

Creating Technology
For Today's
Digital Workforce



Web Design & Dreamweaver MX 2004 Part I

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In Pursuit of Excellence Through People and Technology

Web Design and Dreamweaver MX, Part I:
An Introduction to Web Design

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INTRODUCTION

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Ok, so you want a Web site. I don't blame you. They're a lot of fun to make, and they let you show the world lots of neat things you have done or learned. But how do you make one? Don't get scared now. It's actually pretty easy. That's the great thing about Web authoring programs like Dreamweaver. You don't need to be a computer programmer or anything to create a basic Web page. If you have a computer, access to the Internet, an installed copy of Dreamweaver and a photo editing program, and a digital camera, then you're just about set.

Making a Web page

The WWW

Before diving right in, you might want to know how the Web works. By understanding the basics, you'll have a better idea of what's going on behind the scenes of your Web site and you'll learn more along the way. This will also be helpful when editing and doing some cool stuff later on.

The main thing you will be working with is the Internet. Although you have one computer in front of you, your Web site will be dealing with many other computers. Actually, the Internet is this huge network of connected computers. Since all these computers are connected to one another, all over the world, it's easy for information to be passed from place to place. People all around the world use their computers to connect to other computers and exchange data.

So where does the World Wide Web come into all of this? The WWW is the vibrant visual part of the Internet. The Web has colors and pictures and sounds and movies and all the other neat gimmicks you are able to view when you go online. Your Web browser - such as Netscape Navigator or Microsoft Internet Explorer, is what makes all of this possible. The browser is able to read certain kinds of code and translate them into a Web page that you are able to view on your screen.

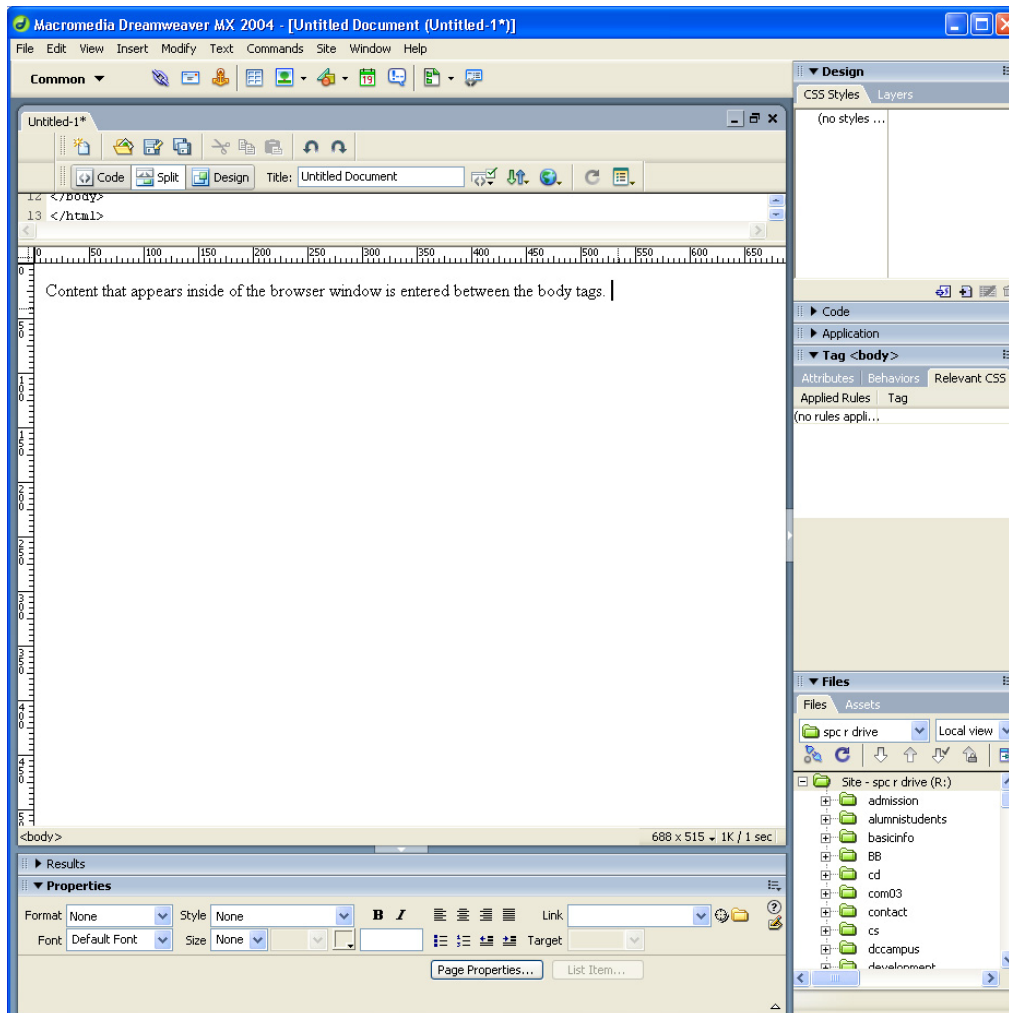
One of the very basic codes is HTML, (which stands for hypertext mark up language), and it's the way many Web pages are created. What programming codes like HTML do is describe to the browser what your Web page should look like. The code says, "Okay, put this picture at the top of the page to the left and put this text underneath it. Make the background green"

Although you really don't need to know a great deal of HTML to use Dreamweaver, the basics are important. HTML may sound scary, but it's not too difficult to learn.

A Little Lesson in HTML

A Web page is made up of several HTML elements and tags. The <HTML>, <HEAD> and <BODY> elements are required for any HTML document.

```
<HTML>  
<HEAD>  
<TITLE>Document Title</TITLE>  
<HEAD>  
<BODY>  
Content that appears inside of the browser window is entered between the body tags.  
</BODY>  
</HTML>
```



Web Page Design

Try to answer the following question, “What makes a really good Web site?” Do you know that answer right away? It isn’t easy. There are many things that determine whether a Web site is one people will enjoy visiting or one they will quickly leave. However, this question must be answered before you begin building your own site.

Think about what things make a Web site enjoyable or efficient. Is it the great images? Is it the ease of navigation between pages? Is it the great information? What about the special effects?

What about the alternative? What makes a really bad Web site? Everyone has visited a site and left quickly after incurring an unfavorable experience. Was it the extra long wait for the images to show up? Was there a massive amount of text and little white space? How about a lack of organization? Did you have to stroll constantly? Was it difficult to find what you wanted? Or was the irritant the obnoxious flashing images? All of these things should be kept in mind when designing your site.

Exercise – Page Layout

Go through several links and note the strengths and weaknesses of in their layout design. Be sure to turn up your speaker volume. Use the evaluation form on the next page to rate the sites you look at.

Web Sites to Visit:

Templar Studios: <http://www.templar.com/>

ItCat Media: <http://www.itcatmedia.com/school/>

4 Guys: <http://www.4guys.com/>

Echo Medium: <http://www.echomedium.com/>

Unleashed Media: <http://www.unleashedmedia.com/>

Apple Computer: <http://www.apple.com/>

Kinkos: <http://www.kinkos.com/>

Florida Crystals: <http://www.floridacrystals.com/>

American Kennel Club: <http://www.akc.org/index.cfm>

PBS: <http://www.pbs.org/flw/>

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: <http://www.sfmoma.org/>

Accordion: <http://www.accordionbrand.com/>

Sapient: <http://www.sapient.com/default.htm>

Wolvesburrow Productions: <http://www.wolvesburrow.com/ODclassic.html>

What suggestions do you have for improving this Web site?

