



www.tramline.com

## TourMaker Reference Manual

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### Intro

**The World Wide Web is immense and chaotic, and Tramline's TourMaker is a tool that provides control and focus for many applications.**

With it, you can create thematic presentations called "Web Tours" from multiple Web pages and your own custom text. With tours on your site, you can take users out onto the Web to explore its resources and then bring them back safely to your site when done.

At its simplest, each Tour is composed of sites and narration integrated together into a sequence that the user can access using controls from the "Tour Control Panel." Tours are launched from hypertext links by a simple mouse click. This opens a "Tour Window" containing the script for the tour and the controls to take it. The user moves through the tour as they desire, exploring or lingering, but never getting lost. They can always get back to the tour or your site with a single mouse click.

TourMaker is both a browser and an authoring system. With it, you select the sites for a tour and enter the text for the tour narrations. As you do this, you gradually create each tour, so you view the tour as a work in progress until you have selected the last site and entered the last narration. At that point, you save your work and the tour is finished. It will run just as you saw it in TourMaker.

### Requirements

Using TourMaker requires a minimum of Windows '95 and Explorer 4.0. Tours, however, will run on most recent versions of Explorer, Navigator and AOL on both Mac and Windows platforms.

### Installation

Before you can use it, you have to install it on your system. Installation is a simple "click and follow directions" process. We recommend following the default settings regarding where you save TourMaker since we refer to these settings throughout this document. You shouldn't experience problems and we don't think you will. However, if you do, let us know immediately at [info@tramline.com](mailto:info@tramline.com). We will get back to you as quickly as we can.

## Getting Started

### First, a little terminology...

We generally call our technology "virtual Web tours" or tours for short, with the exception of our "Virtual Field Trips" site, where we call them "field trips." Both mean the same thing.

The tour window contains several components. Sites are viewed through the "site frame." The text for each stop (the "narration") appears in the "narration frame." Controls for navigating through the tour are in the "control panel." Note: The names for the control panel buttons and their functions are described in the Help page that is opened with the "?" button on the control panel.

### Opening TourMaker

TourMaker is opened from the Start menu or from a shortcut like any Windows program.

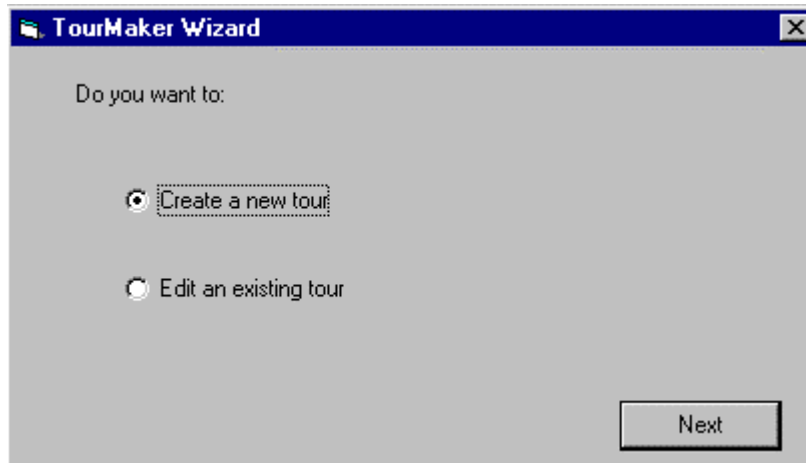
### Registration Number

Once you have installed and opened TourMaker, you are given a choice as to whether you will register your copy (and therefore unlock its full functionality) or just try the program in its trial mode. If you do not have one, a registration number can be purchased through our Web site <http://www.tramline.com/store.htm>. Once you enter your registration number in TourMaker, you will be able to save tours and the trial option will disappear.

**Note:** Save the registration number in a safe place because it will be needed if reinstalling the program ever becomes necessary.

### The TourMaker Wizard

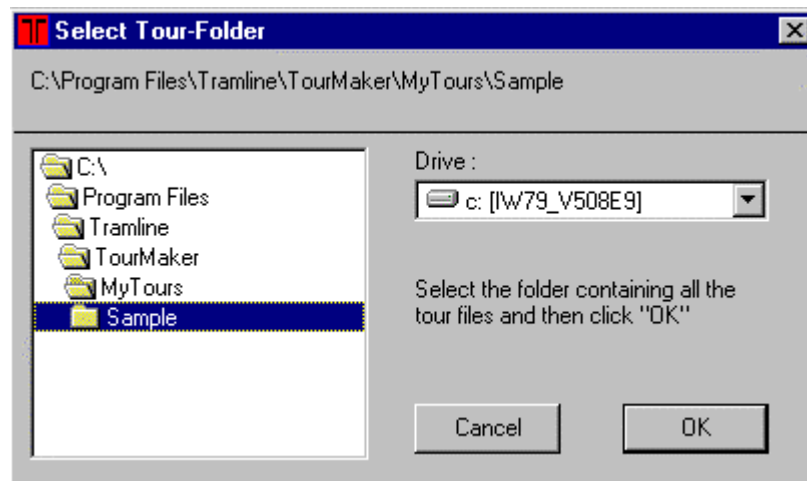
Once you are beyond the initial registration/trial dialog box, you will see the TourMaker window that is very similar to the Tour Window. You will also see the TourMaker "Wizard," a dialogue box that allows you to choose whether to "Create a new tour" or "Edit an existing one." In this case, we'll try editing an existing one first and then discuss what you would do to create a new tour.



### ***Tutorial: Edit an Existing Tour***

1. In the TourMaker Wizard, click on "Edit an existing tour" and then the "Next" button.
2. Highlight the "Sample" folder under "My Tours" and click on the "OK" button.

