

# Websites with Writer

Exporting your finely crafted documents from Writer to the World Wide Web is straightforward – once you know how to do it!

**W**riter is the perfect tool for writing and you should now know a great deal about how to get your words looking exactly as you want them on the page by now. We've covered everything from inserting images and drawing illustrations, tables, columns, styles and templates. But there's no need to keep these elements for printed documents or the occasional emailed PDF. *Writer* has another trick up its sleeve – the ability to export your words and layout as a web page. You can then simply copy this exported web page onto a web server and publish your words to the entire internet without killing a single tree.

## Hypertext Markup Language

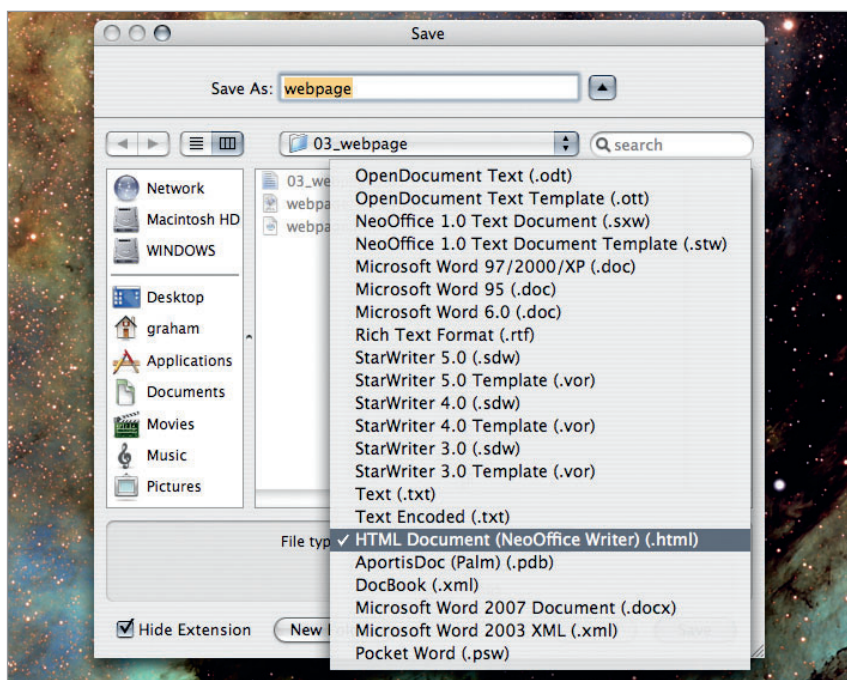
If you're not familiar with how web sites work, then here's a (very) brief explanation. The power behind every web page is a simple language called 'HTML'. It's called a language because it uses certain special words in a specific context to add extra

## Quick tip

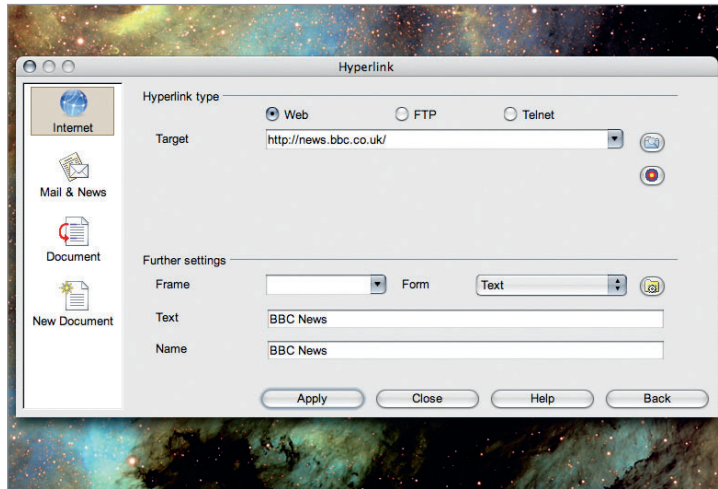
Don't forget, you can also use *Writer* as a simple text editor. This works well if you like to manually build your own HTML documents.

