a quick overview of your site traffic.



Figure C: These 13 reports let you analyze your usage data from several different perspectives.

fact that analysis has occurred at the time you specified.

Analyze this

Once data collection is turned on, you'll have to wait until log processing occurs before you can check your usage statistics. At that point, choose View | Reports | Usage | Usage Summary to get an overview of the statistics FrontPage tracks. **Figure B** on the previous page shows the Usage Summary report for a typical Web.

Like the Site Summary report discussed in the article “Analyze your Web with FrontPage reports,” the Usage Summary report serves as a quick entry point to a number of other reports; about two-thirds of the items listed here are hyperlinked to reports that offer more detail.

Name	Title	Type	InOrder	Visits	Size
calendar.asp	calendar	asp	ajspcal	12	0
calendar.jpg	ajspcal/calendar.css	css	ajspcal	12	0
calendar.htm	NET Home Page	htm	default	3	0
calendar.gif	default/images/VIS-fo...	gif	default/images	3	0
test.asp	server.asp	asp		1	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/images...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/images...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/images...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/images...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0
1.jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	jpg	user/lan/dbs/whicf...	0	0

Figure D: You can crunch as many numbers as you want with the Daily Page Hits report.

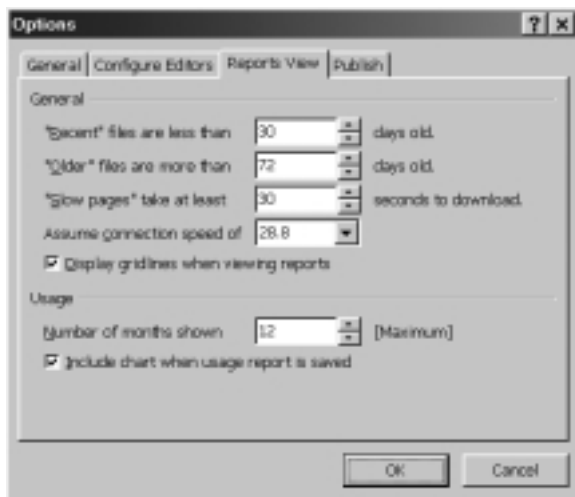


Figure E: You can modify report parameters in the Options dialog box.

So what does the Usage Summary report tell you? The information in the Description column explains each entry fairly well, but one distinction may not be immediately apparent. The first five entries—Date Of First Data through Total Bytes Downloaded—give cumulative statistics from the moment data collection was enabled; the other entries are for the current month only. (Initially, of course, this distinction will be irrelevant.)

The Usage Summary report isn't the only summary report you can access. As the submenu in **Figure C** on the previous page shows, the others are the Monthly Summary, Weekly Summary and Daily Summary reports.

Each of these reports displays the total number of visits, hits and total hits for the specified period. These terms all sound similar, and they actually give three views of the same data. So, what do they measure? Total Hits measures the number of times any file was requested. Hits measures unique file requests, ignoring multiple requests by the same user. Visits measures the number of different users who visited your site.

On the Monthly Summary report, you'll also find a Download Size column, telling you how many kilobytes worth of files were downloaded from the site each month. The other summary reports include a Percentage Of Hits column, which can help you determine when your site's getting the most traffic.

Reports galore

You can go far beyond just the summary reports to zero in on specific data. As **Figure C** shows, the remaining usage reports are divided into three groups: hit reports, visitor reports and referrer reports.

The three hit reports present the raw data that supports the Monthly, Weekly and Daily Summary reports discussed in the previous section. You can see not only the total number of hits each file on your site received, but also the number of hits received every day, week or month, as shown in **Figure D**. You'll need to scroll to see all the data, and you may want to sort or filter the data—as discussed in the article “Analyze your Web with FrontPage reports”—to focus on just the information you're interested in.

Next comes a group of reports that tell you a little about the people visiting your site. The Visiting Users report lists users who have logged on to your site (assuming it's password-protected); anonymous users fall into the All Others category. The Operating Systems and Browsers reports are self-explanatory; they can be quite use-

ful if your site includes features that only certain browsers or operating systems support.

Finally, the referrer reports tell you how people found your site. The Referring Domains report lists all the domains that have referred users to your site, either through searches or actual hyperlinks. The Referring URLs report lists the actual pages from which users came to your site. (When users arrive at the site by typing the URL directly into the browser, no referrer appears in these reports.) The last report, Search Strings, lists the search text that led people to your site.

