

Dreamweaver CS3, The Missing Manual

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Reviewed by Randy Southers

Dreamweaver CS3, The Missing Manual by David Sawyer McFarland helps both first-time web designers who need step-by-step guidance as well as experienced long-time coders who need a handy reference provided you master the detailed 14 page table of contents (or more aptly the very detailed 24 page index).

For beginners it explains to you *what* is important and *why* it is important in Dreamweaver and in web design in general. It contains concise, easy-to-understand explanatory text written in simple English (rather than jargon) and superb tutorials (all materials are available online) presenting the material in a well organized, clearly written, easy to understand format. The illustrations are a mixed bag of Mac and PC screen shots so neither platform is excluded or exclusive to. Each chapter has a kind of 'theoretical' section at the beginning, often with a *real world* example followed by step-by-step instructions. Interlaced throughout the chapters in the examples are numerous *notes*, *tips*, and *warnings* that provide excellent additional history, information, and grief saving tricks respectively. Furthermore the book also contains extra additional information in topic boxes ranging from FAQ's to *Power Users* Clinic, bringing a holistic view of the *item*, which most books omit or include as an afterthought in an appendix.

For longtime programmers who intend to use the book as a reference will find that it is thorough on all the functions and features in CS3, although perhaps a bit verbose when locating the snippet of needed information. But that is to be expected when you address all users of all levels *additional information* has to be included for the beginners, and the author does not skimp on the reader at 995 pages.

As an experienced programmer, I found some of the *fleshing out the concept* was more engaging and better than the dry training I received many years ago, more is often learned when the information is funny or can be related to. The passages are excellent as they are entertaining and unafraid to state when a feature is quirky, flawed, or useless. And those opinions are backed by logic or real world examples.

I thoroughly recommend this book for all, especially the beginner Dreamweaver user. While the experienced user might have some issues with length of prose, these are negated if one masters the very detailed 24 page index, and will find the book an excellent resource.