Additional comments about this Web site.

Designing Your Page

Now that you have thought about what makes a good Web site, and what makes you want to exit one quickly, you are better able to design your own site. Now let's start looking at how you want your Web site to look.

Purpose

The first step in creating well-structured Web pages is knowing the message you want to convey. Do you want to use the Web page to let your friends and family see your work and inform them of your successes or is it for entertainment? Do you want to use the Web page to help you record information that you may later use to present to future teachers, colleges, and employers? Depending on your decision, you need to structure your content and design around the purpose of your pages.

Sketch It Out

Now you should sit down and sketch what you want your page to look like. That's right, sketch it out first. Forget about all this technology and think for a few minutes how your site should be layout. Where should your graduation picture go on the page? Where should your writing go? What about those poems you wrote while in high school? Where can they go?

If you have too much information and it looks too crowded with everything on one page, think about having a second page and then linking them together. And what about the links to navigate to other pages? Where should they go? Also plan out what color you want everything to be. Should all the writing be green? Should there be a pattern in the background? Don't worry about how you're going to do it all, just think about how you want it to look, and figure out the details later. By having a strong idea of the layout of your pages, you will save yourself a lot of time later.

Don't Forget Navigation!

You want lots of people to come visit your site, right? So make it easy for your visitors to get around and find what they want. If you're making a page about growing an herb garden, don't have a bunch of pictures of your pet golden retriever and then squeeze all the herb garden information down at the bottom of the page. As you probably know, people get impatient really quickly when looking at Web sites - there are always other places to go. So make sure your site does what it's supposed to do. If it's supposed to tell people about growing an herb garden, then it should do that quickly. If it's supposed to annoy people with loud recordings of your singing, then make sure those recordings play as soon as the visitors arrive at your site.

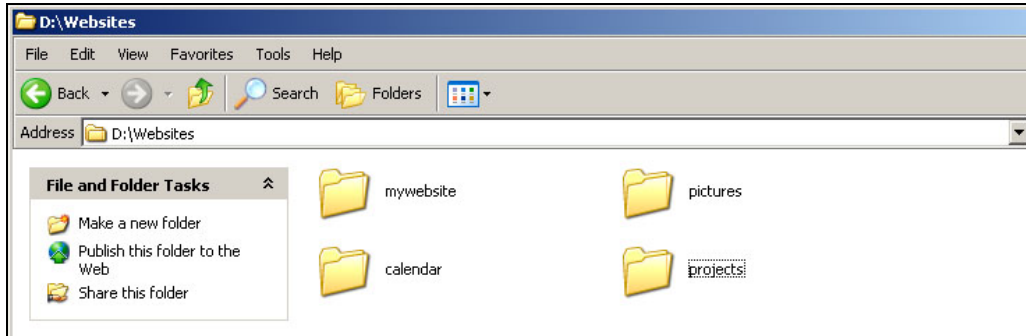
Since your site will contain several pages, you need to plan how users will navigate around your pages. Sketching out how users will jump from one page to another ahead of time may be helpful. When it is not clear how the pages relate to each other or how to move around your pages, users can become lost or frustrated.

OK. So there's a lot of planning involved with making a Web site, but all this thinking means less work for you down the road. You'd be surprised how many people skip the planning part and jump right into making the site. It'll take them about 10 times as long to finish.

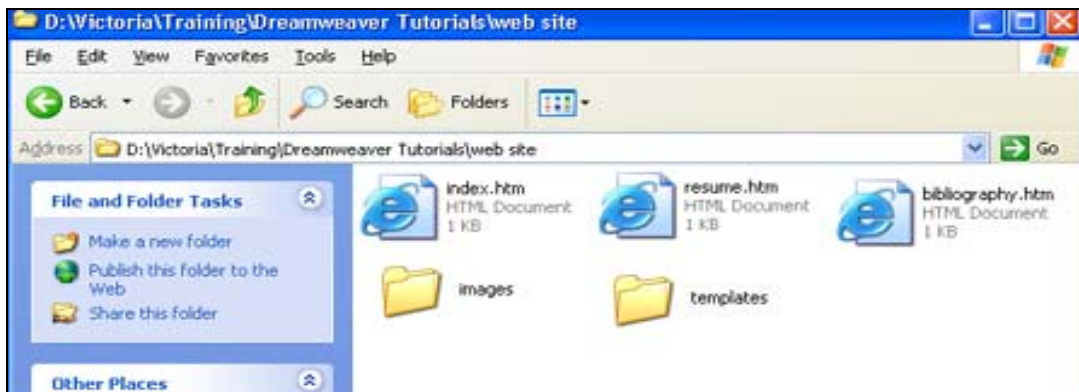
Get Organized!

When you create a site you are basically are creating a place to put all of your information and pictures. Basically a site is everything that makes up your pages and everything that is in each of your pages. You will want all of your information and pictures to be in the same place or your links may not work.

To be sure that everything is in the same place; you should create a folder somewhere on your hard drive where you will keep all of your Web site files. This is important for organization purposes. It is very important to be organized when you are designing a Web site.



Within this folder you will create other subfolders which will organize your site for future reference. It is very much like creating a file cabinet for all of your papers. You will need to create names for the different folders to help you find things you need later. The first folder you should create is an images folder to use for storing your images.