information to simple text. Take the most common web device – the humble link to another page. In HTML this is called an anchor or a hyperlink, and it uses a simple code embedded within the human readable text that a web browser knows is a link. This code is `<A>`, but you don't need to know this because the beauty of using *Writer* to create web pages for you, is that you don't need to understand the syntax of the HTML language and what it includes. If it looks correct in *Writer*, then the web export function will try its best to build a web page that looks exactly the same. The quality of the HTML generated by *Writer* could never be described as either pretty or of a high standard. This is important because the more convoluted and complex a web page is to render, the more likely it's going to cause some users and their browsers problems. *Writer's* HTML isn't meant for mission critical web sites or for professional design. This is because complicated HTML, as generated by *Writer*, is difficult to maintain and can slow a web browser down with the processing overhead of decoding the HTML. Professional web designers use tools that create much better HTML, and give a far greater degree of control over how the HTML is generated.

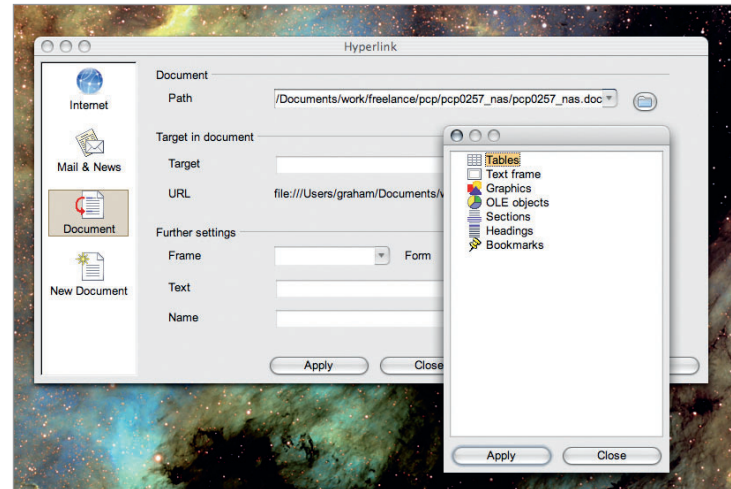
But you mustn't let all this talk of poor HTML output put you off – we're just mentioning it for completeness. For personal web pages, quick and friendly web sites, blog entries and all kinds of other web-related tasks, *Writer's* web page generation is more than up to the task. And it has a single, significant advantage over many other web page generation application – *Writer* doesn't require any specialist knowledge to build a website. If you can create the document in the *Writer* application window, you can create the web site. When people want to pay you for your amazing website design, you can simply move on to something a little more specialised. Exporting your document as a web page is actually very simple. You just need to select HTML Document as the file format from the regular file requester. This will create the HTML file that can either be read by an internet browser, or uploaded onto a web server for other people to access. But you will quickly find that the actual process of



› *Writer* treats HTML and web output just like any other file format and is selected as an option in the Save file requester



› Web pages feel static without links to other documents and sites on the web. *Writer's* hyperlink window lets you add as many as you want.



› You can even cross-reference other documents and parts within those documents using the hyperlink window.

creating the HTML is simply the last step in the chain, and there are several important design decisions and considerations you need to be aware of before the final export. Web pages aren't anywhere near as flexible as native *Writer* documents. This means that you can't spend hours creating your masterpiece within *Writer* and expect it to look exactly the same when you export your document as a web page, HTML is far too restrictive. But after you understand some of these restrictions, you can still get very good results as long as you work within the limitations set by HTML. For example, *Writer* will let you add elaborate borders and drop shadows to many elements within your document, including illustrations and imported images. These effects don't survive the translation to HTML and their effects will be lost, leaving a badly formatted web page.

## Hyperlinks

The best way to create a web page without unpredictable formatting problems is to keep things simple - at least to start off with, and the best place to start is with the text, followed by tables and lists. This is because HTML has built in support for these layout devices, and can translate them from the *Writer* document almost perfectly. You still need to be careful about elaborate borders and formatting, but you will find that in most cases it will be fine. However, as we mentioned earlier, the most important elements you will want to add to your web page are anchors and hyperlinks. You already know what a hyperlink is - these are backbone to the internet, and what primarily differentiates it from printed media. A hyperlink is a highlighted word (or image) that, when clicked or activated, will automatically move the document to a new destination or load a new page. Without hyperlinks, web browsing would be a much more static experience, and it's vital that you include as many links within your document as you can. *Writer's* hyperlink window, which can be opened by selecting 'Hyperlink' from the insert menu, is quite a complicated window to understand. This is because there are several different kinds of hyperlink to cater for. The default choice in the hyperlink window is an internet link as these are likely to be the most common forms of hyperlink.

