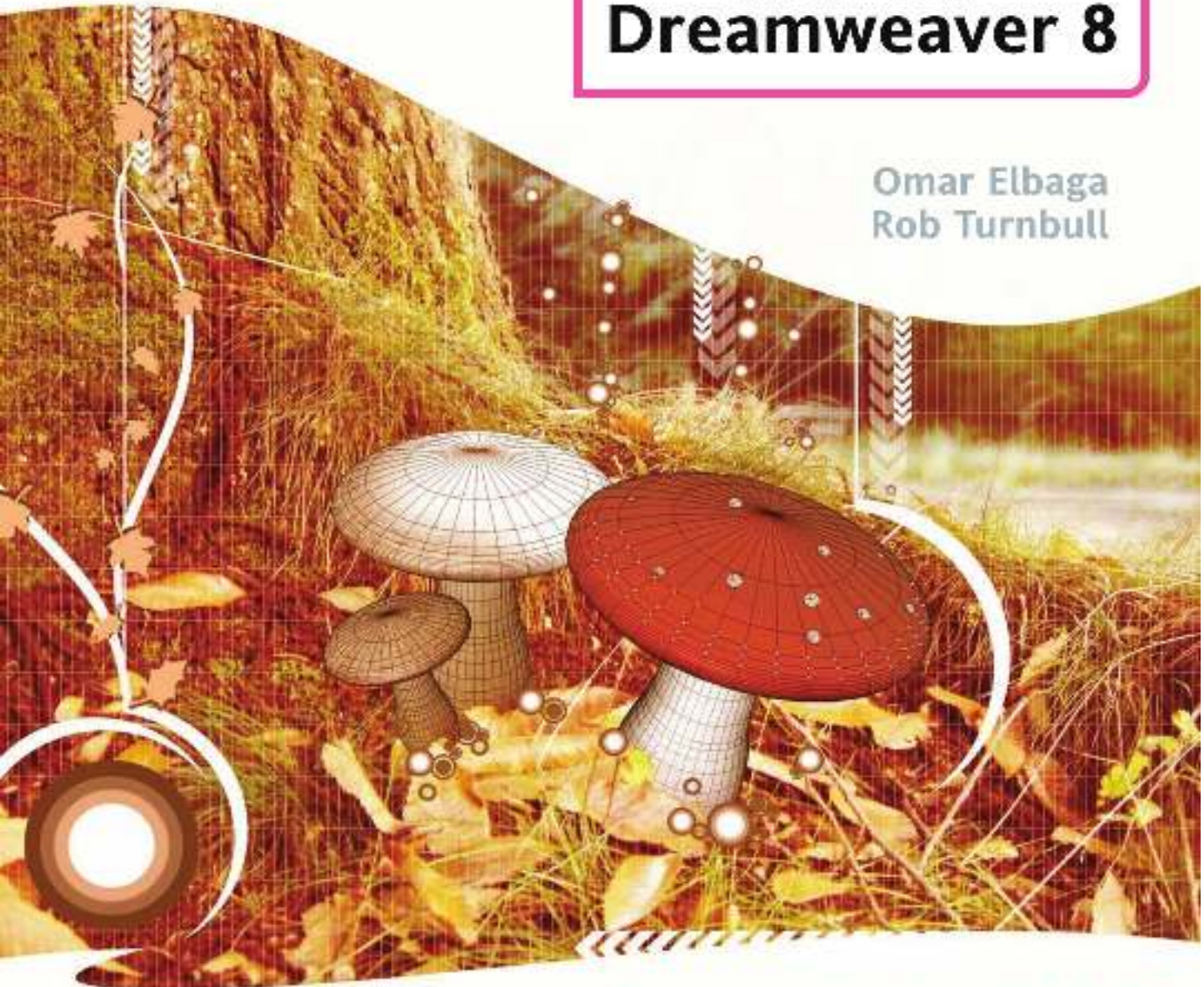


Foundation

# ASP for Dreamweaver 8

Omar Elbaga  
Rob Turnbull



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# Foundation ASP for Dreamweaver 8

Omar Elbaga and Rob Turnbull



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# Foundation ASP for Dreamweaver 8

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ISBN (pbk): 978-1-59059-568-8

ISBN (pbk): 1-59059-568-8

Printed and bound in the United States of America 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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For information on translations, please contact Apress directly at 2560 Ninth Street, Suite 219, Berkeley, CA 94710. Phone 510-549-5930, fax 510-549-5939, e-mail [info@apress.com](mailto:info@apress.com), or visit [www.apress.com](http://www.apress.com).