**Note:** You select the *folder, not a file*. If you look for a file to select, you'll *never* find one.



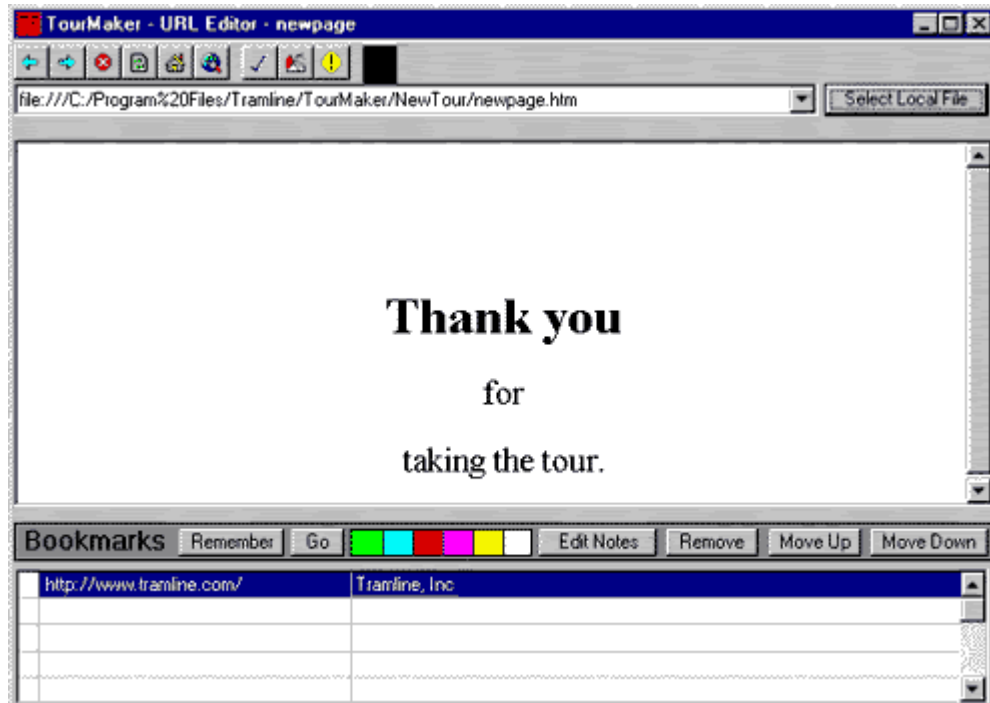
3. You've now opened a sample tour for editing. Note that the interface looks just like the Tour Window, except for the menu and buttons at the top.



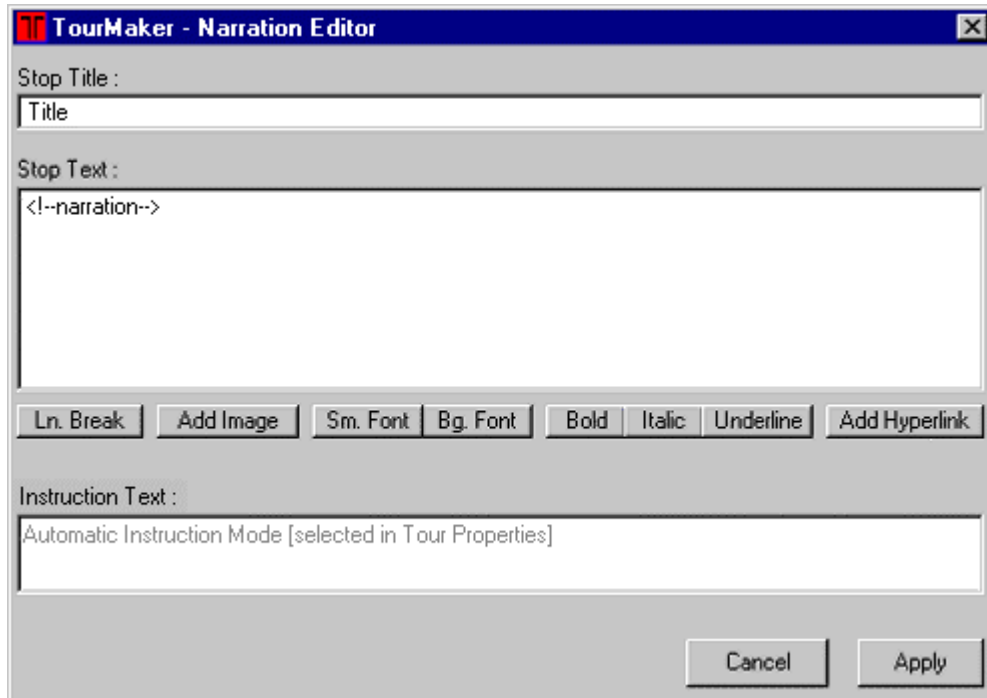
4. Click the forward arrow to go to the first stop, Tramline's home page. Explore the TourMaker buttons by holding your pointer over each to see the pop-up description. You probably shouldn't click on them just yet. You might delete a stop or do something else you don't really want to do at this point.
5. Now explore the menu. In particular, note each of the options in the Edit menu. These control the most basic features of the tours you'll create, including the selection of sites in the Site Frame and the addition of text in the Narration Frame.



6. Now let's really get started. Click on the "+" button to insert a stop. (Note: you could also have selected "Insert" from the Stop menu.)
7. Select "Site Frame" in the Edit menu to open the "Site Editor" window in which you will select sites for the tour. Run your pointer across the window's buttons to see their names. Note that in the Address Bar is a "local" address for the page you are viewing ("Thank you ..."), i.e., it's on your hard drive in the TourMaker file. You can replace this with any other HTML page you have on your hard drive by clicking on the "Select Local File" button and then locating the file using the Select Local File dialogue box. Before we do that, however, let's find and add an existing Web page to this tour, since that's what this is all about.



