Dreamweaver 8 Basics

Software: Dreamweaver 8   **Platform:** Mac/PC

Overview

Dreamweaver is a great tool for producing Web sites. It provides an array of options and functions that speed up the development process and make it easy to update your site. There's no better way to learn Dreamweaver than by using it.

In the next few pages we will give you some guidance on how to perform the most commonly used functions of Dreamweaver. Although the pictures in this helpsheet are of the Macintosh version of the program, the Windows version is basically the same with a slightly different look. However, the methods described here work similarly in both versions.

There are many good books available on Dreamweaver and the program comes with an excellent tutorial which you may want to go through as a review. Additionally, the program's help function is very good, but does require access to the Web to be fully effective. The help function should be the first place you go for answers to your questions — the answer is usually there.

The Dreamweaver Workspace

At the back of this document are a few diagrams depicting some of the various components of the Dreamweaver workspace. These will be useful for orienting you to the screen and are attached for your reference. The elements that you will use most often are:

- the Document Window - the main component of your workspace. It displays the current document and allows you to edit the document layout and content.

- the Insert Bar - contains buttons for inserting various objects such as images, tables and links. Additional options are available by clicking on each of the tabs (see below). If the Insert Bar is not displayed, select Insert from the Window menu.

- the Property Inspector - a context sensitive palette that changes to reflect the properties of the selected object (i.e. text, image, table, etc.). If the Property Inspector is not displayed, select Properties from the Window menu.

Creating Your Site Local Folder

After you open Dreamweaver you should designate a local root folder which will contain the same files as your server Web folder. You work on the pages in your local folder and when they are ready, copy them to the server so they are available online. You can create this folder on your hard drive, a flash drive, or any other readily accessible storage device. Once you have created your local folder you must tell Dreamweaver where it it is; this is called defining a site.

To set Dreamweaver to work from a local folder:

1. With Dreamweaver open, select New Site from the Site menu.

2. The Site Definition dialog box will open (figure 1). Click on the Advanced tab at the top of the window.

3. In the Site Name field, type a name for the site. Then click on the folder icon at the end of the Local Root Folder field and navigate to the folder you created for your local folder.

4. Click that folder and then click Choose.

figure 1

5. Click OK at the bottom of the Site Definition window and then click Create when asked if you want to create a cache file for the site.

6. The Site Window will appear (figure 2). A newly created site will not have files in it like the example shown below.
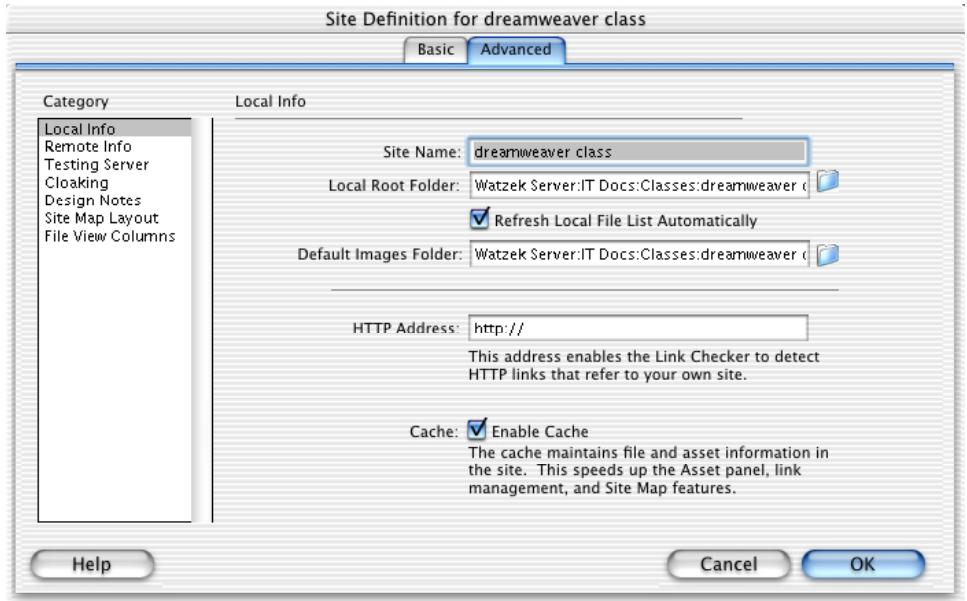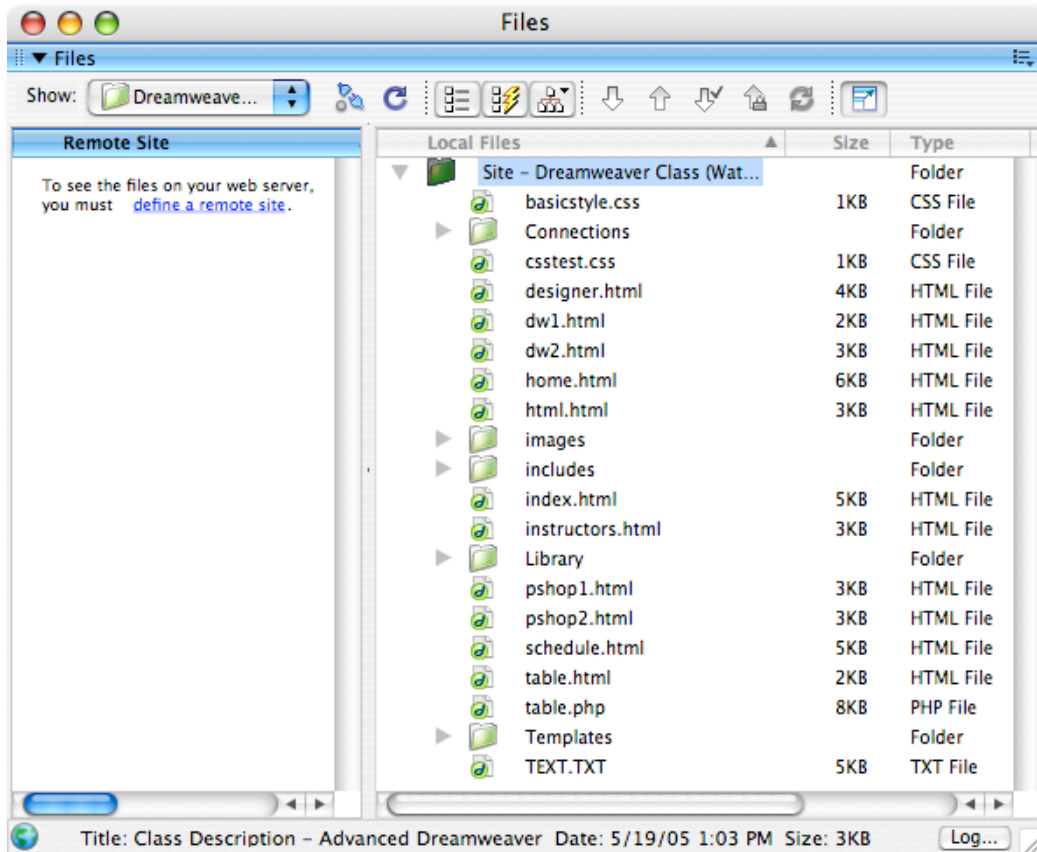

figure 2

Creating A New Page

Dreamweaver normally opens with a new blank page displayed. If Dreamweaver is open and you want to start a new page, select New from the File menu and the New Document dialog box appears. Select Basic Page then HTML and click Create — a blank page will appear. Once you have a blank page you should set your page properties.