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*I would like to dedicate this book to my mom; dad; brothers and sister, Tamer, Hesham, Soliman, and Yasmine; my fiancée, Mona; my entire family; and all my faithful readers.*

*—Omar Elbaga*

*This book is dedicated to my family and friends who always support me. Special thanks go to baby Theo who always puts an even bigger than usual smile on my face.*

*—Rob Turnbull*

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## CONTENTS AT A GLANCE

---

<b>About the Authors</b> .....	<b>xiv</b>
<b>About the Technical Reviewer</b> .....	<b>xv</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>xvii</b>
Chapter 1 <b>Dreamweaver and Dynamic Sites</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Chapter 2 <b>The Dreamweaver Environment</b> .....	<b>19</b>
Chapter 3 <b>A First Taste of ASP</b> .....	<b>45</b>
Chapter 4 <b>Databases</b> .....	<b>83</b>
Chapter 5 <b>Working with Forms</b> .....	<b>133</b>
Chapter 6 <b>Building a Random Quote Generator</b> .....	<b>175</b>
Chapter 7 <b>Completing the Quotes Administration System</b> .....	<b>195</b>
Chapter 8 <b>Restricting Access</b> .....	<b>223</b>
Chapter 9 <b>Creating a Blog</b> .....	<b>245</b>
Chapter 10 <b>Image Gallery</b> .....	<b>287</b>
<b>Index</b> .....	<b>327</b>

---

# CONTENTS

---

<b>About the Authors</b> . . . . .	<b>xiv</b>
<b>About the Technical Reviewer</b> . . . . .	<b>xv</b>
<b>Acknowledgments</b> . . . . .	<b>xvi</b>
<b>Introduction</b> . . . . .	<b>xvii</b>
<b>Chapter 1 Dreamweaver and Dynamic Sites</b> . . . . .	<b>1</b>
Data exchange . . . . .	2
Dynamic takes over static . . . . .	7
Dreamweaver server models . . . . .	7
The ASP VBScript server model . . . . .	7
What Dreamweaver 8 offers you as an ASP developer . . . . .	9
Checking out data . . . . .	9
Connecting to databases . . . . .	9
Where is ASP in Dreamweaver? . . . . .	10
ASP features supported by Dreamweaver . . . . .	10
Insert bar . . . . .	11
The Insert bar's ASP tab . . . . .	12
The Insert bar's Application tab . . . . .	14
Application panel . . . . .	16
The Databases tab . . . . .	16
The Bindings tab . . . . .	16
Conclusion . . . . .	17
<b>Chapter 2 The Dreamweaver Environment</b> . . . . .	<b>19</b>
Workspace layout . . . . .	19
The Multiple Document Interface . . . . .	20
The CSS panel . . . . .	21
The Application panel group . . . . .	22
The Databases panel . . . . .	22
The Bindings panel . . . . .	23
The Server Behaviors panel . . . . .	24
The Tag Inspector panel group . . . . .	25
The Attributes panel . . . . .	26
The Behaviors panel . . . . .	26

The Files panel group . . . . .	27
The Files panel . . . . .	27
The Assets panel . . . . .	28
The Snippets panel . . . . .	28
The Properties panel . . . . .	29
The Results panel group . . . . .	30
The Search panel . . . . .	30
The Validation panel . . . . .	30
The Target Browser Check panel . . . . .	31
The Link Checker panel . . . . .	31
The Site Reports panel . . . . .	31
The FTP Log panel . . . . .	31
The Server Debug panel . . . . .	32
The Reference panel . . . . .	32
Toolbars . . . . .	32
The Insert toolbar/panel group . . . . .	32
The Document toolbar . . . . .	33
The Standard toolbar . . . . .	35
The Style Rendering toolbar . . . . .	35
The Coding toolbar . . . . .	36
New tools in Design view . . . . .	37
Zoom . . . . .	37
Magnification . . . . .	37
Hand . . . . .	37
Guides . . . . .	37
Defining an ASP VBScript site in Dreamweaver . . . . .	39
Local Info screen . . . . .	39
Remote Info screen . . . . .	40
Testing Server screen . . . . .	41
Creating the site . . . . .	42
Conclusion . . . . .	43
<b>Chapter 3 A First Taste of ASP . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>
Specify your language: VBScript . . . . .	46
ASP delimiters <% %> . . . . .	46
Insensitive case! . . . . .	47
Variables . . . . .	48
Declaring and printing variables . . . . .	49
Letting VBScript declare variables implicitly . . . . .	52
Syntax rules for variables . . . . .	52
Data types: string, integer, and Boolean . . . . .	52
Variable concatenation . . . . .	54
Watching out for “adding” numbers . . . . .	55
Variable naming conventions . . . . .	56
Prefixes . . . . .	56
Using understandable variable names . . . . .	56
Commenting code . . . . .	57

VBScript's house of built-in functions . . . . .	58
Conversion functions . . . . .	58
String functions . . . . .	59
Operators . . . . .	61
Assignment operators . . . . .	62
Logical operators . . . . .	62
AND, OR . . . . .	62
NOT . . . . .	63
Comparison operators . . . . .	64
Mathematical operators . . . . .	65
Operator precedence . . . . .	66
Conditional logic . . . . .	68
The If statement . . . . .	68
The If . . . Then . . . Else statement . . . . .	69
The If . . . Then . . . Elself statement . . . . .	69
Looping logic . . . . .	71
The Do . . . Loop statement . . . . .	71
The While . . . Wend statement . . . . .	72
Cookies (ASP cookies, not chocolate chip!) . . . . .	72
Response.Cookies and Request.Cookies . . . . .	73
Cookie expiration . . . . .	75
Updating cookies . . . . .	75
Deleting cookies . . . . .	76
A word of warning about the use of cookies . . . . .	76
Session variables . . . . .	76
Setting the session timeout interval . . . . .	77
Creating and retrieving session variables . . . . .	77
Updating session variables . . . . .	78
Deleting session variables . . . . .	78
Note on sessions . . . . .	79
Environment variables . . . . .	79
Conclusion . . . . .	81
<b>Chapter 4 Databases . . . . .</b>	<b>83</b>
Creating a database . . . . .	84
Inside Microsoft Access . . . . .	84
Inside Microsoft SQL Server . . . . .	85
Preparing a SQL Server database for Internet use . . . . .	88
Creating the IUSR account in SQL Server . . . . .	89
Database design . . . . .	91
Object naming conventions . . . . .	91
Creating tables . . . . .	92
Creating tables in Access . . . . .	93
Creating tables in SQL Server . . . . .	95
Relational databases and referential integrity . . . . .	97
Creating a relationship in Access . . . . .	98
Creating a relationship in SQL Server . . . . .	100
SQL Server views and Access queries . . . . .	102