### Quick tip

Use hyperlinks from images to send your readers to the original image held on the server. This way, you can use thumbnails in your own documents.

You have a choice of inserting either a Web, FTP or Telnet link into your document. The last two, FTP and Telnet are wildly out of date and really shouldn't be presented as usable options within *Writer*. You will nearly always want to choose Web - perhaps occasionally using FTP if there's a file on a remote computer you want to link to. For Web links, simply copy the internet location from the location field in your web browser and paste it into the target field in the hyperlink window. You also need to enter a name for the link into the 'Text' field. This is the part in your document you will be able to read and will be highlighted in blue (by default), clicking on this word will send the reader to the web location you entered in the above field.

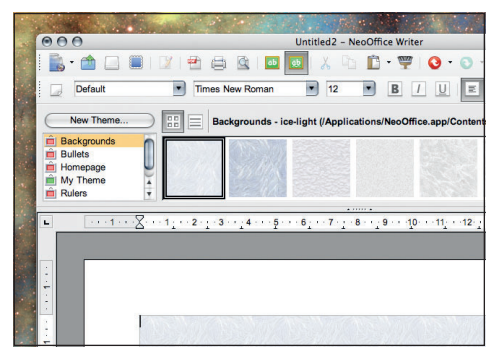
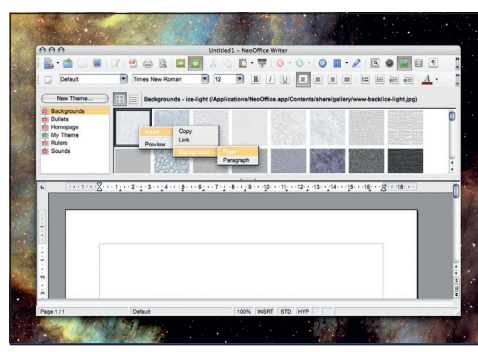
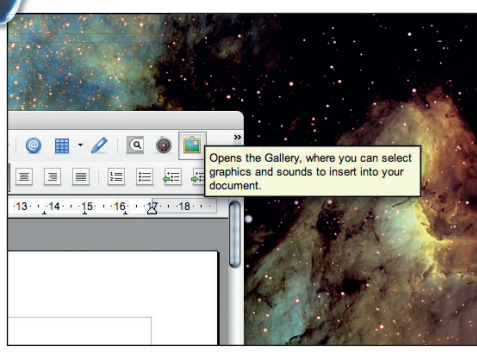
But there are other kinds of hyperlink, and that's what the other pages in *Writer's* hyperlink window are for. Underneath Internet, there's a page for adding Mail and News links within your document. Adding an email link will enable the reader of your document to launch their email client and send an email by clicking on the link. This is commonly used to contact the webmaster of a site, or the author of a document. But you need to be careful if your document is going to be publicly available

**“Writer will let you add elaborate design elements, but they won't survive the transition to HTML.”**

online. Many spam engines harvest email address from exactly this kind of link, and it's usually unwise to publicise an address in this way. It's safer to either obfuscate the address a little by adding extra words that obviously need to be removed ('nosпам' is a favourite), or use a different form of contact. The third page in the hyperlink window is for adding links to points within the either the same document or another *OpenOffice.org*-compatible document. You can select the document from a recent list, or use the file browser, and you choose the target you want to jump to using the navigator window we used in the master documents section. The only problem with these kind of links is that unless the document uses a static address somewhere on the internet, rather than the inaccessible recesses of your hard drive, no one else is going to be able to load the documents you're linking to. For this to work, you need to make sure the links will stay the same when the document you're working on is placed on a web server or emailed to your colleagues. The final page in the hyperlink window is similar, and enables you to create a new *OpenOffice.org* document to link to.

