

Introduction

Microsoft Office Live is *not* an online version of Microsoft Office. It's a complete web solution for individuals and small businesses. It includes domain-name registration, web hosting, built-in web-design tools, custom domain e-mail accounts—such as `you@yourbusiness.com`—and a few other knickknacks to boot.

Office Live comes in three versions: Basics, Essentials, and Premium. Basics is the base version, which boasts all the features I just mentioned plus one that I haven't—it's free. That's right. Free. Complimentary. *Gratis*.

Essentials and Premium are Office Live's beefed-up versions. They include everything that Basics does, and for a small monthly fee, they throw in a few business applications and collaborative tools for building intranets and extranets.

Intranets and extranets are fiefdoms of larger organizations. Small businesses don't usually have the technical expertise or the network infrastructure to build and maintain them. Office Live is Microsoft's attempt to close the gap. With Office Live, the little guys can manage key elements of their businesses—such as e-mail, customer relationships, marketing campaigns, and employee expenses—just with their browsers.

The ability to build a public web site, however, remains the crown jewel of Office Live. *Anyone* can build one with Office Live's easy-to-use tools. But just a tool, no matter how sophisticated, isn't enough to build a great web site; knowing how to use the tool effectively is, perhaps, even more important.

This book is a concise guide to using Office Live effectively. It teaches you the basic Internet concepts and Web terminology. It gives you a clear understanding of what Office Live is and explains what you can and can't do with it. It goes on to show you how to plan a web site from scratch and build it with Office Live. Along the way, it introduces you to the best practices you should incorporate into your site design, and it goes on to offer advice on how to attract visitors to your web site. By following the advice in this book, you'll be able to build an *attractive, usable, and easily maintainable* web site.

If you've never built a web site before, this book will help you become a *workable* webmaster quickly. If you're already a webmaster, this book will help you become a *respectable* one!

How This Book Is Structured

This content of this book is divided into three parts.

Part 1, "What's Office Live, Anyway?," introduces you to Office Live and helps you sign up for the service, if you haven't already done so. It explores Office Live's features and capabilities, and it shows you how to fulfill your administrative responsibilities as an Office Live account owner.

Part 2, "Building Your Site," introduces you to the best practices in building good web sites. It walks you through building a skeleton of your web site. It shows you how to create web pages and populate them with good content, and it follows it up with a few tips and tricks to

make your site more appealing and easier to use. Part 2 concludes with a few hacks that'll help you make the most of your web site.

Part 3, "Being Your Own Webmaster," gives you a taste of your new career as a part-time webmaster. It begins with a final checklist for "going live," then it walks you through Office Live's Site Reports and shows you how to use them to analyze the traffic to your site. It covers the basics of keeping your web site looking fresh and updated before giving you an idea of the maintenance tasks you'll have to perform on a regular basis as a webmaster.

The content often builds on the skills and vocabulary from earlier chapters. As a result, you should plan on reading this book sequentially if you're new to Office Live. However, each chapter of the book covers a distinct aspect of building and maintaining a web site with Office Live, so you'll be able to use it as a reference guide after you master the basics.

System Requirements

To build and maintain a web site with Office Live, you'll need the following:

- A subscription to any version of Office Live
- A computer running Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Server 2003, or Windows Vista
- Internet Explorer 6.0 (with the latest service packs) or later
- Internet access, preferably via a broadband service
- Super VGA (800 × 600) or higher-resolution display

Although you can *view* a web site built with Office Live on any computer using any browser, a computer running one of the versions of Windows and one of the versions of Internet Explorer previously mentioned is *required* to *build* a web site. Translation: Office Live isn't compatible with Apple Macintosh or Linux-based computers.

Companion Sites

Office Live is quite a feature-rich package. I've only covered its site-building features in this book. If you want to learn to use the e-mail service that comes with your account, download and use Windows Live Mail as your e-mail client, download and install the free accounting program Microsoft Office Accounting Express 2007, or explore one of Office Live's more advanced features, please visit this book's companion site at <http://apress.com/book/bookDisplay.html?bID=10331>.

In addition to the bonus companion content, you'll also find articles about Office Live, a forum for your Office Live-related questions, and tips, tricks, and hacks for tweaking your web site at www.acxede.net/books.

Contacting the Author

If you have questions or comments about this book or the content on its companion sites, please send them via e-mail to bookcomments@acxede.net.