Changing report parameters

As with the other FrontPage reports, you can modify a couple of usage-report settings in the Options dialog box. To access this dialog box,

choose Options from the Tools menu and then switch to the Reports View property sheet, as **Figure E** shows.

The first option lets you specify how many months' worth of data should be included when FrontPage calculates usage reports. The second lets you include a chart as part of each report that you save.

Data mining

FrontPage's built-in usage reports provide a wealth of data about who's visiting your site and which pages they're accessing. Coupled with the integrated charting feature, which we'll discuss in a future article, you can use the reports to gain important insights into your site usage and make any tweaks you deem necessary. *

Using default pages to point site visitors in the right direction

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 98/2000/2002

Operating System: Microsoft Windows



Your FrontPage Web may contain dozens, hundreds or even thousands of individual HTML pages, but one of those pages—the default page—is by far the most important. That's because it's the page that the Web server will display if a user types your URL without a specific page name attached. For example, if your home page is *www.myURL.com/index.htm*, users could simply type *www.myURL.com* to access it. In this article, we'll explore some important aspects of defining and using default pages.

What's in a name?

This article will give you a good introduction to naming default pages. We'll tell you which names are most commonly used on which server types and how to change your default page's name if it doesn't match your server's settings.

If you're an experienced Web developer, you may be familiar with these concepts. However, we'll also show you how to use default pages and redirects to protect your directories from prying eyes.

Naming conventions

When it's deciding which page to display by default, the Web server goes through a predetermined list. If it finds a page from that list—*index.htm*, for example—it displays it; otherwise, it displays a list of the files in the site's root directory. The same concept applies to the directories within your site. If a user types *www.myURL.com/images/*, for example, he'll see a list of the files in that directory—unless the server finds a default page there.

Each Web server is configured to look for certain default pages. In general, a Windows server first looks for *Default.htm*; if it can't find that page, it then looks for *Default.html*, *Default.asp*, etc. A UNIX server, on the other hand, first looks for *index.htm* or *index.html*. (Keep in mind that names in UNIX are case-sensitive; *index.htm* isn't the same as *Index.htm*.)

At the same time, your local FrontPage Web has a single page that's designated as the home page. In FrontPage 2000 and 2002, you can tell which page is the home page by viewing the

site's structure in Navigation view; the page's icon includes a small house logo, as shown in **Figure A**. In FrontPage 98, the home page is the page whose icon appears at the top of the directory tree in Navigation view.

So what happens if your home page is named `index.htm` and the Web server is looking for `Default.htm`? If the server has the FrontPage Server Extensions installed, you don't need to worry. When you publish the Web, FrontPage changes the home page's name as needed to match the first name on your server's list of default page names; it also fixes any hyperlinks

to the page. (This only affects the files on the server, not files on your hard drive.) You may not even notice that this is happening, although the message shown in **Figure B** appears briefly during the publishing process.

If your Web server doesn't have the extensions installed, you'll need to check with your Web presence provider and find out what you should name your default page. If you're using the wrong name, you'll need to change the page's name in FrontPage.

To do so, right-click on the page in Folders view and choose `Rename` from the shortcut menu. Depending on your site and your version of FrontPage, several dialog boxes may appear. The first (which only appears in FrontPage 2002) warns you that you're renaming your home page, as shown in **Figure C**; click `Yes`. If you're changing the page's file extension, another dialog box warns you that doing so may make the file unusable. Click `Yes` here as well. Finally, you may be asked if you want to update any hyperlinks to the page; again, click `Yes`.

Directory assistance

Default pages do more than just get users into your Web site. They also keep users out of parts of your site they shouldn't view.

Let's assume, for example, that your Web includes the standard images directory. Depending on your server's configuration, a user typing `www.myURL.com/images/` in the browser could end up viewing a directory listing like the one in **Figure D**. At best, such a listing can confuse site visitors; at worst, it can allow them to poke around parts of your site they shouldn't see.

Fortunately, the solution is simple: Just add a default page to each directory in your Web. Each page should have the same name as your Web's home page.

In some cases, you may want these default pages to contain actual content. In other cases, however, you'll simply want to redirect users to another page. In the latter case, open the directory's default page in FrontPage's HTML mode and add the following code just before the `</head>` tag:

```
<meta http-equiv="refresh" content="0;
URL=../index.html">
```

This meta tag tells the browser to load the page `index.html`, which is located in the parent directory of the current directory. The redirect happens in zero seconds, so the transition is virtually seamless.