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 **Writer: make it pretty**

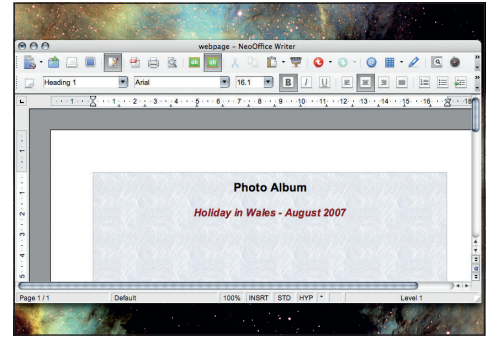
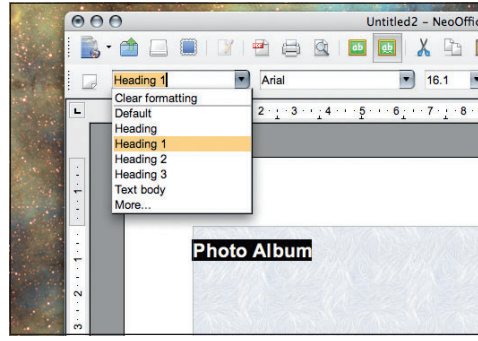
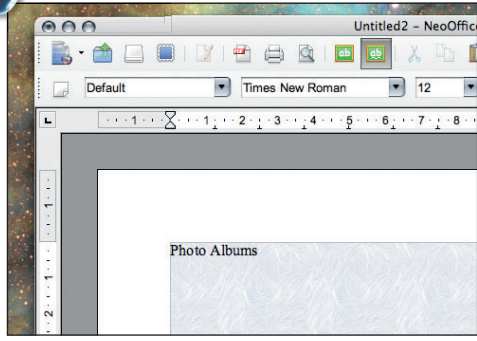


**1 The eye of the beholder**  
Websites need to be attractive; you can use custom images and backgrounds, but *Writer* includes several usable backgrounds in the main app. These will then be exported with your web page. Select the gallery icon to see the various images available.

**2 Gallery panel**  
This will take over the upper half of your document window. Shrink or enlarge this using the separator bar in between the two sections. Scroll through the available options to a style you like, right-click on the tile and select Insert > Background > Page.

**3 Placing a pattern**  
Here, we've used the tile pattern as the background for the whole page, but you could also restrict it to a single paragraph or even a table cell. Backgrounds are well supported in HTML, and should look the same when you export them as a web page.

 **Writer: add a title**

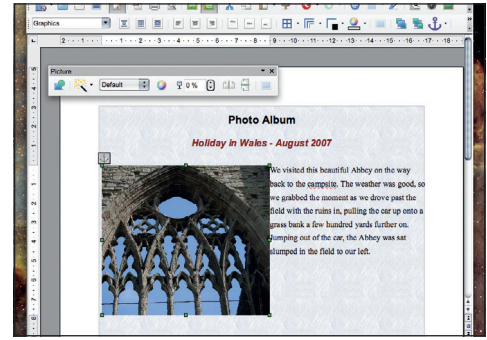
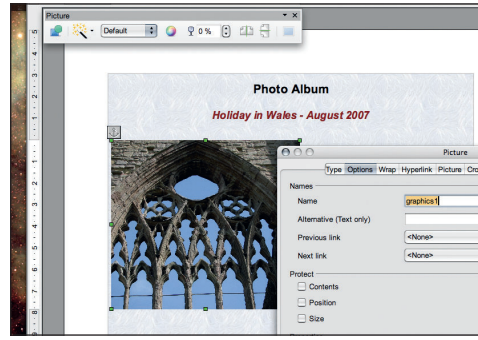
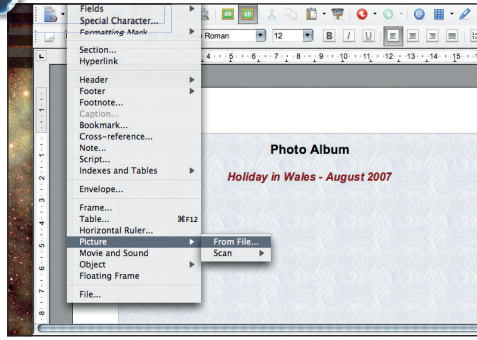


**1 Giving headers**  
Remember: when creating a website with *Writer*, adding styles to your document helps the export routine make sense of your layout. Headings need to stand out from the rest of the text. Type a title for your website into your document.