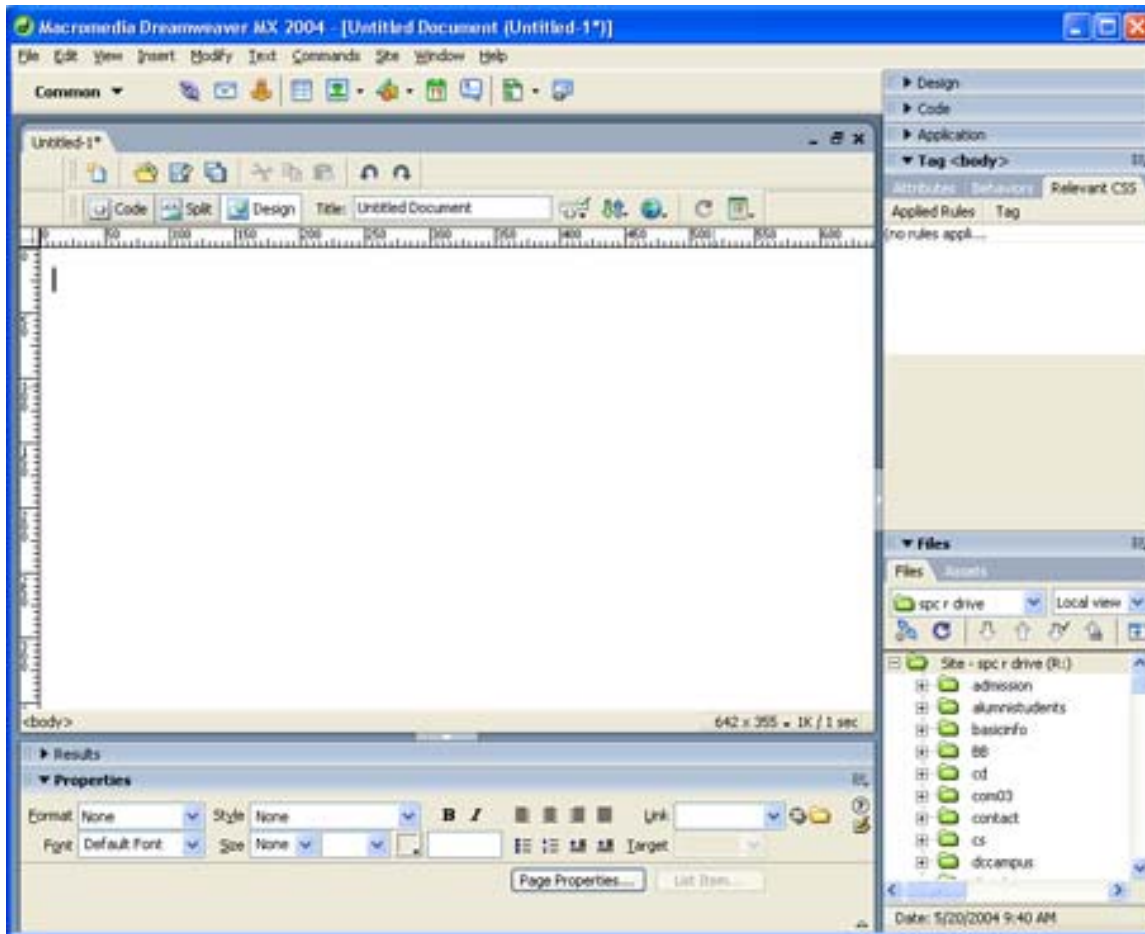


Introduction Dreamweaver

When you open Dreamweaver you will find a collection of buttons, toolbars, and menus that will help you, the Web author, enter page elements such as text, images, and links. You will see the Document Window and the following four items: Menu bar, Tool Options bar, Property inspector, and Launcher bar. You will learn how to use these tools in this manual.

The Document Window

The Document Window is used to input content into Web pages. You can input information such as text in the Document Window as you would into a word processor. You can insert graphics, tables, and many other common Web page elements into the Document Window. The Document Window is a WYSIWYG editor (What You See Is What You Get), displaying content, much like the way it will look in the Web browser.



Buttons, Tool Bars, and Menus

The toolbars and the menu bars are frequently used when creating a Web page. Each button on the various tool bars has one function while each word on the menu bar offers a variety of choices. If you are unsure which button to use or what a button does, point at it and a comment will reveal its function.

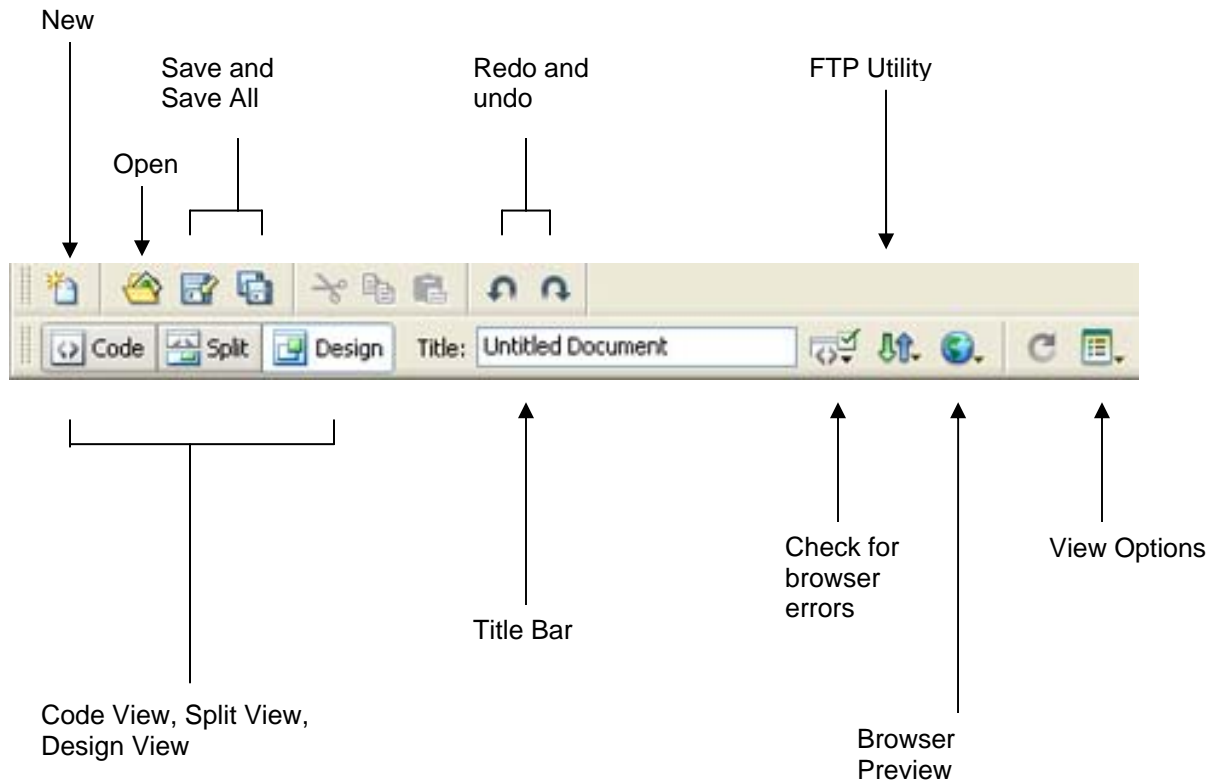
Menu Bar

By clicking on any of the words on this bar you will see a dropdown menu of options in that category. The menu bar is similar to other Windows programs in that some categories such as File and Edit, are used for saving files and to copy and paste text. Other categories offer options that are more specific to the Dreamweaver software.



Tool Options Bar

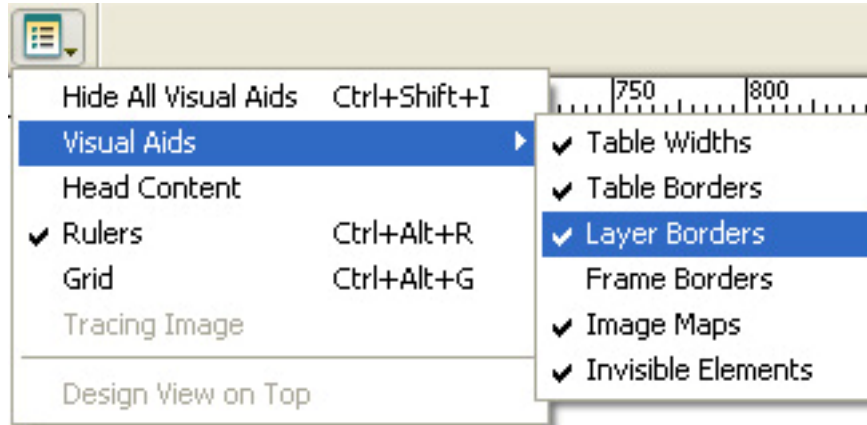
Most Dreamweaver tools are available on the Tool Options Bar. These options will change as different tools are selected to show you available preferences.



View Options

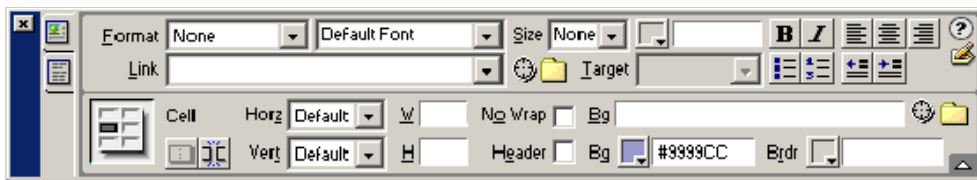
Dreamweaver lets you customize the way a Document Window looks and how you work. Using the View options you can include rulers and see the background grid to help you precisely position images, tables and text. Other Visual aids include showing Frame Borders, table Borders, Image amps, Layers, and Invisible Elements like HTML Comments and Anchor Links.