If you aren't comfortable specifying the rela-

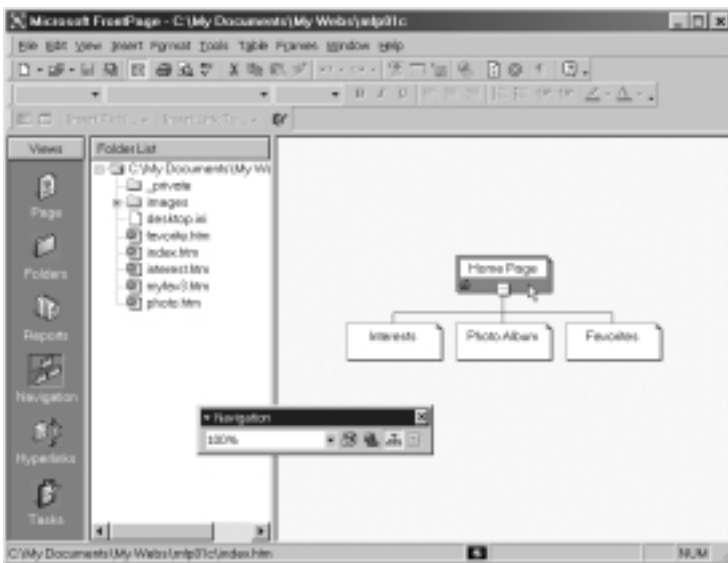


Figure A: FrontPage 2000 and 2002 indicate the home page with a special icon.

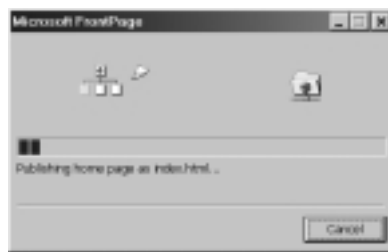


Figure B: If the server extensions are present, FrontPage automatically renames your home page to match the server's configuration.

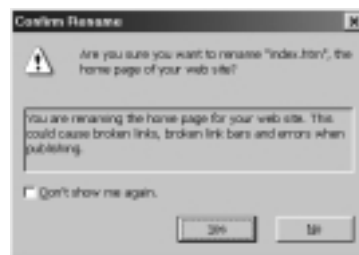


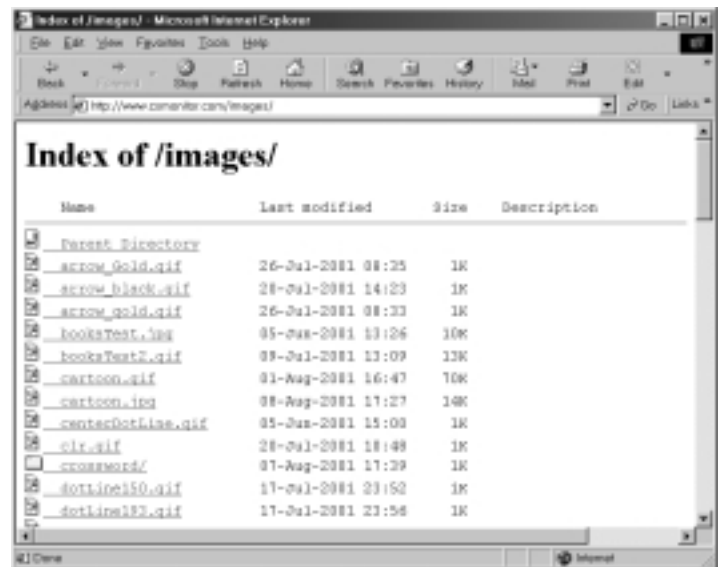
Figure C: FrontPage warns you when you try to rename the home page.

tive URL of the page to which users should be redirected, you can instead specify an absolute URL: <http://www.myURL.com/index.html>, for example.

Home sweet home page

When the Web was new, most users carefully typed in every URL exactly as presented, such as <http://www.myURL.com/index.html>. These days, however, they're likely to type *myURL.com* and expect the correct page to appear. That's why it's more important now than ever to specify the correct default page in your Web—and in all the directories within your Web. *

Figure D: If no default page appears in a directory, users may well see a listing like this.



Creating an invisible hit counter in FrontPage

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 98/2000/2002

Operating System: Microsoft Windows

In the parlance of the moment, hit counters are *so* yesterday. While it was once popular to trumpet your site's popularity (or lack thereof) on your home page, many people now consider hit counters to be a hallmark of amateur Web-site design, much like blinking "Under Construction" images.

