

PRODUCT COMPARISON

But wait, what about Web publishing?

By Galen Gruman

It's an old battle: dedicated system or open tool? In publishing, several dedicated systems have labored on corporate sites while attention has been on Adobe Systems Inc.'s Acrobat, which works with almost any Macintosh or Windows program to produce portable documents. With no complex editing environment and no limited file import, print and publish is Acrobat's promise. Two nimbler products also work with practically any program: Tumbleweed Software Corp.'s Envoy and Hummingbird Communication Inc.'s Common Ground. All let you annotate documents with comments and hyperlinks (even to Web sites), share documents across platforms, and search for text within and across documents.

All three have freely distributable viewers so you can publish electronic documents to anyone without royalty fees. Tumbleweed also has Netscape Communication Corp. Navigator plug-in readers for Windows 95, Windows 3.1, and Macintosh; Adobe has beta versions for Mac and Windows. Hummingbird's plans are uncertain.

The viewers can be basic; for example, Common Ground's only lets you view and print, and the others add a limited search. They're enough to get you hooked into buying a more capable viewer. By giving away the viewers, they're following the success-

ful Gillette model: Give away the shaver once and sell a lot of blades for a long time. Here's where each product stands.

■ **Adobe** has released a beta version of its Acrobat 3.0 system (formerly known by the code-name Amber and due to ship later this summer) for Mac, Windows 3.1, Windows 95, Windows NT, OS/2, and Unix. In addition to a Navigator plug-in, Acrobat has an optimize feature that should reduce the ungainly file sizes, which have plagued this product: Save an image once and just use a pointer in subsequent locations to save space and processing. Acrobat 3.0 will also display a page in Navigator while downloading the rest of the document so you don't notice the download times. But Acrobat looks to remain fat: The Win95 reader beta installation file takes 2.4MB, including the Navigator plug-in.

Acrobat will continue in several versions, from a stand-alone Acrobat Exchange creation engine to the Acrobat for Workgroups, which includes Exchange, the Distiller PostScript file batch converter, and the Catalog indexing tool for multidocument searching. This full package shines in its indexing capabilities. (415) 961-4400; <http://www.adobe.com>.

■ **Tumbleweed** has released a suite of tools from the simple to the complex, similar to Adobe's offerings. (See "Tumbleweed

offers document fidelity, hyperlink tools," May 27, page 110.) Tumbleweed continues to offer small file size compared with Acrobat. Not only is its Envoy portable document small, but so is its viewer — about half the size of the Acrobat 3.0 viewer beta version. In addition to its fine font display and powerful search capabilities, the top-end Envoy creation program, Publishing Essentials, has a great tool for creating tables of contents for your portable documents based on the style of your text. Mac and Windows 3.1 versions are shipping now; the Win95 version is due this summer. (415) 363-7022; <http://www.tvcorp.com>.

■ **Hummingbird**, a company whose principal business has been X-servers for Windows NT systems, acquired Common Ground last December in an effort to bring portable document publishing to Windows NT, which is rapidly becoming popular for Web servers. Hummingbird figures that Web servers might make good Web publishers, and Common Ground was a natural means to that end. Version 2.0 was released almost a year late in August 1995 for Windows 3.1, and the promised Version 2.0 for Mac still hasn't materialized. However, Version 2.0 readers are available now for Mac, Windows (a 16-bit version), SunOS, and Solaris. But Hummingbird is working on Common Ground 2.0 versions for Mac, Win95, NT, and Solaris, as well as NT-based

CD-ROM, Web authoring systems based on Common Ground, and an NT version of its AutoMaker facility for Windows 3.1, which allows batch creation of documents. The products may ship this summer.

Hummingbird released on June 19 its Columbus 1.0, an Internet and intranet management and collaboration environment for Windows. It is free until Sept. 19 from <http://www.hummingbird.com>.

Common Ground 2.0's strengths match many of Tumbleweed's: small file size, quality font reproduction, and flexible and powerful searching. Its linking and table-of-contents features aren't quite as strong, and its PostScript support was inconsistent. We'll see if this changes in the new versions. (415) 917-7300; <http://www.commonground.com>.

■ A wild card is the forthcoming **Quark-Immedia**, a Power Macintosh-only plug-in to Quark Inc. QuarkXPress that will let you create interactive documents with sound, movies, and buttons from your layouts. Due to ship this summer for \$895, Quark-Immedia is aimed more at CD-ROM publishers, such as catalogers, than Web publishers. The viewer (for Windows and Mac) will be free like the other portable document programs. But unlike them, Quark is keeping the creation tools on the platform most used by high-end creators: the Mac. (303) 894-8888; <http://www.quark.com>.

lio products. Unlike Guide Passport, IPK doesn't have its own scripting lan-

ing searches by developing search forms. Dynatag ships with a few search forms that can be placed in the book directory. But for more cus-

Application development

■ EBT solution

SATISFACTORY

GUIDES LOGIIX

Logiix, a Pascal-like language, is Guide Passport's scripting language for customizing the application. For example, using Logiix, we could create scripts to accept input from users or call other programs. Not only can developers create scripts, but Logiix comes with a glossary of more than 80 scripts that can be inserted and modified. You can also have scripts automati-

