

# PRODUCT reviews

- NVU
- Olympus DM-10

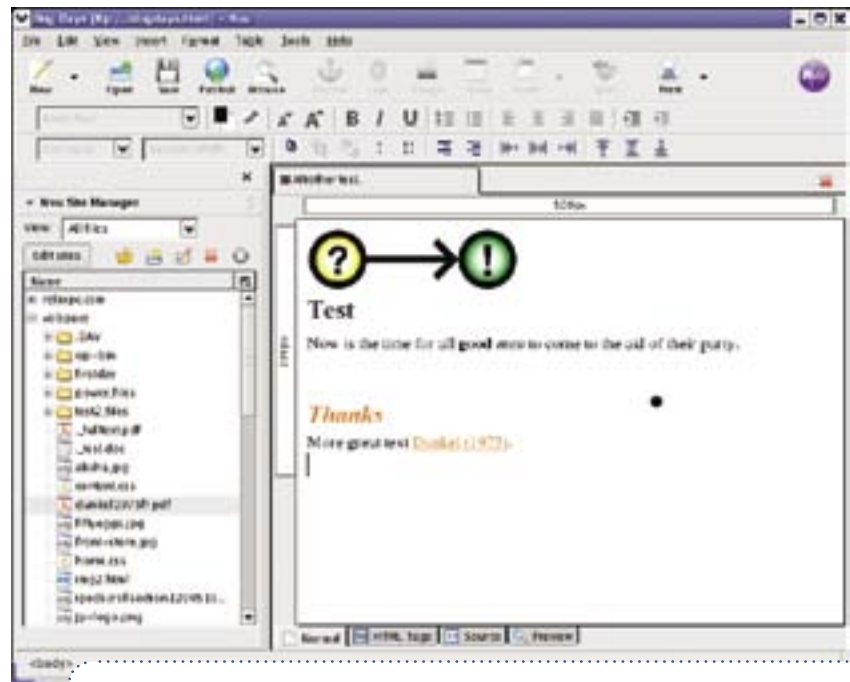
## NVU: Web Authoring

By Jay Pfaffman

Pronounced “N-view,” NVU is an open source Web authoring system that’s available for all three major platforms. It’s designed to be a suitable replacement for FrontPage and Dreamweaver, especially for novices. It is based on the Gecko layout engine that is the heart of Mozilla. Like Firefox, it is a stand-alone piece of Mozilla. It is therefore smaller and faster, and, because the developers are interested only in the Web authoring tool, it is better than the Composer built in to Mozilla.

A Web authoring system intended for faculty should have a familiar word processor-like interface to make it easy to do the most common tasks of creating simple pages with images. More important, perhaps, it should have an intuitive means to get pages uploaded to the Web server. I pride myself on my ability to understand why novices have a hard time understanding how to use computers, but I continue to be befuddled about what is so hard about moving files to a Web server.

NVU has a now-familiar tabbed interface. Tabs at the top of the window allow switching between multiple open files. Tabs at the bottom of the window allow switching between normal, tagged, source, and preview views. The tagged view is essentially a WYSIWYG view that indicates explicitly which tags are embedded in the code. This view shows most of the information available in the HTML



NVU's main working screen is simple, based on familiar concepts, and designed to quickly bring new users up to speed. Tabbed views enable you to switch easily between HTML code view, Web preview, and the normal page creation and design view shown.

view without having to parse HTML in one's head.

NVU's site manager is simple to configure. It asks only for a name for the site, the URL to pass to the browser, and a FTP URL for publishing (though it can also use files accessible on a local or network file system). Unlike its more robust brethren, NVU provides no means to keep a local cache of a site and periodically synchronize it with the server. Instead, users can click the Publish button to move the file (and associated images except, curiously, on the Linux version) to the server. Although many a professional Web developer would be reluctant to work directly with files

live on the Web, this saves the novice the confusion of having links and images working on the local version but failing when actually moved to the Web server.

Images can be inserted by clicking the image icon and browsing for the file from the local file system or dragging-and-dropping the image from the file manager. When the page is published, the images are uploaded to the server with an option to save them in a separate image folder (again, except in the Linux version). If you are not facile with resizing images in a photo editing tool, you can resize them by indicating the image size in the image dialog box.