That's not to say that hit counters are completely useless, however. In fact, by making your hit counters invisible, you can silently gather hit data while keeping your pages free of visual clutter. We'll show you how in this article.

Counter-intuitive

If you're familiar with the Hit Counter component, you can still read through this article to learn how to substitute invisible digits for the digits FrontPage ordinarily uses. If you've never used hit counters before, we'll give you a quick introduction.

We'll begin by explaining how FrontPage uses counter images and where it stores counter data. Then, we'll show you how to specify a custom—and invisible—counter image. Finally,



Figure A: FrontPage uses images like this to display hit data.

we'll explain how to check the counter results from within FrontPage.

Getting started

While you might think it takes 10 separate digit images to create a hit counter, FrontPage actually uses a single image like the one shown in **Figure A**. The program slices this image into 10 equal pieces on the fly, using the first slice for 0, the second slice for 1, etc. To implement our technique, we'll use a transparent GIF image that has a height and a width of just one pixel instead of an image like the one shown in the figure. FrontPage will still slice and display this image, but site visitors won't notice it.

You can create a transparent one-pixel-square GIF image in your favorite image-editing program, or you can simply download [blank.gif](#)

from our FTP site at ftp.elementkjournals.com/mfp/blank.gif. Once you've downloaded the image, import it into your Web's images folder.

Next, you must add a hit counter to your page and access the Hit Counter Properties dialog box, shown in **Figure B**. Doing so requires slightly different steps depending on your version of FrontPage. In FrontPage 98 Editor, choose Insert | FrontPage Component; in the dialog box that appears, double-click Hit Counter. In FrontPage 2000, choose Insert | Component | Hit Counter. In FrontPage 2002, choose Insert | Web Component; in the dialog box that appears, select Hit Counter and click Finish.

At this point, the Hit Counter Properties dialog box appears. Notice that you have five counter styles to choose from—as well as the

option to specify a custom picture. It's that last option that we'll use to create our invisible counter.

Enable the Custom Picture radio button and type `images/blank.gif` in the text box. Click OK to close the dialog box and publish the Web to a live server.

Note: If your image has a different name or is stored in a different folder, you'll need to modify this relative URL. Always specify the image's location relative to the Web's root directory—not to the directory in which the current page is located. For example, if `blank.gif` is stored in the images directory and you've added a hit counter to `www.myURL.com/pages/index.htm`, you'd still enter `images/blank.gif` in the Hit Counter Properties dialog box.

In Normal mode, you'll see a [Hit Counter] placeholder, but this placeholder won't appear when you view the page in the browser. Instead, FrontPage will generate a hit counter, which will of course be invisible, using `blank.gif`.

Hidden in plain sight

Now, you may be wondering how you can check your new hit counter's value. After all, if the counter is invisible to your site visitors, it's also invisible to you! The trick here is to check the file where FrontPage stores your counter's current value—and to do that you must make this hidden file visible.

Choose Web Settings from the Tools menu and switch to the Advanced property sheet, shown in **Figure C**. Depending on your version of FrontPage, you'll see a check box labeled Show Documents In Hidden Directories or Show Hidden Files And Folders. Enable this check box and click OK.

Now, in Folders view, open the `_private` folder. There, you'll find a file named `index.htm.cnf`, where `index.htm` is the name of the page that contains the hit counter. (If the page that contains the counter is stored within a subfolder of your Web, you'll find a corresponding subfolder in the `_private` folder; open it to find the counter file.) Right-click on this file and choose Open With. In the Open With Editor dialog box that appears, double-click on `notepad.exe`. The counter file opens in Notepad, as shown in **Figure D**, allowing you to check your counter's current value.

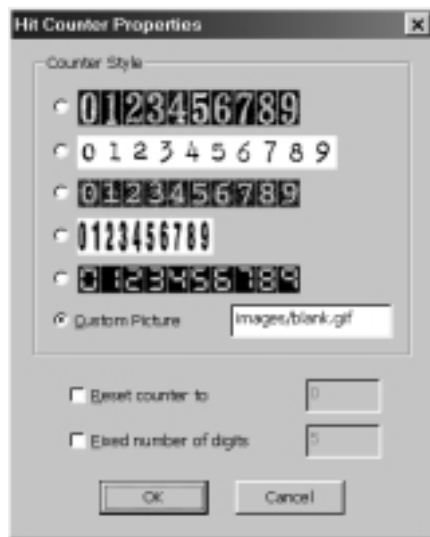


Figure B: Specify `blank.gif` as the source for your counter digits.