To set the page properties:

1. Choose Page Properties from the Modify menu.

2. In the Page Properties dialog box click on Title/Encoding on the Category menu. Type the name of your page in the Title field. This is the name that will appear as the window title in your browser and will be used as the bookmark for the page — this is not the file name: whatever.html.

3. Now click on Appearance on the Category menu. Click on the small square next to the Background field and the color picker will appear (Figure 3). Use the eye-dropper tool to select the color you want to use for your background. The default color is white.

4. Other colors may be changed as well:

   Text - default color is black.

   Links - default color is blue and underlined.

   Visited Links - default color is magenta and underlined.

   Active Links - default is same a current status (unvisited or visited).

   We recommend you don't change the default link colors which most Web users are familiar with.

figure 3

5. Click OK to close the Page Properties window.

6. Save your page by selecting Save from the File menu. Make sure you use an appropriate file name so that you can easily identify the page. Your main/home page should be named index.html (you may use html or htm for your file extenders - just be consistent in which one you use).
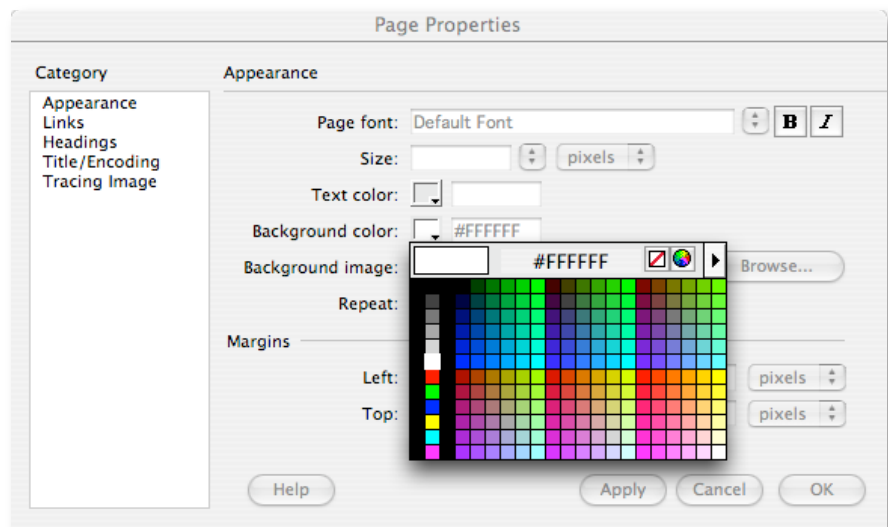
Using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

For those of us who design Web pages, HTML is a way of life. Unfortunately, the way HTML handles the appearance of our pages is not as exacting as many of us would like. Layout is not a significant part of what HTML was designed to do and the work-arounds that we have created increase the amount of code that we (or Dreamweaver) must write.

But in late 1996, style sheets quietly entered the scene. Officially called cascading style sheets (CSS), it was an elegant cousin to HTML that promised:

• more precise control than ever before over layout, fonts, colors, backgrounds, and other typographical effects;
• a way to update the appearance and formatting of an unlimited number of pages by changing just one document;
• compatibility across browsers and platforms; and
• less code, smaller pages, and faster downloads.

So what's so special about stylesheets? In a nutshell:

- You can separate form and structure.
- You can control layout like never before.
- You can make smaller, faster pages.
- You can maintain or update many pages at once, faster and easier than before.
- You can be browser friendly.

Let's look at each benefit:

You can separate form and structure.

HTML was never meant to control the form or appearance of Web pages. It's a language that defines the structure and function of elements on a page. It lets the Web browser decide how those elements should actually appear.

Cascading style sheets enable us to get more control the right way: by separating the part that defines structure from the part that defines form. The HTML remains clean and simple, as originally intended, and the CSS code controls appearances from afar. You can control layout like never before.

Sure, ‹FONT SIZE› enabled us to resize text, and table tags helped us create margins. But overall, what we could do with HTML was very limited. We couldn't create text exactly 80 pixels tall, we couldn't specify margins easily, we couldn't control the space between lines or words, we couldn't precisely position images on the screen. Until now. Style sheets make all these things possible and more.

You can make smaller, faster pages.

Here's more good news: style sheets are simple text, just like HTML. There are no graphics, no executable program, no plug-ins, no streaming, no delays. It's as fast as straight HTML code.

And with CSS, you can do things that you previously had to resort to GIFs for. But wait, there's more! As I mentioned earlier, cascading style sheets also mean fewer table tags and other HTML hacks cluttering up your code. Less code and fewer graphics translate into smaller file sizes.

You can maintain or update many pages faster and easier.

Without style sheets, if I wanted to update the font used for body text across my entire site, I'd have to manually edit each page. The whole point of style sheets is to separate form and structure. With style sheets, I can have all the pages on my site point to a single CSS document. If I want to change the body text, all I do is change one line in this stylesheet and the entire site instantly changes.

You can be browser friendly.

Unlike some other Web technologies, CSS code degrades gracefully. That is, users don't get a glaring broken icon if they're missing a plug-in or code gibberish if they're using an older browser. Browsers that recognize cascading style sheets use it. Browsers that don't recognize CSS simply ignore it.

Some CSS Terminology

Let's look at what's going on in a style sheet. At the core of cascading stylesheets are rules. The simplest kind of rule looks like this:

```
H1 { color: green }
```

This rule tells the Web browser that all text surrounded by ‹H1›‹/H1› should be displayed in green.

Each rule consists of a selector and a declaration. In the example above, H1 is the selector. It's the HTML tag that the style is being attached to. The declaration defines what the style actually is, and it also consists of two parts: the property (in this case, color) and the value (green).

Any HTML tag can be used as a selector. Thus, you can attach stylesheet information to any kind of element, from normal ‹P› text to ‹CODE› and ‹TABLE› content. You can even use some cascading stylesheet properties on graphics by applying them to ‹IMG›.

