

Dreamweaver MX 2004 Basics

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Objectives

Website construction and maintenance is quickly becoming a necessary skill in both academic and working spheres. Whether you're new to web design or just new to Dreamweaver, this tutorial will help explain the ins and outs of this popular program. By the end, you'll be able to create web pages with ease. This tutorial has the following objectives:

- Explore interface, menus & properties manager
- Create a basic web page
- Add text, links, tables and images
- Change fonts and alignment
- Review transferring files and images to the server and learn techniques for effective management of your server space.

Dreamweaver is a web development tool that is available on all of the computers in the IT Lab. It can also be purchased for about \$100 from the Campus Computer Store. For creating a simple web page, it may have more functionality than you really need. For large sites, however, the many features of Dreamweaver are invaluable.

Need to create a simple web page, anxious about learning HTML, or unwilling to fork out the money to buy Dreamweaver? Mozilla Composer may just be a great alternative to Dreamweaver. Mozilla is an open source suite of applications used for web browsing, email, or creating html pages, which can be downloaded for free from the Internet (<http://www.mozilla.org/>). Mozilla Composer is the web development tool of Mozilla. All of the computers in the IT Lab have Mozilla Composer on them, and it is very easy to download it on your home computer. For more information about how to use Mozilla Composer, check out the Creating a Web Page Using Mozilla Composer tutorial (<http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/technology/tutorials/webdev/mozilla/index.html>).

Definitions

Dreamweaver:



An HTML editing and web page construction tool, offering a graphical user interface (GUI) for HTML functionality. In the School of Information's IT lab, you'll be given the choice of Dreamweaver 4 view or Dreamweaver MX view. 4 separates the windows, while MX provides a connected workspace. The preferred view is debatable, and in this case, entirely up to you.

Email link:



Creates a link which users can click on to send an email to the recipient. Simply click on the email link icon, and enter the appropriate info. Note: when using the Properties Window's link field to create an email link, enter <mailto:yourlogin@ischool.utexas.edu>, no spaces.

Hyperlink:



Creates a link that takes users to a specified URL. Note: when using the Properties Window's link field, be sure to enter the entire URL (including http://).

Insert

Window:

Offers a GUI for the insertion of images, links, tables, etc. It mirrors the functionality of the Insert menu on the main toolbar.

Properties

Window:

Displays the current properties for links, text, tables, and objects. Allows for manual entering of dimensions and colors (including background, table cells, and text).

URL:

A Uniform Resource Locator is commonly referred to as a "web address." It includes such information as the protocol used to access the resource (e.g. http), the domain name of a computer or server connected to the Internet (e.g. www.ischool.utexas.edu), and the path of the sought resource (e.g. ~yourlogin/filename.extension).

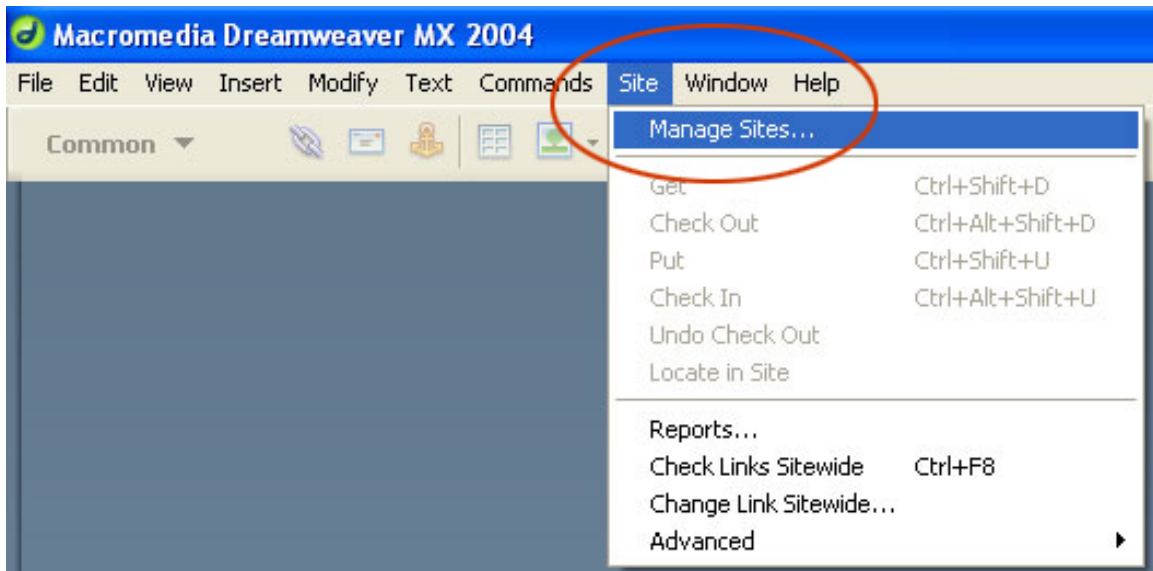
Getting Started

Creating your site:

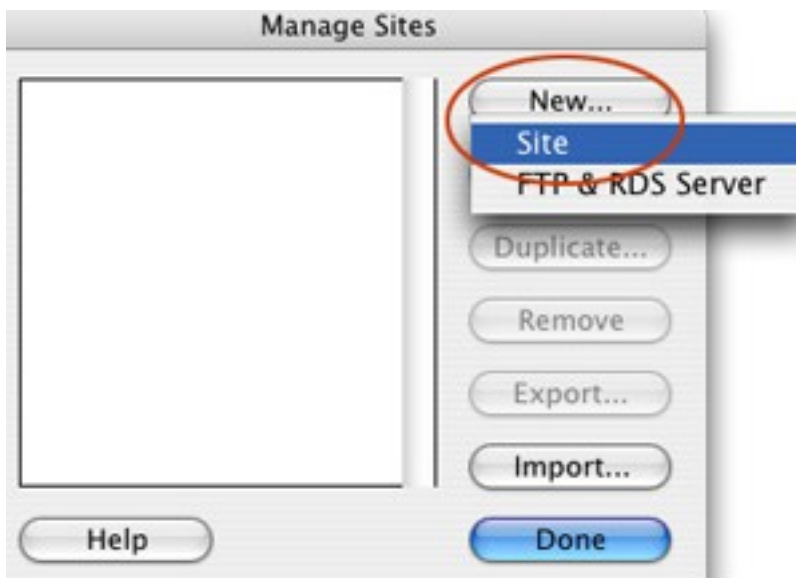
Setting up a site in Dreamweaver allows you to easily manage, update, and locate your files. Follow the next few steps closely to insure that your site setup will work for you:

- Create a folder on the desktop (or any other place on your computer you will remember) – you will save your pages here until they are ready to post on-line.
- From the main toolbar choose: Site > Manage sites

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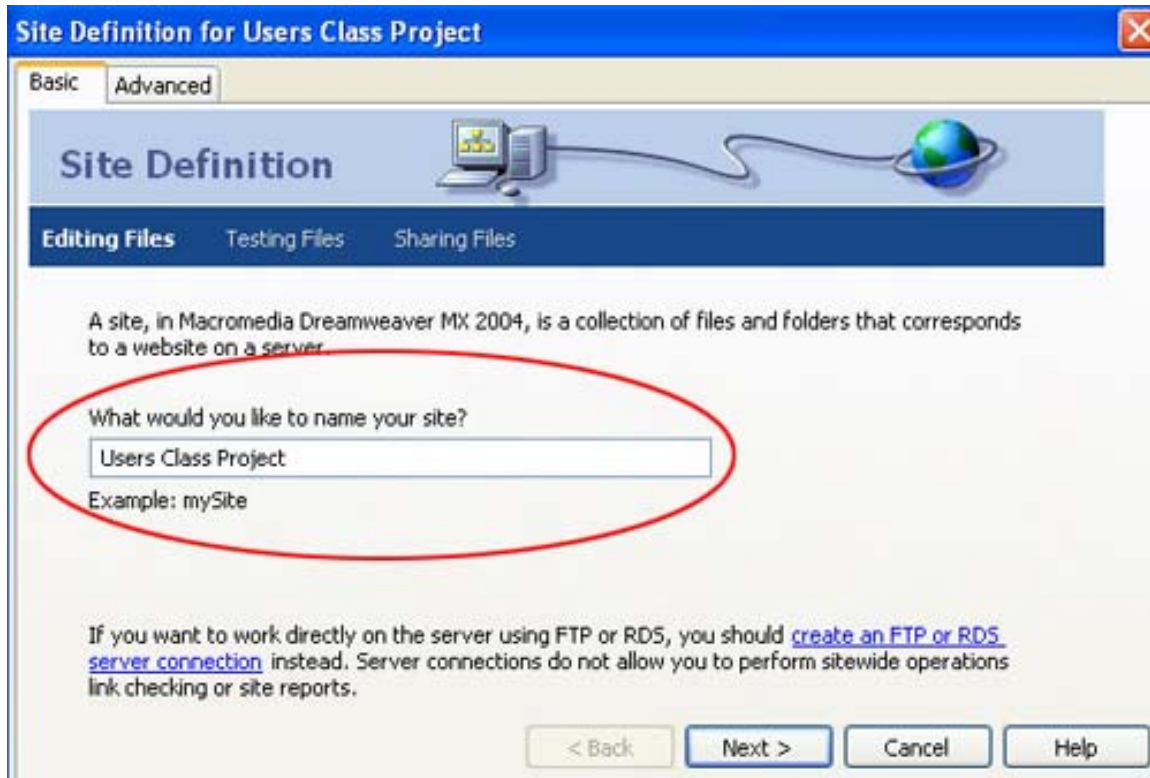


