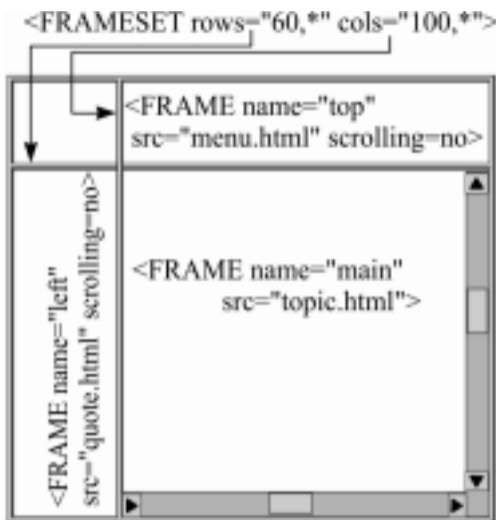## Getting Wired

Part 9 - Frame set and match!

Well, this one really is a winner! Divide your browser window into rectangles called frames, each carrying an independently functioning web "page". Use one, say, as a menu bar, to switch the contents of the main area, and another to display information you always want visible, such as a logo or contact information. It is simple even though a lot of web design packages make a hash of it. Once you have a frame set, copy it and use as often as liked, linked to different contents simply by changing references, without having to modify your main pages at all.

```
<FRAMESET rows="60,*" cols="100,*">
    <FRAME name="top"
    src="menu.html" scrolling=no>

    <FRAME name="main"
    src="topic.html">

    <FRAME name="left"
    src="quote.html" scrolling=no>
```

A simple frame set

Start with <FRAMESET> tags (not <BODY> tags!). Specify **rows** to create horizontal dividers and **cols** to create vertical ones. Define the width of each **row** or **col** in pixels, allocating one an asterisk to absorb the slack space, or use % to divide in proportions. Separate each with a comma:

<FRAMESET **rows**="60,*" **cols**="100,*">... </FRAMESET> will create four frames, including a left column 100 pixels wide and a top row 60 pixels wide. To remove all borders just add framespacing=0 border=0 frameborder=0.

Once you have the layout, insert a <FRAME> tag for each frame in order left to right, top to bottom. Name the frame with **name**="whatever". Link to a page, image or more frames with **src**="filename" just like a normal link. E.g.:<FRAMESET etc as above.>

<FRAME name="topleft" src="logo.gif"><FRAME name="top" src="menu.html">
<FRAME name="left" src="quote.html"><FRAME name="main" src="topic.html">
</FRAMESET>.

To prevent scroll bars appearing add scrolling=no to the <FRAME> tag. To inset contents add marginwidth=x and marginheight=y. (Always use these attributes together). You could subdivide individual frames further by nesting another FRAMESET where the relevant <FRAME> tag would have been placed.

To cater for early browsers without frames, finish with a brief description of your site and a link to a simple alternative frameless menu. Surround this text with the <NOFRAMES> ... </NOFRAMES> tags to make invisible to frames browsers and put this before the last </FRAMESET> tag.

Switching the contents of one frame from another requires the link to carry a target frame reference and we'll cover this in detail next time. The above example is illustrated at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tonylondon.

The Archer's website can be found at http://archer.tsx.org.

42 Church Lane
London N2 8DT

Telephone:
020 8444 6265

EAST FINCHLEY ADVICE SERVICE NEEDS VOLUNTEER ADVISERS

Do you enjoy helping others?
Could you give advice?
Are you a sympathetic listener?
Can you spare two and a half hours a week?
Training given
If you are interested contact the co-ordinator on 020 8444 6265.

Take a Closer Look

By Diana Cormack

A Millennium Award from The Royal Society has enabled local children to look at a world they had never seen before. Using a £10,000 microscope helped them to get a different picture of things which they had collected or which had been provided, such as leaves, petals, hair, a fly's wing and even a nerve cell.

Learning at The Old Barn. Photo: Daphne Chamberlain

Scientific scale

Dr James Downing of New Oak Road, East Finchley, and five undergraduate and post-graduate students - Sara Chalabi, Sri Kumar, Simon North, Dale Raine and Robert Pinchen from Imperial College

Dr James Downing & children at the Old Barn. Photo: Diana Cormack

London - gave a fascinating presentation which helped the youngsters to get an idea of Scientific Scale, ranging from the very, very big to the very, very small. It took them from the largest planet down to tiny cells, in an interactive demonstration which held the children's interest throughout.

Much of this was due to the verve and enthusiasm of the students, as well as to the empathy between them and their young audience, who were of mixed ages and abilities.

Part of the project was aimed at giving some idea about how to become a scientist, as well as what scientists do, so it was good to have a female student in the group.

Next Generation

Maybe one day some of the children from the Old Barn Community Centre and The Finchley Fun Factory held at Holy Trinity School will be inspired by this memorable demonstration. Certainly, some of the responses they gave on the questionnaire afterwards were hard to forget, but more of that next month!

Somewhere, in East Finchley, in a home near you, someone's listening out for sounds of aliens. Neil Barnes explains how you too could join the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence.

Is Anybody Out There?

Okay. You've got your computer. You've played the games. You've written all the letters you can stand. You've surfed the Internet. You've even built your own web page. And now, all that lovely new hardware is just sitting there getting old, wondering what to do next.

So, what can you do while the computer is waiting for you to load the next game? Well, assuming you don't want to go down the path of making your own software (with all the pizzas and coke that that implies) you might like to look into the concept of distributed software.

Distributed software? Sounds complicated. What's it all about?

Number Crunching

Science generates numerical problems in three general classes: Those which are easy and fast, those which are easy but slow, and those which are insoluble. The first are hardly of interest, and the last are something of a waste of time, but imagine a problem which needs lots of processing to get an answer.

You may have come across discussions about Internet security. "No-one can crack my codes," they say, "It would take a computer ten thousand years!" Well that may be so - but equally it might take ten thousand computers only one year - provided you can get ten thousand computers.

Science Fiction

There's another type of problem similar to this: the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence

(SETI). You may have seen the recent film 'Contact' and remembered that the radio telescope at Arecibo was used to listen for signals from the stars. Science fiction? Well actually, no.

Listening to the Stars

There are a group of volunteer scientists based at Berkeley University who are doing exactly that. They're listening to the noise of the stars - not just a single star but millions of them - over the next two years and analysing the results to look for things which might indicate intelligent life - beeps and boops and whistles and so on. They have two problems here: they have an enormous amount of data to process, and there's a huge amount of processing to do on each piece of data.

So they've come up with an idea. Think of all those computers sat out there doing nothing most of the time, they said. (Hey, wasn't that where we came in?) Perhaps we could borrow them a little bit, just when they're not busy, and save ourselves having to spend a few hundred million dollars on supercomputers?

They've written a piece of software which can be downloaded over the Internet to let them do this. It runs as a screen

saver (or if you have a faster computer, you can run it all the time without interfering with your other work) and so far over a million people are running it. It takes from around sixty hours (on a slow Pentium) down to only a few hours on the latest Pentium III machines, after which it needs about two minutes connected to the Internet to send its results back and get the next chunk of data to process.

Phone Home

If you want more information, look up the SETI At Home site at http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu and download the software. For more details about the Arecibo radio observatory, check out http://www.naic.edu/

And remember, you could be the one to discover that the truth really is out there…