To edit the view options click on the view options button and select the options you would like to change from the menu.



Properties Inspector

The Properties inspector frees Web authors from the tedium and drudgery of having to create pages in raw HTML code. The Properties inspector allows you to examine and edit properties for the currently selected page element, either an object or text. (If you unable to view the Property inspector, click on Window on your menu bar and select Properties from the dropdown menu.) The options within the Property Inspector change based on the object or area selected.



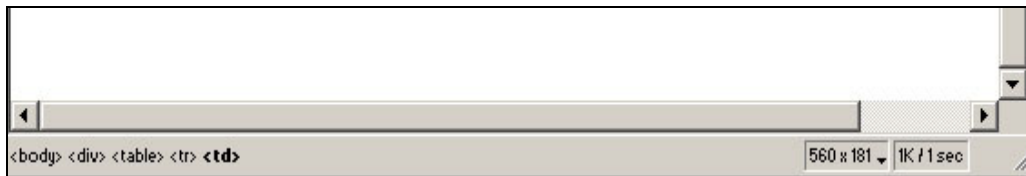
Launcher Bar

Provides easy navigation among Dreamweaver venues. Can be found at the bottom of the Document Window



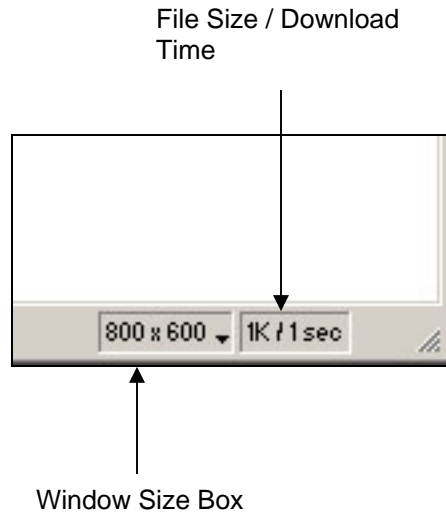
Tag Selector

Elements in HTML, such as (to bold text) are also referred to as tags. At the bottom of the Dreamweaver Document Window, the Tag Selector displays a range of tags depending on where the cursor is in the document. The Tag Selector provides a very convenient way to access specific tags.

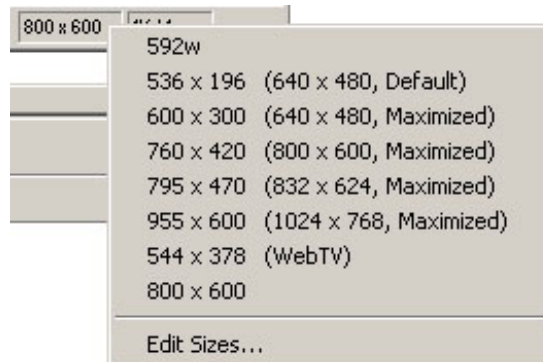


Window Size and File Size / Download Time

The current size of the Document Window is displayed in the Window Size box. The Document Window is resizable using the Window Size Pop-Up Menu. The Window size is displayed in pixels. The File Size / Download Speed box displays the current estimated time it will take a user to download your page from the Internet. This will change depending on the amount of content, such as text and graphics are contained in your site. This time is estimated by Dreamweaver, assuming users have a 28.8Kbs modem.



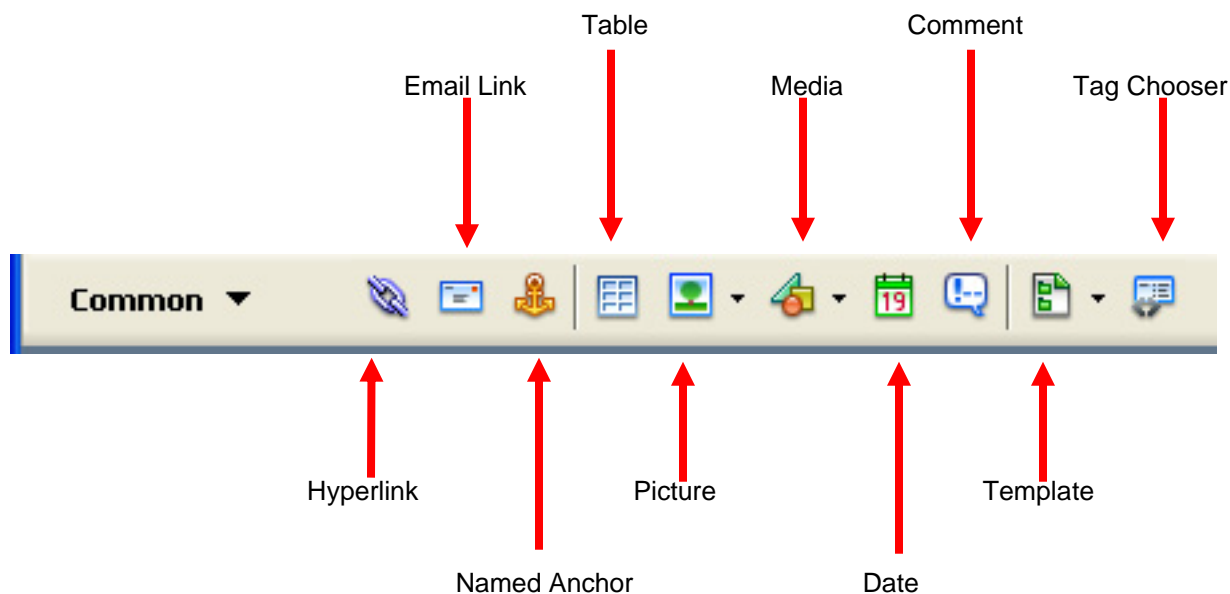
To resize the Document Window, click the hold the Window Size box and select from a number of preset Document Windows sizes or simply drag any corner or edge of the Document Window.



Objects Panel

This bar is a short cut to many of the commonly used tools found on the menu bar. You will likely find it more convenient to use these shortcuts. (If you are unable to view the Objects Panel click on Window on your menu bar and select Insert from the dropdown menu.)

You can also view other buttons available in the Objects Palette. To change the Objects Palette from the Common Objects, click the drop-down arrow at the top-right of the Palette. A drop-down will appear allowing you to choose other object selections. To use the Object Palette simply place your cursor where you want the object to appear and click the appropriate object button.



Some of the common objects are only available when the dropdown arrow is selected next to the icon. For example, media has a selection of different media available when you select the drop down arrow. Picture and template also have dropdown arrows.