A new window will open – we will be creating a new site:

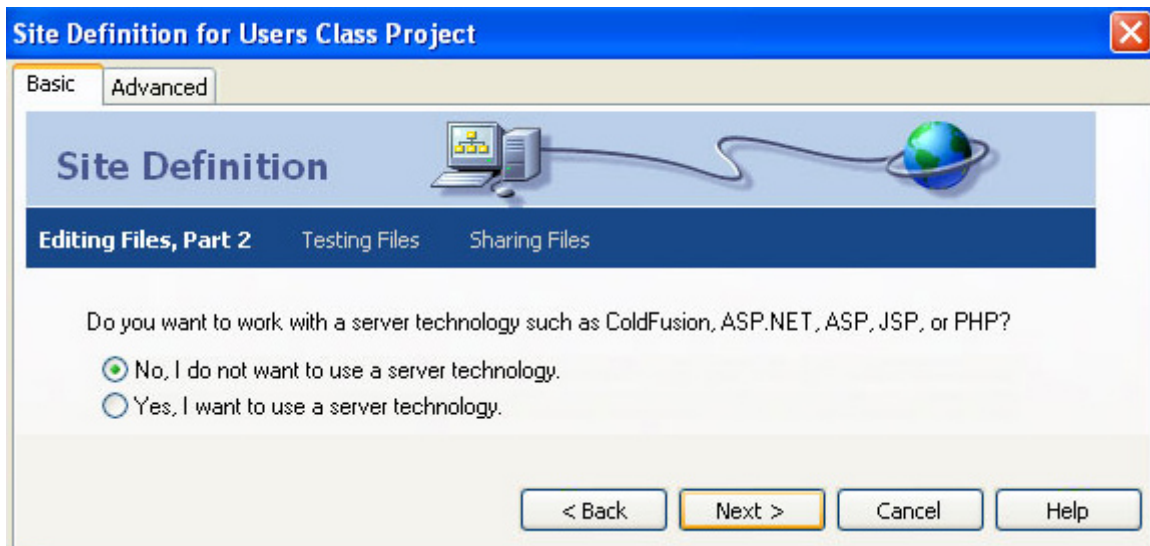


Next, give your site a name – this is just a name to help you recognize your files:

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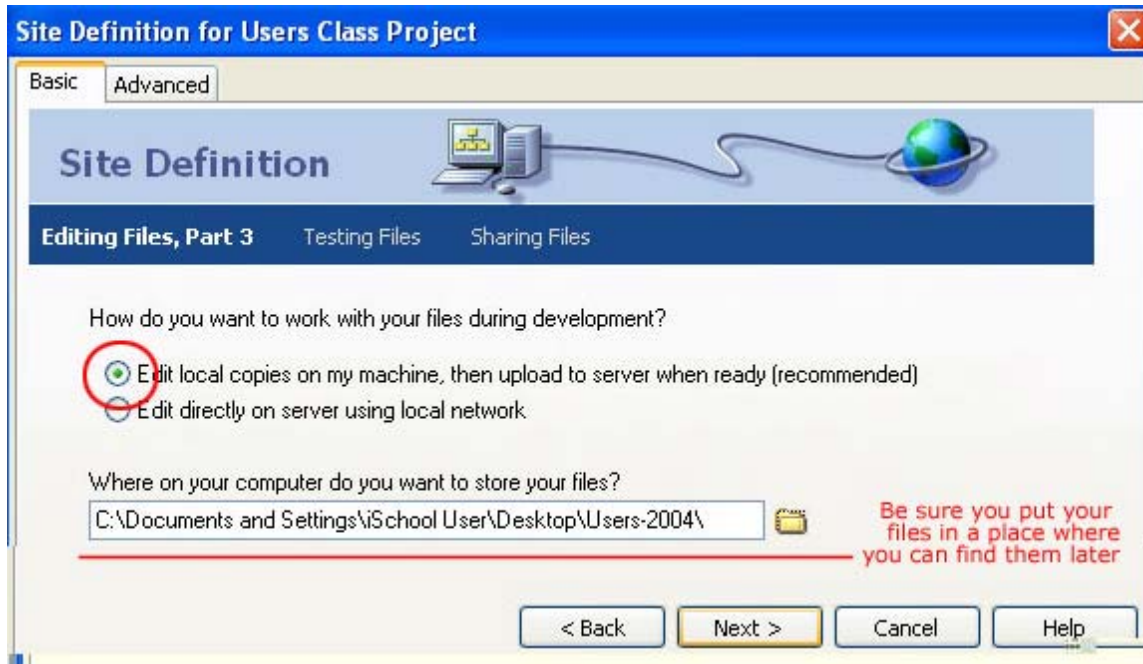
For most web work, server technology is not needed. ColdFusion, ASP, and other server technology programs are typically used for database creation and support. Suffice it to say – if you are just getting started with Dreamweaver, you should opt to NOT use server technologies at this point:



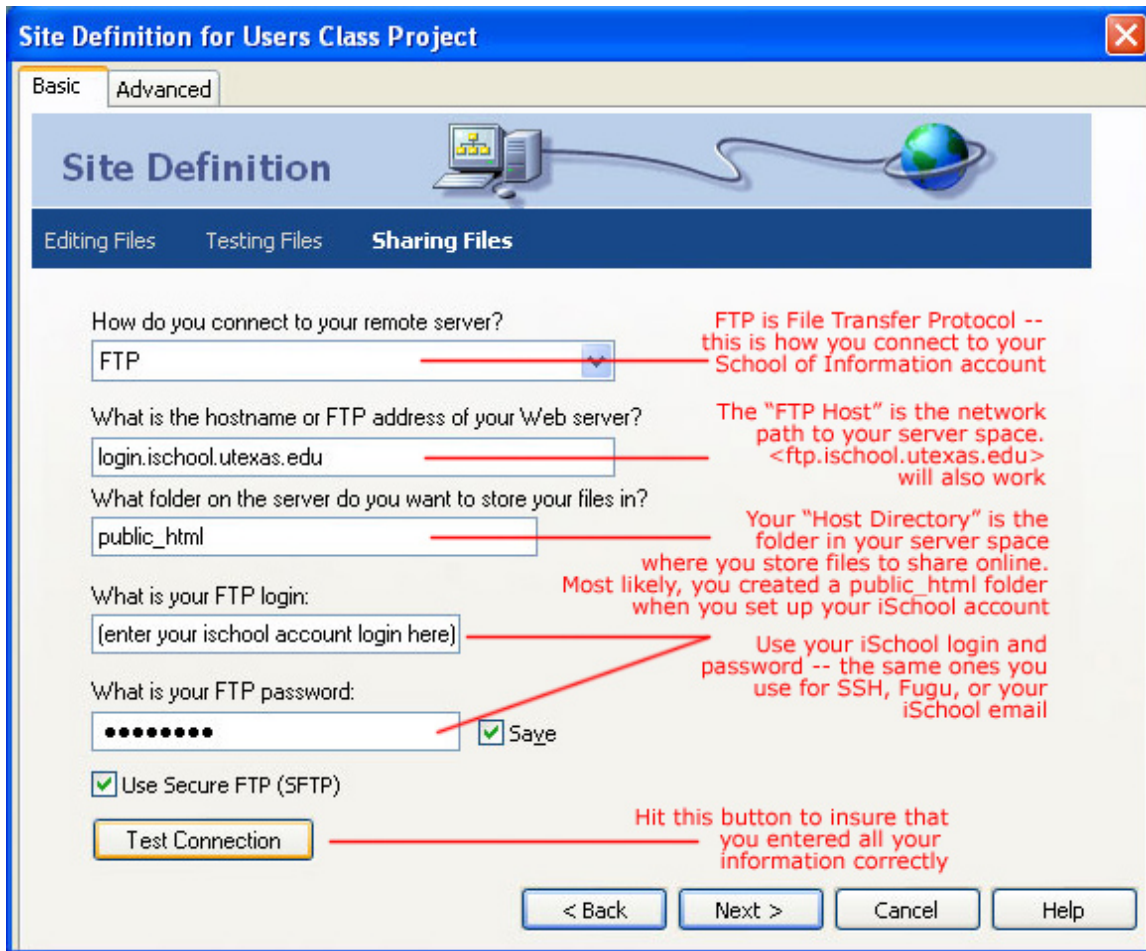
You are next asked how you want to work with your files during the web development process. It is suggested that you select to edit local copies on your machine before loading them on the web. This means that your files will be saved to your computer and then uploaded to your iSchool space

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only when you perform the upload. This often prevents costly mistakes, such as accidentally deleting a page or replacing a finished page with a work in progress.