**2 Handling headings**  
For prominent handling by *Writer* and web browser, choose 'Heading1' style from the drop-down menu. The font will be larger and all text marked with Heading1 will look the same. Do the same for other headings and subheadings within your document.

**3 Appearance tweaks**  
You can change other aspect of the heading, such as the colour and justification. You should do this, as well as add a subheading marked as Heading2 in the Style menu explaining a little more about your website and what people might find.

 **Writer: add some content**

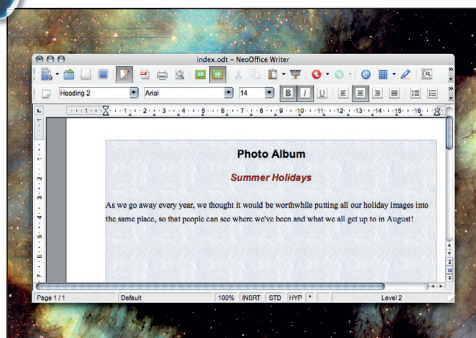


**1 Import image**  
The next step is to import a photo. Either drag an image from your computer's desktop, or use Insert > Picture > From File. You need to rescale the image so that it looks sensible – this will be the size you'll see on the web page and smaller images are better.

**2 Position image on the page**  
Double-click to open the image configuration window. Change the spacing of the image, but don't add any borders. Add a link to the original image online if you wish, or alternative text if your readers don't want to see the image.

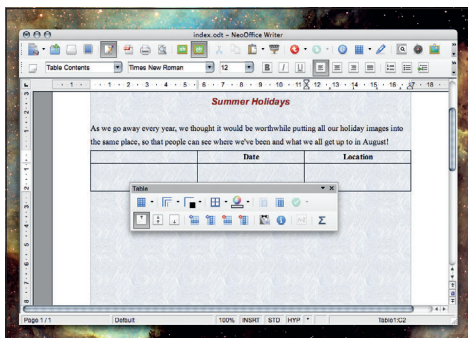
**3 Create an album**  
Type something interesting next to your image, as you would with a photo album. This is usually what friends and family like best, as it gives some insight that isn't obvious from the image alone. Now add as many images as you want to create an album.

 **Writer: add an index**



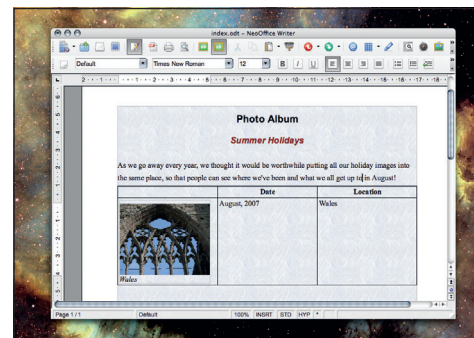
**1 Navigate albums**

We've now created the page with the images on, and we need to add an index page so that you can add as many albums as you like. Create a new document and add a title and sub-heading just like we did with the other page.



**2 Image information**

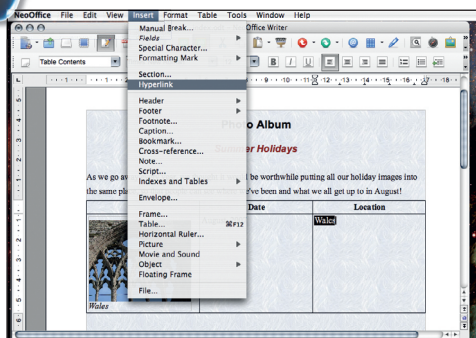
Tables are good for helping with clear design; we're going to use one to hold info on each album in our library. Add a three column table and resize the top row so that it's big enough for a single line of text. We use the last two columns for date and location.



