11 VIEWING GRAPHICS ON THE WEB

In this lesson, you learn how to view the various types of graphics files found on the Web and how to save them onto your computer.

WORKING WITH GRAPHICS FILES

As you explore the Web, you will come across all kinds of graphics. Although graphics are commonly used to illustrate Web pages, you will find plenty to download onto your computer. You can use these graphics to jazz up your presentations, newsletters, reports, and more. You can even use the graphics you find online to spice up your own Web pages.

Graphics come in all shapes, sizes, and formats. They can be pictures, photos, and computer images, but in the realm of multimedia, graphics also include movie and video clips, 3-D images, animation, and more. Table 11.1 shows a few of the common types of graphics file formats found on the Web.

TABLE 11.1   GRAPHICS FILE FORMATS

FILE FORMATS	DESCRIPTION
GIF, JPG, JPEG, JPE, XBM	Common graphics files found on Web pages.
JFIF, PJPEG, PJP	Variations of the JPEG format.
TIFF, TIF	Other common graphics formats.
AVI	Video for Windows.

FILE FORMATS	DESCRIPTION
BMP, PCX	Bitmap graphics files that are common in Windows programs.
MOV, QT	QuickTime video formats.
MPEG, MPG, MPE, M1V	MPEG video and animation formats.
WRL, WRZ	A VRML 3-D object file format.

Why are there so many file types? There are dozens of graphics files or formats due to the multitude of applications available today. Multimedia applications have also spawned their share of graphics formats, and growing numbers of Web sites are starting to incorporate multimedia presentations into their Web pages. For example, there are many different file types for video clips, such as AVI, QT, MOV, and MPEG. You will need a video player program to view these files. (Learn more about viewing animation, video, and presentation files in the lessons to come.)

Netscape Navigator 4.0 does an impressive job of displaying most of the static graphics files you will come across while browsing the Web. For example, you will not have any trouble viewing GIF, JPEG, JPG, or JPE files. The browser can handle these files. Occasionally, you will run across certain types of graphics files that Netscape Navigator is incapable of viewing or displaying. For example, if you plan to view CAD (Computer Aided Design) drawings on the Web, you will need a graphic viewer program to see these files. If you plan to search the Internet for FIF file types (fractal files) or CGMs (Computer Graphics Metafiles), you will need a viewer to see these files.

There are many graphic viewers you can download off the Web for viewing the unique file types you may encounter. Some of the graphic viewers you'll find are helper apps and plug-ins (see Lesson 8, "Working with Plug-Ins," for more information about using plug-ins and helper applications).

VIEWING AN UNKNOWN FILE TYPE

As previously mentioned, Netscape Navigator can view common graphics file formats, such as GIF and JPEG. But, what happens when the Navigator comes across a graphics file format it cannot recognize? A warning box, as shown in Figure 11.1, appears on-screen.
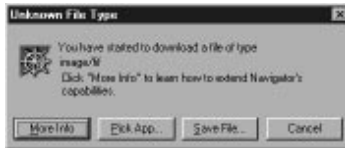

FIGURE 11.1 A warning box appears when Netscape Navigator encounters an unknown file type.

When you click a link, Netscape Navigator checks to see what type of file is being sent. Remember, clicking links automatically starts the process of downloading data from a Web server onto your computer. If a file is not in a format Netscape Navigator recognizes or is configured to play, a warning dialog box will appear, giving you several options on what you can do (refer to Figure 11.1). You may select one of four options:

- Choose to save the file now and decide later how to view it by clicking the **Save File** button and designating a place to save the file.

- Choose an application Netscape Navigator can use to view the file by clicking the **Pick App** button and selecting a viewer program to use.

- Click the **Cancel** button and forget viewing the file.

- Click the **More Info** button to find instructions on locating a viewer program that's compatible.

If it turns out you don't have a viewer program to display the file type, locate and download an appropriate graphics viewer program.

CHOOSING A GRAPHICS VIEWER

There are several good graphics viewers you can use with Netscape Navigator, such as the ViewDirector plug-in and LView Pro and ACDSee helper apps. Depending on the type of graphics files you plan to view, select a specific graphics viewer program. For example, if you plan to view fractal files (FIF file types), you need a program such as Fractal Viewer. If you just want to expand the number of graphics file types Netscape Navigator can view, try a plug-in such as FIGleaf Inline.

Table 11.2 lists some graphics viewers worth viewing. You'll find download links to each of these viewers when you visit the Netscape Plug-ins page at **http://home.netscape.com/ comprod/mirror/navcomponents_download.html**. You may use these plug-ins to extend the capabilities of Navigator.

> **TIP**
>
> **What Platform?**   Not all viewers are available for all platforms. Check the Web sites mentioned to find out if the viewers will work with your operating system, whether it's Windows 95, Macintosh, or UNIX.