8. In the Site Editor, click on the Search button. This brings up a page of links to search engines. Click on the one of your choice. The search engine page will appear in the window.
9. Now, from this point you can explore the Internet to your heart's content. Rather than do that now, click the checkmark button (Use this Site). Note that the TourMaker Window has moved to the top of the desktop. You have just added the search engine site as a stop on the tour. Now, you have to add the narration.
10. Select "Narration Frame" from the Edit panel to open the "Narration Editor." It has two areas for entering information: Stop Title and Stop Text. The title should generally be a short descriptive one. The text can be longer, and you can format it using the various buttons below the text window (more about that under Narration Editor, below).



Enter whatever you wish here and click the Apply button--your entry should now appear in the narration window. OK, you've just added one stop with narration. Multiply that ten or so times and you have a tour. At this point, you now know the basics on creating a tour. We'd recommend you continue to play around with the sample tour for a while, though, and add, delete, or change it as you wish. When you're done, you can save your changes or just Quit the program to leave the Sample Tour as is. When done, you've experienced a good introduction to developing a tour. However, there are a few more things we'd like to point out.

### ***Key Features and Tips***

#### **Trial Use**

When you use TourMaker prior to registering, you can test all its functions, but you will not be able to save a tour. In the process, you will name and create a tour folder for your trial tour that will be placed in the MyTours folder. Once you register and create tours, the trial folder will still be in the MyTours folder unless you delete it or use it to create and save a tour.

#### **MyTours Folder**

**TourMaker's recommended default location for tours it creates:  
C:\Program\_Files\Tramline\TourMaker\MyTours**

## Tour Folder

Tours are saved in folders containing all the associated files for the tour. When editing a tour in TourMaker, it is important to remember to select the tour folder, not a file, as TourMaker will only open a folder.

## HTML Editor

You can select a program as your default HTML editor by selecting "Options" in the "View" menu. Note that Word and other word processors generally have HTML features and may be used. See also: "Custom Pages/Local Files."

## The Site Editor (Edit menu: Site Frame)

The Site Editor allows you to search the Internet or your hard drive for the sites or local files you'll use as stops in your tour. In addition to basic browser features, it has some features designed specifically for tour creation. In particular, the bookmark feature allows you to annotate your bookmarks. You bookmark pages by clicking on the "Remember" button. When you do, the address will be stored in the Bookmarks window. You can write notes about these bookmarks and store them with the bookmark by selecting the Edit Notes button.

In addition to searching the Web, the Site Editor allows you to select local files by clicking on the "Select Local File" button. If you haven't already created the local file, you can open your HTML editor by clicking on the Launch HTML Editor button. (Note: for this to function, you must first tell TourMaker what your HTML editor is by selecting Options in the View menu. Then browse until you find the program you want to use and select it.)

## Narration Editor (Edit menu: Narration Frame)

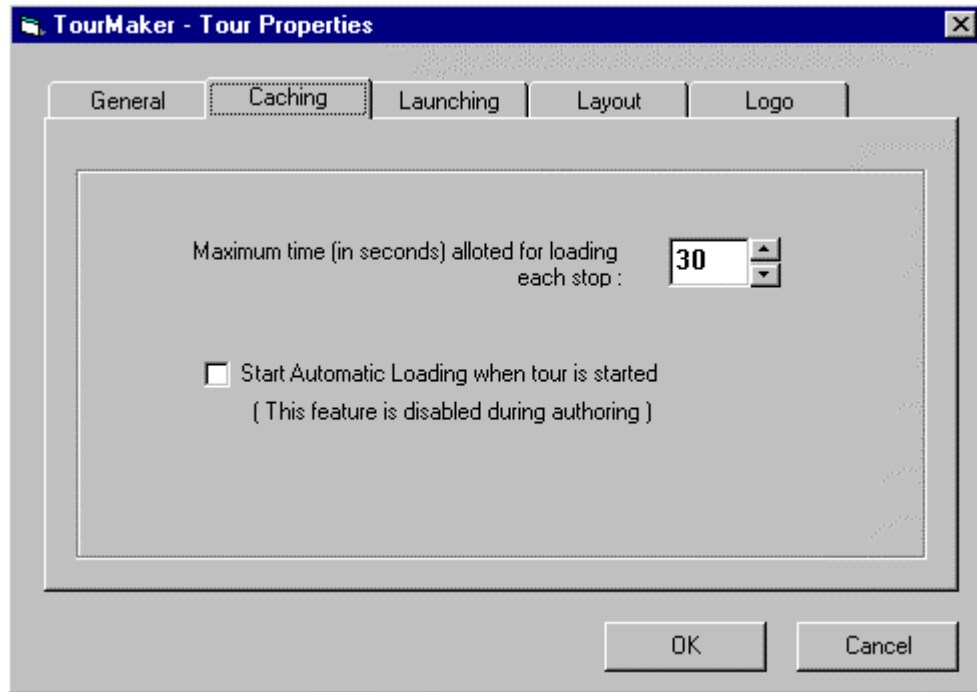
The buttons allow you to format the text (bold, italic, etc.). You do so by highlighting the text and then clicking the button. If you want to add a link to the text, highlight the appropriate word, then click on the "Add Hyperlink" button. A dialogue box asking you to type a URL appears. Enter it and click OK. Your narration will now contain a link that when clicked will open another URL in the Site Window.

## Tour Properties

There are many useful features to this dialogue box. The first is that you name the tour in the "General" section as it will appear on the automatic opening Help page. You can also set the caching time for each stop (see below). Perhaps the most important feature is that you will set the location of the web page(s) from which your tour will be launched. **Note:** the "Layout" and "Logo" options are not available in the Educational Version.