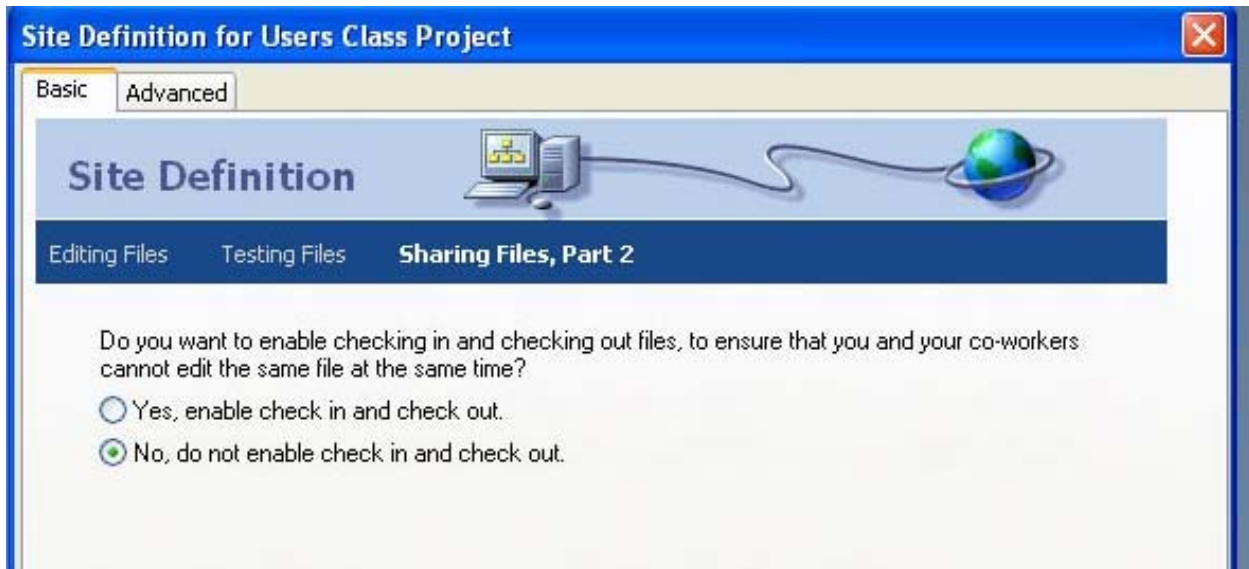
Next, you will tell Dreamweaver how to connect to your iSchool server space:



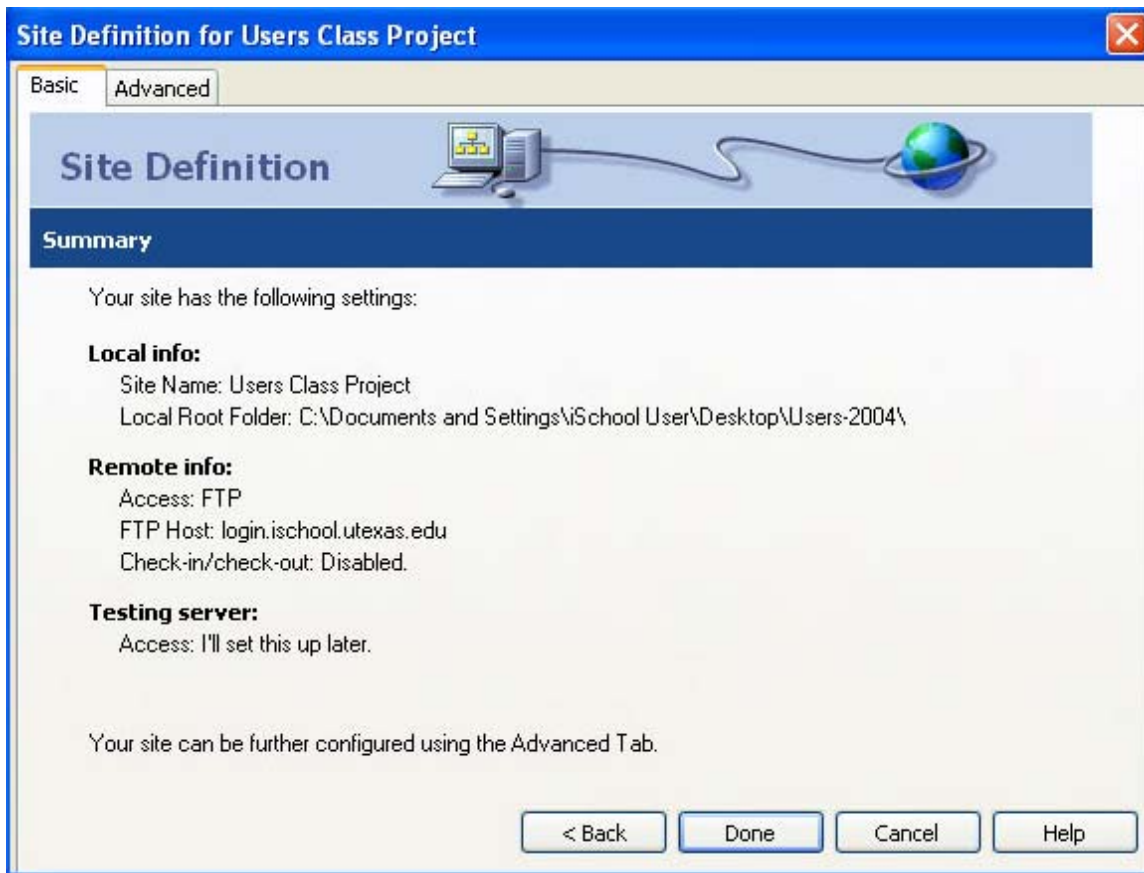
There are many ways to connect to your server space; we will always use FTP (File Transfer Protocol) at the School of Information. If you use SSH, WFTP, or Fetch, you are familiar with the following fields. The FTP address is login.ischool.utexas.edu or ftp.ischool.utexas.edu. This allows Dreamweaver to transfer files between your computer (or local machine) and the server (or remote machine). You will choose your public_html folder to store your files. Everything you place in this folder is viewable on-line, if the correct path, filename, and extension are used. Your FTP login and password are the same login and password you use for your School of Information account.

Test the connection before you continue...typos are frequent and easier to deal with in the moment, than later when you are trying to understand why you can't connect.

Dreamweaver also has capabilities to facilitate a site on which multiple people are editing and authoring files. "Check in" and "check out" should not be used if you are the only person working on your website. However, if you're working with a group, it can be very helpful. For example: If you're working on a group project for your Information Architecture course and many people have access to the account for the web site you are building for your final project, there is no way to know if someone is working on the same file as you or when s/he will upload it. You risk losing your work and/or your team member's work. "Check in" and "Check out" will allow only one team member at a time access to a file.

