

# The Quill

N E W S L E T T E R

## QUILL GETS GRAPHIC!

### GRAPHIC DESIGN AT THE QUILL

The Quill Consultancy has been introducing clients to graphics packages for many years now. We started with Microsoft PowerPoint and Publisher and in more recent times have provided training in FrontPage, Adobe Photoshop and In Design.

Training consultants David Pitt and Dee Webb have spent many enjoyable hours producing special graphic effects for exercises in these courses and David has also designed Web pages for clients.



However, more and more of our consultancy projects now require an attractive user interface such as a Web page, database form or Word template. When it became clear that the collective artistic skills of the development team could just about produce a stick figure (but not a very good one!), and the graphically minded training consultants were often too busy training to help, we decided to seek the services of a professional graphic designer.

As a result, we are delighted to announce that we now have access to the considerable talents of Kit Murdoch, who along with partner Jon Bronston has

her own graphic design business. Kit has been a long-time associate of The Quill Consultancy, having attended several of our training courses in past years. She has considerable skills in all the Microsoft Office products and design tools such as PhotoShop.

Kit has already designed a Web page for one of our current clients (after providing three different options) and has also been able to offer the client further services in design of stationary such as letterheads and business cards to match the concept chosen for the Web page.

All our clients can now look forward to a more artistic and aesthetically pleasing Quill Consultancy in 2001.

### VISUAL BASIC.NET TRAINING FOR QUILL STAFF

In The Quill Consultancy's commitment to on-going technical training and exposure to cutting edge technologies, last December saw the Quill's development consultants Andrew Ormerod and David Norton attend a one-day seminar on Visual Basic.NET, the next generation development platform. Lead by PhD candidate Simon Cuce from Monash University, Andrew and David had a hands-on taste of the future of programming and development.

Andrew and David have been using their spare time (if they have any!) to work with the Beta 1 copy of

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Graphic design  
Visual Basic.NET  
MOUS exams  
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Center

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Curriculum

VB.NET, which is rumoured to be ready for launch this March. They anticipate that by the end of this year, most of their development work will be completed on this platform.

In March, Andrew will also be attending a 4-day developer's conference in Sydney to further increase his skills. Called VSLive!, the conference will showcase a range of Australian and International guest speakers on such topics as Visual Studio.NET, ASP.NET and T-SQL, with lectures on design, programming and interoperability.

Look for an update on the conference in the next newsletter.



## ARE YOU A MOUS(E) TOO?

**T**raining consultants D'rene Walker, Dee Webb and David Pitt recently became MOUS qualified! No, they don't have a broad knowledge of furry four legged critters, but have added yet another qualification to their bag of tricks. MOUS is the Microsoft Office User Specialist qualification that is suitable for anyone who needs certification at a user level for Microsoft application products, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Outlook. The Quill Consultancy administers MOUS exams on a Thursday each week, and these can be booked by calling Anna on 6231 0577.

**Microsoft Office User Specialist**   
Proof you've got what it takes.

## SUCCESSFUL SCANNING

**C**onfused about scanning, but would like to know more? Here we discuss some terms and technology from the scanning world to help you understand this process.

### *What can I do with a scanner?*

This is possibly an endless answer, as everyone will

need a scanner for a different reason. Probably the main use of a scanner is in scanning photos for use in slide shows, on web sites, for sending in emails to friends, for newsletters and publications, and the list goes on. Since these images are now digitised, they can also be modified and combined or have special effects applied. This is an entire industry in itself!

The other advantage to scanning photos is that the image will not fade over time, as printed photographs are prone to do. In twenty years time you will still be able to produce a printed version of a photo as clear as the day it was taken.

You can also use a scanner for copying documents, just like on a photocopier. In fact, it is probably more versatile to have a scanner rather than a photocopier if you are short on space or available funds. Scanned documents, books or magazines can be enhanced or modified, and then printed. You could also use fax software from your PC to fax a scanned document.

