Getting Started with MACAW

Build responsive websites with a cutting-edge application

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JOE CHELLMAN & REX RAINEY



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Joe Chellman and Rex Rainey

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For Kate and Monica whose fault it is we know each other

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The Rest of the Tools



Here we'll introduce you to all of Macaw's other tools and show you where they're located throughout the application.

The Interface

Macaw's interface is more akin to the interface of a graphics application than a web design text editor. This is part of its appeal because for many users the interface of a graphics application is much more familiar, and less intimidating, than a traditional text editor. These types of interfaces tend to be more approachable because users can draw shapes and text directly on a canvas or page, without having to create everything through lines of code. To make it easier to describe Macaw's interface as well as to help you get oriented to where everything is, we've divided it into five main areas (see **Figure 4.1**):

- The top area contains the Page Manager, page tabs, options bar, breakpoint and DOM information.
- The left side contains the toolbar and links for global styles, swatches, and feedback.
- The large area in the middle is the canvas (where you'll create your site).



Figure 4.1 Macaw's full interface.

- The right side contains the Inspector, Outline, and Library panes. Each shows different information, based on which element(s) are selected on the canvas.
- Lastly, at the very top of the screen (or window if you're on Windows) is the standard operating system menu bar. All sorts of actions can be accessed here. The various drop-down menus work just like other applications you have on your computer.

Top area

The top area contains a handful of helpful items.

Page Manager

Figure 4.2 Page Manager icon.

NOTE

In the upper-left corner is a small, three-line list icon that accesses the Page Manager (see **Figure 4.2**). Clicking this icon shows a list of all of your pages. There you can add, rename, or copy pages.

When you create a new page, Macaw automatically adds a tab for that page to the right of the Page Manager icon. If you close the tab for a particular page, it does not delete the page—it just closes the window/tab view of that page. If you do intend to delete a particular page, you need to click the trash icon next to that page in the Page Manager.

Page tabs

The tabs next to the Page Manager icon are open windows for any of your site's pages (see **Figure 4.3**). Each new project you create starts with a blank page with the title "index" (feel free to keep or rename this page as desired).

index

Figure 4.3 Page tab.

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Options bar

The information shown in the options bar changes depending on what is currently selected, whether it be a tool from the toolbar or an element on the page (see **Figure 4.4**). It consists of information and settings that can be adjusted to alter the next action you'll make with your currently selected tool or to modify attributes of any currently selected element.

VIEW MODE: normal 🔻 MAINTAIN FLOW ON NUDGE/PUDGE

Figure 4.4 Options bar.



Figure 4.5 View Mode toggle.

One common item that shows up in the options bar is the View Mode toggle (see **Figure 4.5**).

This toggle allows you to switch between normal, outline, and wireframe view modes. Keep in mind that the options bar is visible only when certain tools are selected.

Breakpoint and DOM information

🌾 1200PX 🔗 DOM

Figure 4.6 Breakpoint and DOM information.

To the right of the options bar is the breakpoint and Document Object Model (DOM) information (see **Figure 4.6**). This area simply tells you which breakpoint you're currently looking at and whether you can edit the DOM. The "DOM" text turns blue, and a little pencil icon appears when you can edit the DOM. When you cannot edit the DOM, the "DOM" text turns gray, and the pencil icon changes to a lock icon.

Left side

The left side contains the toolbar and a few other commonly used items.



Select tool

You use the Select tool (keyboard shortcut: V) to select whole elements or groups on the canvas.



Direct Select tool

You use the Direct Select tool (keyboard shortcut: A) to select a single element within a group or component.

т

Text tool

You use the Text tool (keyboard shortcut: T) to create or edit text elements. Macaw has two types of text elements: point text and paragraph text. Clicking once on the canvas with the Text tool will make a point text field that has auto width and behaves like an inline element. Clicking and dragging on the canvas with the Text tool will create paragraph text, which has set dimensions and behaves like a block element (which means it can also be made scrollable if desired—more on that later). The actual text within text elements can have various tags applied to them: spans, links, regular and strong emphasis. Each of those tags may be styled as well.

Element tool

You use the Element tool (keyboard shortcut: R) to create or edit basic elements. With this tool, you can create empty elements that don't have any content in them. This tool comes in handy when you're prototyping or creating initial styles. Keep in mind, though, these elements should eventually be converted to containers for better structure and semantics when you publish the final project (more on that later).

Container tool

You use the Container tool (keyboard shortcut: G) for grouping multiple elements. Containers have their own dimensions and can be styled like any other element.

To create a container with the Container tool, first select the tool from the toolbar and then click and drag on the canvas. Drag over the elements you want to group in a container and those elements will highlight as you drag. All of the highlighted elements will then be placed inside the new container.

Containers can also be created by selecting a bunch of elements and then selecting the Elements > Group command from the menu bar, or by pressing (\mathbb{R}) -G (Mac) or Ctrl-G (Windows).