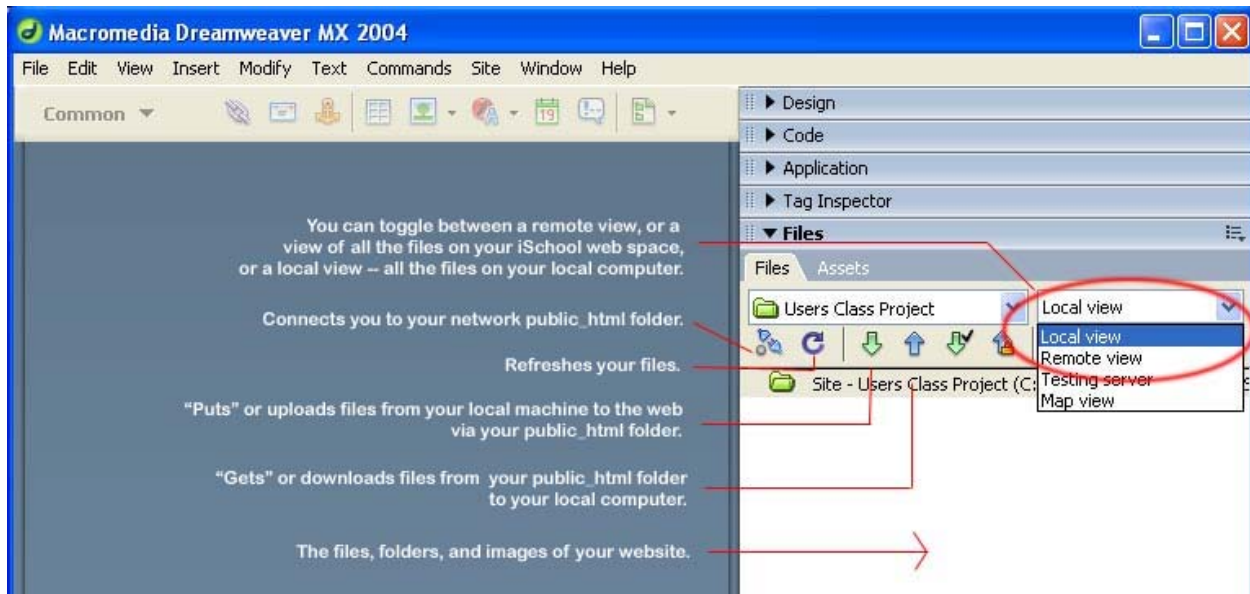


The final page of the wizard displays a summary of your website setup preferences -- check that these are correct and click DONE!



After you set up your site, the following window will appear:

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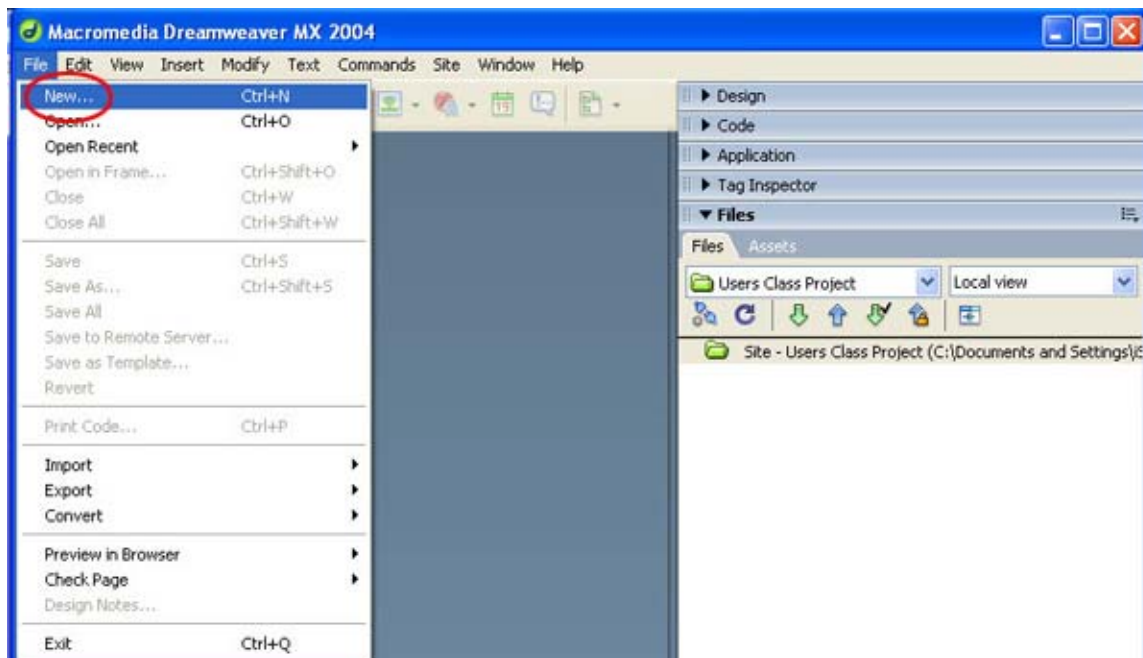


Getting Comfortable

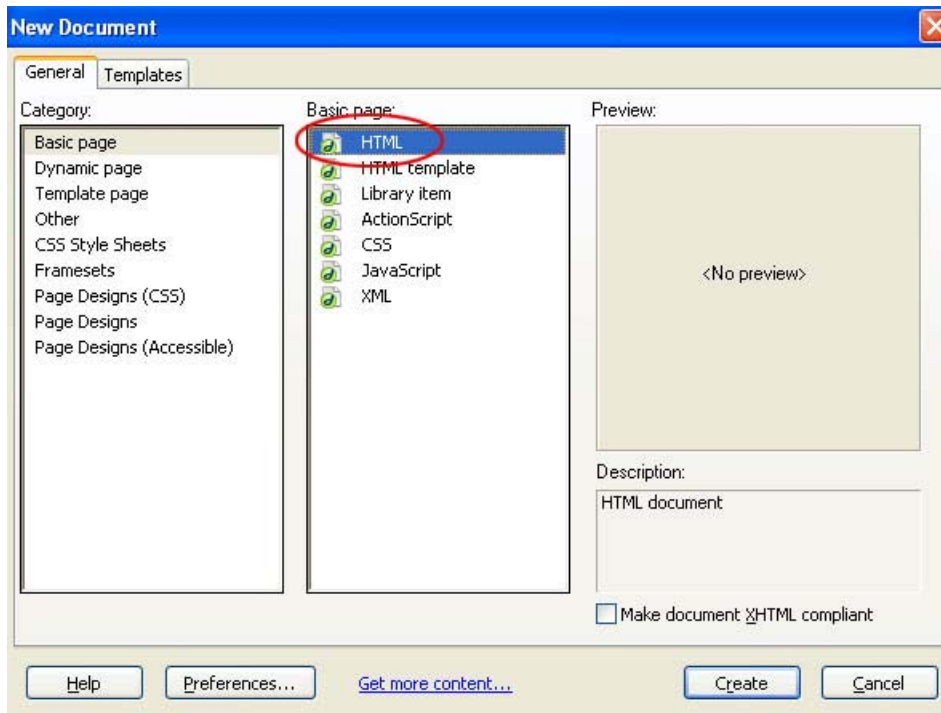
Creating your page

Now you're ready to begin! There are two ways to get started with Dreamweaver: Either select a new HTML file or open a new document by going to File → New.

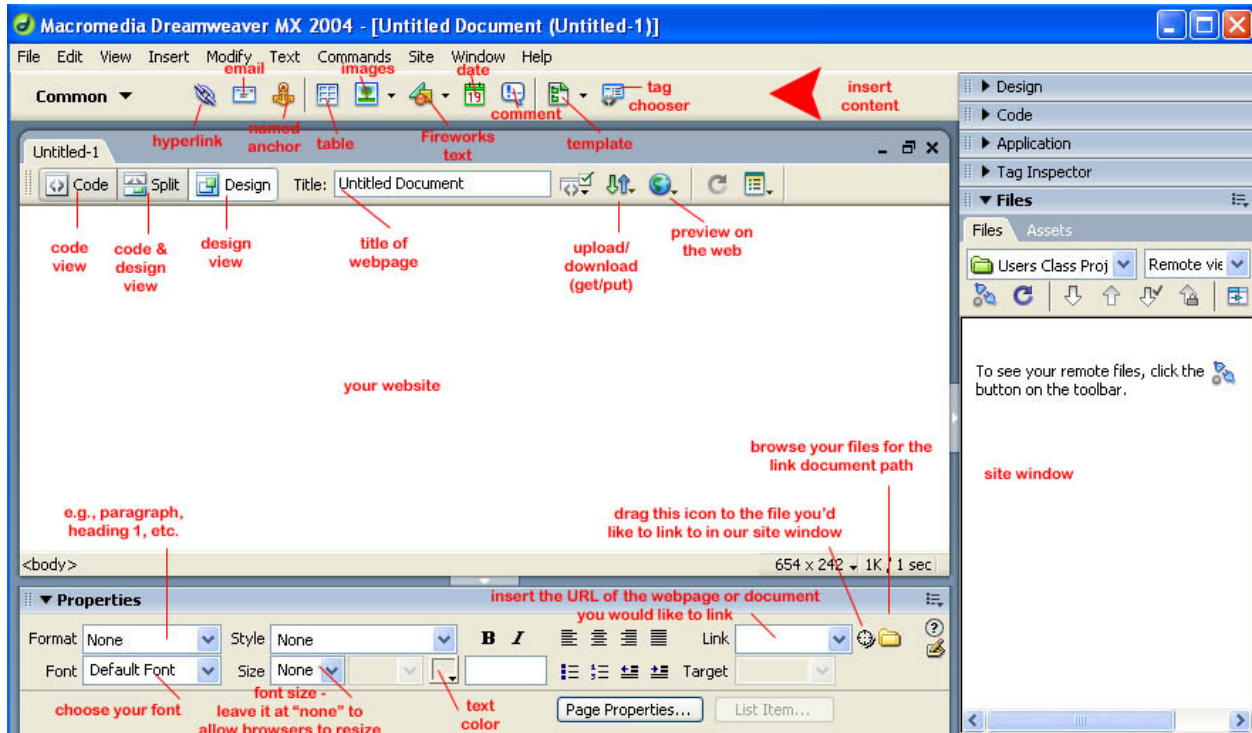
Dreamweaver MX operates much like Microsoft Word; just begin typing, inserting images, tables, etc.