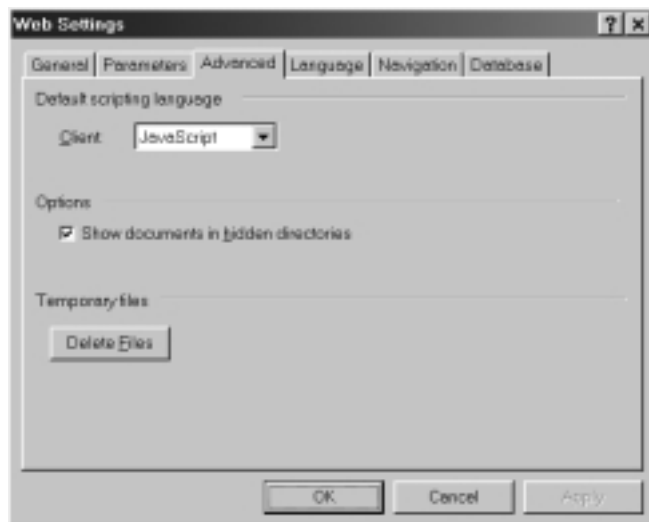
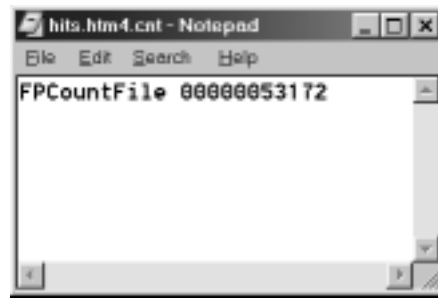


Figure C: To check your counter, you must be able to view hidden files and folders.

The FrontPage hit parade

While not as valuable as the usage analysis reports that FrontPage 2002 introduces, hit counters are still a useful way to get a quick sense of the number of users who are visiting a specific page. By making your hit counters invisible, as we've described in this article, you can continue tracking hits without displaying a hit counter on your pages. *

Figure D: View the configuration file in Notepad to see your current hit total.



Customize your FrontPage 98 site's look with a custom theme

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 98

Operating System: Microsoft Windows

When it released FrontPage 2000, Microsoft added the ability to edit themes within the program. What many FrontPage 98 users didn't realize—and perhaps still don't—is that you can also edit that version's themes. All you have to do is install a program called Theme Designer, which is found on your FrontPage 98 CD-ROM.

To install the program, insert the CD-ROM and locate the program `tdsetup.exe`. It will be in the `D:\SDK\Themes\Designer` directory, where `D:` is your CD-ROM drive. Launch this program and confirm that you want to install the Microsoft FrontPage Theme Designer. Installation takes just a moment. The next time you launch FrontPage Explorer, you'll find a Show Theme Designer command on the Tools menu.

Choose this command to launch the Theme Designer, shown in Figure A. The program shows a sample of whichever theme you select, much like the Choose Theme dialog box does.

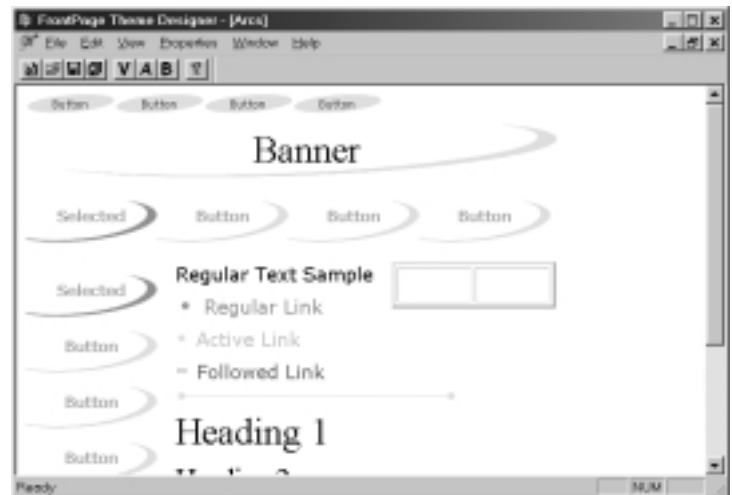


Figure A: The separate FrontPage Theme Designer lets you edit FrontPage 98 themes.