You can also group rules together:

H1 { color: green; font-size: 37 px; font-family: impact }

This rule specifies that all text within ‹H1› tag will be green, 37 pixels tall and Impact font. Similarly, you can group selectors:

H1, P, BLOCKQUOTE { font-family: arial }

This rule specifies that all text within ‹H1›, ‹P›, and ‹BLOCKQUOTE› tags will display in the Arial font.

Dreamweaver and Style Sheets

The beauty of Dreamweaver is that you don't have to write the rules. You select the options you want from a dialog box and all is done for you automatically. However, just like knowing the basics of HTML it's good to know basics of how style sheets work so that you can tweak the code and make it work for you.

There are two main types of style sheets: internal and external. With an external style sheet the browser will read the style definitions from a separate file you create (i.e. mystyle.css), and format the document according to it. Internal styles are defined in the head section by using the <style> tag. The browser will read the style definitions in the head section, and format the document according to them.

Because CSS is now the preferred way to format web pages, Dreamweaver automatically creates styles for you. If you don't use an external style sheet, Dreamweaver will create internal styles each time you format your text in a different way. Figure 4 below shows an example of how this looks in the Code View of a web page.

```
1   <!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
        "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
2   <html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">
3   <head>
4   <meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=ISO-8859-1" />
5   <title>Untitled Document</title>
6   <style type="text/css">
7   <!--
8   .style1 {
9       font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;
10      font-size: 16px;
11      color: #FF3333;
12  }
13  -->
14  </style>
15  </head>
16
17  <body>
18  This is a <span class="style1">test style</span>.    Dreamweaver will create
        an internal style based on formatting made in the text.
19  </body>
20  </html>
```

style tag

style definition

style applied to
text in the body
of the page

<body>   1K / 1 sec

figure 4

The following section explains the basics of creating an external style sheet.

To create an external style sheet in Dreamweaver:

1. Click on File ➜ New, the New Document dialog box appears (figure 5).

2. Select CSS Style Sheets from the Category list.

3. Select one of the sheets from the CSS Style Sheets list.

Note: a preview of the styles for your selection appears in the Preview window.

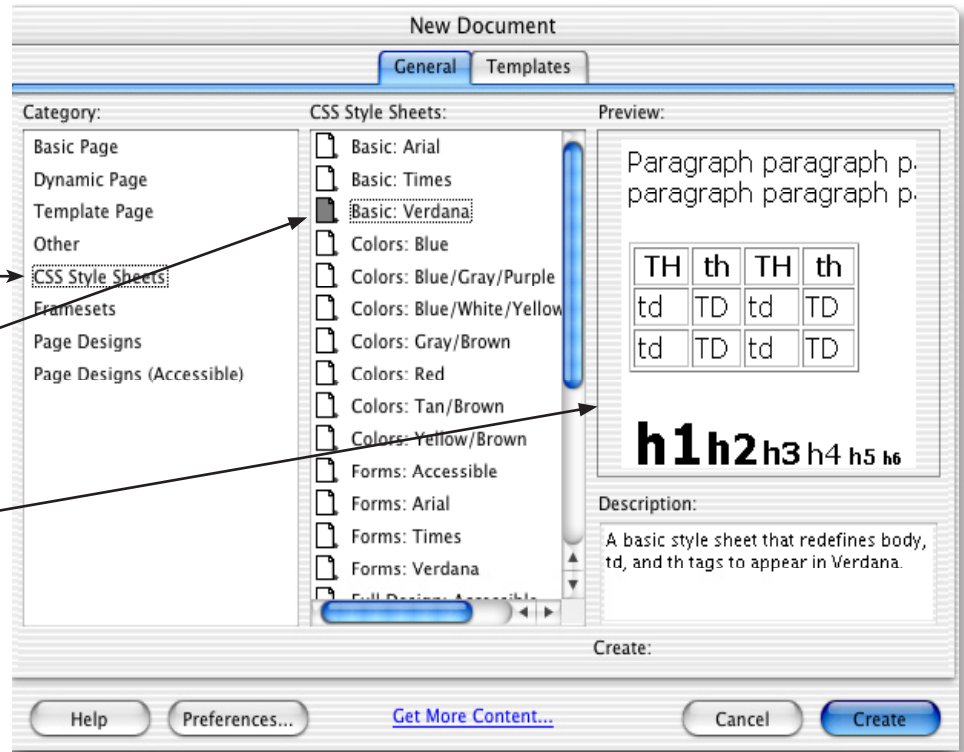4. Click on Create to display the new style sheet.

figure 5

The new style sheet will look similar to the one in figure 6 (especially if you selected the Basic: Verdana style). Note that text styles are set for the body and also for tables.


```
 1  body {
 2    font-family: Verdana, Geneva, Arial, helvetica, sans-serif;
 3  }
 4
 5  td {
 6      font-family: Verdana, Geneva, Arial, helvetica, sans-serif;
 7  }
 8
 9  th {
10      font-family: Verdana, Geneva, Arial, helvetica, sans-serif;
11  }
```
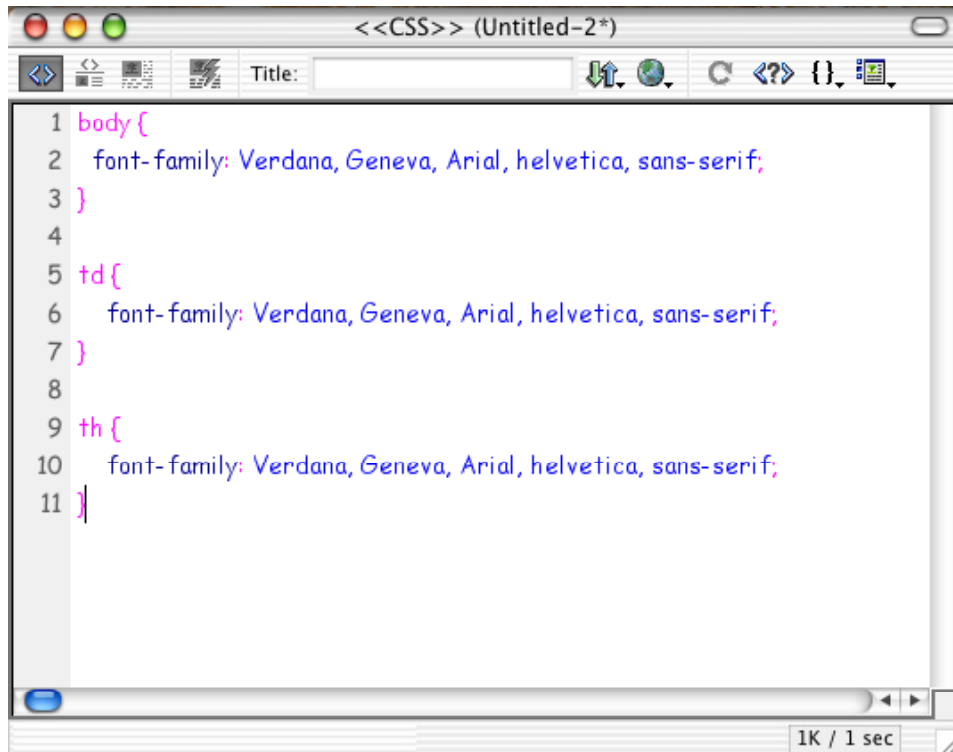
figure 6

Once you have created a style sheet you must link it to all the of the HTML documents that you want to format. Open an HTML document you wish to link to the style sheet.