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Let's take a look at the Dreamweaver interface: several key toolbars – the properties window, the insert toolbar, and the file management window – offer quick access to many of Dreamweaver's functionalities:



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Page Views

Dreamweaver offers three viewing options for working on and creating your page:

1. Code – This view presents the user with only the HTML code.
2. Design – This view presents the user with a GUI interface, similar to a word processing program, allowing for the creation of professional quality pages with little or no knowledge of code.
3. Code and Design – The view splits the screen, providing the user with both the code (on top) and GUI (on the bottom). Highlighting text in the bottom, GUI portion, will highlight the code on top. This offers the user a unique opportunity to learn code in a “subtitle” fashion.

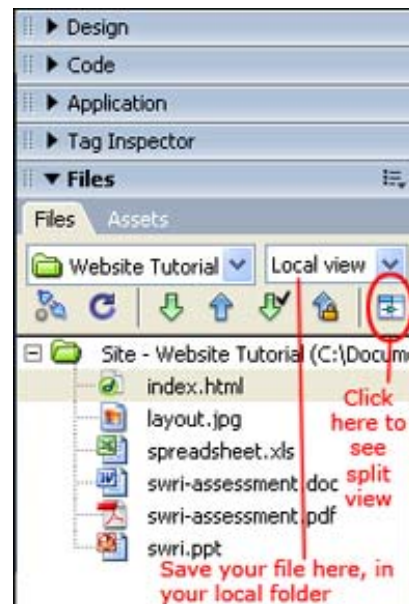
Preview your work in a browser

While working on your web page, you may want to see how it will look when it’s posted or in a browser. There are two ways to achieve this goal.

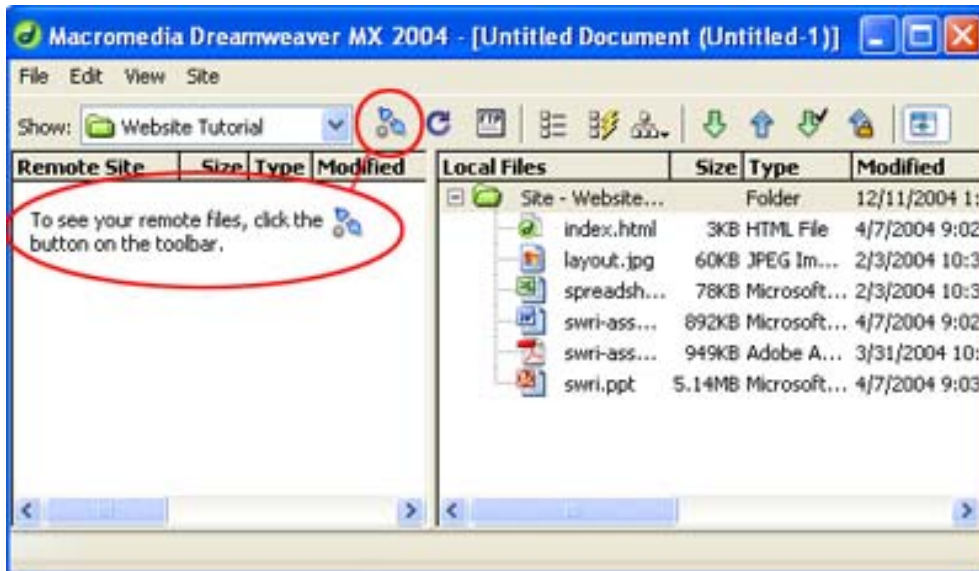
1. From the main toolbar select File > Preview in Browser. You may then select the default (Internet Explorer) or choose a new one (e.g., Mozilla, Netscape, Opera, Safari).
2. When you feel more comfortable with Dreamweaver, you can use the hotkey, **F12**, to preview your work.

Saving and Publishing your page

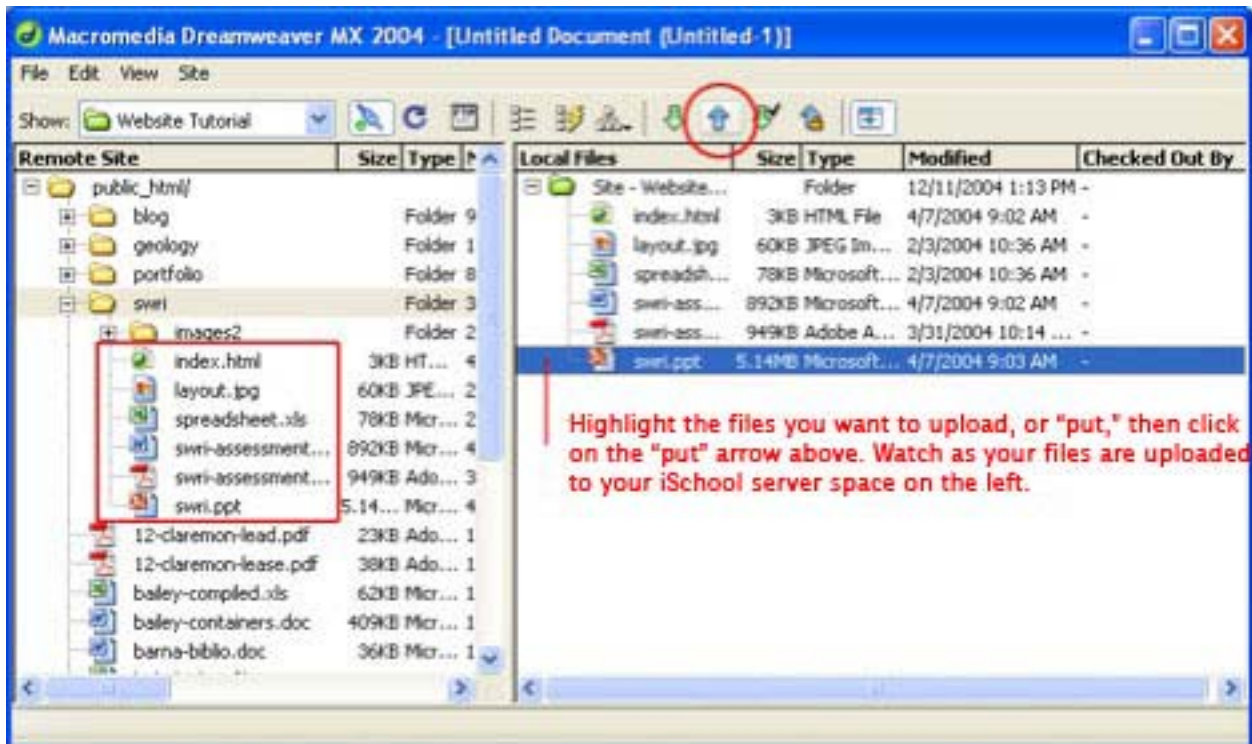
- When you are ready to publish your work, the first step is saving it to your local folder. Next, click on the “Expand / Collapse” Button at the right of the Local View window to see a split view of your local files and your remote files – this will show you both what you have saved locally, on your computer, and what’s on your iSchool server space inside your public_html folder.
- Connect to your iSchool space by clicking on the “Connect to remote server” as illustrated below:



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Finally, highlight the file or files you wish to upload and click on the “put” or upwards arrow at the top. If your files transfer successfully to your iSchool server space, they will appear in the remote site area on the left side of the window:

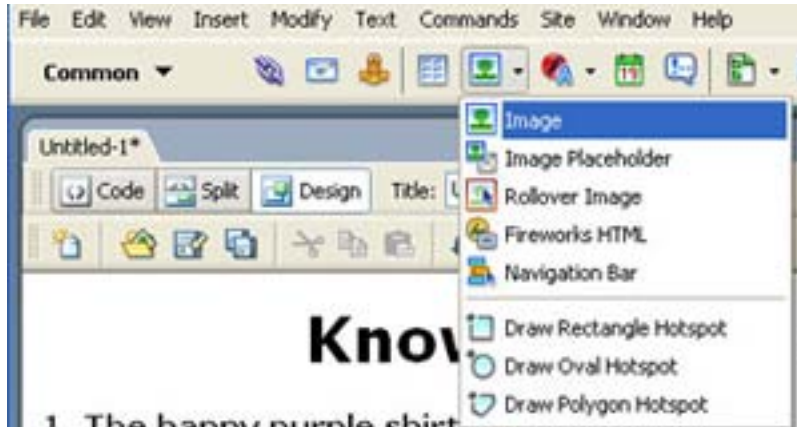


You can now view your page on-line by typing
<http://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~yourlogin/filename.html>

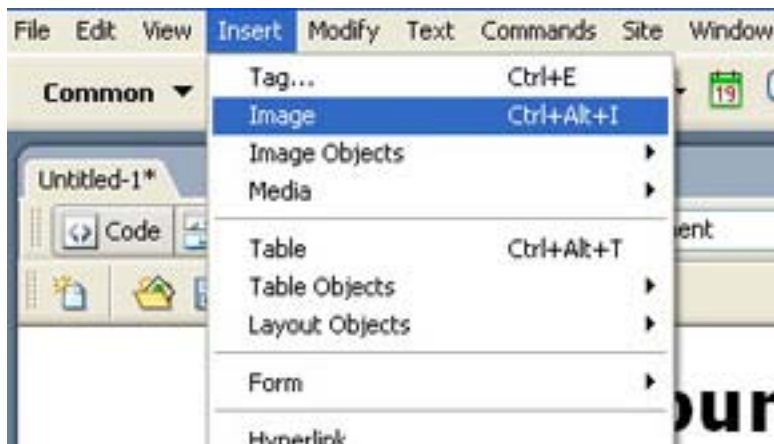
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Inserting an Image

In Dreamweaver, there are many ways to accomplish any given task. For instance, there are two ways to insert an image. You could click on the image button in the insert content bar at the top:



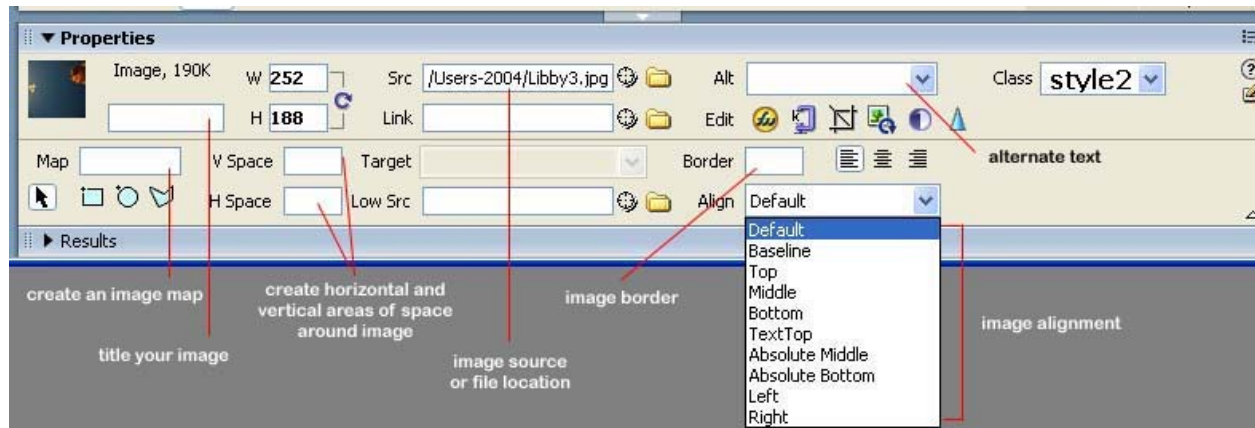
Or, you could click on “Insert” at the top and scroll down to “Image:”



It is important to remember that Dreamweaver is an html editor, not an image editor. Make all adjustments to your image in Fireworks, Photoshop, the Gimp, etc., before inserting it into your Dreamweaver document. This includes resizing the image, as you risk losing quality and correct proportions.

There are certain features of your image that you can edit from the Properties window. You can align an image, create a border around the image, add alternative text, allot horizontal and vertical space to pad your image, create an image map, and more:

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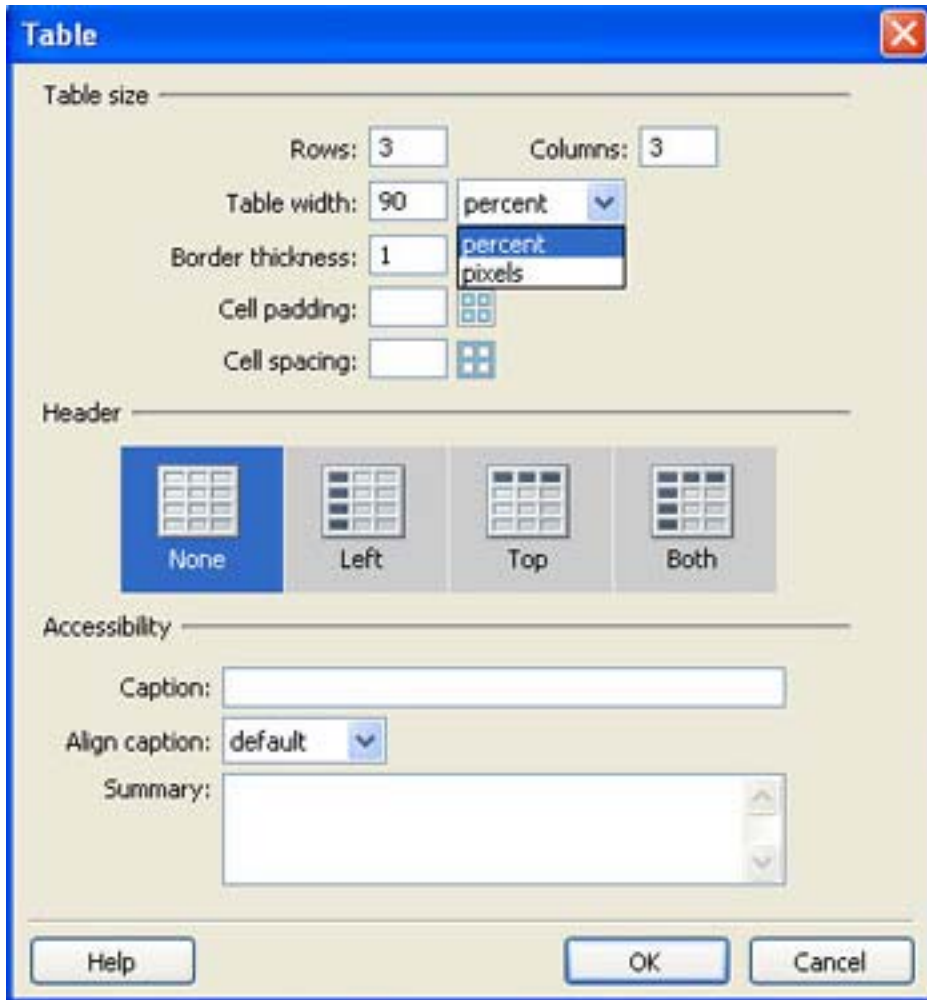
Inserting a Table

In HTML, tables offer a number of layout options. If you choose a border, the user will see the tabular structure. If you choose no border, the user only sees aligned text or images.