TABLE 11.2   GRAPHICS VIEWERS

GRAPHICS VIEWER	DESCRIPTION
ABC QuickSilver	A plug-in for viewing and working with object graphics.
Bubbleviewer	A plug-in for viewing 3-D graphics.
CMX Viewer	A plug-in for viewing smooth vector graphics.
Corel Visual Cadd	A plug-in for viewing CAD files on the Web.
CPC View	A plug-in for viewing CPC graphics.
DWG/DXF	A plug-in for viewing AutoCAD/DWG and DXF drawings.

continues

TABLE 11.2   CONTINUED

GRAPHICS VIEWER	DESCRIPTION
FIGleaf Inline	A plug-in for viewing CGM, TIFF, PNG, BMP, WMF, EPSF, RGB file types, and more.
Fractal Viewer	A plug-in for viewing fractal files.
InterCAP Inline	A plug-in for viewing CGM files.
Shockwave for FreeHand	A plug-in for viewing compact vector graphics.
SVF	A plug-in for viewing CAD drawings.
ViewDirector	A plug-in for viewing TIFF files.
WHIP	A plug-in for viewing 2-D vector AutoCAD graphics.

Pick the viewer plug-in you want to use and follow the links to download the file. If you need help installing the file, turn to Lesson 8, "Working with Plug-ins." Most plug-ins use self-extracting files to install the program. Make sure you exit Netscape Navigator before you install the plug-in since the browser only loads plug-ins at startup. After installing the plug-in, Netscape Navigator automatically launches the viewer the next time you encounter a file type that matches one associated with the viewer.

There are other sites where you can find graphics viewers. Table 11.3 lists a few.

TABLE 11.3   SOURCE SITES FOR VIEWER PROGRAMS

SITE	URL
Stroud's	**http://cws.iworld.com/**
Stroud's 2nd main site	**http://www.stroud.com**
TUCOWS	**http://www.tucows.com**

CONFIGURING NETSCAPE NAVIGATOR FOR GRAPHICS FILES

You may have to reconfigure Netscape Navigator to work with the graphics viewers you have downloaded and installed on your computer. You can configure a viewer if you come across an unknown file type while using the Web. In the Unknown File Type warning box, click the **Pick App** button and select a viewer to use.

Use these steps to configure a graphics viewer program in Netscape Navigator:

1. Choose Pick App to display the Configure External Viewer dialog box.

2. In the text box, enter the full path of the directory where you installed the helper app viewer.

3. Choose **OK** to save the Helper App configuration. Netscape launches the Helper App to display (or play) the file in the link.

There is one drawback with helper apps. When Netscape displays the Unknown File Type dialog box, you must know which helper app will display (or play) the unknown file type. Fortunately, with the rapid growth of plug-ins since the Netscape 2.0 release, you aren't likely to run into too many unknown file types that will require a helper app. Nowadays, most new or unknown file types on a Web page are accompanied by the needed plug-in.

DOWNLOADING AND VIEWING GRAPHICS

There are zillions of graphics files on the Web. Although you are certain to stumble across many during your online journeys, it's much easier to look for graphics files by using a Web search engine (see Lesson 6, "Searching for Web Sites"). For example, Yahoo!'s directory of World Wide Web sites (**http://www. yahoo.com**) keeps track of the latest and greatest graphics on the

Web by categorizing them. With Yahoo!, you can search for Computer Graphics, Multimedia Pictures, and Photography.

To help you find some great graphics now, here are a few sites that offer different kinds of graphics files you can view or save and use later.

American Association of Zoo Keepers   If you're looking for animal photos, stop by the site for some excellent images at **http://aazk.ind.net**.

The Electric Gallery   Want to tour an art gallery? Check out this well-organized site at **http://www.egallery. com/egallery**.

WebMuseum   If fine art from the masters is more to your liking, visit the WebMuseum and download your favorite painting as a graphics file at **http://www.emf.net/wm**.

Hollywood Online   Get the latest celebrity pix at **http:// hollywood.com**/.

The GOES Weather Satellite   You'll find plenty of weather images and maps at **http://climate.gsfc. nasa.gov/~chesters/goesproject.html**.

Kodak   Nobody does photography better. You'll find dramatic photo images at **http://www.kodak.com**/.

NASA   Visit the NASA site for the latest images from outer space at **http://www.jpl.nasa.gov**.

> **What's Taking So Long?**   Depending on the graphics file's size and your modem's speed, downloading large images can take quite some time. Be patient. If you choose not to download the file, click Netscape's **Stop** button and go on to another site.

SAVING A GRAPHICS FILE

When you come across a graphics file you like, you can easily save it onto your computer's hard drive. Most of the time, you can identify a graphic file by its file extension. For example, **.jpg** indicates a JPEG file. You can always open the file in the browser's window or in another program that can view the file type. If the file is a thumbnail (a smaller version that you can click to view the full size version), make sure you save the full size version and not the thumbnail version.

To save a file, follow these steps:

   1. Open Netscape's **File** menu and choose **Save As**. This opens a dialog box for saving graphics. For example, if you're using Windows 95, the Save As dialog box (see Figure 11.2) appears.

FIGURE 11.2 The Windows 95 Save As dialog box.

   2. Depending on what operating system you're using, designate the folder or directory where you want the file stored; then give the file a name.

   3. Click **Save** or the appropriate command button to save the file.

Once you have saved a file, you can use it again. For example, you can take a photograph downloaded from the Web and turn it into a desktop background or size it to fit in a newsletter.

TIP **Careful of Copyrights** Not all graphics you find on the Web are available for commercial use; many are copy-righted. Be sure to check before using a Web graphic in a commercial site or project of your own. If a site allows you to save a file, don't assume you are free to use it on your Web site.

In this lesson, you learned how to view various types of graphics files by using Netscape Navigator 4.0. In the next lesson, you learn how to use Netscape to view movies on the Web.