To apply the style sheet:

1. Choose Window > CSS Styles from the main menu. The CSS Styles panel will appear (figure 9).

2. If you haven't previously selected a style sheet, no styles will show on the panel. To link to your newly created style sheet click on the Attach Style Sheet button (figure 10).

3. The Link to External Style Sheet dialog box appears (figure 7). Click on Browse... and navigate to the style sheet you want to use then click on Choose.

4. In the Link to External Style Sheet dialog box click on OK. The style sheet's name and contents appear in the CSS Styles panel. In addition, Dreamweaver places linking code in the header of your document (figure 8).
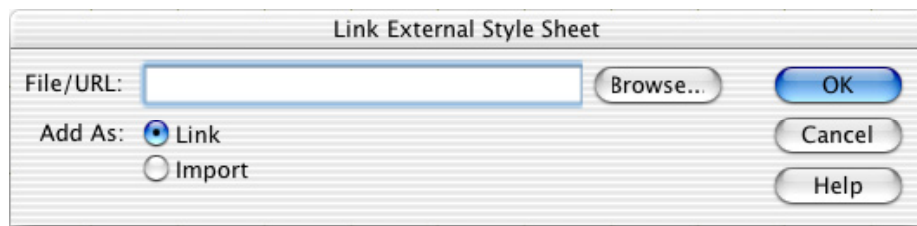
figure 7
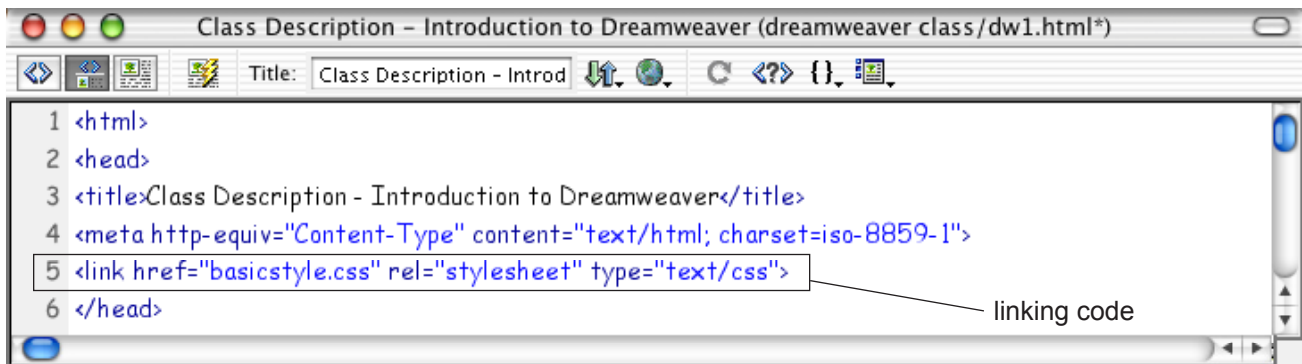
figure 8

Now that you have your basic style sheet set up, you may want to add to or modify the styles in the style sheet.

To modify your style sheet:

1. In the CSS Styles Panel click on the Edit Styles button (if it isn't already selected) to display the styles in your style sheet (figure 9).

2. Select the name of the style sheet on the Styles panel and click on the Edit Style Sheet button at the bottom of the panel (figure 10).
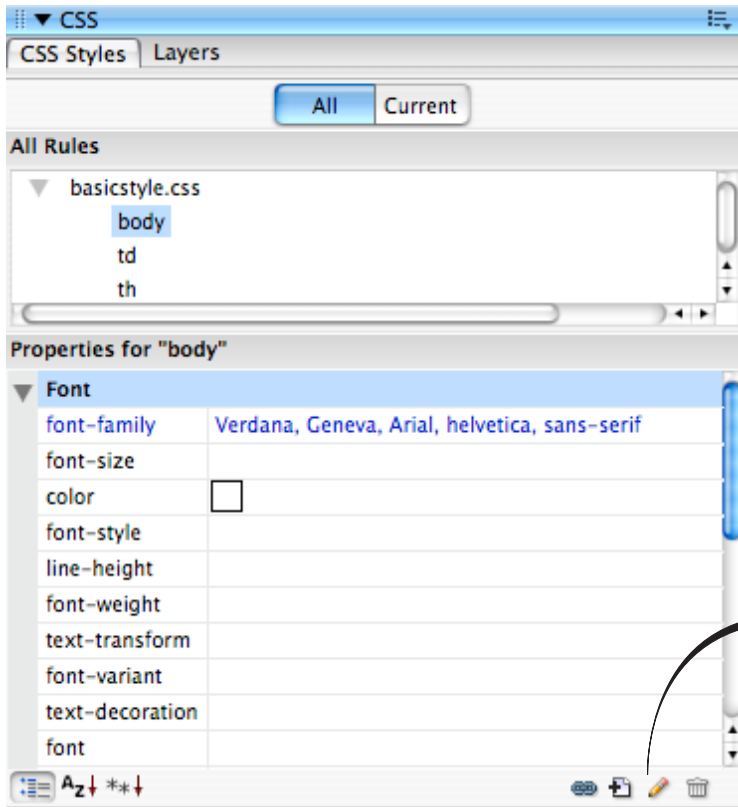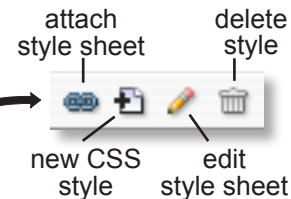

attach
style sheet

delete
style

new CSS
style

edit
style sheet

figure 10

figure 9

3. Click on the selector you want to edit (i.e. body).

4. The CSS Properties panel displays the editable properties for the selector you clicked on (figure 9).

5. In this panel you may set values for the different properties by entering information or selecting items from the drop-down menus.

Inserting and Formatting Text (non-CSS)

To insert non-formatted text, click on the web page and start typing. The Property Inspector is used to set the properties of whatever object that is selected. In this case, selecting the text will allow you to format it.

1. Choose Properties from the Window menu to display the Property Inspector (if not already visible) (figure 11).

2. To create a heading, type it on your page and select it. Use the Format drop-down list to choose an appropriate heading size. Click on the arrow next to Default Font and select an appropriate font; if you leave default, text will usually be displayed in Times Roman. Since you chose a Heading size you will not need to select a size in the size box - make sure None is entered.