Fundamental SQL . . . . .	103
Selecting all records from a table . . . . .	104
Selecting all records that meet one criterion . . . . .	104
Selecting all records that meet several criteria (using AND) . . . . .	105
Selecting records that meet one or more of several criteria (using OR) . . . . .	105
Useful SQL keywords . . . . .	106
COUNT . . . . .	107
SUM . . . . .	107
TOP . . . . .	108
BETWEEN . . . . .	108
ORDER BY . . . . .	109
IN . . . . .	110
GROUP BY . . . . .	111
DISTINCT . . . . .	112
Going on a DATE . . . . .	113
Making the connection . . . . .	113
Setting up a DSN to an Access database . . . . .	114
Setting up a DSN to a SQL Server database . . . . .	114
Connecting from Dreamweaver . . . . .	115
The Simple Recordset builder . . . . .	116
The Advanced Recordset builder . . . . .	119
Using commands . . . . .	122
Inserting a record . . . . .	124
Updating a record . . . . .	125
Updating multiple records (a simple example) . . . . .	127
Deleting a record . . . . .	128
Deleting multiple records (simple example) . . . . .	129
Conclusion . . . . .	131
<b>Chapter 5 Working with Forms . . . . .</b>	<b>133</b>
Form attributes: Action and Method . . . . .	134
get method . . . . .	134
post method . . . . .	135
Retrieving form values with Request.Form . . . . .	135
Creating sample login forms . . . . .	135
Forms with text box elements . . . . .	136
Forms with list/menu elements . . . . .	137
Menu element selection form with conditional logic . . . . .	138
Forms with check box elements . . . . .	139
Receiving data from a URL parameter . . . . .	141
Retrieving URL parameters with Request.QueryString . . . . .	141
Sending form values to e-mail . . . . .	143
Setting up your SMTP server . . . . .	143
ASP mail components . . . . .	146
General requirements for mail components . . . . .	147
Sending e-mail with mail components . . . . .	148
Sending e-mail with CDO . . . . .	148
Sending mail with AspEmail . . . . .	151
Sending e-mail with JMail . . . . .	154

Dynamic e-mail interaction . . . . .	156
Sending e-mail by hyperlink . . . . .	156
Sending e-mail via a form button . . . . .	158
Making e-mail property values dynamic . . . . .	160
Sending e-mail with dynamic values . . . . .	160
Sending e-mail with dynamic form field values . . . . .	162
Sending a page to a friend . . . . .	164
Real-world examples using forms . . . . .	167
Sending a user a forgotten password . . . . .	167
Creating a mailing list . . . . .	170
Conclusion . . . . .	173
<b>Chapter 6 Building a Random Quote Generator . . . . .</b>	<b>175</b>
Creating the quotes database table . . . . .	176
Building the form . . . . .	177
The Insert Record server behavior . . . . .	179
Adding conditional code . . . . .	180
The Repeat Region server behavior . . . . .	182
The Update Record server behavior . . . . .	186
The Delete Record server behavior . . . . .	189
Conclusion . . . . .	192
<b>Chapter 7 Completing the Quotes Administration System . . . . .</b>	<b>195</b>
Updating the quotes database table . . . . .	196
Author administration . . . . .	199
Building the Insert Author page . . . . .	199
Category administration . . . . .	201
Building the Insert Category page . . . . .	201
Updating the Insert Quote page . . . . .	203
Creating the recordsets . . . . .	203
Building the Authors recordset . . . . .	203
Building the Categories recordset . . . . .	204
Building dynamic select lists . . . . .	204
Updating the Insert server behavior . . . . .	207
Updating the edit page . . . . .	208
Copying recordsets . . . . .	208
Adding authors and categories to the edit page . . . . .	210
Updating the Quotes recordset . . . . .	211
Binding dynamic select lists with a selected item . . . . .	211
Updating the Update server behavior . . . . .	213
The random quote generator . . . . .	214
Creating a join in the database . . . . .	214
Displaying a random quote . . . . .	216
Building the Quotes recordset . . . . .	217
Conclusion . . . . .	220

