



What is Macromedia Studio MX Plus?

Studio MX is a suite of products by Macromedia to facilitate the creation of awesome Internet technologies and Web Sites. Its primary purpose is to integrate Macromedia's web authoring tools to enhance site functionality. More aptly put, Studio MX is an integrated family of client, tool, and server technologies for building rich Internet applications and a myriad of web sites—simple to intricate. Macromedia Studio MX is available for both Windows and Macintosh platforms, which almost certainly adds to the product's enormous appeal and success. How much success? Since the product's introduction in June 2002, it has been adopted by more than 250,000 customers. As a refresher for those not familiar with Macromedia's products, I will briefly explain what products are contained in the Studio MX suite, as well as their core functions.

A Very Sweet Suite

Let's jump right in by giving you a concise description of what's inside this mega suite of bundled goodies. Incidentally, in case you were wondering what the "MX" designation means after each product name, it indicates the latest version of the product, as in "Dreamweaver MX." If you're of the inquiring mindset, the "MX" moniker is not an acronym and doesn't have a literal translation.

- **Dreamweaver MX** – Macromedia's flagship application, Dreamweaver MX is billed as a "professional web design and development program." Dreamweaver MX is a pleasure to use, and its design, layout, and features will amaze you. Dreamweaver MX is fully customizable and extensible. You can add new objects, behaviors, commands, tools, and just about anything you need to make the application work the way you want it to. Dreamweaver MX supports all of today's (or shall I say tomorrow's) open Internet standards including XML, XHTML, CSS2, J2EE, .NET, and ECMAScript. According to Macromedia, Dreamweaver commands about 80 percent market share of professional web authoring tools. Just walk into your nearest bookstore and check the selection of "Web Design" books. You will be in awe of the countless number of books on Dreamweaver MX and associated Macromedia products described below.
- **Flash MX** – Macromedia's Flash MX is what you use for creating astounding multimedia animation programs for the web. If you ever visited a web site with a dazzling animated intro clip, you've probably experienced Flash's prowess first hand. Flash produces ".SWF" files that require the "Flash Player" to be viewed. Over 80% of Internet users have the plug-in installed on their computers. Flash MX is the tool of choice for creating dynamic video and multimedia Internet applications. Its uses include on-line advertising, Internet Training Courses,

application front ends, and about anything else you desire. This new version is unbelievably feature rich and includes an overhauled user interface that is more intuitive and in sync with the rest of the MX Suite.

- ***Fireworks MX*** – Macromedia’s Fireworks MX is the program you will use for preparing your images for the web and other Studio MX programs. If you are going to use web graphics, Fireworks MX helps you create, edit, optimize, and add special effects for web utilization. Think of Fireworks MX as an “imaging and editing application” for processing graphics and related images for web use. One great feature worth noting is that Fireworks MX lets you create JavaScript pop-up menus that you can edit and use in Dreamweaver. It also boasts incredibly powerful bitmap tools.
- ***FreeHand MX*** – Macromedia’s FreeHand MX is a powerful, yet versatile drawing program. Some call it the Swiss Army knife of drawing programs. According to many experts of this refined application, once you learn its basics, it allows you to accomplish just about anything in the graphic arts field. FreeHand MX is considered one of the best “Vector-Based” drawing programs ever created—it has been refined, retooled, and improved over 10 years. For the uninitiated, “vector graphics” uses a mathematical formula to calculate its lines and anchor points. The advantage to this method is when resizing images, the artwork always looks sharp without degradation of image quality.
- ***ColdFusion MX*** – ColdFusion MX, sometimes referred to as ColdFusion MX Server, is tightly integrated into the Studio MX suite (particularly with Dreamweaver MX and Flash MX). ColdFusion MX allows nonprogrammers the capability to create sophisticated Web and Internet applications without learning intricate programming languages. This rich server scripting environment supports Windows, Linux, UNIX, and integrates with the Java, and .NET standards. Keep in mind ColdFusion MX is not a stand alone application that you create or build with. The version included in Studio MX is a “Developer’s Edition” single-user edition (it supports all the features of the “Enterprise Edition” but can only be used by a single IP address).
- ***Macromedia Contribute*** – Macromedia’s Contribute is a brilliant program aimed at office workers (or anyone) who needs a simple mechanism to maintain and update web site content. You know, like adding Microsoft Word documents or adding pictures to a site. Contribute works with all HTML websites including FrontPage. This is the newest program to be added to the growing Studio MX suite. Between the included “Contribute Connection Wizard” and quick start guide you will be updating and maintaining your site in a jiffy! Although this version of Contribute only works with Windows, Macromedia will shortly have a new version of Contribute that will support Mac OS X.
- ***DevNet Resource Kit Special Edition*** – This is the equivalent of a “Windows Resource Kit” except that it is exclusively for the Macromedia Studio MX family of products. Here, you will find easy-to-use highly developed learning resources (including articles, tutorials, etc.). The DevNet Resource Kit Special Edition also includes essential extensions, components, and other resources for getting the

most out of your Studio MX suite. This is truly a “Special Edition” that contains the best of the DevNet Resource Kit Volumes 1 and 2.

Boxing Up the MX Suite

Although the Macromedia Studio MX family of products is targeted towards the enterprise, it still remains an outstanding value at \$899 MSRP. Most products included in the Studio MX suite can be purchased separately should you not require the extra development accompaniments. I may be a little biased, but let me tell you firsthand, if you need a dynamic and professional web presence without limitations...Dreamweaver is the only way to go! Keep in mind my brief descriptions of each product in the Studio MX suite barely scratch the surface to unlocking the depth and breadth of their respective capabilities. To learn more about Macromedia Studio MX or any Macromedia product, please visit their official site at www.macromedia.com.

Prices:

Macromedia Studio MX Plus – \$899

Macromedia Studio MX Plus upgrade – \$699 or \$499 depending on whether you currently own one or two eligible Macromedia products.

Windows Requirements for Macromedia Studio MX Plus:

- Intel Pentium II 300MHz or greater
- Win 98SE, Win ME, Win NT 4 (Service Pack 6), Win 2000, or Win XP
- 96 MB of free available system RAM to open one application (128 MB recommended)
- Additional RAM required to open multiple applications simultaneously
- 16-bit color monitor capable of 1024x768 (thousands of colors) or better
- 510 MB of available hard disk space to install applications
- CD-ROM drive
- Adobe Type Manager Version 4 or later for use with Type 1 fonts
- For Adobe PostScript printing: PostScript Level 2 or PostScript 3
- Netscape Navigator 4.0 or Internet Explorer 4.0 or greater
- FreeHand MX requires a PostScript Level 2-compatible printer or higher