3. Click on the Align Center button ▤ to center your heading.

4. Place the cursor at the end of the heading and press Return (Enter on PC). This inserts a new paragraph (and a double space) and allows you to begin entering text. You enter and format standard text the same way you did with the heading.
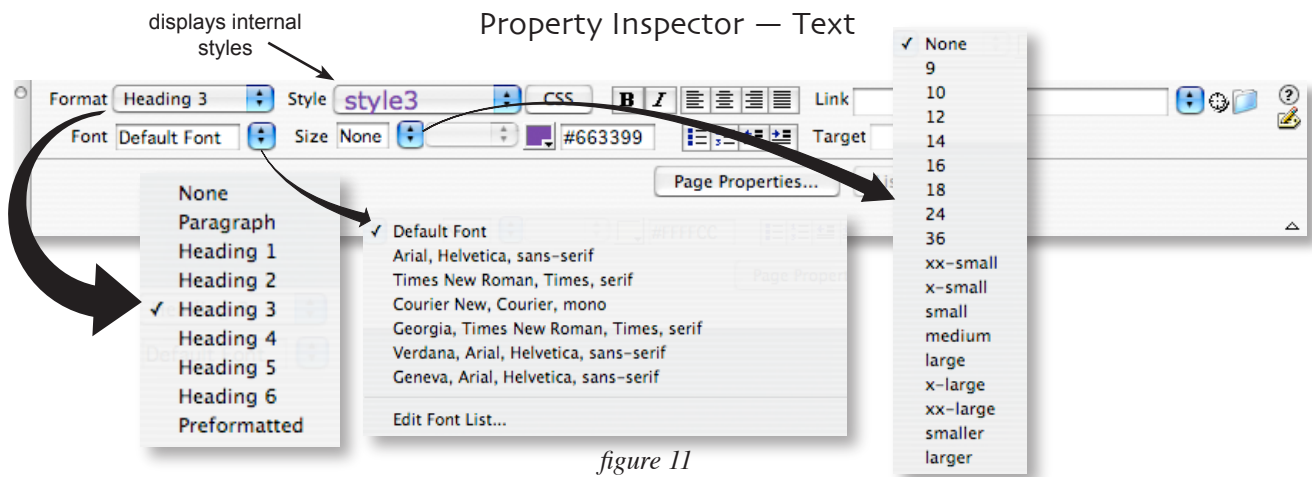
displays internal styles

Property Inspector — Text

Format Heading 3 ▾ Style style3 ▾ CSS **B** *I* ≣ ≣ ≣ ≣ Link
Font Default Font ▾ Size None ▾ ▾ #663399 ≣ ≣ ≣ ≣ Target

Page Properties...

None
Paragraph
Heading 1
Heading 2
✓ Heading 3
Heading 4
Heading 5
Heading 6
Preformatted

✓ Default Font
Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif
Times New Roman, Times, serif
Courier New, Courier, mono
Georgia, Times New Roman, Times, serif
Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif
Geneva, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif

Edit Font List...

✓ None
9
10
12
14
16
18
24
36
xx-small
x-small
small
medium
large
x-large
xx-large
smaller
larger

figure 11

5. When you insert text by typing, the text will wrap according to the width of your displayed page. You create line breaks (for single spacing between unwrapped lines) by pressing **shift + return (enter)**. You may also select a line break **BR** from the Text tab on the Insert Bar.

Inserting Images

To insert an image in your document:

1. Place your cursor where the image is to be inserted, and click on the Insert Image icon 🌲 on the Common tab on the Insert Bar. The Select Image Source dialog box will open.

2. Navigate to the image and double-click on it, the image will be inserted where your cursor was located.

All of your images should be located in your local site folder — if you have more than just a few, put them in a sub-folder and call it "images", this will help you keep your site organized. Dreamweaver will expect that your images are in the site folder. If you select a source somewhere outside the local site folder, Dreamweaver will ask you if you want to copy it to your site folder.

To align the image on the page:

1. Click on the image to select it.

2. Click the Align Left, Align Center, Align Right button as desired in the Property Inspector. This places the image in a relative position on the page. If you want to be more specific about positioning or want to place text next to the image you should create a table and place the image in a cell that coincides with your desired positioning.

Note: when you click on the image to select it, the Property Inspector shows the image properties; including such information as dimensions and source (figure 12).
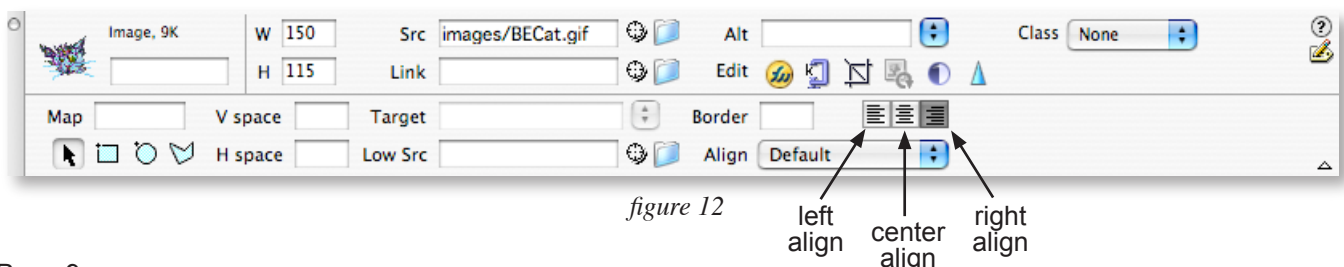
Image, 9K W 150 Src images/BECat.gif Alt Class None
          H 115 Link Edit
Map V space Target Border
     H space Low Src Align Default

figure 12

left align   center align   right align

Creating Links

There are four types of links: relative, absolute, e-mail (mailto), and named anchor.

1. Relative links are links within your Website. For example, a link from your index.html page to the other pages that you created is relative because the files are in the same folder. Any links to files in folders or sub-folders within your site should be relative links. To create a relative link:

    • Select the object to be linked (text or image).

    • In the Link field of the Property Inspector type the file name or URL of the document you're linking to. You may also click on the file folder icon at the end of the Link field and navigate to the linked item. When you locate it, double-click it to automatically insert it's path in the Link field.

    • You may also use the Point to File method — convenient when your site window is open. Click and hold your mouse button on the Point to File icon then drag it to the file you want to link to. The path to the linked item is automatically inserted in the Link field.


Point to File
icon

2. Absolute links are links to other Web pages or files that are outside your site. For example, you may have an absolute link from your Website to Adobe to download Acrobat Reader. When you create an absolute link, type *http://* and then the URL address for your link (i.e. *http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html*). They are created the same way as relative links.