Scanning 3D items, such as coins, flowers, etc, can also be very effective as long as the item is fairly flat. However, with a little experimentation, you can create some interesting effects with shadows and lighting.

### *What are the minimum PC hardware requirements for scanning?*

This will depend on the number and size of images you want to scan, however, there are a few things to keep in mind. While PC speed is not your first consideration, memory and hard disk size should be. Consider at least 64MB of RAM, the more the better. If you are doing a lot of scanning, keep in mind that images can take up a lot of disk space, probably more than you think!

Video memory is another consideration. A video board with 2MB of memory is a minimum, with 4MB or more optimal.

### *What is OCR?*

Normally, when a page of text is scanned in, the entire page is saved as a graphic image. However, using OCR, the individual characters on the page can be detected as if you had typed them in. OCR stands for Optical Character Recognition, and is the ability of the scanner software to recognise scanned characters on a page as real characters. In this way, you can modify the text using a word processor. OCR is useful if you only have a hard copy of a document you need to modify. Instead of retyping the entire document you can use the OCR technology.

OCR can also work for handwriting, although there will be some obvious limitations. Chances are if you

can't read the writing, neither can your scanner!

### **What is TWAIN?**

TWAIN is the name given to the software standard that scanner manufacturers have agreed to use, with the aim that all graphics software can work with all scanners. Individual manufacturers have given this technology their own name, such as Hewlett-Packard's DeskScan, and Microtek's ScanWizard. Each scanner has its own 'version' of TWAIN that works for that specific scanner. So from a user viewpoint, TWAIN is just the name given to the software technology that interfaces between the scanner and the PC. (By the way, it is rumoured that TWAIN stands for Technology Without An Interesting Name!)

### **What's the difference between TIFF, GIF and JPEG?**

TIFF, GIF and JPEG files are all common graphic file formats. Depending on the type of image to be scanned and the expected use of that image, each file format has its advantages and disadvantages. Let's look at each format in turn.

TIFF (Tag Image File Format) or .TIF files are used when you need to have a master image with no loss of picture quality. They are typically very large files, as they contain all the data for the scanned image. TIFF is a very common format that virtually all software will be able to read, but in general it is too large to email or to download for Internet purposes. However, if you need to scan a master file that you may modify later on, TIFF is your best option.

JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) or .JPG files are the most common file types found on the Internet. JPEG files are compressed to up to 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the file size of a TIFF file, but of course, this compression means a loss of quality. Furthermore, every time you modify and save a JPEG file, a little more quality is lost. So JPEG's are best used when space is critical, but image quality can be compromised.

GIF (Graphic Interchange Format) or .GIF files are best suited for situations where there are a limited number of colours. GIF files use a maximum of 256 colours, which make it an unsuitable file format for photographs, but suitable for logos or line art which typically have a small number of colours. The fewer colours the smaller the file, which makes it suitable for web applications such as icons and buttons.

You may encounter other file formats such as .PCX and .BMP. The major drawback with these is that they are unrecognised on non-Windows platforms. Both of these formats are large and more suited to photographs.

### **What are the different modes of scanning— colour, line art and grey scale?**

There are several different types of scans that most scanner software can perform. These include Colour, Grey Scale or Line art. Let's look at each of these modes in turn.

Colour (or 'Millions of Colours' for some software) is the best choice for colour images, with a possible combination of 16.7 million different colour tones.

Grey Scale (or 'Shades of Grey' for some software), looks very much like a black and white photograph, and can be the best choice for pencil drawings, black and white images, etc.

Line art is only two colours – black or white. There are no shades of grey. It is not therefore, a good choice for detailed photographs, but is an excellent choice for pages of printed text, where extra shading, etc is not required. Line art can be improved with a process called dithering, which will appear to make a line art photo look more like a traditional black and white photo.

There are lots of extra resources available on scanning techniques, including a great website which can be found at [www.scantips.com](http://www.scantips.com).