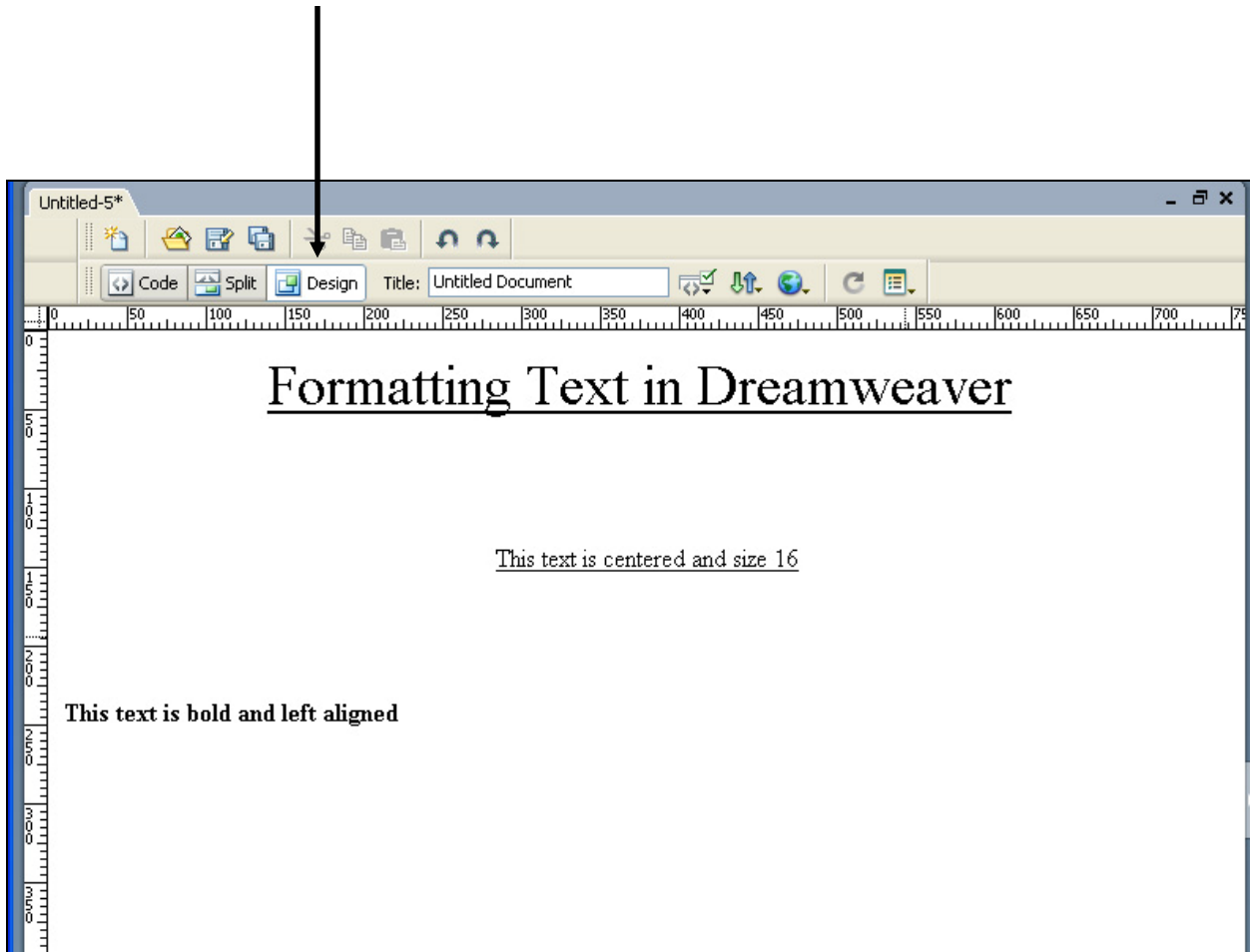
Exercise

1. Open the Property Inspector
2. Open the Object Panel
3. Close all other panels
4. Arrange work area so all Windows are available

The Design View

The Design View allows you to type as you would in a Word document. You can format your text simply by clicking on buttons on menu and tools bars. You can also add tables, images, Flash buttons, and basically complete all of all of your Web site creation. The Design View removes the underlying code from view.

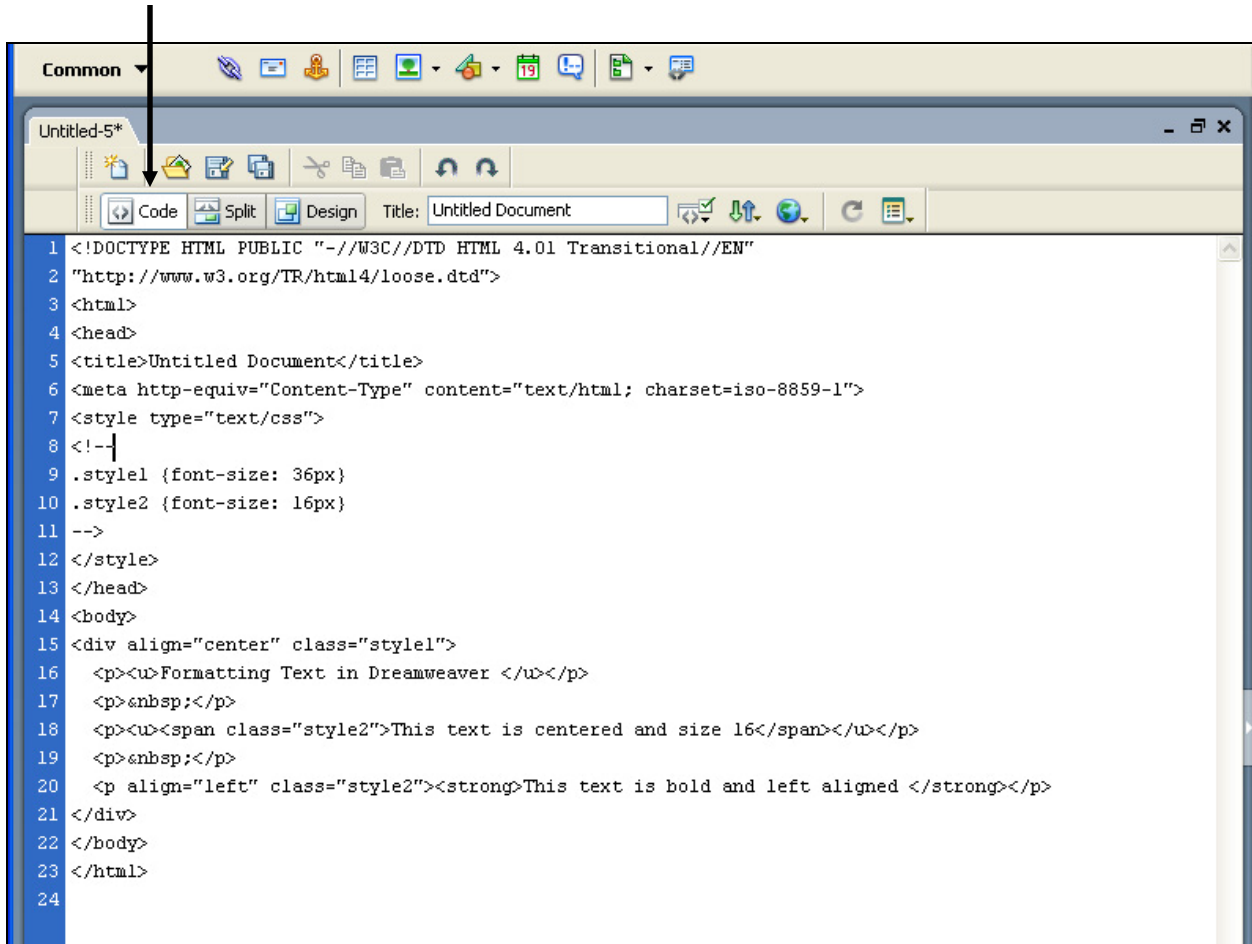
Design View



Code View

The Code View allows the designer to view the HTML, Java, CSS, ColdFusion, etc. This is used to manually edit the code. This allows you to view the source code at anytime to make changes as necessary. You may want to view the code Dreamweaver creates as you creasavingte your Web page to familiarize yourself with HTML.