3. E-mail links allow you to make a contact link. If an e-mail program is installed and configured on the computer of the person clicking the link, a compose window will appear that will allow them to send an e-mail to the specified e-mail address. To make an e-mail link:

    • Place your cursor where you want the link inserted.

    • Click on the e-mail link icon on the Common tab on the Insert Bar. Enter the text you want to refer to your e-mail address into the Text field and type your e-mail address into the Email field. Click OK.

4. Named Anchor links are links to specific places on a page. To create an Anchor link:

    • Put your cursor in the place you want the link to go to.

    • Click on the named anchor icon on the Common tab on the Insert Bar. The Insert Named Anchor dialog box appears, enter a name for the anchor and click OK.

    • To create a link to an anchor on the same page, in the Link field, type the anchor name preceded by #. To link to an anchor on another page, in the Link field, enter the page name followed by # and the anchor name (i.e. designer.html#schedule).

Inserting a Horizontal Rule

A horizontal rule is a line that goes across the page or part of the page. They are useful for separating sections of a page or setting off a specific area of a page. To insert a horizontal rule, place your cursor where you want the rule to appear and click on the Horizontal Rule icon on the HTML tab on the Insert Bar.

On the Property Inspector (figure 13), you can select a width in pixels or percent. If you leave the width box empty the line will extend all the way across the page. If you choose a specific length you also can choose to align the rule left, center or right by selecting the appropriate setting from the Align drop-down menu.

figure 13
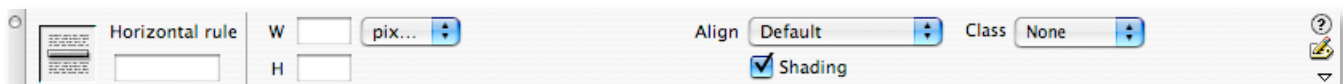
Creating Lists

Both ordered (numbered) and unordered (bullet) lists are easy to create in Dreamweaver. You can create lists as you type on a page or you can highlight existing text and apply the list format. To create a list:

1. Place the cursor where you want the list to begin.

2. Click on the Ordered List button ⊞ or the Unordered List button ⊞ on the Property Inspector.

3. Type the first list item next to the number one or the first bullet and press the Return key. Continue entering list items until you are done. When the last item on the list is inserted, press Return twice to turn off the list function.

Creating Tables

Tables can be an important element in Web design. Aesthetics never played a major part in the development of HTML standards. Thus, before the advent of style sheets, the major element used in HTML page layout was tables. Tables provide a way to place text and graphic elements in specific areas of a Web page.

To insert a table in Dreamweaver:

1. Place the cursor where you want the table inserted.

2. Click on the Insert Table icon ⊞ on the Common tab on the Insert Bar. The Table dialog box will open (figure 14).

3. Enter the number of rows and columns you want.

4. Set the width as desired — either a specific number of pixels or a percent of browser window width.

figure 14

5. Set the border as desired. Set zero for an invisible table.
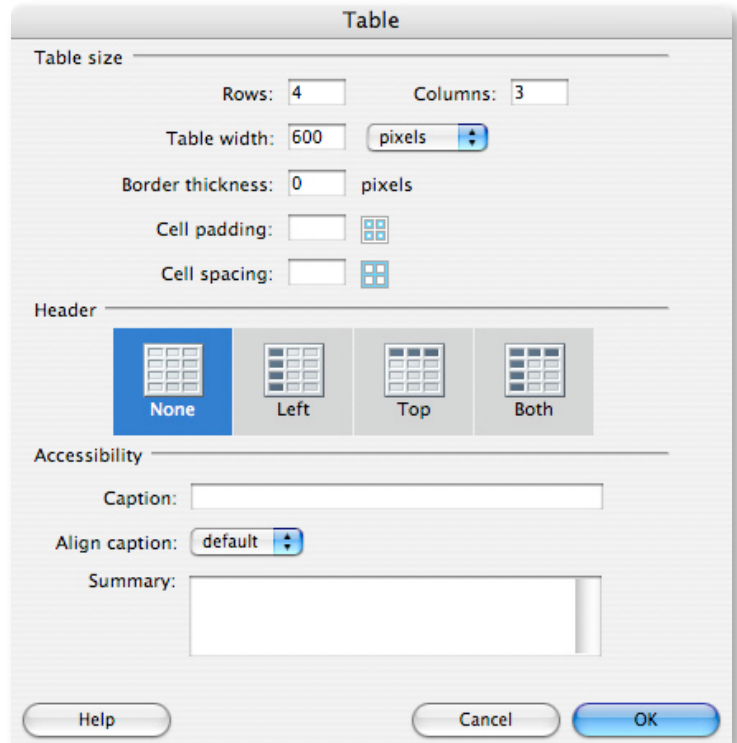
6. Click OK to create the table.

figure 15

NOTE: You can set other attributes for the table by selecting the table and using the Table Property Inspector (figure 15) to set the attributes you want.
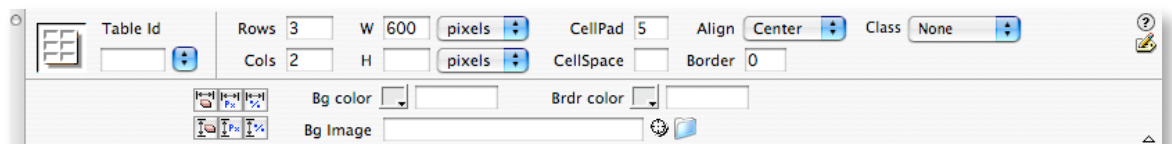
After you insert a table you can:
- Adjust the table size by clicking and dragging the outer border of the table — cell sizes can be changed by clicking and dragging the cell borders.

- Insert images or any other object directly into a cell, or drag objects into the cells.

- Add text to the table by placing your cursor within a cell and typing — modify the format of the text in a cell just as you would with any other text.

- Press the Tab key to move from cell to cell, Dreamweaver will add additional rows if you press Tab at the end of the table. You may also use the arrow keys to move between cells.