## Caching

Tours can be cached, i.e., automatically downloaded to a user's computer. Caching of stops occurs at predetermined intervals that the tour author can adjust in the Tour Properties dialogue box of TourMaker. The default setting is 30 seconds. In other words, each stop will be downloaded for 30 seconds before the next stop is downloaded. Since each stop has a different cache time, some stops will cache at one setting while others won't. *Note that caching is turned off in TourMaker's authoring mode. It will only work in the actual tour.*



## Frames

Every once in a while, we come across a site that is frame intolerant. That is, it will not allow itself to be viewed in a frame. If you put such a site in a tour, the narration and control panel windows would disappear the moment the site loaded. There are very few such sites on the Web, but they do exist. As a precaution, we've developed an automatic test that allows us to determine if a site is frame tolerant. When you click on the checkmark button (Use This Site) in the Site Editor, it automatically verifies that the site is frame tolerant. If it isn't, it will tell you so and you will have to find another site.



## Tour Structure

Tours work best that are focused around a theme, topic, or story. There are no hard rules, but we try to keep ours to no more than 15 to 20 stops. The first stop is an orientation page with the title of the tour and some basic guidance for the user. It is automatically generated by TourMaker, but you can replace it with something else if you'd like. When possible, we also like to include an introductory page containing a brief overview on tour objectives and content, as well as any other relevant information (see Custom Pages, below). For example, if Shockwave is needed for some of the stops, here is a good place to mention it.

## Narration

The narration frame is small, so the narration for any stop should be economical and efficient. Users will not want to do extensive scrolling to read it. That said, the narration should always identify the site being visited and the objectives of the visit (for legal reasons, Web etiquette, and just plain clarity), along with providing suggestions or instructions on what to do there. If a large amount of text is needed (such as background or reference information), you should consider making it into a custom page (see below). This allows you to integrate more content into the tour than the narration window can reasonably accommodate.

*Note: The narration frame automatically contains a hyperlink that will open the site being viewed in a third frameless window. This allows viewers to see the site without having it hemmed in by our frames. When a user moves forward or backward on the tour, this third window is automatically closed.*

## Custom Pages/Local Files

These are simple HTML documents stored on your server and downloaded to the user's drive just like the web sites they'll visit. They are viewed through the Site Window on a tour. For example, TourMaker automatically generates a simple custom page for the first stop of each tour (mentioned above). Adding custom pages is an excellent way to provide context and content to a tour. Possible uses include providing background information on a subject, ancillary information to be printed and viewed while taking the tour, lists of additional links (see below), etc.

Local files can be placed anywhere on the tour either as a stop or as a page brought into the site window by a narration link, and you can do anything on them that you see on any Web page. The only catch is that you'll have to create them yourself using an HTML editor and then save them as local files on your system. You can create a local file anywhere on your hard drive, but note that it probably shouldn't be in the actual tour folder you're working on, because TourMaker copies the file to that folder and will tell you it can't if the file is already there.

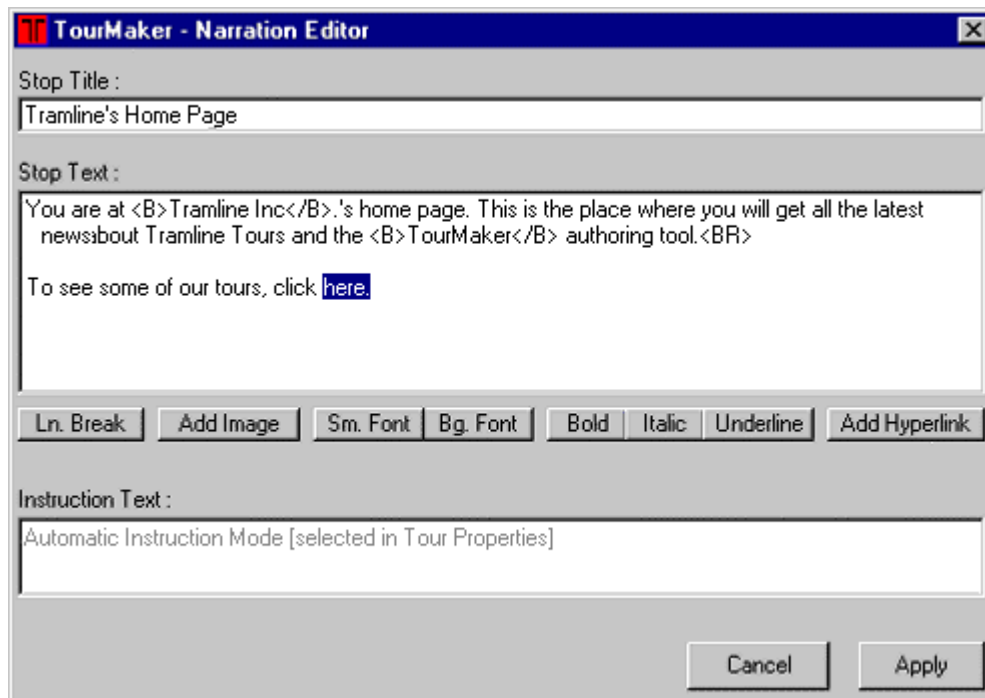
Since Word and other word processors generally contain an HTML editor, you probably won't have a problem creating at least simple HTML pages, but you may need experience to achieve more ambitious results. That said, it is generally a good idea to keep both text and graphics simple for such pages.

## Lists of Links

Since relatively brief tours are best, yet there are so many possible Web resources to see, it is often useful to develop a list of additional resources as a custom page and to include it as a stop (often the last) or stops in a tour. The tour format offers a significant benefit on such lists in that the user can explore them without getting lost: whenever they wish, they can return to the tour by clicking on the "Return To Tour" button on the control panel.

