

## ***7 Steps to a Backstage Internet Studio 2 Website***

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This article will demonstrate how simple it is to create a Macromedia Backstage Internet Studio 2 website with full functionality and without needing to learn one whit of HTML code tags or how to write CGI scripts. The beauty of Backstage 2 is its ease of code creation via Wizards and simple, pre-programmed client/server interaction via Backstage Objects. This article will concentrate on stepping you through the process via screenshots since creating a website with Backstage 2 is a visual and no-coding-needed process.

Please note that at the time this article was written, Backstage Internet Studio 2 wasn't even in its first public beta, so some features in the screenshots may appear dimmed or unavailable. This won't be the case with the shipping product. In order to bring you the latest information here in *Web Techniques*, Macromedia was kind enough to send me a pre-beta Engineer's build to example the new features of Backstage 2 for you. While Backstage Internet Studio 2 includes Macromedia's xRes for image creation and editing and Macromedia's AppletAce and PowerApplets for easy creation of powerful Java plug-ins, we won't address those programs specifically here since they are complicated and robust enough to deserve articles of their own.

Now it's time to power pack a single web page into a fully dynamic website with Macromedia's Backstage Internet Studio 2 in 7 Simple Steps.

### **Step One: Crank It Up!**

Open up the Backstage 2 Designer program and you're instantly presented with a user-friendly environment for creating a new website. I won't use a background image since that makes the base design harder to see and illustrate in these screenshots. Since Backstage is a WYSIWYG program, just start typing your text. We'll create a site for *Books to Donuts!* the only bookstore in the world where you can page through the layers of a puff pastry and dip into an index at the same time.

(Insert dbFIG-01.bmp) Legend: Figure 1 demonstrates the opening page of the Backstage Internet Studio 2 website with WYSIWYG headline and text insertion.

Adding formatting and color to the text is as simple as clicking on the painter's palette on the toolbar.

### Step Two: Inserting Applets, Plug-Ins and Components

Next, we need to add some functionality and inspiration for the eye and ear to our site. Backstage Internet Studio 2 provides native interactivity for adding Java applets, Netscape Plug-Ins and Microsoft ActiveX components. You click on the coffee cup button on the toolbar to add Java; click on the puzzle piece to insert a plug-ins; touch the big blue AX@ and an ActiveX component can zap into place.

(Insert dbFIG-02.bmp) Legend: Figure 2 shows how Backstage Internet Studio 2 is able to simultaneously support Java, Plug-Ins, and ActiveX.

The Java, Plug-In and ActiveX images you see are only placeholders. They don't do anything yet. In order to make them fire with functionality, you need to double-click on the image. I'll double-click on the Netscape Plug-In image, so we can add a Macromedia Shockwave feature.

(Insert dbFIG-03.bmp) Legend: Figure 3 B The Netscape Plug-In window.

After double-clicking on the Netscape Plug-In, you're presented with a new tabbed window that will help you find and setup your plug-in. When you've completed all the setup tasks and closed the Plug-In window, Backstage Internet Studio 2 indicates that the Plug-In is now active by highlighting the placeholder with a thick, black, border. That border will always be your clue as to which applets, plug-ins and components you've coded and which you haven't.

(Insert dbFIG-04.bmp) Legend: Figure 4 B The border around the Netscape Plug-In placeholder indicates it has been properly setup.

Macromedia will offer a ganglia of pre-programmed Shockwave Plug-Ins on the Backstage Internet Studio 2 CD-ROM that you can add to your website out of the blocks.

### Step Three: Forms Wizardry

The Backstage Internet Studio 2 Database Forms Wizard is an exceptionally powerful tool for easily obtaining, storing, and managing important information on the client and server side of your site. With the Backstage Internet Studio 2 server extensions installed, you can create powerful CGI interaction without coding one line. When you select Insert | Form | Form Wizard from the menu bar, you're set to setup ODBC interactivity.

(Insert dbFIG-05.bmp) Legend: Figure 5 B The welcome screen for the Backstage 2 Database Forms Wizard informs you just what is required to get started.

The Wizard steps you through each moment of the process and gives you full control over the look, feel, and format of the form. We'll add a Search and Request form or our Books to Donuts! website so our visitors can see what books we have in stock by querying our online database. You simply check the fields you want included in the form.


(Insert dbFIG-06.bmp) Legend: Figure 6 B Check the box of the form field you want to include.

When the Wizard is finished, your new database form is placed within your site automatically. Here's how our Books to Donuts! is shaping up:

(Insert dbFIG-07.bmp) Legend: Figure 7CHere's how our site looks with the searchable Author's form added.

Even though Backstage Internet Studio 2 is a WYSIWYG editor, you can still check the structure of your site and also your base HTML code if you like and, if you an old code-head like me, this capability is welcome.

#### Step Four: Peek and Verify!

Taking a look at the skeleton of your site is a good way for the web professional to get an overall relational view of how the page is coming together. The web design amateur can also learn from Backstage Internet Studio 2's ability to show you the subcore of your site. Click on the  icon in the toolbar and you'll get the document branch structure.

(Insert dbFIG-08.bmp) Legend: Figure 8 B This is the document tree of our website.

You can also go into a raw notepad-like HTML window to edit the source code by hand. Click on the paper and pencil icon in the toolbar and you're able to eye the underpinnings of your website. You can keep the changes, print the source code or discard any changes made in this view.

(Insert dbFIG-09.bmp) Legend: Figure 9 B You can edit your HTML source code by hand if you like in Backstage Internet Studio 2.