<b>Chapter 8 Restricting Access</b> . . . . .	<b>223</b>
Creating the administrators database table . . . . .	224
Creating the login system . . . . .	225
Building the login form . . . . .	225
Adding the Log In User server behavior . . . . .	227
Restricting access . . . . .	229
Adding the Log Out User server behavior . . . . .	231
Registering new users . . . . .	233
Checking the new username . . . . .	235
Creating a user-friendly login . . . . .	236
Expanding the Log In User server behavior code . . . . .	237
Implementing the “remember me” feature . . . . .	239
Updating the login form . . . . .	239
Baking the cookies . . . . .	241
Conclusion . . . . .	243
<b>Chapter 9 Creating a Blog</b> . . . . .	<b>245</b>
Blogging application overview . . . . .	246
The database . . . . .	246
The blog display . . . . .	246
Administrative controls . . . . .	247
Administrative login/logout . . . . .	247
The search function . . . . .	247
Creating your blog database . . . . .	247
Creating the database tables . . . . .	249
Table 1: tbl_ones . . . . .	249
Table 2: tbl_users . . . . .	250
Populating the database tables . . . . .	250
Populating tbl_ones . . . . .	251
Populating tbl_users . . . . .	251
Setting user permissions for tables . . . . .	251
Connecting Dreamweaver to your database . . . . .	253
Connection strings . . . . .	253
DSN . . . . .	254
Displaying blog entries . . . . .	255
Creating onews_main.asp . . . . .	255
Designing onews_main.asp . . . . .	256
Wiring up onews_main.asp . . . . .	257
Creating onews_details.asp . . . . .	261
Designing onews_details.asp . . . . .	262
Wiring up onews_details.asp . . . . .	262
Creating onews_archives.asp . . . . .	264
Designing onews_archives.asp . . . . .	264
Wiring up onews_archives.asp . . . . .	265
Blog administration . . . . .	266
Creating onews_admin_archives.asp . . . . .	266
Designing onews_admin_archives.asp . . . . .	267
Wiring up onews_admin_archives.asp . . . . .	268

Creating onews_admin_details.asp . . . . .	270
Designing onews_admin_details.asp . . . . .	271
Wiring up onews_admin_details.asp . . . . .	273
Securing the blog administration pages and creating login/logout functionality . . . . .	276
Designing login.asp . . . . .	277
Wiring up login.asp . . . . .	278
Creating logout.asp . . . . .	279
Searching your blog . . . . .	281
Creating the search form . . . . .	281
Creating the results page . . . . .	281
Designing onews_searchresults.asp . . . . .	283
Wiring up onews_searchresults.asp . . . . .	283
Conclusion . . . . .	285
<b>Chapter 10 Image Gallery . . . . .</b>	<b>287</b>
Overview of the image gallery application . . . . .	287
Storing information in the database . . . . .	288
Inserting, editing, and displaying albums . . . . .	288
Uploading and displaying photos . . . . .	288
Editing captions and deleting photos . . . . .	288
Creating the database for the image gallery . . . . .	289
Table 1: tbl_photoalbums . . . . .	289
Table 2: tbl_photos . . . . .	290
The relationship between tbl_photos and tbl_photoalbums . . . . .	292
Connecting Dreamweaver to your database . . . . .	294
Connection strings . . . . .	294
Data Source Name (DSN) . . . . .	295
Inserting, editing, and displaying albums in the image gallery . . . . .	295
Creating myphotos_main.asp . . . . .	295
Designing the main web page . . . . .	297
Implementing the dynamic features of the main web page . . . . .	298
Creating addalbum.asp . . . . .	301
Designing the Add Album page . . . . .	301
Wiring up the Add Album page . . . . .	302
Creating edit_photo_album.asp . . . . .	304
Implementing the dynamic features . . . . .	304
Creating pages for uploading and displaying photos . . . . .	307
Creating upload.asp . . . . .	307
Designing upload.asp . . . . .	308
Wiring up upload.asp . . . . .	309
Creating upload_action.asp . . . . .	312
Creating the Edit Caption and Delete Photo pages . . . . .	316
Creating edit_caption.asp . . . . .	317
Creating delete_action.asp . . . . .	320
Conclusion . . . . .	322
<b>Index . . . . .</b>	<b>327</b>

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**Omar Elbaga** has been passionately involved in web development for over six years, over which time he has completed several projects for small businesses and nonprofit organizations, including personal sites. He has previously coauthored two books on Dreamweaver web development, and maintains his own Dreamweaver tutorial/resource site, now known as [dmxfire.com](http://dmxfire.com). Because he did not start out as a programmer himself, he has a knack for teaching dynamic web development to those who do not have programming backgrounds.

He is also a postsecondary language arts instructor, artist, independent filmmaker, and graduate student at New Jersey City University, currently finalizing his master thesis as a reading specialist. You can find some of his work in these areas and more information at <http://elbaga.net>.



**Rob Turnbull** is the senior developer for Lighthouse – design for business limited, an established new media design and marketing company based in Shrewsbury, UK. Clients across Europe, from small businesses to blue chip companies, provide an increasing workload, which includes the development of databases, websites, multimedia presentations, interactive CD-ROMs, promotional videos, and 3D artwork (animations and stills).

His personal website, <http://robgt.com>, is primarily focused on offering help and guidance to fellow Dreamweaver users, including tutorials and links to helpful resources and some useful extensions. You'll also find links to relevant books on web development and design, including his three previous books about Dreamweaver.

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## ABOUT THE TECHNICAL REVIEWER

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**Jason Nadon** has been in the information technology field for the past nine years, and building web applications and solutions with Macromedia tools for the past six. He holds several industry certifications and is currently employed by Thomson Creative Solutions as a web services administrator.