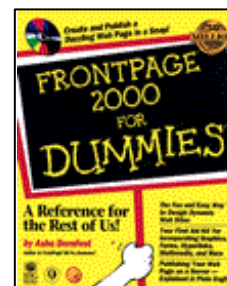
## **BOOK REVIEWS**



If your New Year's resolution was to learn more about the Internet, then it's not too late to get started! In this newsletter, we review two FrontPage books to get you underway. Both books are available from The Quill Consultancy—call Anna on 6231 0577 to order your copy.

### **FrontPage 2000 for Dummies**

*Publisher* IDG World wide  
*ISBN* 0-764-504-231  
*Price* \$49.95 (inc GST)



If you are just starting out, you will find this book reinforces those concepts you have learnt in your FrontPage Introduction course, plus adds a few more tricks and tips to get good looking Web pages up and running fast!

This book covers:

- ?? Creating Web pages that incorporate text, graphics, hyperlinks, image maps, tables, and multimedia,

- ?? Adding creative fonts, lists, symbols, borders and shading, comments, and interactive forms to your Web pages,
- ?? How to create site themes, place active elements on a page, use expert tips and publish the final result on a server,
- ?? Using all the newest features and Wizards in FrontPage 2000 to keep your site running smoothly and efficiently.

A CD-ROM that comes with this book includes two bonus chapters, and a handful of custom-designed Web page templates. Also included are a slew of Internet tools and utilities to make your online time even more productive, including PaintShop Pro for creating custom graphics, PowerPoint Animation Publisher and Player for building animations to add to a site, a variety of viewers for reading online documents, an ftp program, and a 'browser-safe' colour palette.

### Microsoft FrontPage 2000 Bible

*Publisher* IDG Worldwide  
*ISBN* 0-764-533-134  
*Price* \$79.95 (inc GST)



If you feel like you need a more in-depth analysis and assistance with your Web design, this may be the book for you. Using precise instructions and lots of examples, this book and CD package shows you how to use FrontPage 2000 to create state of the art Web pages.

This book covers:

- \* Mastering basic principles of Web design and Web publishing,
- Creating new Webs quickly using templates and wizards,
- Learning to work effectively with FrontPage themes and colour tools,
- Adding sound, video, and Dynamic HTML animation effects to pages,
- Placing contents with pixel-precise precision using absolute and relative positioning,
- Achieving consistent formatting throughout your site using Cascading Style Sheets,
- Integrating interactive forms and Discussion Webs,
- Inserting scripts, ActiveX controls, and Java elements into a site,
- Connecting pages to Access databases or

other data sources

Managing remote, team-based projects more easily with FrontPage 2000's new features

This book would be suitable for attendees of the FrontPage 2000 Intermediate course.

## FROM THE HELP DESK

*Q. How do I find the beginning of my Gantt chart in Microsoft Project?*

A. Use the keyboard shortcut Alt +Home. This will return you to the beginning of your Gantt chart. On the other hand, Alt + End will move you to the end of your chart.

*Q. I'm a skilled Excel user, so how can I do my data entry ever faster?*

A. While doing data entry, your fingers are already at the keyboard. Keyboard shortcuts can therefore be the fastest way to move around the application. Here are some Excel keyboard shortcuts to help you on your way:

Alt +=	Inserts the AutoSum function
Ctrl + Shift + A	Use this combination after you have typed a function name, and it will automatically insert the parentheses and the argument name for the function you typed
Ctrl + 1	Displays the Format Cells dialog box
Ctrl + ;	Inserts the current date
Ctrl + Shift + F3	Automatically creates Named Ranges from the headers for the selected table of data with row or column headers
Shift + F10	Displays the shortcut menu that applies to the current location of the cursor
Alt + F11	Opens the VBA Editor (or switches to it if it's already open)
Alt + F8	Displays the Macro dialog box