Many WYSIWYG editors never let you manipulate the base HTML code because they're afraid you will be frightened by its ugliness or overwhelmed with ASCII nightmares from the old DOS days. For those of us who like get into the base code quickly, Backstage 2 provides that basic feature right on the toolbar.

#### Step Five: Embedding Backstage Objects


Now let's pull down Insert | Backstage Object from the file menu, and we'll add a pre-programmed Backstage Object to your site. Backstage Objects let you seamlessly add some magic to your site: You can add page hit counters, tables, a discussion group and other action links. I added a Content Generator script that will display my visitor's browser information (their IP address, their browser ID string and number of visits previously to my site) when they land on my site.

(Insert dbFIG-10.bmp) Legend: Figure 10 B Click on the INSERT button to add a

Backstage Content generator to your website.

The beauty of Backstage Objects is that all the guesswork has been taken out of getting these high end smart site features on your homepage. You just decide what you want, then pick, then click and you're good to go.


#### Step Six: Hyperlinking

The  button with the blue underline on the Backstage Internet Studio 2 toolbar is the way you bring up a property window for setting Hyperlinks. You can make a standard web link or create an internal Backstage hyperlink.

(Insert dbFIG-11.bmp) Legend: Figure 11  This is the Backstage Internet Studio 2 hyperlink properties window.

This property window also is your key into hyperlinking and chaining Backstage Objects together. You could create a Backstage Object hit counter that, when it reached a certain number, would then fire your visitor to another page congratulating them on being the one millionth visitor to your site.


#### Step Seven: Image Mapping

Take a graphic, any graphic, and let Backstage Internet Studio 2 make an image map out of it for use on your website! Click on the  icon in the toolbar to insert your image. Then, as you did with your Plug-In placeholder, double-click on the image to bring up the Backstage 2 Image Map Editor.

(Insert dbFIG-12.bmp) Legend: Figure 11  The Backstage 2 Image Map Editor is simple and powerful to use.

I pulled in the main graphic for one of my other sites so I can add it as an image map full of hotlinks from our Books to Donuts! site. Each letter in my name is a hyperlink to a different page. You can select image map target areas with a square, a circle or random points along a radical shape. When you're finished, click the SAVE button and Backstage Internet Studio 2 will register the image map hotspots on your page and place the graphic on your page.

#### Step Eight (Extra Credit): Congrats!

Oh, I suppose isn't really a step! It's stop for congratulations! In 7 steps we created a simple single page in Backstage Internet Studio 2 that is packed with functionality, information. Our site is pleasing to the visitor's eye as well as the webmaster's aesthetic. Just think of the things you could do with several more pages filled with this sort of dynamic content  and then chaining them all together via Backstage 2 Object hyperlinks!

Backstage Internet Studio 2 is available in the Desktop Edition and the Enterprise Edition. The Desktop Edition works with desktop-based databases, including Microsoft Access, Excel, FoxPro, dBase and Paradox to help you easily create database-driven

websites. The Enterprise Edition works with client-server databases, extending the power of Backstage to handle large scale enterprise applications. Backstage Internet Studio 2 builds on top of existing business infrastructure by integrating Web sites with Oracle, Sybase, Informix and Microsoft SQL servers.

The Backstage Internet Studio includes the Backstage Designer, Backstage Manager, Backstage Objects and Backstage Object Server:

Backstage Designer is a WYSIWYG HTML editor that includes table editing and all popular word processor-style features so you don't need to learn a new toolbar or interface feature to get going fast. AppletAce and Java-based PowerApplets are integrated with Backstage Designer to quickly get you up and slamming with jolts of Java on your website. Wizards you create database connected forms and ActiveX and Netscape Plug-Ins simply by clicking pre-programmed buttons on the toolbar.

Backstage Manager brings you project-level maintenance to manage multiple sites. Through drag-and-drop editing, pages can be easily re-organized and hyperlinks automatically checked and validated. Backstage Manager incorporates a built-in visual FTP client for remote management of a website.

Backstage Server works in concert with any Web server to deliver customized Web pages tailored to each site visitor. Backstage Internet Studio 2's powerful database communications features allow you to design sites that gather data from a variety of enterprise applications, such as accounting, workflow and customer information systems, and deliver dynamic content to your visitors.

Backstage Objects build sophisticated Web-based business applications without programming or complicated scripts. Sixteen objects provide database access and interfaces, threaded discussion groups, security authentication, e-mail forms, conditional includes, and more. If your background is highly technical, you can increase the power of Backstage Internet Studio 2 by writing new Backstage objects using the Backstage XDK (xTtras Developer Kit) for highly customized applications. Part of the Macromedia Studios Open Architecture, the XDK provides a framework for additional database connectivity, dynamic Web page creation, and multi-page session management.

Backstage Internet Studio also includes Macromedia xRes, a powerful tool for creating and editing Web site images. xRes has all the features needed for the Web such as support for GIF and JPEG formats, transparencies and color reduction. Web page templates, clip art and Shockwave movie libraries further help to magnify your online productivity.

#### Pricing and Availability

The Backstage Internet Studio 2 is available now in North America. The Desktop Edition is priced at U.S. \$299 and the Enterprise Edition is U.S. \$999. Current users of Backstage 1.0 products can upgrade to the Backstage Internet Studio Desktop Edition for US \$99 and the Backstage Internet Studio Enterprise Edition for US \$499. The Backstage Internet

Studio is available for Windows 95, Windows NT 3.51 or greater. To order, please call (800) 288-8108, ext. 2608. Interested parties outside North America should contact their local Macromedia distributor for pricing and availability.