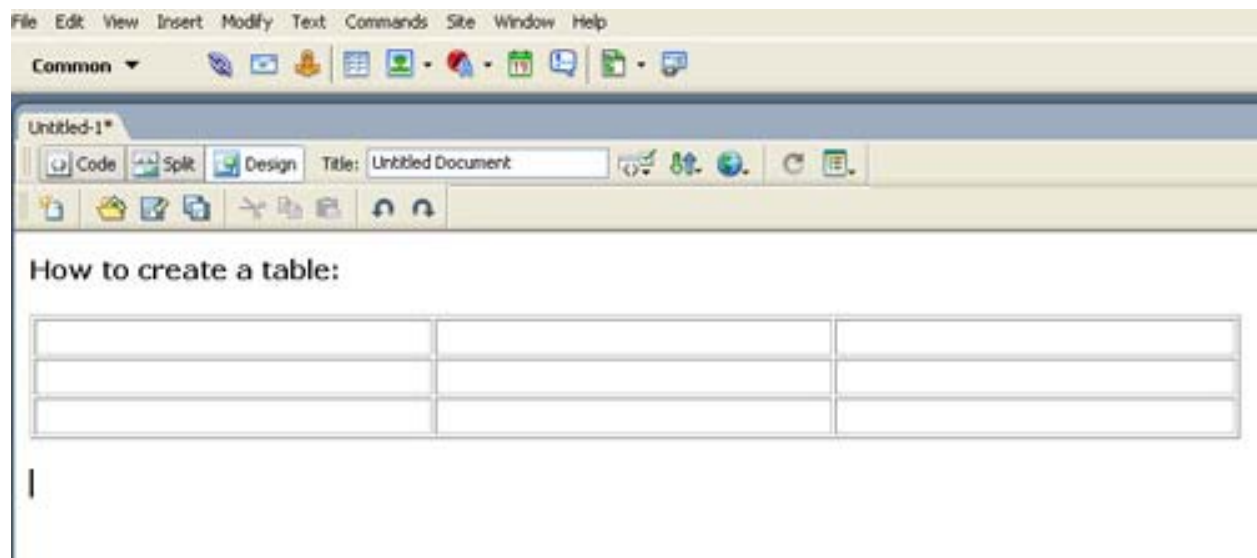
You can insert a table in two ways:

1. The table icon on the Insert Window
2. File > Insert > Table

Both options will yield a window with options for # of rows, # of columns, cell spacing, cell padding, width, and border:



Choose the dimensions and qualifications for your table and press OK. You have a table!



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Links

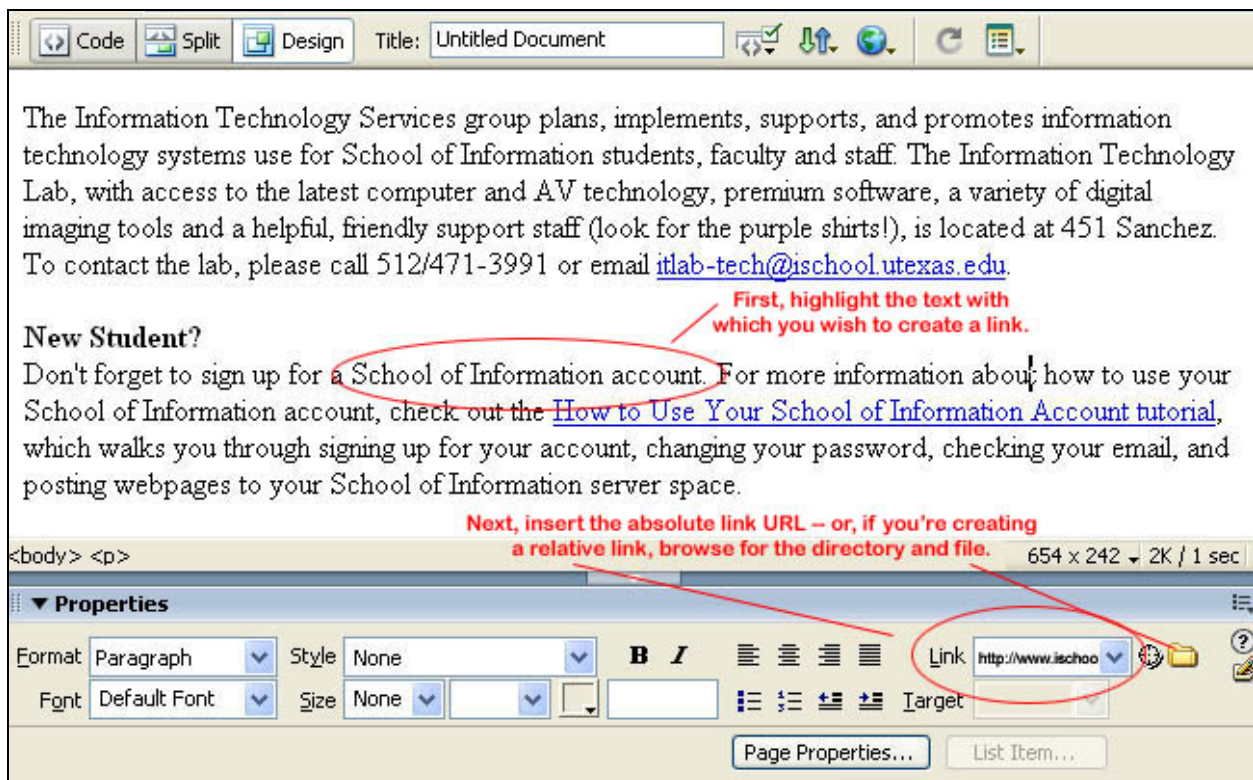
There are two types of links in this world: absolute and relative. You should already be familiar with absolute links – these are links that are full URL addresses. Here's one example:

<http://www.ischool.utexas.edu>

Absolute links are used to direct a reader of your webpage outside your webpage.

Relative links point to a specific file within your webpage – the file's relation to the current directory or root directory. For example, if you have two files in your public_html directory, homepage.html and school.html, to link from one to the other you only need to insert the filename into Dreamweaver's link feature. When you have files within folders within your public_html folder, things become a little more complicated. Let's say you want to insert links on your homepage.html page to an image that is located in a folder named "images." You need to tell browsers to look in the "images" directory to find your images. Therefore, any links from homepage.html to files in your image folder would be like this example: "images/gnomes.jpg." The name of the folder is reflected within the file name.

As is the case with many of Dreamweaver's functions, there are many paths to the same end. My preferred method for inserting links is through the Properties window:



- Highlight the text you would like to link.
- Click in the "link" field in the Properties window. Enter the URL of the page you would like to link to.

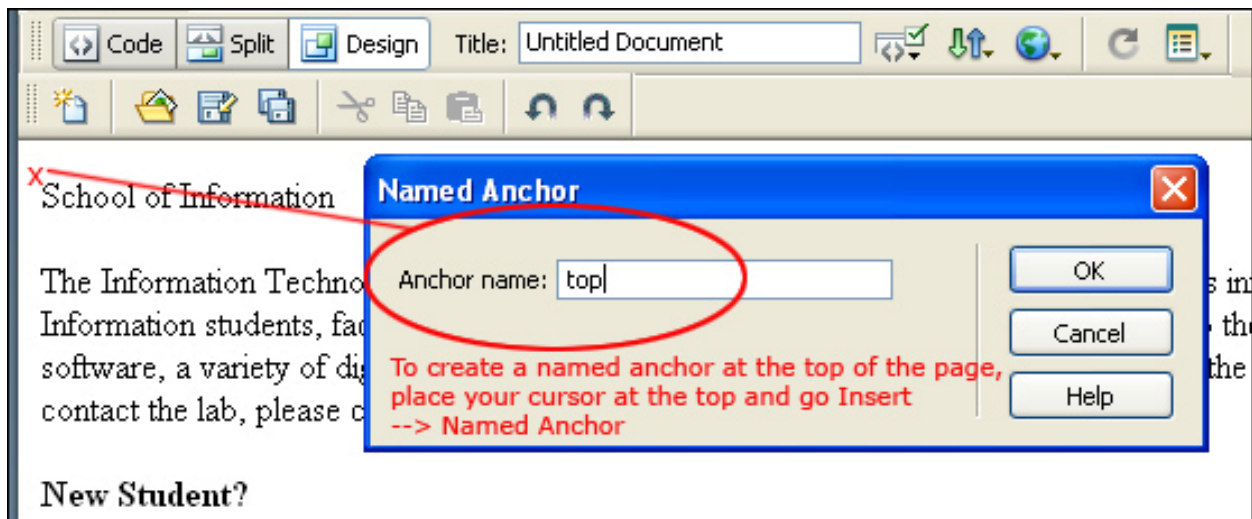
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- If you are linking to a page within your site, you need only enter the filename.