Preview in Browser

It's a good idea to check your pages in the browser(s) that most people will be using. You can set up a number of browsers to use to review your pages. You can either select Preview in Browser from the File menu; or click on the View/Debug in Browser icon at the top of the Document Window.

figure 16

1. You set your preview browser preferences by clicking on Edit Browser List (figure 16) when you select Preview in Browser from the File menu or click on the Preview/Debug in Browser icon.
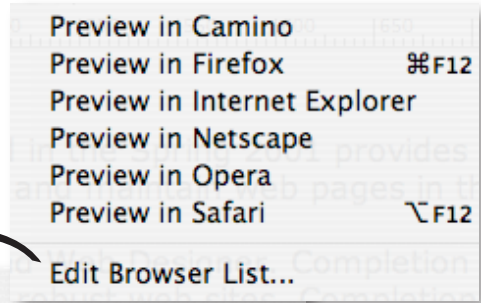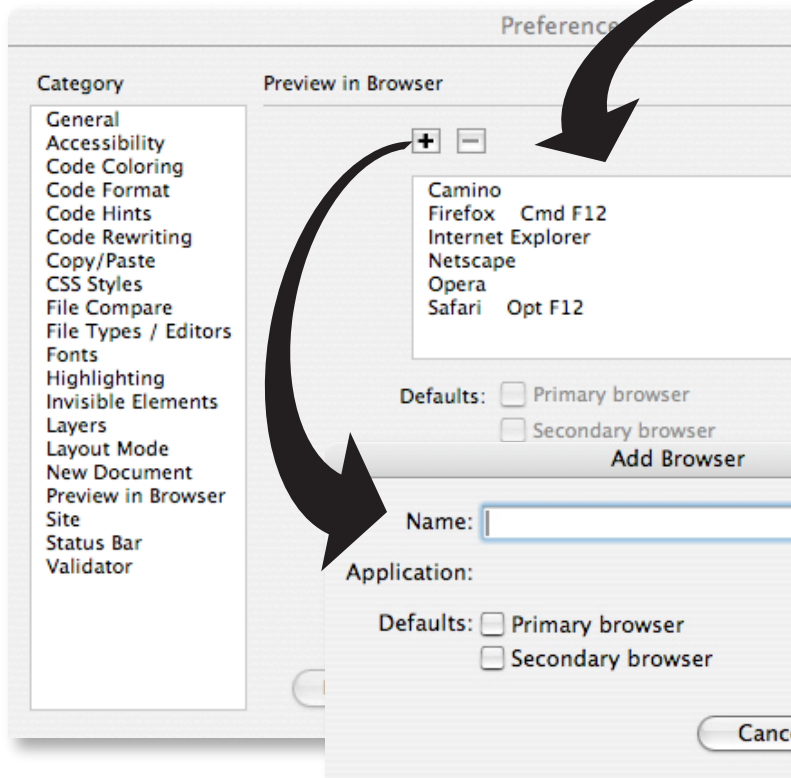
figure 17

2. This will open the Preview in Browser Preferences dialog box (figure 17). Click on the + button to add a browser to the list.

3. In the Add Browser dialog box (figure 18), click on the Browse button and navigate to the browser you want to add to the list and select it. Click either the Primary or Secondary Browser check box to designate your keyboard shortcut and then click OK.

4. After you've designated your Primary Browser, press F12 to view your page in that browser. You also may choose to preview you page as outlined above.

figure 18

Setting Dreamweaver to Work With the Web Server

The final step in getting Dreamweaver set to upload files to your Website is completing the Remote Site information in the Site dialog box. To accomplish this:

1. Choose Manage Sites from the Site menu.

2. Select the name of your site (set when you made the local folder) from the menu and click on Edit.

3. Select Remote Info in the Category field (on the left) and the dialog box will display the server information area (figure 19).
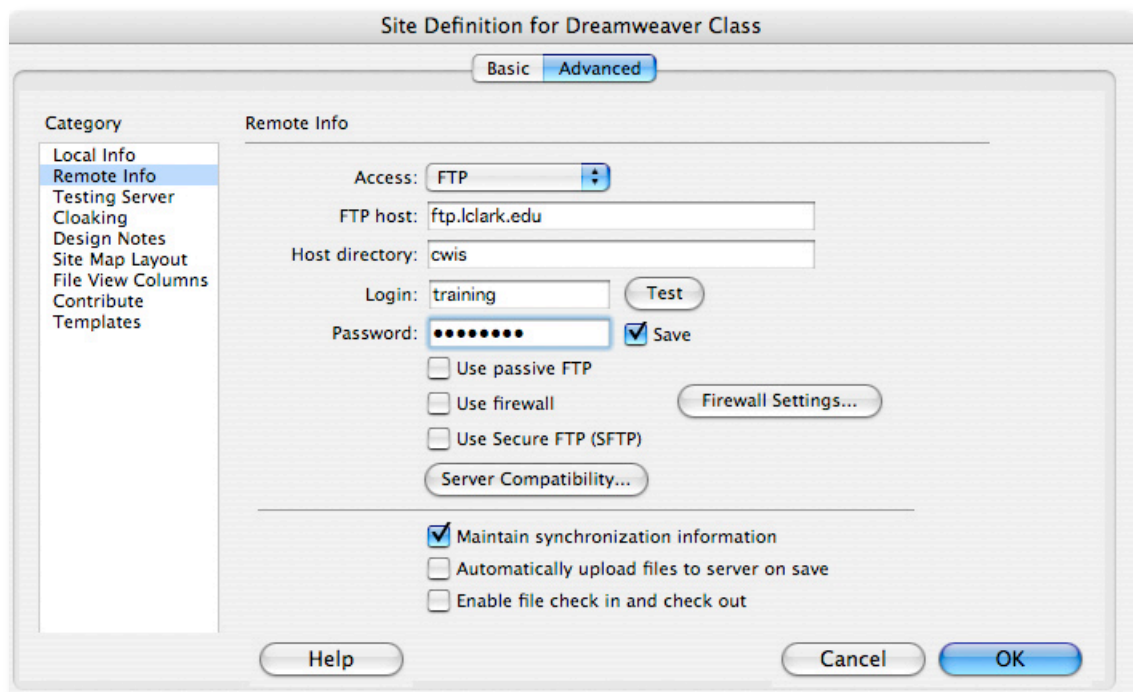
figure 19

4. Pull down the Server Access menu and select FTP.

5. In the FTP host field type the name of your server (i.e. ftp.lclark.edu).

6. In the Host Directory field type the path to your Website (at L&C use cwis).

7. In the Login field type your user name (at L&C use your e-mail login).

8. In the Password field type your password for the server (at L&C use your e-mail password). If you are not at your own computer you may want to leave this field blank, in which case Dreamweaver will ask for your password when you connect to the server.

9. Click OK and in the next dialog box, click Done.

Moving Files to the Web Server

The Site dialog box provides an easy way for you to move files from your local site folder to the Web server. It is divided into two sections: Remote Site and Local Folder which display the files in those places (figure 21). It is a simple process to move files from one place to the other:

1. Select the file(s) you want to move — most often from the Local Folder to the Remote Site (Web Server). You may select more than one file at a time by holding the Command (Ctrl on PC) key and clicking on the files you want to copy.

2. Click on the Put File(s) button (if moving from Local Folder to Remote Site). If you are moving a file from the Remote Site to the Local Folder click on the Get File(s) button.