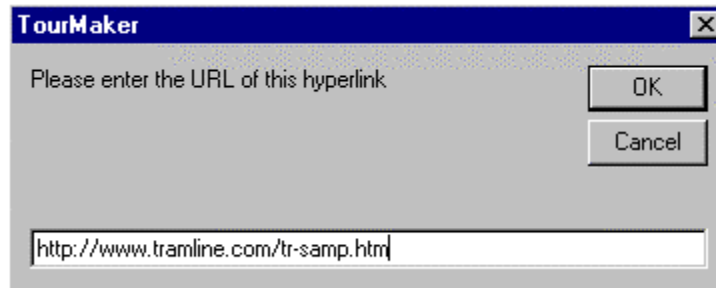
## Narration Links

You can put a link into the narration that opens a second web page in the site window. This means, for example, you can take users to one URL at a stop and then instruct them to click on a link to see another URL or even a custom page. Technically, you can add as many links as you wish in the narration. However, because of the window's size and the fact that the narration at a stop cannot change even if the site does, you are pretty much limited to one or two additional links. In most cases, it is better to simply turn an additional link into another stop having its own narration.



To create a link in the narration editor, highlight the link and click on the "Add Hyperlink" button. A TourMaker Enter URL dialog box (below) appears in which you

can enter your link. You then click on "OK" and a link appears in the narration frame that will open a new page in the site window.



### ***Tutorial: Creating A New Tour***

And now it's time to create your own tours....

1. Open TourMaker.
2. Select "Create a New Tour" and click Next in the TourMaker Wizard.
3. Name the tour and the folder in which it will go. The name (or tour title) is what will appear on the tour title page (as in My Web Tour) and in the tour itinerary. It can be a phrase with or without punctuation. The folder name should be a "folder length" abbreviated version of the tour title that you can remember and recognize. Click Next.
4. Select the "My Tours" folder and click Finish to save your tour folder there.
5. You're in the tour at the tour title/orientation page. Note that this is a custom page automatically generated by TourMaker and stored as a local file.
6. Click the forward arrow to move to the first stop.
7. Open the Site Editor and select a site as you did in the Edit Tour Tutorial (in Getting Started).
8. Open the Narration Editor and add the stop narration. Be sure to include a stop title. Click on Apply.
9. Add stops and build your tour. It's that easy.
10. SAVE the tour when you are done.
11. Reopen it and play it. Make sure it's the way you want it. When it is, post it to your web site following the directions in the next section.

### ***Posting Your Tour to the Web***

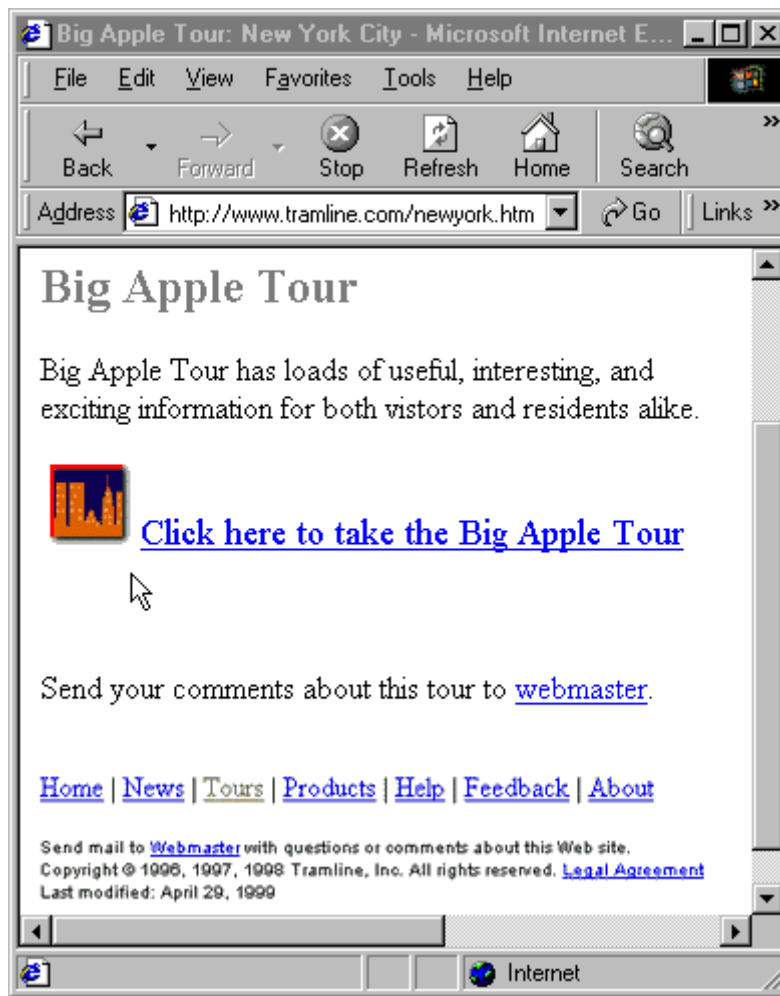
When you have completed and saved your tour, you will need to upload it to the Web in order for others to enjoy. But first you will have to:

- Create a web page that includes a link to your tour and its files.
- Upload your web page and tour folder and files to your web site.

Before we begin, let's take a simple look at the tour process and then we'll tell you how to do it. A user takes a tour by clicking a hyperlink on your web page. The tour launches (starts). When they are done with the tour, they click the **Exit** button on the tour control panel, the tour ends, and the user is returned to your web page.