Named Anchors

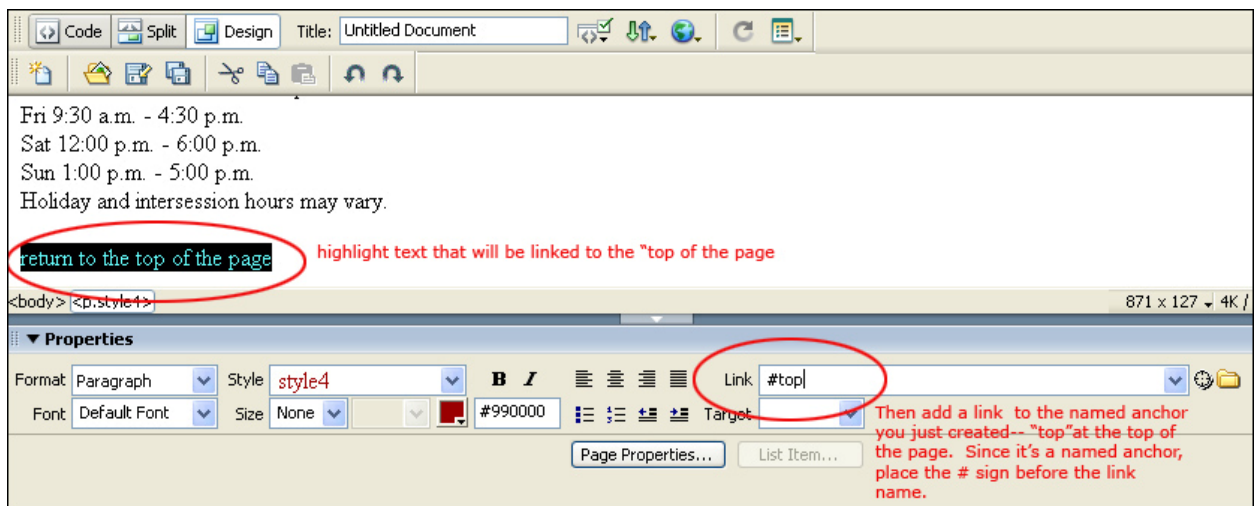
When writing papers or posting “information rich” pages, you may want to link within the page to afford the user more freedom of movement and choice (e.g. “back to top”). These situations call for named Anchors.

When you insert a named anchor (from the Insert Window or main toolbar, Insert > Named Anchor) a tag is inserted into your document. To continue with the above example, insert one at the top of your document and call it “top:”



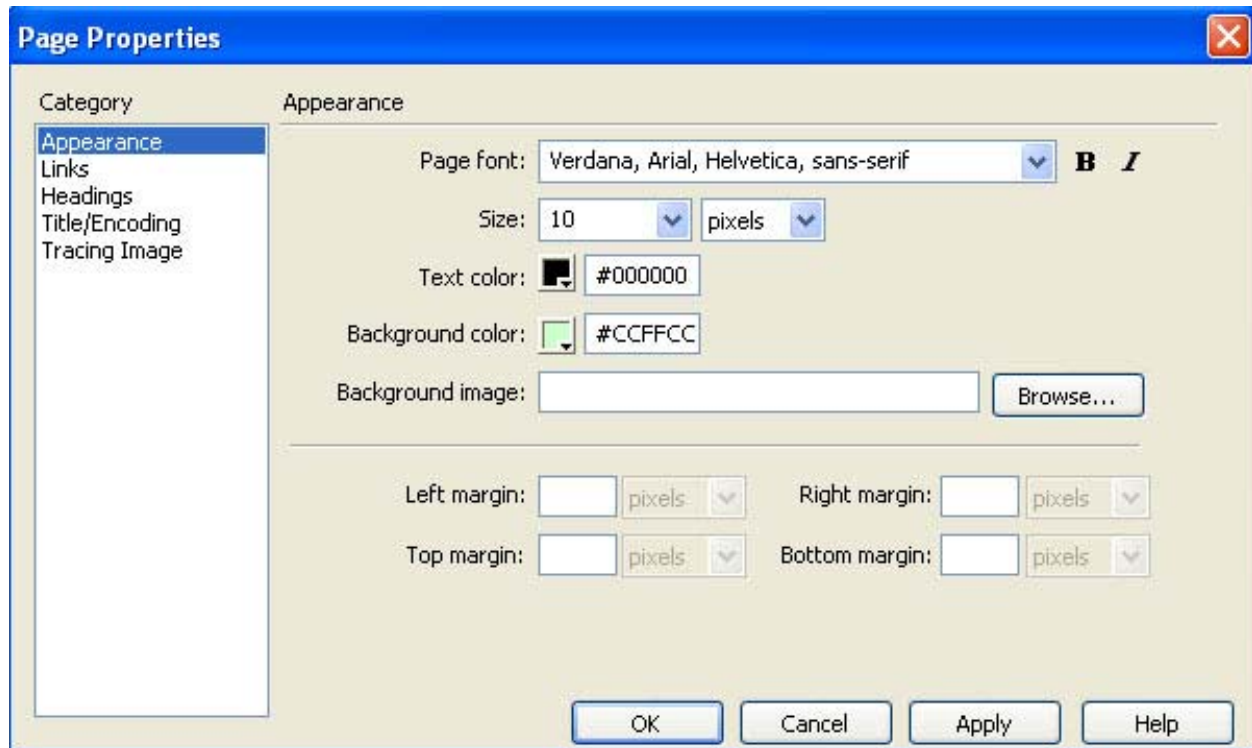
Lower on your page (at least one screen length) type “back to top” or simply “top.”

Highlight the word or phrase, then place your cursor in the link field of the Properties Window and type “#top”. The # is telling the browser to look for the anchor named “top:”

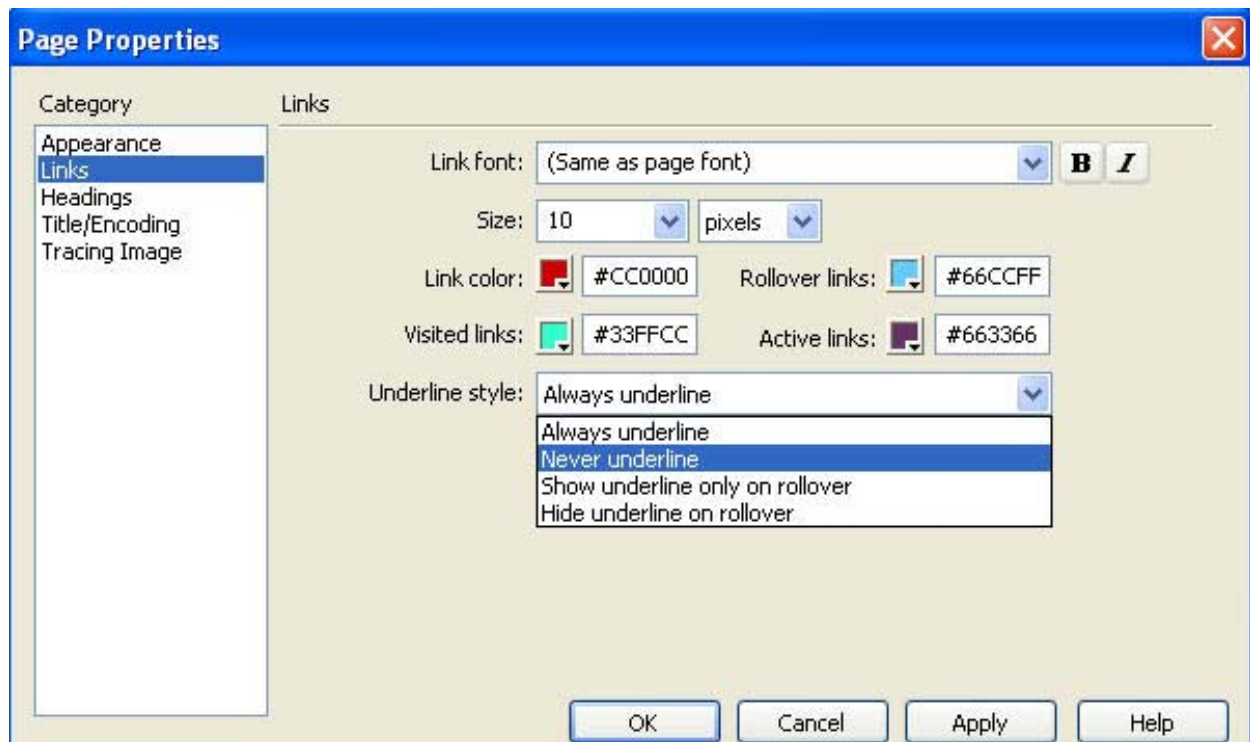


Page Properties

An important new feature of Dreamweaver MX 2004 is the expanded Page Properties Menu. From this menu, you can modify the text font, size, and color, as well as the background color of the entire page:



Additionally, you can modify how links appear on your webpage by clicking on “Links” in the left window:



Conclusion

When learning any new technological tool or software, it's best to tinker to find what works and what works best for you.

Additional Resources

These are a few recommended resources for more information on best practices for web design, information architecture, and Dreamweaver:

- www.w3.org - The World Wide Web Consortium offers standards for many web tools.
- www.dynamicdrive.com - offers free DHTML and java scripts. It sounds ominous, but they give great visual examples to choose from.
- www.bboxesandarrows.com - a bunch of information architects came together and you have boxes and arrows.
- www.macromedia.com - info on current and upcoming Macromedia products.
- www.sourceforge.net - claims to be “the largest repository of Open Source code and applications available on the Internet.”