Note: remember to also select any image files that are needed for the pages you are uploading or click yes in the Dependent Files dialog box (figure 20) when it appears.

figure 20

Get   Put
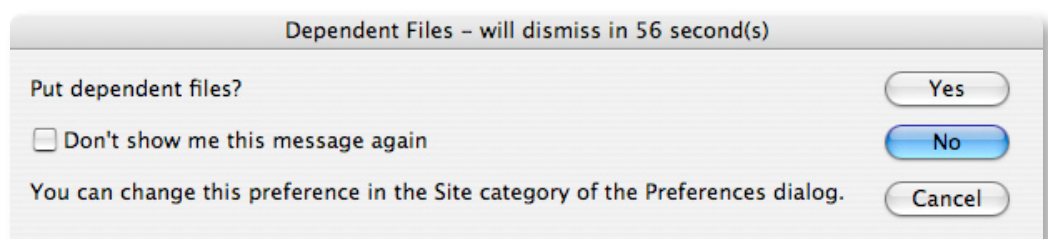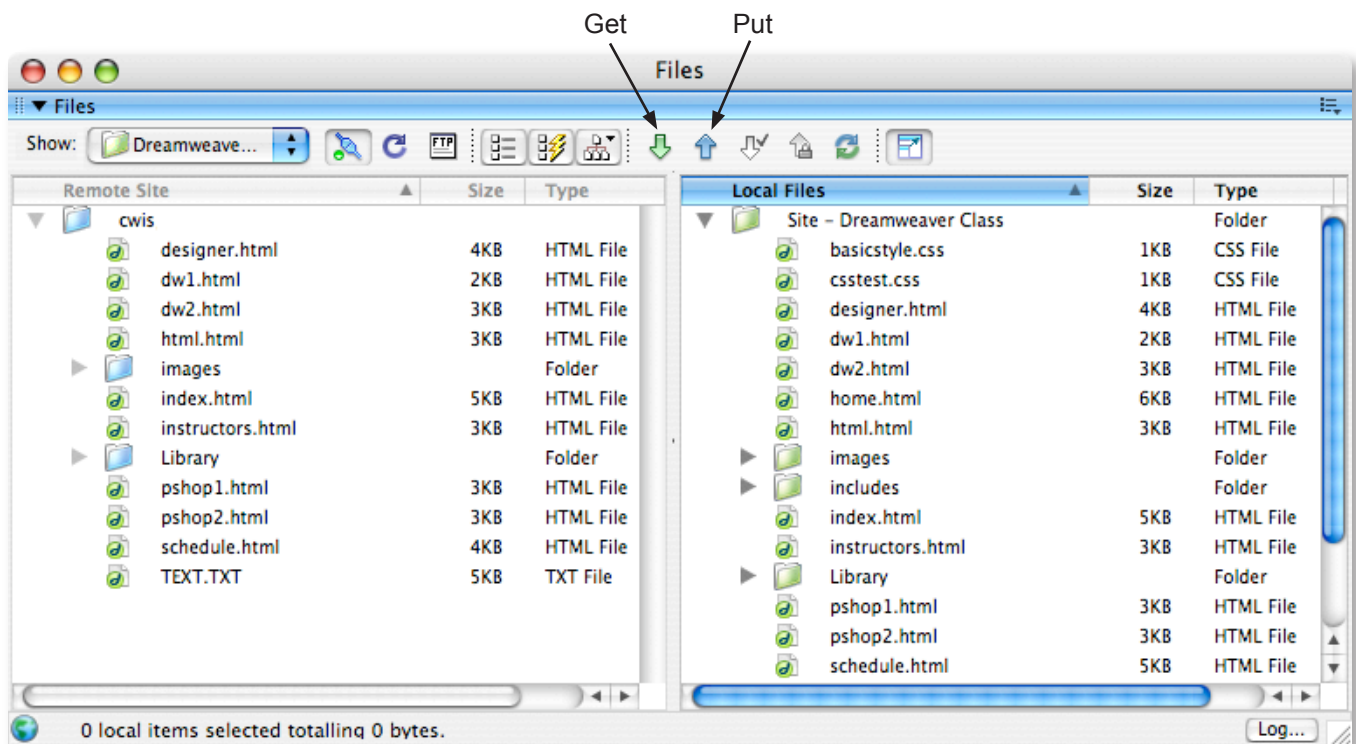
figure 21

Further Information

Adobe's Dreamweaver development site: *http://www.adobe.com/devnet/dreamweaver.* Here you will find tutorials, articles and links to additional Dreamweaver information.

The introduction about CSS in this handout is quoted or paraphrased from: Mulder's Stylesheets Tutorial, Steve Mulder, Wired Digital Inc., a Lycos Network site. Retrieved October 14, 2002 from *http://hotwired.lycos.com/ webmonkey/98/15/index0a.html.*

Dreamweaver 8 Screen

Insert Bar

Document Toolbar

Dreamweaver   File   Edit   View   Insert   Modify   Text   Commands   Site   Window   Help

Insert | Common | Layout | Forms | Text | HTML | Application | Flash elements | Favorites

Untitled-1 (XHTML)

Title: Untitled Document

Code   Split   Design

Show Code View

Show Design View

Show Code and Design View

Document Title

Browser Check

Validate Markup

File Management

Preview/Debug in Browser

Refresh Design View

View Options

Visual Aids

Window Size

Document Size / Estimated Download time

726 x 312   1K / 1 sec

100%

Document Window

Tag Selector

<body>

Property Inspector (Text)

Format   None   Style   None   CSS   B I   Link

Font   Default Font   Size   None   Target

Page Properties....   List Item....

Dreamweaver 8 Property Inspectors

Text

Labels: Help, Quick Tag Editor, Browse for Link, Point to File, Link Pull-Down Menu, Text Link, Link Target, Link Target Pull-Down Menu, Justify, Align Right, Align Center, Align Left, Indent, Outdent, Numbered List, Bullet List, Italic, Bold, Hexadecimal Color, Font Color Picker, Open CSS Panel, CSS Style Menu, Size Pull-Down Menu, Font Size, Font Pull-Down Menu, Font, Text Format

Format: Heading 3 — Style: None — Size: None — CSS — #FFFCC — Link — Target — List Item... — Page Properties...

Image

Labels: Help, CSS Class, Quick Tag Editor, Edit Image in Other Application, Alternate Text, Browse for Link, Point to File, Browse for Source, Align Right, Align Pull-Down Menu, Align Center, Align Left, Image Border, Browse for Source, Link Target Pull-Down Menu, Low Source, Link Target, Vertical/Horizontal Space Around Image, Image Map Area, Image Thumbnail, Image Size, Width, Height, Image Source, Image Link

Image, 9K — W 150 — H 115 — Src images/BECat.gif — Link — Alt — Edit — Class None — V space — H space — Target — Low Src — Border — Align Default — Map