## Creating a Launch Page

Using whatever tools you normally use to create web pages, create a web page (also referred to as a launch page because it is from this page that users will be able to launch your tour) that will have a link to your tour. You may want to have both a text link and an icon linking to your tour. Here's a sample page (below) that we created for our Big Apple Tour. We designed our page to include the tour name "Big Apple Tour", a descriptive sentence about the tour, and some other information relevant to our particular web site, however, the purpose of this page was to link to our tour, so there is both an icon link and a text link to the Big Apple Tour.



If you looked at the source code of the web page above, here is the HTML code you would see for the tour links. We'll go into more detail about this in the next sections but wanted to give you a sneak preview.

Assuming that the tour folder is called "newyork", which is stored inside the "webtours" folder at "www.tramline.com/tm/", the html code for the Big Apple Tour *icon* link will be:  
`<a href="http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork/_tourlaunch1.htm"></a>`

and here is the html code for the *text* link which reads "Click here to take the Big Apple Tour."


`<a href="http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork/_tourlaunch1.htm"><big>Click here to take the Big Apple Tour</big></a>`

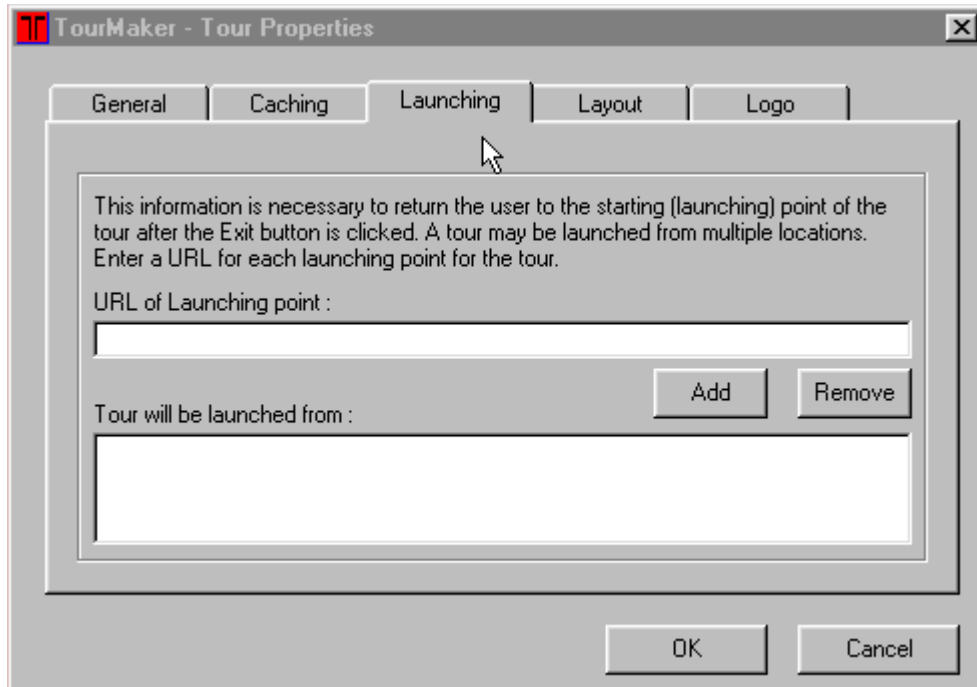
Your code will be similar but you will instead be using the URL to YOUR tour on YOUR web site.

## The Tourlaunch File

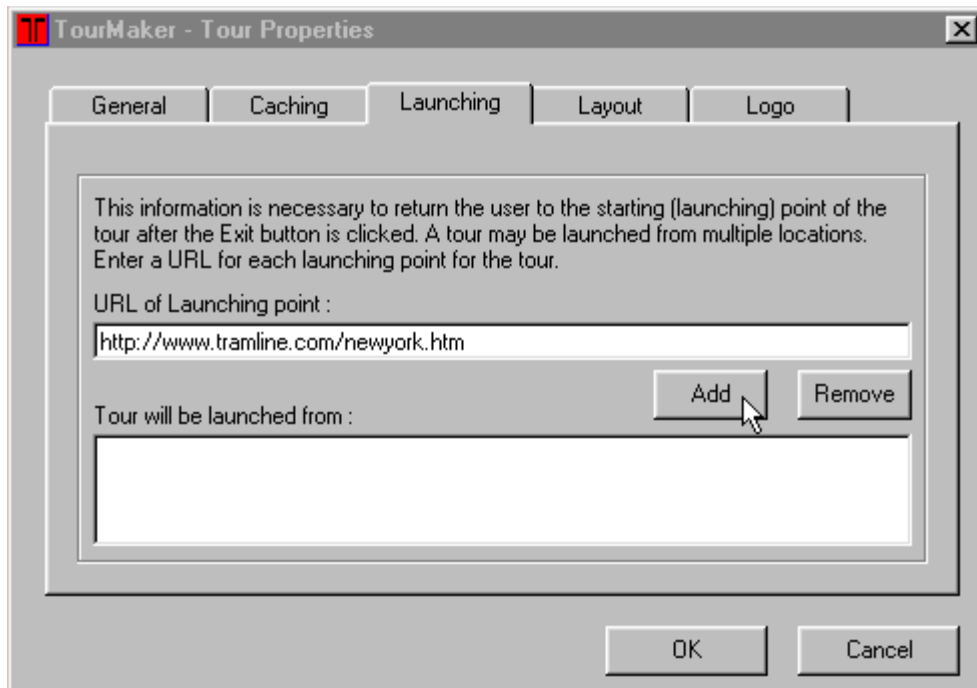
The link to your tour on your launch page is a hyperlink to a specific file called *\_tourlaunch1.htm*. (In the html code example provided above, you can see this filename in the last part of the URL.) The *tourlaunch* file serves two purposes:

1. It launches the tour, and
2. it remembers the URL of your launching web page so that when the user clicks the **Exit** button and leaves the tour, they are returned to your web page.