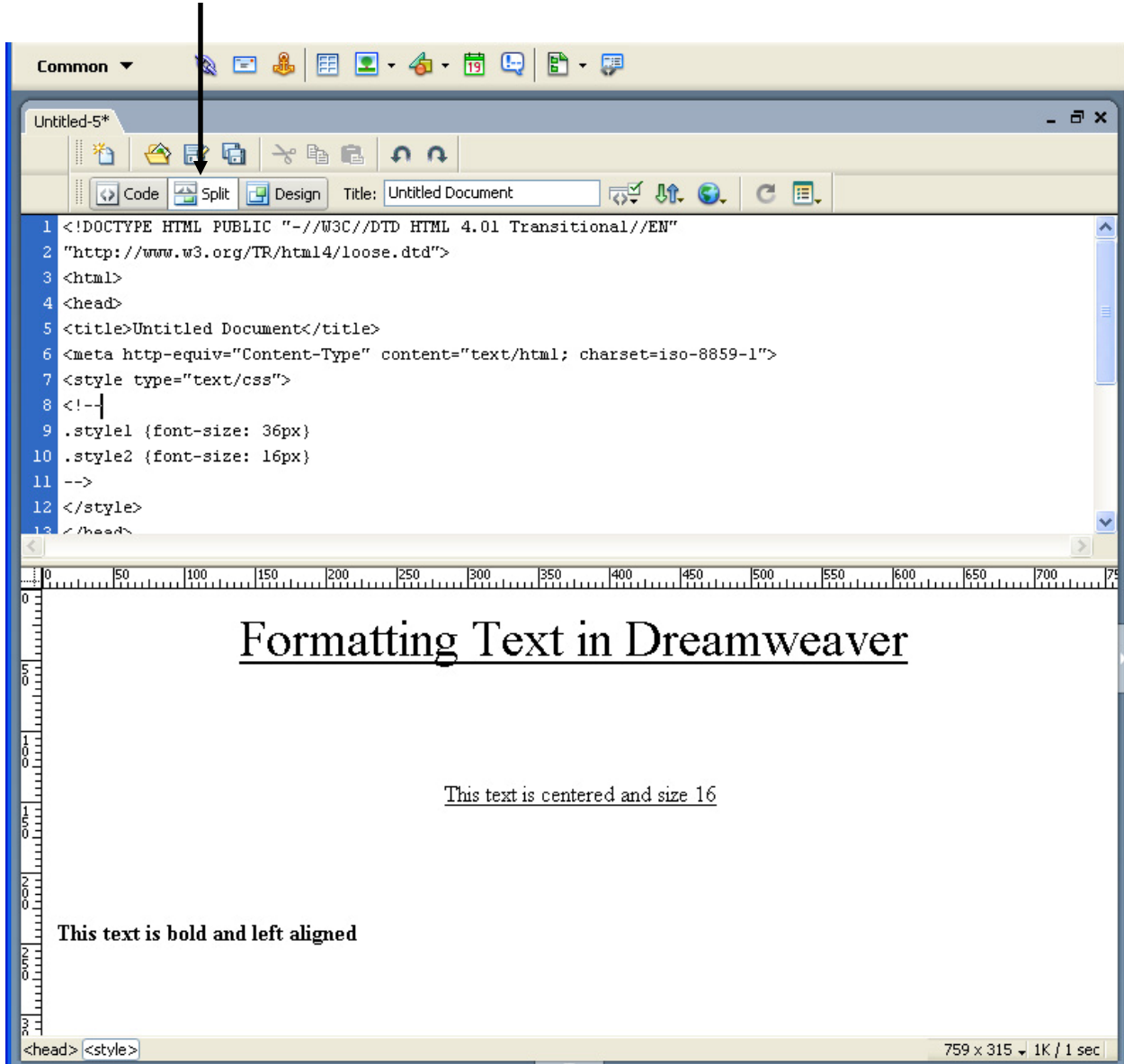
Code View



Split View

Split view splits the document into two different panels. The first shows the Code View and the second the Design View. For designers this is an excellent way to become more familiar with the underlying code. You will notice that as you move through your document in the Design View panel the text and images you select are highlighted in the Code View.

Split View



Building Your Web Page

If you have not already created your Web site folder on your hard drive, this is the time to do it. Organizing a Web site into folders and subfolders makes lots of sense if you are building a large site with many pages. It can get extremely confusing for future editing without some in place organization! Inside of your new Web site folder you should create a second folder named Images. Once you have created your Web site folder, you will need to create a new site.

Creating a New Site

To create a new site, you will need to define the site for Dreamweaver. Return to the Dreamweaver Document Window.

On the menu bar, select Site | Manage Sites | New Site.

In the Site Definition box, make sure Local Info is selected in the Category list.

In the Site Definition dialog box, under Local Info, type *My Web Site* in the Site Name box.

In the Local Root Folder box, click the folder icon to the right and browse for the folder you created on your hard drive, select it and click on OK.

Select Enable or Use Cache to create a cache file for the site. Caching the files in your site folder creates a record of existing files so Dreamweaver can quickly update links when you move, rename, or delete a file. Click OK twice.

Note: If you save your site to a disk and open it on another computer you will need to define your site again using the above steps.
--

Now that you have a place to put all of the information associated with your new Web site, you can begin adding content.

Saving

This is a good time to save your page. This will be your home page, in most cases this will be the first page visitors will see when they come to your site. When you save the page, you will need to give the page a name.

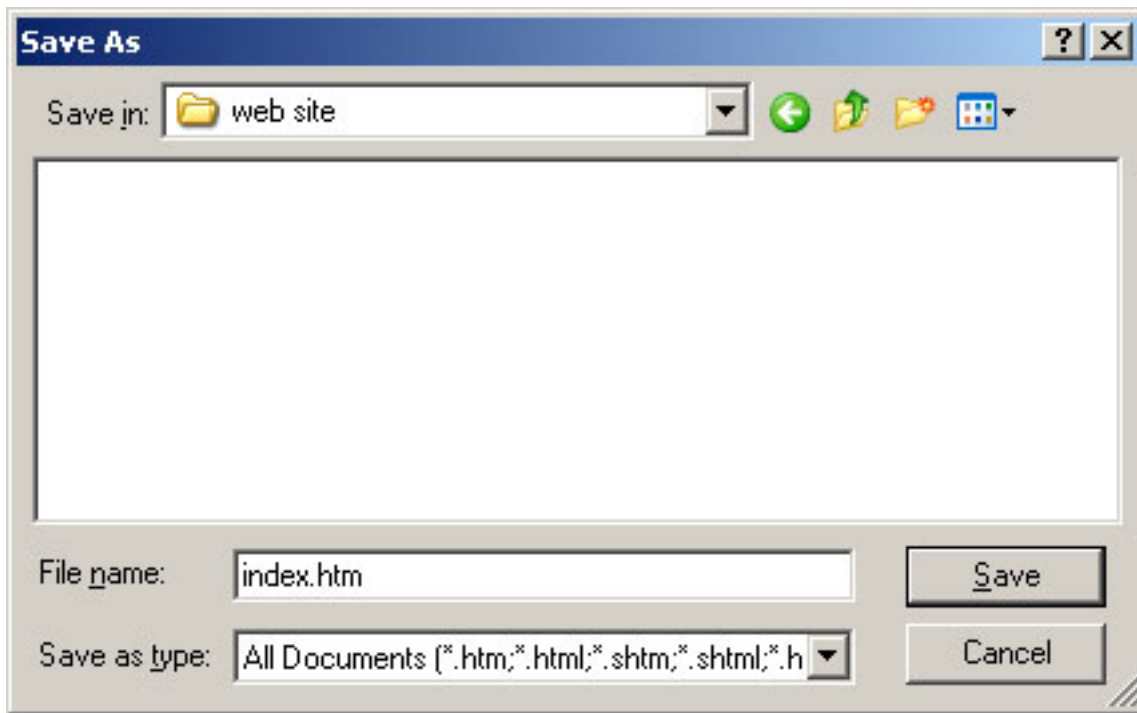
Select File | Save As

or

Use the keyboard shortcut and select Control and the letter S

In the dialog box that appears be sure that the Save In field at the top displays your Web site folder. (See image below)