**3 Representative example**

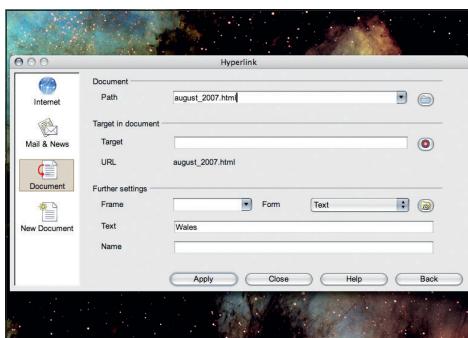
Select the first cell on the second row and insert an image you feel is representative of the album. Then rescale the image until it's small enough to fit easily in the table, and add date and location information on your album into the other two columns.

 **Writer: create a link**



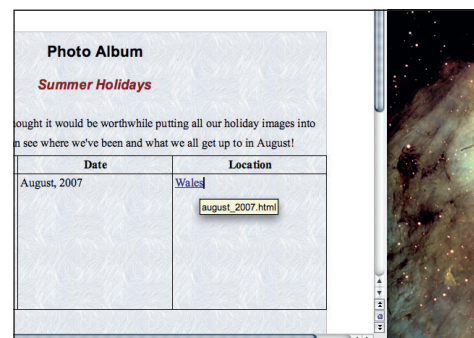
**1 Linking up**

Add a link from the album in our table to the first page we created containing the entire album. When you click this in your browser, the album will load. Highlight location text and select Insert > Hyperlink from the menu to open hyperlink window.



**2 Filename**

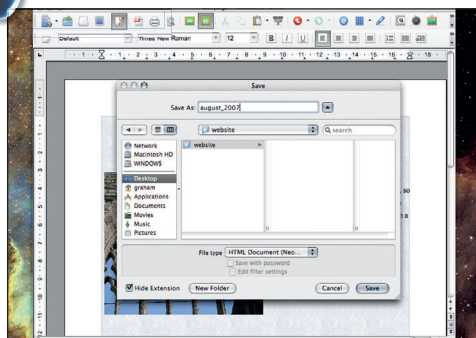
We've not created either web page yet; call the photo album **august\_2007.html**. This filename needs to be entered as the path in the hyperlink window, and will take the reader to this page after we've exported the website from writer.



**3 Turning blue**

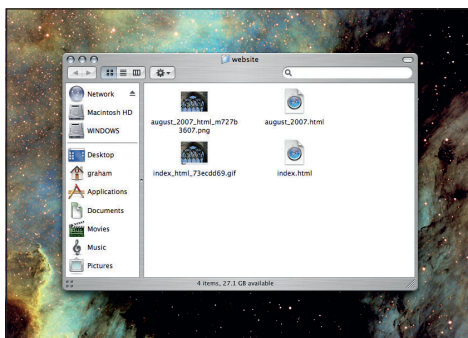
The text you used for the link in the original *Writer* document will now turn blue, as it's a hyperlink. Hold the cursor over the link, the destination will be highlighted. The link won't work yet, we first need to export both pages before the website will work.

 **Writer: export website**



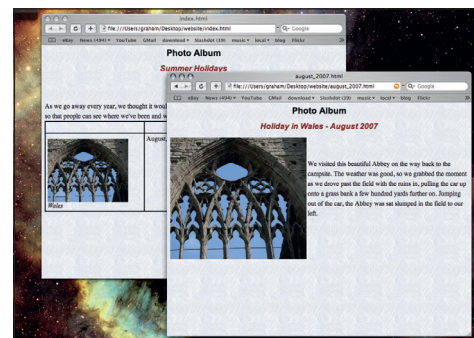
**1 Creating pages**

Export both pages we've created as HTML. Open the album document, and select Save As from the File menu. Change the file type to HTML document and make sure the file name is **august\_2007** (the same name we used for the link) and click Save.



**2 Exporting index**

Do the same for the other document; call it **index**. This is the name websites use as the first page to try when someone types in a web address without the specific page. You will now have two **html** files in the directory you exported your website.



**3 Try out your website**

Simply load the **index.html** page into your browser. Clicking on the link we created will take you to the album page. If you're happy with the results, upload both pages along with any images to a web server to host your own photo album website. **EXE**