Button tool

You use the Button tool (keyboard shortcut: B) to create or edit button elements. The text in buttons is centered by default. The button type (submit for forms, button for general use, and reset to clear a form) can be set in the Advanced palette in the Inspector.



Input tool(s)

You use the Input tool (keyboard shortcut: N) to create or edit various form input elements: single-line text fields, multiline text areas, select (that is, popup or drop-down) menus, check boxes, and radio buttons. To access the various input elements, click and hold on the current Input Tool icon, or use the keyboard shortcut Shift-N. Keep in mind that input fields are editable. Any text you type inside the element will be used as placeholder text when you publish your project.



Embed tool

You use the Embed tool (keyboard shortcut: M) to create or edit embedded elements such as HTML, iframes, maps, and videos. Unfortunately, Macaw doesn't always display every kind of embedded content while in the editor or while previewing in the browser. But the embedded content will display correctly when you publish your project.



Hand tool

You use the Hand tool (keyboard shortcut: H or spacebar) to pan (click and drag) around your page. When this tool is active, a thumbnail of the whole canvas is displayed in the upper right, and can be clicked to pan quickly to anywhere on the canvas.



Eyedropper tool

You use the Eyedropper tool (keyboard shortcut: I) to select and match colors from existing elements. This tool works very much like eyedropper tools in other standard graphics applications.



Global Styles

You use this tool to access any global styles you've created for the current project and create new ones.



Swatches

You use this tool to open the Swatches palette (Keyboard shortcut: S), which includes any swatches you saved for the current project. This icon is only clickable when an element that can have a swatch applied to it is selected on the canvas. Click a swatch to make it the background color of the selected element.

Feedback

ou use the Feed

You use the Feedback tool to send feedback directly to the developers of Macaw, right from within the app. As we mentioned earlier, Macaw is a pretty new tool and is constantly being refined and improved upon. If you run into a bug, or you have any feature requests, please let the developers know!

The canvas

The large area in the middle is known as the canvas. This is where you'll do the bulk of your creating. Let's explore a few key portions of the canvas.

The grid

The grid—keyboard shortcut: **ﷺ** (Mac) or Ctrl (Windows)—is the invisible structure of your site (see **Figure 4.7**). Any quality site is designed using a grid. It gives you guidelines for separating and organizing your content. The default breakpoint is set with a 12-column grid, but this grid can be edited to your liking using the Inspector on the right. Various other attributes of the grid can be modified in the Inspector as well, but we'll get into those later in this book when we start making a site. You can turn the visibility of the grid on or off from the menu bar by selecting View > Toggle Grid.



Figure 4.7 The grid (in light gray) over a blank page.



Ruler and breakpoints

Resize handle

At the top of the canvas is your ruler (see **Figure 4.8**). The ruler shows you the width of your site. You can use the ruler to quickly jump between your various breakpoints (once you've created more than one).





Figure 4.9 Resize handle.

To the right of the grid (but still within the canvas) you'll see the resize handle (see **Figure 4.9**). You can click and drag this handle to see how your site responds to various screen widths. If you have only one breakpoint, any elements on your page will just squish or stretch based on the adjusted width. Once you have more breakpoints and set various

properties for each element on your page (at each breakpoint), the various elements on your page will respond as you've defined in real time as you drag the resize handle.

The right side

The right side is where the Inspector, Outline, and Library panes are located.

Inspector

All the various properties, such as dimensions, color, font, border styles, and effects, that can be edited for the currently selected element show up here (see **Figure 4.10**). The properties that appear change depending on what element on the canvas is selected (not all properties are applicable to all elements). The Inspector will be used constantly to modify and tweak the various elements in your design. The various features of the Inspector will be covered in more detail when we create a project in later chapters. Even when you have nothing selected, properties appear in the Inspector that you can edit. These properties apply to your overall project: breakpoints (add, rename, delete), background images/color, grid properties, and page title.





Outline

The Outline pane shows you the structure of your site (see **Figure 4.11**). You can control how items are ordered visually, change their tag types, add or remove HTML classes, and nest elements within others. The outline gives you a lot of control over structure of your pages, so if you're a control freak, you're going to love it!



Library

The Library lets you import images of all kinds (including SVG) for use on the canvas (see **Figure 4.12**). Any components you create will appear here as well. These items are shared among all pages in your project.



Figure 4.12 The Library pane.

Figure 4.11

The Outline pane.

The menu bar

The Macaw menu bar is located at the top of your screen. It functions like other menu bars in other applications on your computer (see **Figure 4.13**). You can access common actions associated with working with files and projects on your computer, actions such as setting preferences, saving, printing, copying/pasting, and grouping.

Figure 4.13 Menu bar.		Macaw	File	Edit	Select	View	Elements	Window	Help	
Figure 4.13 Menu bar.	a di se	Macaw	File	Edit	Select	View	Elements	Window	Help	

NOTE

If you need further help getting to know Macaw's interface, please check out the in-depth documentation at http://docs.macaw.co.

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