

**Creating Web Pages**

**The Basics**

**with**

**Dreamweaver**

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# Creating Web Pages - The Basics

Dreamweaver is a an HTML editor that allows you to create and edit web pages without knowing any HTML code. It is similar to a text editor as it allows you to create pages by typing the text and formatting it with the help of menus and buttons.

The first step in creating a web site is to plan it by asking yourself these simple questions:

1. Why am I creating this Web site? What is it I want people to do or know after they visit my site?
2. Who do I want my audience to be?
3. What information do I want to share with my Web site visitors?
4. What kind, if any, information do I want from my visitors?
5. How much time can I afford to spend maintaining my site?

## **Tips to know before you start designing:**

1. Be sure to SAVE often!
2. The page you want to be displayed should always be named *index.html*. This is because the web server automatically searches for and displays the index page. There should be an *index.html* in every folder of your site.
3. When naming the pages of your site never use spaces, always use lowercase letters, and use the .HTML extension. Keep in mind that the page name will be part of a URL so name it appropriately.
4. When naming images, never use spaces and always use lowercase letters. Graphic images are best saved as .GIF files and photos as .JPG files. Remember that the bigger the image file, the longer the download time.
5. When replacing pages on an existing site, make sure to name the new pages the same as the old ones. This will reduce the number of broken links and

bookmarks.

**6.** When working on an existing page, make sure you have copied it to your hard drive before making the changes to ensure that there are no accidental deleting.

**7.** Keep your site design simple with all relative files and images together to avoid numerous folders. Remember that the Web is not a storage area, so remove any outdated files and images.

**8.** Frames are not user-friendly and should be avoided.

**9.** When your page is completed, make sure you test it in both the Internet Explorer and Netscape browsers. Also, view it at 600 X 800 resolution to make sure all you visitors can see the content.

### **Mapping a Drive:**

First you must be able to connect to the network, which can be done by mapping a drive.

Here are the steps you should follow:

1. Right click on "My Computer" and select **MAP NETWORK DRIVE**
2. Select a Drive letter ( **W** is the norm)
3. In the Path box type **\\webserv\username**
4. In the Connect AS box type your username
5. When you are on your own computer select the Reconnect at Logon box
6. Select OK , you should now be prompted for your username and password

Now that your drive is mapped, create a folder called **public\_html**, this is where your web pages will be stored.

### **Editing an Existing Page:**

Open Dreamweaver and choose **Open** from the file menu, but be sure to check that the page on your hard drive is the same as the one on the server.

### **Starting a New Page:**

Open Dreamweaver and File, New and name your page **index.html**. ( Index

is often used for home pages as most web servers are configured to display the index.html file when no file name is specified. ) You should now add a title to your page. Choose an appropriate name as it will be displayed in the upper-left corner of your page.

\* You may also add a title from the Modify / Page Properties menu.

Next imagine your page is divided into 3 sections:

**1. Header** ~ This is the top section of your page and should describe the subject, it usually has a banner or image of some kind, a title and may contain hyperlinks for navigation.

**2. Body** ~ This is the core of your page and should display the content or an index of links to the available content.

**3. Footer** ~ This is the bottom of your page and should contain the Web site builder's name and contact information, the date last revised, and any copyright information. It may also contain hyperlinks.

## **Adding Color and Page Properties:**

From the **Modify** menu, select the **Page Properties** option. Here you can set the colors of the text, background, and links. You can also select an image as a background, however, it will appear tiled if your image does not fill the page. Keep in mind that this will also increase your download time.

Choose browser-safe colors as this will ensure that your page will be viewed the same in all browsers. You can find a browser safe color chart at:

**[http://html.about.com/compute/html/library/bl\\_colors.htm](http://html.about.com/compute/html/library/bl_colors.htm)**

When choosing colors, avoid using dark colors which make it hard to print the info, too many colors which can leave the page looking unprofessional, and colors that fight with each other.

## **Adding a Header:**

Select a **Header** style from the paragraph style drop-down menu on your toolbar. **Header 1** is the largest font and **Header 6** is the smallest. This will format your font as a title, but will not allow for anything else on the same line. To place something beside a header, use a table.

## **Adding an Image:**

Before you can insert an image, you must have one saved. For this example go to [www.mta.ca](http://www.mta.ca) and right click on the MTA logo. Select **Save Picture as** and save the image in the folder where your web page is located.

Click on the Image icon on the toolbar. Browse to the location where you saved the MTA logo. If the image is not in the same directory as the page, be sure to include the path. Once you have selected the image you have the option of setting the properties. Here you can set the size of the image, choose to add spaces or place borders around the image and make the image a hyperlink.

Make sure that the image path does not include a drive letter like **M://** as this will cause the page to look to your computer for the image instead of the folder on your web site. If this happens, simply delete everything in front of the image name.

Always add a descriptive **Alternate Text** name to your images as some browsers do not handle graphics and this will allow all visitors to understand what is on your page. To add the text select the **Alt Text** option on the image properties menu.

Remember to use meaningful images to enhance your site as decorations merely distract from your content and make the download time slower.

## **Adding a Horizontal Line:**

By selecting the Horizontal Line icon on your toolbar, you can create a separator for the content on your page. Be careful not to use too many.

## **Inserting a Table:**

Click on the Table icon on your toolbar. Here you can choose the number of row, columns, the borders and the alignment.

If you are using a table to serve as a alignment tool only, you should set the

borders to 0 pixels so will not be visible when you page is viewed. Once your table is created, it is helpful to place a character or two in each cell as a place holder.

When deciding on the size of your table, remember that you should be designing your page to fit in a 600l x 800w so your table should be no wider than that to avoid horizontal scrolling, you may choose fixed width or expanding tables which are described below.

