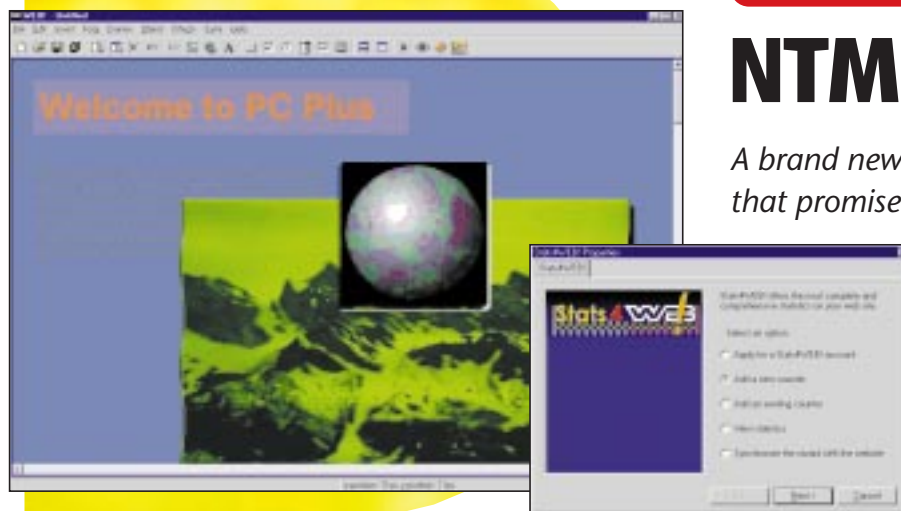


PC Plus

NTM has designed Web! Pro to enable you to add DHTML effects and filters to your pages. You'll find that many of them only work in Internet Explorer 4.0 or better.



HTML editor

NTM WEB! PRO

A brand new HTML package that promises to be the easiest yet

Minimum requirements Windows 95/98 and NT 4.0
Tested on Pentium II 300 with 128MB RAM
Extra information Download cost is \$60 (about £38)

Dynamic pages are actually ASP (Active Server Page) programming at a complex level, heavy going for all but the hardened ASP programmer.

PRICE £47 ■ EX VAT £40 ■ SUPPLIER NTM Publishing ■ WWW www.ntm-publishing.com

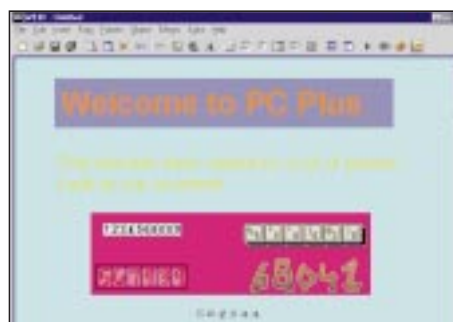
There are many different Web design tools on the market. All of them are trying to offer something different from each other. NTM's Web! Pro is aimed at the SoHo market, and prides itself on its ease of use. But is it a "what you want is what you get package"?

You can buy Web! Pro on-line from most of the major on-line shopping sites, as well as buy boxed copies. It's written in Java so you need to install a Java Virtual Machine in order to run the program – unfortunately because it's the Microsoft dialect of Java you can only run it on a Windows system with the Microsoft JVM. NTM has missed out on an opportunity to create a truly cross-platform tool here, as a Java 2.0 version would have been able to run on Linux and a Mac OS as well.

When you start up Web! Pro, you're presented with a blank screen. It's not easy to see how you're meant to progress from here. The manual isn't much help either, as there aren't any tutorials – just a set of descriptions of the program's operations. This might be acceptable in a high-end tool designed for professional Web designers, but for a SoHo package it's a major problem.

Once you've finally worked out how to add elements to a page, you'll find that Web! Pro takes an object-oriented approach to page design. You can accurately position elements on a page because Web! Pro generates the DHTML and CSS used to display the content. This enables you to apply more complex formatting than with standard HTML – as well as applying DHTML effects to your content.

We were able to layer objects and mix different DHTML effects on the same page. You can produce various transition effects on the images and text you use in your pages – mainly various forms of fade-in, though these can be linked to



Registering your copy of Web! Pro gives you access to a library of ugly page counters. You'll need to publish your site before you can use them.

mouse clicks as well as to opening pages. One thing to be aware of, though, is Web! Pro generates large Web pages, especially if you get carried away and use as many DHTML effects as possible on your pages.

We were disappointed to find that there was no way of importing files from other Web applications. NTM says that this is because of incompatibilities between Web development tools, but we don't think this is a valid argument. If a tool like NetObjects Fusion with its internal object database model is able to import whole sites, then a tool designed to handle straight HTML like Web! Pro should be able to work with existing HTML files. The suggested copy and paste method is completely inadequate, especially if you're working with sites composed of large numbers of pages.

As Web! Pro is designed for the SoHo market and the development of small business sites, there are several other glaring omissions. The largest is the lack of any site management tool. While you are able to use the integral FTP tool for basic file

manipulation on the server (something that a copy of WS_FTP or even the Windows command line FTP client does a lot better), NTM hasn't included tools for managing links or for monitoring your site assets – features we would expect to find in any modern Web site development package. Also missing was the feature to link Web! Pro with any server side applications or third party shopping tools – tools that any business wanting to go on-line will need to produce anything other than a piece of brochureware. There are form tools, but these don't offer the dynamic page generation features a modern Web site requires.

Web! Pro is trying to provide a solution to a non-existent problem. If a SoHo organisation wants to put together a Web site, then it's much better off downloading the free FirstPage 2000 package than paying for something as limited as Web! Pro. If you want to stay commercial, then the combination of Microsoft's FrontPage 2000 and Vizact are a better solution for the DHTML developer, with NetObjects Fusion offering the small business a complete site management and design tool. We tried hard to find something we liked in Web! Pro – unfortunately we failed. This isn't a business Web design tool, in fact Web! Pro isn't even suitable for the home user.

Simon Bisson

PC Plus

VERDICT

WEB! PRO 3.0

For Low cost DHTML editing tool with library of fades, wizard-driven page stats tool

Against No import features or site management tool, no direct access to HTML source, poor documentation

Range of features.....5

Ease of use.....4

Documentation.....4

Performance.....6

Value for money.....4

4/10

This isn't a business Web design tool, in fact Web! Pro isn't even suitable for the home user