Jason also manages the Ann Arbor Area Macromedia User Group and enjoys being an active member of the Macromedia developer community.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Thanks to my mom and dad for raising me, supporting me, and pushing me toward fulfilling all of my educational goals and aspirations. Thanks to Uncle Ibrahim and Uncle Salah for being two of the greatest male role models in my life. Thanks to Aunt Khadiga and Aunt Hanem for being like second mothers to me. Thanks to my classy fiancée, Mona, for always being there, standing beside me and supporting me whether things are up or down, and always making my heart smile. Thanks to my brothers and sister, Tamer, Hesham, Soliman, and Yasmine—I couldn't ask for better siblings to have in my life! Thanks to my baby niece, Safiya; I can't wait to see you grow up. Also, thanks to all spouses and relatives of the people I have mentioned who have also been there for me. Thanks to the true and caring educators who taught me at NJCU, and my sincere and faithful teachers at McNair Academic High School. Thanks to all of my own students at Middlesex County College and Hudson County Community College. Thanks to Ihsan, and all my friends who stand by me; you know who you are. Thanks to you, dear reader, for entrusting me with your learning.

—Omar Elbaga

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# INTRODUCTION

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We're glad you picked up this book to begin learning about building dynamic websites using Dreamweaver 8 with ASP technology. This book is geared for both beginners who know little about dynamic and database-driven websites, and intermediate users who want to begin building more powerful web applications—such as blogs and photo albums—along with working administration systems to effectively manage those data-driven applications.

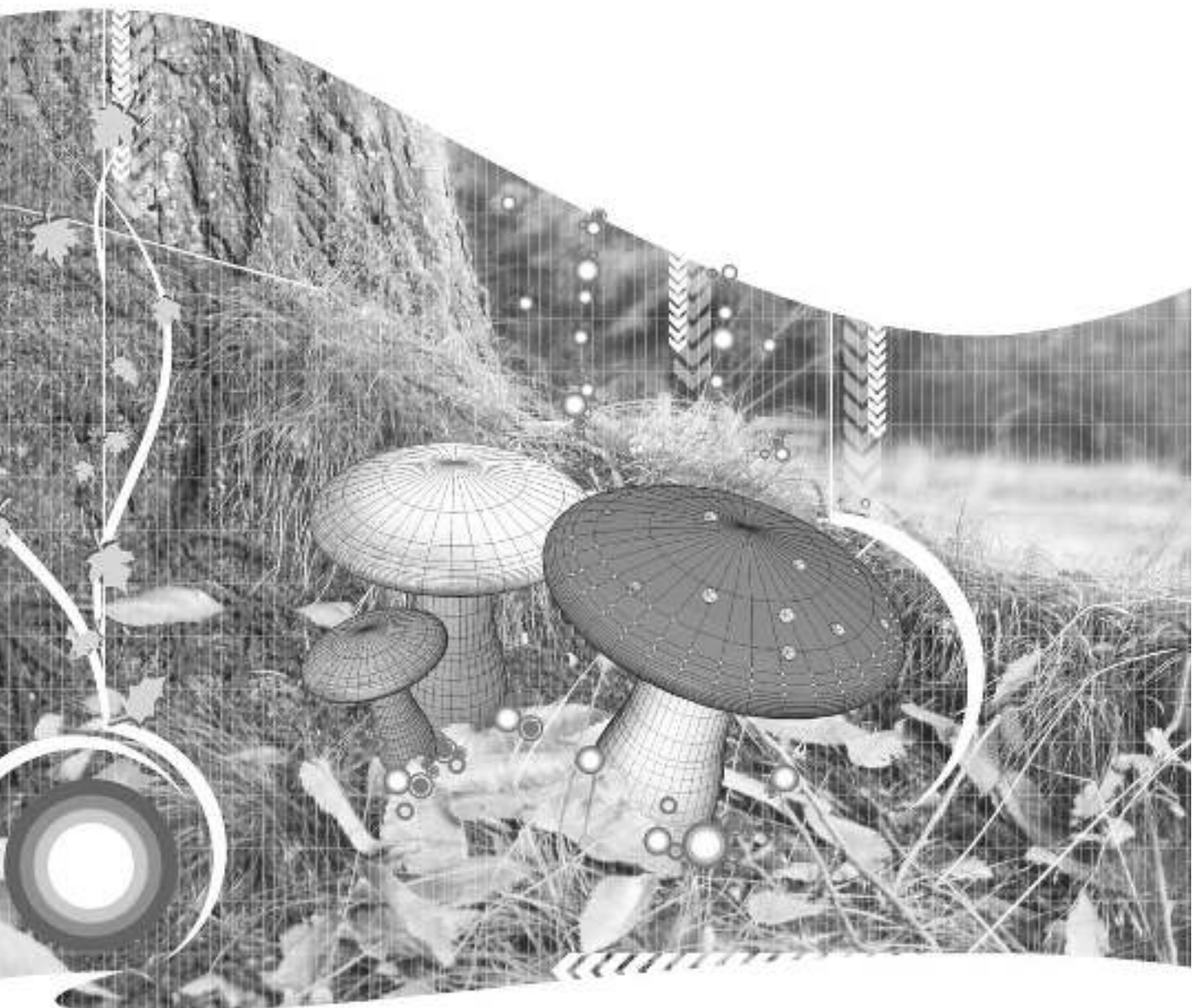
To complete all of the activities in this book, you will only need Dreamweaver 8, a server running Microsoft's classic ASP (Active Server Pages), and Windows 2000 or above. If you do not use the Windows platform, you can run the code remotely, such as on your web host's server—just make sure your web host allows ASP scripts to run on its server.