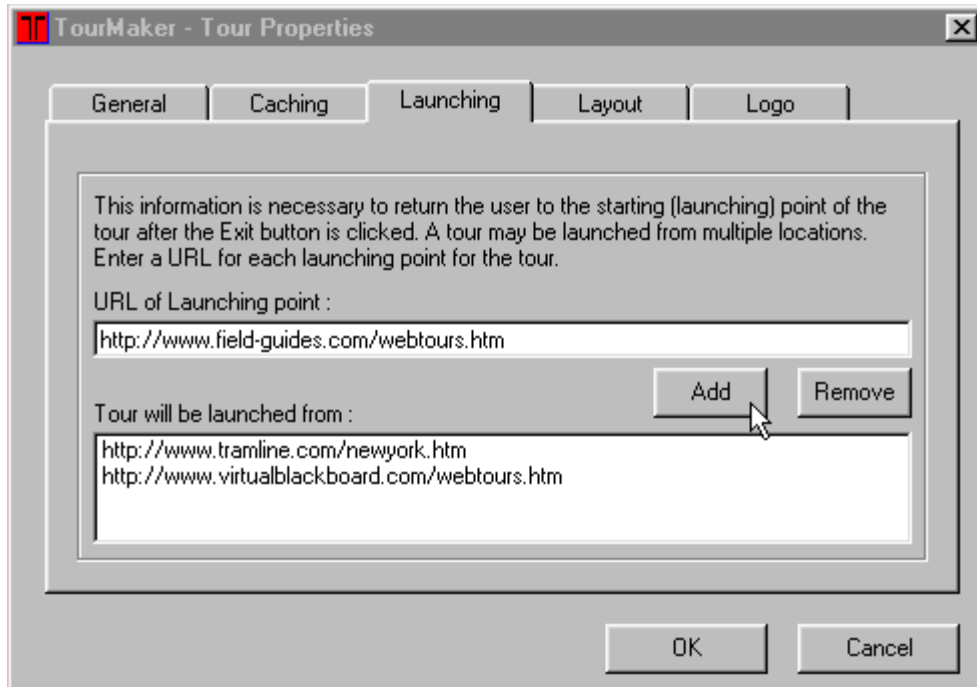
This file is automatically generated (and placed in your tour folder) by TourMaker when you enter one or more URLs in the Launching tab of TourMaker's Tour Properties (If this isn't clear, go into TourMaker and click the Tour Properties button  to see the dialog box below).



Enter the URL of the web page from where users will play your tour (this would be the URL of wherever you'll put the launch page you've created). Then click **Add** (see picture below). After you click **Add**, the URL will be visible in the *Tour will be launched from:* box on the right.

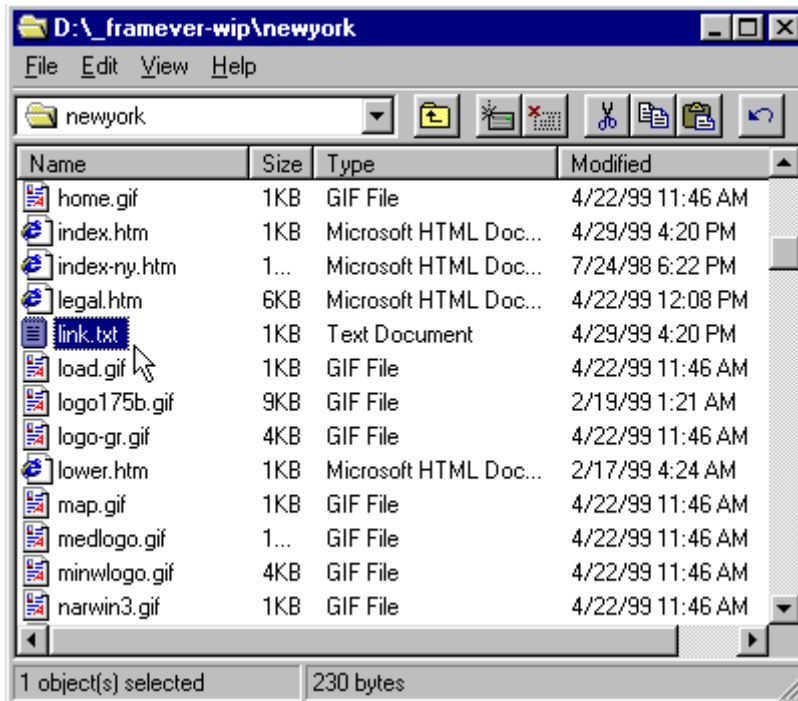


It's possible to launch a tour from multiple locations but for each unique location you will need a slightly different version of the *tourlaunch* file. The first *tourlaunch* file is named '\_tourlaunch1.htm', the second one '\_tourlaunch2.htm' etc. Each successive *tourlaunch* file will be automatically created when you enter more than one URL in the Tour Properties Launch option in TourMaker (see picture below).

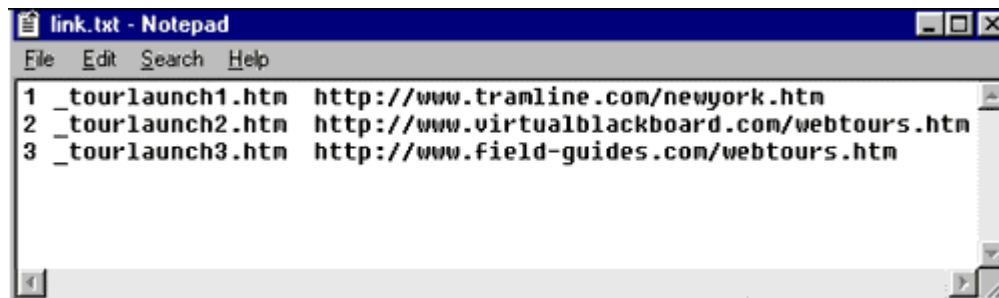


To launch the tour from the first URL, you need to create a hyperlink on your launch page to '\_tourlaunch1.htm'. Similarly, to launch the same tour from a different web site or page (second URL), you will need to create a launch page at that location with a hyperlink to '\_tourlaunch2.htm'.