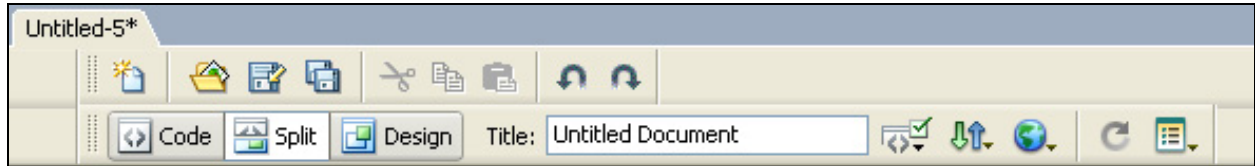
In the File name field at the bottom type index.htm (Be sure that you do not have any spaces and that you use all lowercase letters)



Remember to save often!

Define the Document Page Title

Although the page has a file name, the document is still untitled. This is because it needs an HTML document name, or a page title. It is important to identify a page with a title since this provides browsers a method of identifying the page. Visitors will also be able to use the title when deciding which pages to visit and it will be displayed in their bookmarks.



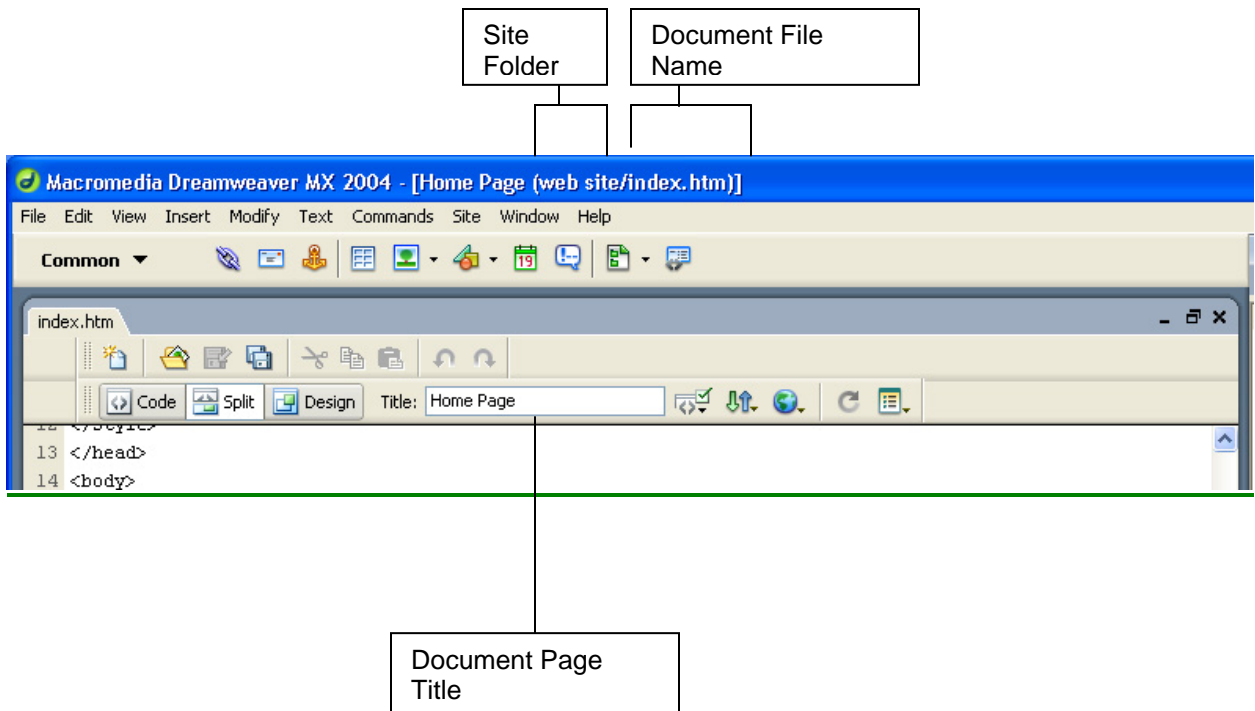
Click in the Document Window to make it active.

Choose View | Toolbar if the toolbar is not already visible.

In the Title box, type a name for your document.

Click in the Document Window to update your title.

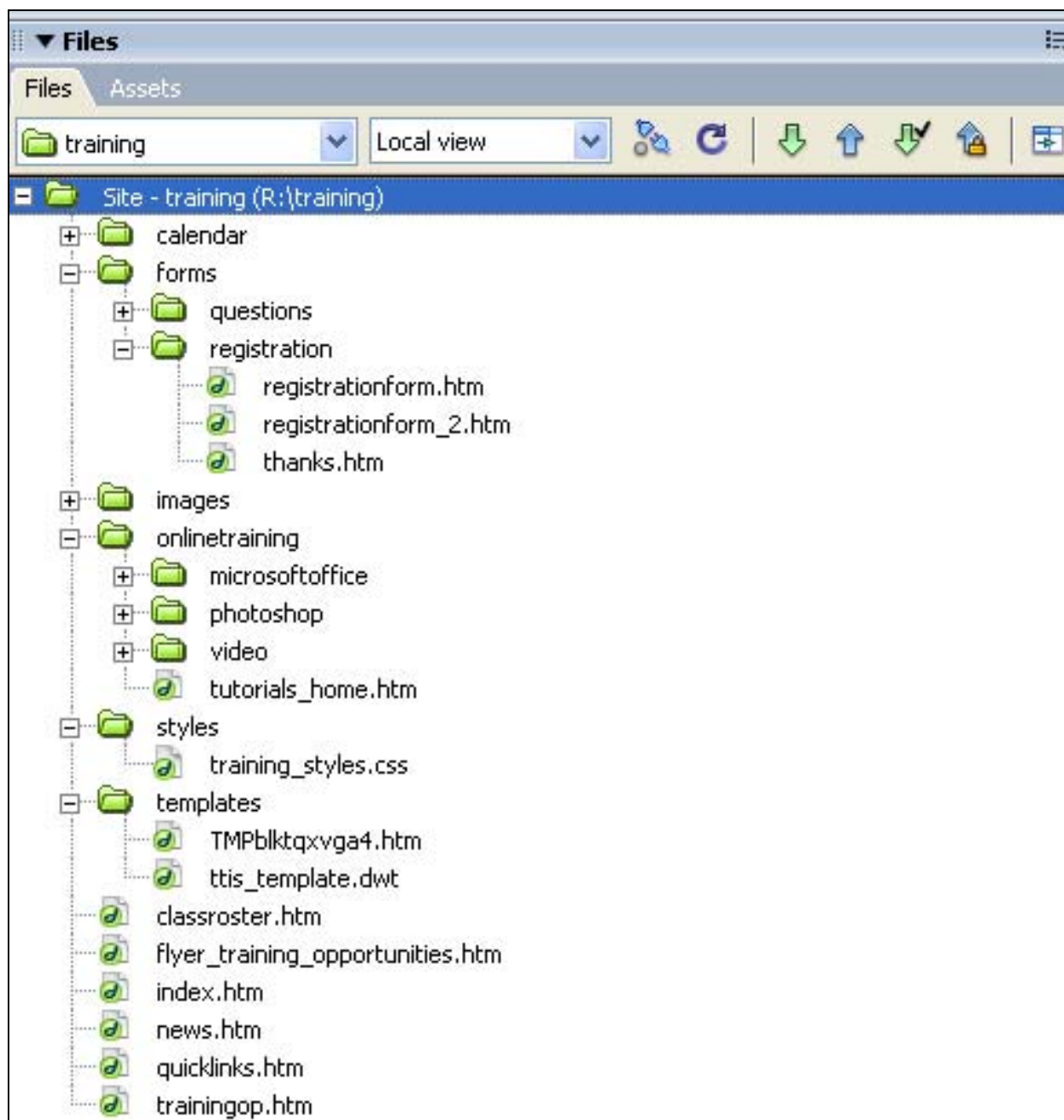
Notice the names designated on your page:



Viewing Site Contents

Open your Site Panel. Select Window | Files

The Site Panel will display all folders and files currently in the local site. The list also acts as a file manager, allowing you to copy, paste, delete, move, and open files just as you would on a computer desktop.



The Site Panel can be left open to view changes to the site as you work in your pages.

As stated earlier, Dreamweaver is one of many WYSIWYG (What You See is What You Get) editors allowing authors to create Web pages in a user friendly, point and click environment similar to modern word processing programs. Therefore, most of the steps you will need to create things requires simple clicking on buttons and typing of text.

Adding Text

You can type text directly into the Document Window or you can cut and paste text from another source. Personalize your Web site by typing "_(your name)_'s Web Site" in the top cell of your table.

Just below, type Welcome to My Web Site .

Highlight *Welcome to My Web Site* and click on the Bold button in the Properties inspector.

To change text color, highlight your text, then click on the text color box on the Properties inspector and select a color in the color palette.

Finally, highlight all of the text, and use the Property inspector to center the text in the cell.

Note: Continue to enter text as you see fit. At any point, you may run Spell Check. Just select Text | Check Spelling from the menu bar.

Tip: Have you noticed that when entering text and you press the Enter key, your cursor will skip a line? To avoid extra blank lines, press Shift-Enter and your cursor will simply go to the next line.

Basic Formatting Text

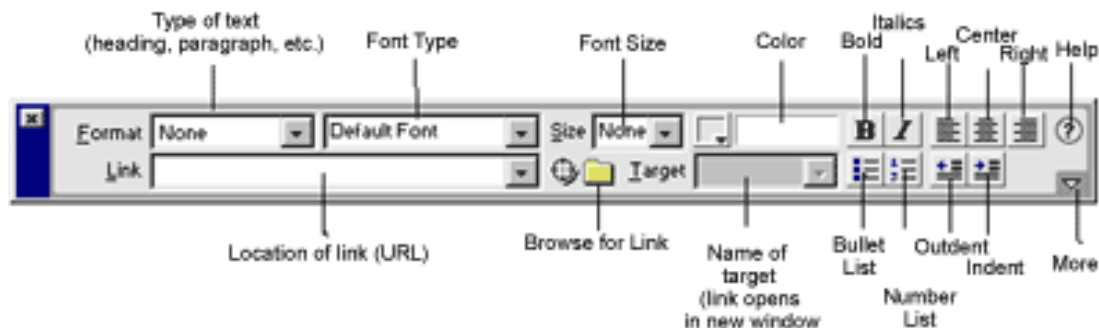
To do basic formatting of text, you can use the Properties Inspector Panel. For more advanced formatting, we will discuss Styles and Cascading Style Sheets in the third lesson.



You can easily change the format of the text you have written by highlighting the text with your mouse and then selecting an option in the Properties panel.

For example, in the Properties panel you can click the:

- **Format arrow** on the left (initially displaying **Paragraph**) to create larger fonts for a line of text that is a head or subhead on a page. Heading 1 is a very large font size, while Heading 6 is a very tiny font size.
- **Font arrow** in the middle (initially displaying **Default Font**) to pick a particular font for your text, such as Arial, Courier, Times New Roman, etc.
- **Size arrow** in the middle (initially displaying **None**) to increase or decrease the size of the text. You can do this either by selecting 1 through 7 for basic sizes (with 7 being very large and 1 being very small), or by selecting +7 through -7 for a wider selection of text sizes (with +7 being very large and -7 being very small).
- **Color arrow** – to select the color for your text.
- **B button** on the right to make your selection boldface.
- **I button** on the right to display the selection in italics.
- **Align Center button** (the third button in from the far right) to center the text on the page.
- **Ordered List and Unordered List buttons** (just to the left of the indent buttons on the far right) to create bulleted lists of text.
- **Text Indent button** (just below the centering button on the far right) to indent the text to the right.



Headings - Headings are used to set titles and subtitles apart from the main text on a page. There are six different heading sizes with Heading 1 being the largest and Heading 6 the smallest.


Headings - Headings are used to set titles and subtitles apart from the main text on a page. There are six different heading sizes with Heading 1 being the largest and Heading 6 the smallest.

1. Highlight the text, "Welcome to Jane's Electronic Portfolio", and make it **Heading 3**.
2. Highlight the text, "Objective", and make it **Heading 4**.

Note: All the tools you need to format text are found on the Properties inspector.

Ordered/Unordered Lists - Lists are used to organize data on a Web page for a clean, concise, professional look. You can create bulleted (unordered) lists, or numbered (ordered) lists. You may see an example of an ordered list in Activity 2 and an example of an unordered list in activity 3.



1. Highlight the words,
"You will learn how to add text to your site."
You will learn how to insert graphics onto your site.
You will learn how to create links from your site."
2. Click on the **Unordered List** button  in the Property inspector.

Continue to enter information on your page as desired and save your page.

Tip: For good Web page design, avoid skipping a heading size on the page. For example, If you use Heading 3 for your title, you should use Heading 4 for subtitles on your page.

Previewing Your Document

Previewing your document in a browser allows you many benefits including the observing the differences in how various browsers will display your Web page and viewing browser – related functions such as roll over buttons, and links. Press F12 to preview your Web page in a browser. If you have access to more than one browser you can designate a browser by selecting File | Preview in Browser. You can select a listed browser or edit your browser list in the drop down menu displayed.

Exercise

1. Create a new folder on your hard drive titled “My Web Site”
2. Open Dreamweaver and save a new document in the “My Web Site” folder, name it index.htm
3. Open the Site Window and Define a New Site”
4. Name the Site “My Electronic Portfolio” and browse and select the “My Web Site” folder and finish creating your site
5. Open your index.htm file in your new site
6. Title your page: My Electronic Portfolio: Home

Resources:

The Yale WWW Style Guide is one of the best references for those beginning in Web design. Please take the time to pursue this site.

<http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual>

A great source for technical terms:

Right Track Learning Center: <http://www.right-track.com/dictionary.htm>