### **Tables with a Fixed Width:**

Advantages of fixed width tables include being somewhat sure of your layout as it will not change as a user shrinks or expands their browser window. However, you get horizontal scroll bars if the browser window is shrunk narrower than the table. You also get “white” space beside your table if the window is wider than the table.

To create a table with a fixed size simply click the arrow on the dropdown box beside **Table Width** in the Table Properties box and choose **pixels**. Set the number of pixels to the desired width.

### **Tables that Expand and Contract:**

You don't get horizontal scroll bars if the browser window is shrunk narrower than the table. The table just shrinks with it. You also don't get “white” space beside your table if the window is wider than the table. The table grows also.

However, your layout may change as the table changes. Text can wrap in unexpected ways, especially when you have images with the text. You may have to be very specific with cell or column widths so they do not mess up your design.

To create a table with a width that is relative to the window simply click the arrow on the dropdown box beside Table Width in the Table Properties box and choose **% of Window**. Set the width to the desired percentage.

### **Spanning Rows and Columns:**

You can achieve interesting layouts by making cells span multiple rows and/or columns. To make a cell span across columns, highlight the cells and select the join cells icon on the Table Properties box. Use the same method

to join rows.

## **Adding a Hyperlink:**

Hyperlinks allow your visitors to quickly move from page to page or to another site with a simple click of the mouse. Highlight the text or image that you want to be a link and from the **Modify** menu select the **Make Link** option or the link icon on your toolbar. Browse to the page you want to link to or type the name of the file to which you are linking in the **Link To** box. Make sure to include the whole path.

To link to an external site type or paste the URL in the **Link To** box.

## **Adding an Email Hyperlink:**

Select the **E-Mail** icon from the properties toolbar and enter the e-mail address and the text you wish to include. This will automatically launch the visitors email program.

## **Inserting an Anchor:**

Anchors allow you to create links to certain areas of your page. The most common use of a target is a "Back to Top" which helps limit scrolling on long pages.

To create the anchor, highlight the text or place your cursor in the location that you want to link to and select the **Anchor icon** from the **Invisibles** toolbar. Name the anchor appropriately, such as Top.

Next highlight the text (Back to Top) where you want the link to be located, then click drag the wheel icon on the Properties box to the anchor tag on your page. This will also add the link to your dropdown list on your properties box.

The other way to link to an anchor is to highlight the text, select the Modify / Make Link option and type # followed by the Anchor name in the link to box. (#Top in this case).

## **Inserting a List:**

There are 3 common types of lists; Bulleted, Numbered and Definition. To create a list select a **List** from the **Properties** toolbar. Each time you hit the enter key a new list item will be created. To exit the list, hit the enter key twice.

## **Inserting Special Characters:**

To insert a special character like a copyright symbol, select the **Character** menu on the properties toolbar and click the appropriate icon or select Special Characters from the Insert Menu.

## **Additional Tips & Resources:**

1. Save often! Dreamweaver is a stable program, but crashes happen.
2. Always provide a link back to the source page
3. Use a template to keep your site consistent or use an existing page as a starting point for a new one.
4. Avoid background images. Busy or high contrast backgrounds make text difficult to read.
5. Limit the number of fonts you use on any page or site. Choose two (maximum) fonts for a page and apply them consistently to defined elements, i.e. one for headings, one for links, etc.
6. Test all the pages you create with Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer.
7. Use the Spell Checker (in the Text menu)
8. Do not use the publish button. Use FTP to put pages on the server or copy from your hard drive to the server share.
9. Putting all your web site files in the same folder greatly simplifies linking and inserting of images. This is only true for small sites.
10. Keep pages simple. Do not use a lot of images and animations.

### **Resources:**

Dreamweaver Training <http://www.mta.ca/webmaster/dreamweaver.html>

Education-World <http://www.education-world.com/>

SchoolSite <http://www.schoolsite.com/>

Canada's SchoolNet <http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/info/sitemap.html>

Register here

<http://www.schoolnet.ca/grassroots/e/schools.online/index.html>

Design Tips <http://www.mta.ca/comment/wwwcon/tips.html>

**Places to put your Web site:**

nbnet (your own account - web space is free if you have internet service)

Canada's SchoolNet <http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/info/sitemap.html>

List of free Web site hosts

Homestead - <http://www.homestead.com/>

Dreamwater - <http://www.dreamwater.com/>

(some put a banner ad on your page, some say they will pass your information on to third parties)

Teacher Portfolios <http://www.utexas.edu/academic/cte/teachfolio.html>

or <http://www.cte.iastate.edu/portfolio.html>

## Exercise: Create a web pages with the following elements

1. Create a page called index.html and give it a title such as "My Home Page".
2. Change the background color of your page.
3. Create a title on your page using a header.
4. Insert some text such as "Welcome to my home page".
5. Format the font by changing the color, size and style.
6. Make a list of items using bullets or numbers.
7. Make a target at the top of your page and a "Back to Top" link at the bottom.
8. Insert a horizontal line near the bottom of your page.
9. Below the line create a "Maintained by.." section with a link to your email.
10. Create a second page with an appropriate name and title.
11. Insert a table with no visible borders, at least 2 columns and 2 rows and align it to the center.
12. Make the top row into one by joining cells.
13. Insert the MTA logo and link it to [www.mta.ca](http://www.mta.ca).
14. Insert an image and use the Alt Tag description.
15. Insert some text with Special Characters like a Copyright symbol.
16. Create a "Back to Home" link to your main page.
17. Go back to your first page and create a "Next Page" link to your second page.