To see which *tourlaunch* file corresponds to which launching point, take a look at the file in your tour folder called *link.txt*.



This file is modified any time you change the URL list in the Tour Properties of TourMaker. In the example below, there are three different locations from which we want to launch our tour.



If I want users to access the *Big Apple Tour* (which is stored at [www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork](http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork)) from [www.tramline.com/newyork.htm](http://www.tramline.com/newyork.htm) (my first launch page), then my link will look like this:

`<a href="http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork/_tourlaunch1.htm"><big>Click here to take the Big Apple Tour</big></a>`

Additionally, if I want users to access the *Big Apple Tour* from [www.virtualblackboard.com/webtours.htm](http://www.virtualblackboard.com/webtours.htm) (my hypothetical second launch page), then my link could look like this:

`<a href="http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork/_tourlaunch2.htm"><big>Click here to take the Big Apple Tour</big></a>`



Note that in both cases, the hyperlink points to the URL of the appropriate "\_tourlaunch" file, where "\_tourlaunch1.htm" will return the user to the first launch page which is located at the tramline.com site, while "\_tourlaunch2.htm" will return the user to the second launch page which is located at the field-guides.com site.

## The Link to your Tour

The link to your tour is like any other link in that it consists of the URL to the appropriate *tourlaunch* file(see example below).

**Typical link:** [http://www.yourdomain.com/tourfolder/\\_tourlaunch1.htm](http://www.yourdomain.com/tourfolder/_tourlaunch1.htm)

**yourdomain.com** will be replaced with www.something.com or www.something.edu (whatever your domain name is) *In our example above, the domain name is tramline.com*

**tourfolder** will be the name you gave your tour folder. You should use the same name on your web site that you used on your hard drive. *In our example above, the tour folder is several levels deep. The tour folder called newyork is stored in a folder called webtours which is in a folder called tm. This is done for site organization purposes.*  
tm/webtours/newyork/

**\_tourlaunch1.htm** is the name of the file that actually launches your tour. *In our example above, the tourlaunch is called \_tourlaunch1.htm but if you play your tour from more than one location, you will have subsequent tourlaunch files such as \_tourlaunch2.htm and \_tourlaunch3.htm.*

*So you can see that if you put it all together you have:*

[http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork/\\_tourlaunch1.htm](http://www.tramline.com/tm/webtours/newyork/_tourlaunch1.htm)

**Note:** Most current word processors have the ability to create HTML pages and to put hyperlinks in them. For example, in Microsoft Word you could create a launch page with the text you want (and--within limits--graphics), and put your tourlaunch link in it by using the "Hyperlink" option from the "Insert" menu. This will bring up a Hyperlink dialog box in which you will have to enter the tourlaunch link and click OK. You then select the "Save as HTML" option under the "File" menu and you have created an HTML launch page you can use. Different word processors operate differently of course, so you will have to consult the user manual for your particular program for specific instructions.

## Uploading Your Tour to the Web

Uploading your tour to a web site isn't any different than uploading any other web page. You just need to make sure that all of the tour files in your tour folder on your hard drive are placed into a tour folder of the same name on your web site.

If you have a tour folder on your hard drive called 'tornado' then you'll want to create a tour folder on your web site called 'tornado'. The 'tornado' folder on your hard drive has all of the tour files necessary for your tour to play so you have make sure to copy all of these files into the 'tornado' folder on your web site.

Once you have your tour folder and files uploaded, you'll want to upload your web launch page so people can take your tour.

1. FTP to your web site. (Note that some FTP programs and servers are case sensitive therefore as a rule of thumb, name all of your files in lowercase.)
2. Copy your tour launch page and any associated graphics to your web site.
3. Create a tour folder on your web site and give it the same name as whatever you called your tour folder on your hard drive when you created your tour.
4. Navigate to your tour folder on your hard drive and your tour folder on your web site.
5. Copy the tour files from the tour folder on your hard drive to the tour folder on your web site.
6. Go to your web site and make sure your tour works.
7. Exit your ftp program.
8. Announce your tour!

## **Running Tours from Your Hard Drive**

Besides running your tours from a Web site, you can also run them off the hard drive on your computer. TourMaker saves all the tour files needed in the folder for each tour you create. You simply need to open the right one and the tour will run. There are various reasons this is useful, but in a classroom situation in particular, this means students can create tours and present them to class without having to post them to a central school web site.

There's more than one way to run tours off a hard drive, but we recommend using your browser to open the right tour file. First you need to know where the tour was saved. TourMaker's default location for tours is the MyTours folder inside the TourMaker folder that is inside the Tramline folder. If you didn't change this and save the tour somewhere else, you should find it there. Once you know where the tour is, here's how you open it:

### **In Explorer:**

1. Select **Open** from the **File** menu.
2. Choose **Browse** from the dialog box and then locate the folder for the tour you wish to open. Once you've found the right folder, select the file titled "**framever**" and click on **Open**.
3. The address will appear in the Open dialog box. Click on **OK** and the tour should open immediately in Explorer.

### **In Netscape:**

1. Select **Open File** or **Open Page** (depending on your version) from the **File** menu.
2. Locate the tour folder using the **Open** dialog box. Highlight the **framever** file and click **Open**. The tour should open in Netscape immediately.

If you need special assistance, send an email to [info@tramline.com](mailto:info@tramline.com).