You should also have either Microsoft Access 97 or higher, or SQL Server 2000 or higher, to build the databases that you will connect your pages to. You can download a 180-day trial of the new SQL Server 2005 at [www.microsoft.com/sql](http://www.microsoft.com/sql). Alternatively, you can make use of the new (and free) Express edition of SQL Server 2005, which is available from the same location. You can also download a 30-day trial of Dreamweaver 8 at [www.macromedia.com](http://www.macromedia.com).

It is possible that throughout your reading of this book, you will have some questions or comments, so feel free to drop the authors a note. Omar Elbaga can be contacted directly through the feedback/contact section of his website, <http://elbaga.net>, and Rob Turnbull can be contacted through the contact form on his website, <http://robgt.com>.

We have written this book for you, and we are here for you. Please give us time to respond due to the large amount of responses we have to deal with. We look forward to helping you learn more about building dynamic websites using Dreamweaver 8 with ASP!







## Chapter 1

# DREAMWEAVER AND DYNAMIC SITES

---

In this chapter, you'll learn about a number of important concepts, including what a dynamic website is and how it's different from a static site, what awesome dynamic features Dreamweaver offers you as a progressing web developer, and how ASP (Active Server Pages) fits into the mix. You'll also discover which ASP features are supported by Dreamweaver, where ASP features are located in Dreamweaver, and how Dreamweaver automates ASP code to create dynamic sites.

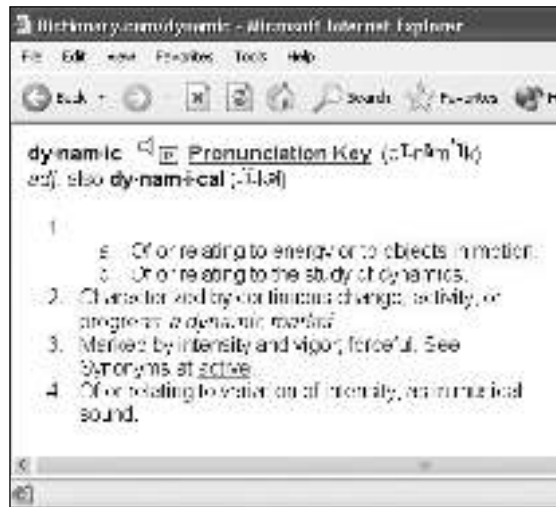
The first thing going through your mind is probably "What in the world is a dynamic website?" Well, I want you to figure this out with me. Take two minutes and jot down some things you know about the word "dynamic." What do you think a dynamic site is? And what do you think it can do? Do that, and then come back and continue reading. Remember, you're thinking of the word "dynamic" in the context of computers and web development.

All right, you're back! That was fast! What did you write down?

If you said something like "strong," you're right. If you said something like "powerful," you're also right; however, these meanings are a little different from what the word "dynamic" means in the context we're talking about. If you said anything like "changing" or "moving," you're right on target—that's exactly what it means!

You can also look it up in the dictionary—if you have access to the Internet, do a quick search at [www.dictionnaire.com](http://www.dictionnaire.com) or <http://m-w.com> (Merriam-Webster Online).

According to the American Heritage Dictionary, dynamic means “characterized by continuous change, activity, or progress.” That’s it! It’s all about change. See Figure 1-1 for further clarification on the definition.



**Figure 1-1.** Here is a screenshot of the definition of the word “Dynamic” at Dictionary.com. “Dynamic” means “changing.”

So sit back, relax, and let’s have some dynamic fun!

The first thing I want you to ask yourself is “What do I personally do with web development now?” and “What more do I want to be able to do?” If you said to yourself that you’re writing back-end database models for Amazon.com, you might want to stop right here!

If you said something like one of the following, though, this book will definitely help you take your web development skills to the next level:

- I am designing websites for myself and family.
- I am working for a company whose managers want me to upgrade the site so that they can begin adding content to the site on their own.
- I want to start doing more dynamic things to my site, such as allowing web surfers to register and log in.
- I want to start collecting information from my site visitors.
- I want to start protecting site content from particular web surfers.

## Data exchange

As a web developer, you need to make your website interesting and interactive. Thus, you need to tailor your website according to the web surfer. Shoving the same static data at all of your users is bound to leave someone (or many people) behind. The greatest problem with a static website is the

simple fact that it doesn't change. Imagine Amazon.com without the personal wish list, or without the capability of tracking your recent purchases, or without the feature that says "Customers interested in this title may also be interested in . . ." Dynamic websites can spontaneously reconstruct themselves according to an individual web surfer's needs. These sites change depending on how each user interacts with them. This is what data exchange is all about, and data exchange is what enables Dreamweaver 8 with ASP to save your website from static doom!

You want to exchange data between yourself and the web surfer; technically, the web surfer's computer will be doing the exchanging. Basic HTML can't handle this kind of data exchange, which is why we now use web programming technologies to do this for us—in our case, the particular technology is ASP. The web programming aspect takes care of all the dynamic stuff and then tells HTML what to print out. So instead of having to tell HTML what to do every time you want to change your data (by recreating HTML web pages), you set up an interactive system in which ASP tells HTML what to do. You're saying, "HTML, we've already designed you. From now on, let ASP deal with you for major changes in terms of data."