Double-click on whichever element you want to change, and adjust the settings in the dialog box that appears. *

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Features that require server extensions

by Mark Ray

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 98/2000/2002
Operating System: Microsoft Windows

I've just upgraded to FrontPage 2002 and want to use the new Photo Gallery component in my Web. Unfortunately, my hosting company uses nothing but UNIX servers; since the SharePoint extensions only run on Windows 2000, their tech support people say I can't use the Photo Gallery component. Is that correct?

Austin Steinholder

Actually, they are wrong on two counts. First (and most pertinent to your question), the Photo Gallery component doesn't require any form of server extensions. In fact, it will even work on a disk-based Web.

Note: For an introduction to the Photo Gallery component, see the article "Build a flashy online photo album in a flash" in the November 2001 issue of *Inside Microsoft FrontPage*.

Second, like many people, your tech support folks are confusing the FrontPage Server Extensions with SharePoint Team Services. SharePoint Team Services—which does run exclusively under Windows 2000—is only required if you're creating a team Web or using such SharePoint features as discussion boards, document libraries and surveys. The FrontPage Server Extensions, on the other hand, are required for such features as hit counters, usage analysis reports and search forms.

To make things more complicated, Microsoft releases a new version of the FrontPage Server Extensions with each new version of FrontPage.

If your hosting company is still running the 2000 version of the extensions, you won't be able to use new FrontPage 2002 features like custom link bars, although you'll still be able to use hit counters and other older features.

Note: For more information about SharePoint, see the article "Introducing SharePoint Team Services" in the August 2001 issue of *Inside Microsoft FrontPage*.

So how can you tell which features require which set of extensions? The Microsoft Knowledge Base includes several helpful articles on the subject:

FrontPage 2002

<http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q281/5/32.asp>

FrontPage 2000

<http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q232/5/24.asp>

FrontPage 98

<http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q194/0/51.asp>

If you're specifically interested in FrontPage 2002, you might also want to review the article at <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/Q281/5/95.asp>. It describes each of the new features in the latest version of FrontPage and also specifies whether each requires an extended server.

Distinguishing between paragraph and line breaks

Application: Microsoft FrontPage 98/2000/2002
Operating System: Microsoft Windows

When I'm typing in FrontPage and press the [Enter] key, the program adds an extra space between my paragraphs. I read on the Web that you can press [Shift][Enter] instead to get rid of that space,

but when I do that, I have trouble with paragraph alignment. Why is that, and what can I do about it?

William Lord

To understand what's going on here, it's helpful to turn on paragraph marks in FrontPage. You can do this by clicking the Show All button (¶) on the Standard toolbar. (The button is called Show/Hide ¶ in FrontPage 98.)

A section of text preceded by a paragraph mark (¶) can have its own formatting, but a section of text preceded by a line-break mark (↵) adopts the formatting of the previous paragraph. If you want one paragraph to be right-aligned, for example, and the next to be centered, you must press [Enter]—not [Shift][Enter]—between the paragraphs.

As you've discovered, doing so adds extra space between the paragraphs, which may not be desirable. To get rid of this space in FrontPage 2000 or 2002, select both paragraphs and choose Paragraph from the Format menu. In the Paragraph dialog box that appears, shown in **Figure A**, enter 0 in the Before and After text boxes in the Spacing section. Click OK to continue.

The procedure is a little trickier in FrontPage 98. Select the paragraphs as before and choose Paragraph from the Format menu. In the Paragraph Properties dialog box that appears, click Style to access the Style dialog box. Then, switch to the Alignment properties sheet. Enter 0 in the Top and Bottom text boxes in the Margins section and click OK twice.

If you're using FrontPage 2002, your pages may include line breaks disguised as paragraph marks. How could that be? When you paste text from another program into FrontPage, a smart tag appears, as **Figure B** shows. If you choose the Keep Text Only option, FrontPage converts all the paragraph marks in the text to double line breaks. The visual effect is the same—paragraphs separated by an extra space—but it's impossible to format the paragraphs independently. Fortunately, it's relatively easy to go back and replace the line breaks with paragraph marks. *

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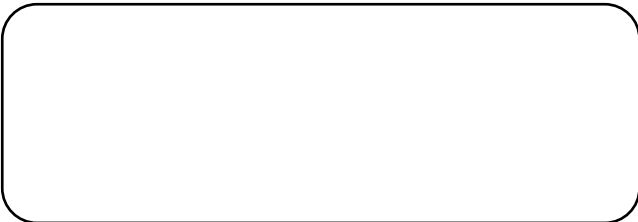
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