Let me show you a quick example. If you've already set up your environment, you should be up and running to view ASP pages on your local server. (You'll learn all about setting up the Dreamweaver environment in Chapter 2.)

1. Load Dreamweaver.
2. Choose File ► New, and select the General tab. Select Basic Page from the Category menu (on the left) and HTML from the Basic page menu (on the right), and click the Create button at the lower right of the window (see Figure 1-2).

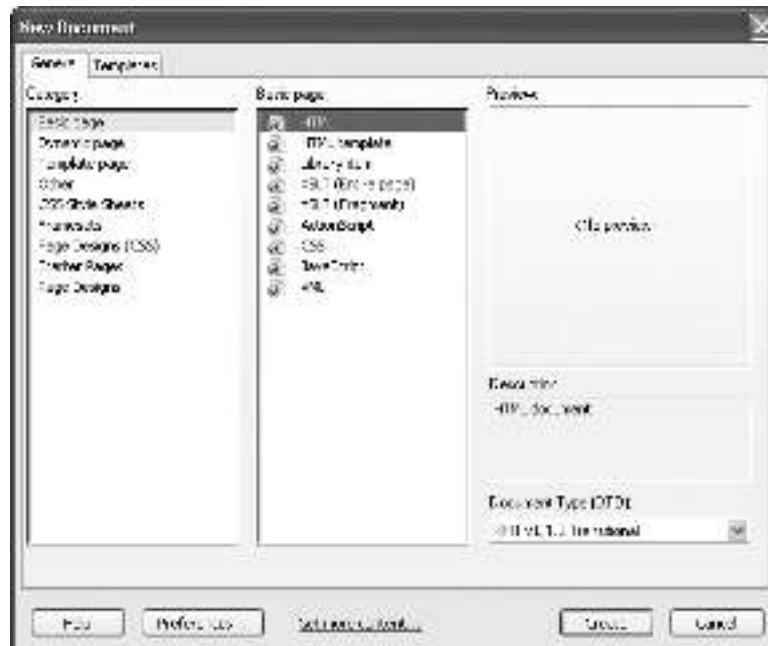


Figure 1-2. View of Dreamweaver's options for creating a new document

3. On your new “basic” page, type in the following message in design view:

Hi, I don't know who you are because I'm just a plain 'ol' HTML web page.

You might want to change the title of your document. I changed the title of my document to Plain 'ol HTML. View the page in your web browser by selecting File ► Save As, naming the file, and finally loading it into your browser. You can also press F12 to have Dreamweaver automatically load the page into your browser (see Figure 1-3).



Figure 1-3. View of static HTML page in the web browser

4. Next, within Dreamweaver, select File ► New. Select the General tab, highlight Dynamic page from the left-hand Category list and ASP VBScript from the right-hand Dynamic page list, and click the Create button at the lower right of the window (see Figure 1-4).

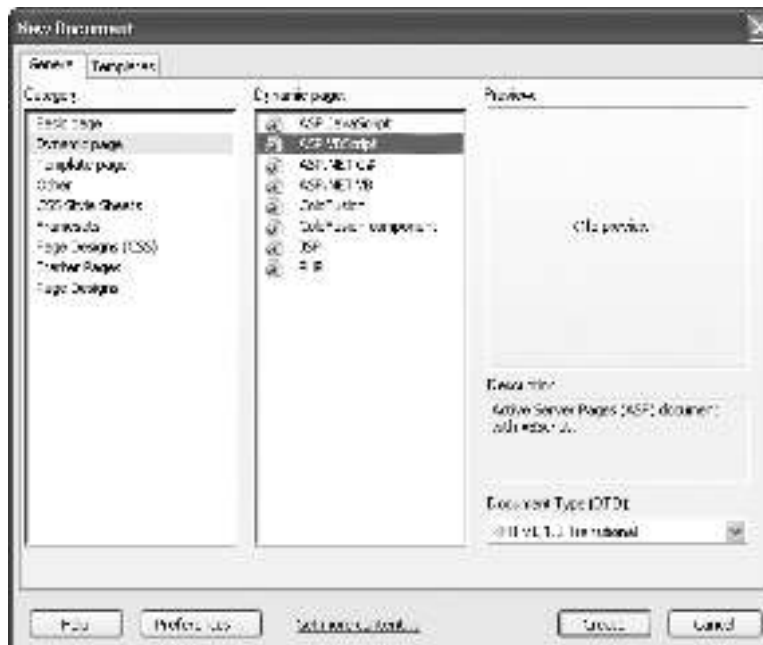


Figure 1-4. View of Dreamweaver's New Document options, in which Dynamic page and ASP VBScript are selected

Your cursor will now be within the design body of the document. From the standard toolbar, select Insert ► ASP Objects ► Output. Dreamweaver will now create the following ASP brackets for you: `<%= %>`. (We'll go into more detail about these brackets in Chapter 3.)

5. Within the brackets, type the following code:

```
Request.ServerVariables("REMOTE_ADDR")
```

In Code view, your final code should look like the following:

```
<%= Request.ServerVariables("REMOTE_ADDR") %>
```

In Design view, you'll see an ASP textual placeholder that represents the dynamic code. Highlighting the dynamic text in Design view will automatically highlight the same code from within Code view. Switch to Design view, take the focus off the dynamic text by moving your cursor to the right of the text, and hit Enter. Now type the following message:

I know who you are now. Your IP address is listed. Don't try anything funny!

6. Save your page as `dynamic_asp.asp` and view it in your web browser (see Figure 1-5).

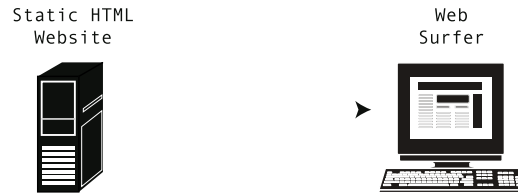


Figure 1-5. View of the `dynamic_asp.asp` page in the web browser

See the difference? With HTML, you're unable to recognize the web surfer; you can only share *your* information with him or her. But with ASP, you can collect information from the user. In this vein, you can also have the web surfer provide you with specific information, which can be accomplished through forms. We'll go into further detail about this in the chapters to come, but most importantly, we want to drive the following point home:

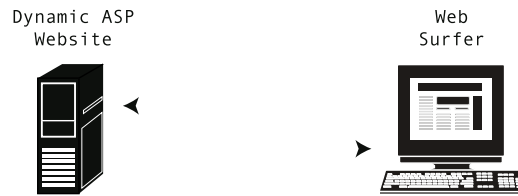
*ASP gives you the ability to interact with your web surfers by allowing you to exchange data with them. What's more, once you have that data from the user, you can update data on your web pages accordingly.*

With a static HTML website, your data is merely sent to the web surfer's web browser, unchanged and unprocessed, by a dynamic web programming language such as ASP (see Figure 1-6).



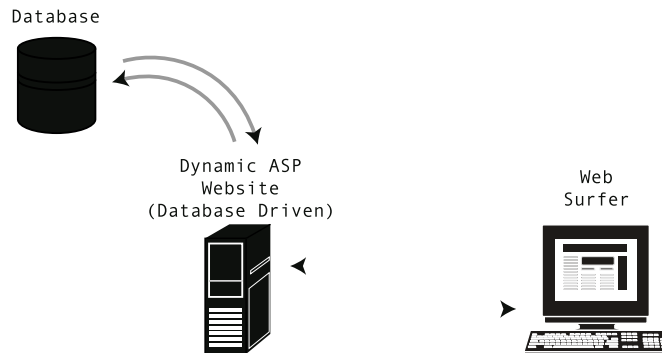
**Figure 1-6.** Illustration of data flow from a static site

With a dynamic ASP website, data can be sent back and forth between the website and the web surfer's web browser (see Figure 1-7). As a web developer, you can do a variety of things with the data, such as collecting it for statistical purposes or processing it with a dynamic web programming language such as ASP. In the latter case, ASP processes the data on the server and then recreates the HTML page, sending the data back to the web surfer's browser with new data.



**Figure 1-7.** Illustration of how data is exchanged between a dynamic site and the web surfer

Data that you provide, and data you collect from the web surfer's computer, can be stored in a database. The ASP page can then connect and interact with the database while interacting with the web user. The flow of the interaction is all up to you (see Figure 1-8). For example, you can send data that you specify (such as contact info or "about" info) from a database to the web surfer's browser without allowing the user to alter the data, or you can actually allow the surfer direct access to the database so they can add, edit, and delete data.



**Figure 1-8.** Illustration of database-driven data exchange between a dynamic site and the web surfer

## Dynamic takes over static

What do I mean by dynamic “taking over” static? I mean that we’re now in a new era of web development and we need to pick up the pace and get with the times. Web development has been zooming right by us, and you’re just sitting around doing nothing! Well, not you, since you picked up this book.

Web development has progressed from displaying simple pictures to streaming live video footage. Even more drastically, it has gone from displaying basic text to regenerating huge reports on the fly, in seconds, at the touch of a web button. It has gone from static text to dynamic text—for example, you were once able to write up your own resume, create a website with basic HTML pages, and upload it to the Web. Now, websites are able to generate your resume and a thousand others on the fly, at the same time, based on the simple submission of a couple of online forms! If you don’t believe me, go visit Yahoo’s Hotjobs (<http://hotjobs.yahoo.com>) or [www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com).

## Dreamweaver server models

How exactly does Dreamweaver make your sites dynamic? In the past, you could create HTML pages through Dreamweaver’s powerful visual layout system, but you would then have to edit the content of the actual HTML page and hand-code the HTML tags over again to make the pages more dynamic. Now, Dreamweaver integrates what Macromedia calls server models. You, as a web developer creating websites with Dreamweaver, get to choose whichever server model you want to create dynamic websites with, almost seamlessly. And the best part about it is that Dreamweaver generates the web programming code for you through its robust internal storage of stock code. It does so based on the server model you select.

### The ASP VBScript server model

When developing web applications in Dreamweaver, it’s a good idea to choose a server model that you’re familiar with, or at least one that you want to become more familiar with. When you use server models, Dreamweaver will generate full-blown programming code—but you’ll want to be able to know what Dreamweaver is doing, and you’ll also want the ability to tweak code to attain more desirable results. As such, this book will familiarize you with ASP as a language before teaching you how to develop using Dreamweaver’s drag-and-drop ASP server behaviors.

We’ll show you how to set up your environment in the next chapter—but for now, fire up Dreamweaver. Let’s take a look at the server models that Dreamweaver supports.

1. From the toolbar at the top, select Site ► New Site.
2. Select the Advanced tab, and then highlight Testing Server in the Category list.



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