



Using Dreamweaver

1 – Overview

About the Web

The worldwide web has become one of the most common uses for the Internet. It allows people to access a wide range of documents and other media from all over the world in a simple to use format. Designing content for the web is not so straight forward though. Many people learning to create websites are used to using word processors such as Microsoft Word and try to create web pages the same way they'd create a Word document. Unfortunately this doesn't usually work too well since the online world and print world are very different. Sure, you can make a web page the same way you'd make a word processed document, but it often won't work too well and will be vulnerable to a variety of problems. The first thing a new web developer needs to do is to change their thinking and gain an understanding of how the web works. You need to remember that some things that will work well in a web page, won't work well in a printed document and vice-versa.

The Web began in the 80s when Tim Berners Lee (pictured) wanted to create a system to facilitate the sharing of information among researchers. The first web site was created in 1991 and in 1994, the World Wide Web Consortium¹ (W3C) was established to create standards and improve the quality of the web. It was around that time that a new web browser called Netscape Navigator became available, helping to popularise the web due to its ease of use. In 1995 Microsoft released their competing Internet Explorer web browser which pushed the widespread use of the web even further.



Web pages are based on the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML). Originally, creating content for the web required learning the HTML language and writing the code in either a text editor or a more specialised HTML editor. In more recent years it has become common for people to use a WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get – usually pronounced *wizzy wig*) editor, which removes the need for learning the code since the editor writes it for you as you work. Dreamweaver, Adobe GoLive and Microsoft Frontpage are all examples of WYSIWYG web editors. Like most such editors they also allow the user to edit HTML directly which is still often useful and even necessary.

About Dreamweaver

Dreamweaver was originally developed by Macromedia and is now owned by Adobe. Over the years it has become one of the most popular tools for developing websites and is widely used by professional web developers. In the past, WYSIWYG editors like Dreamweaver have often been criticised for producing websites that are in many ways inferior to web pages written in HTML. In recent versions, Dreamweaver has become increasingly more capable of producing neat, efficient HTML code that supports the W3C standards. In addition, it has included increasing support for newer technologies such as CSS, ASP and PHP.

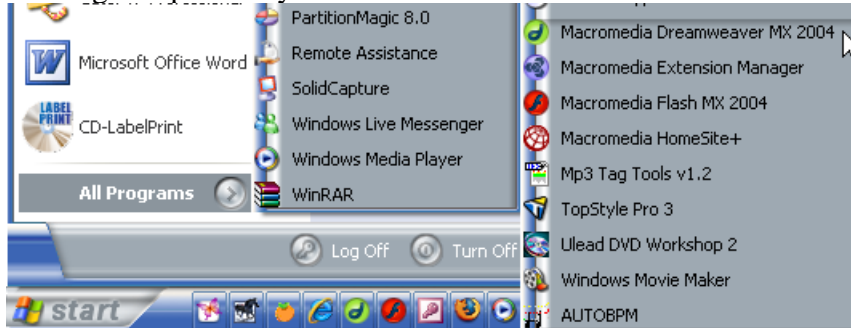
Note These exercises assume you are competent in using Microsoft Windows. It is also assumed that you are experienced in using the web and editing documents in applications such as a word processor. Some HTML experience is a definite bonus as well.

¹ <http://www.w3.org/> - World Wide Web consortium website

Exercise 1 – Starting Dreamweaver

Dreamweaver can be started like most Windows applications. Below are examples of how it might be launched.

- Clicking an option in your start menu.



- Clicking an icon on your desktop

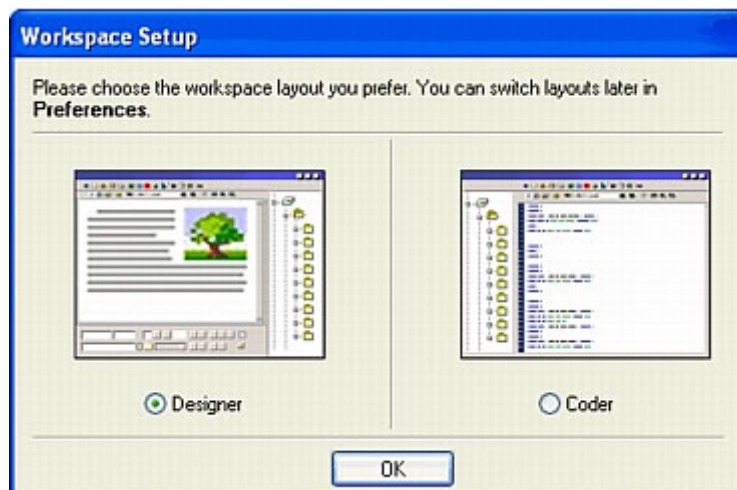


- Clicking an icon in your quick launch bar



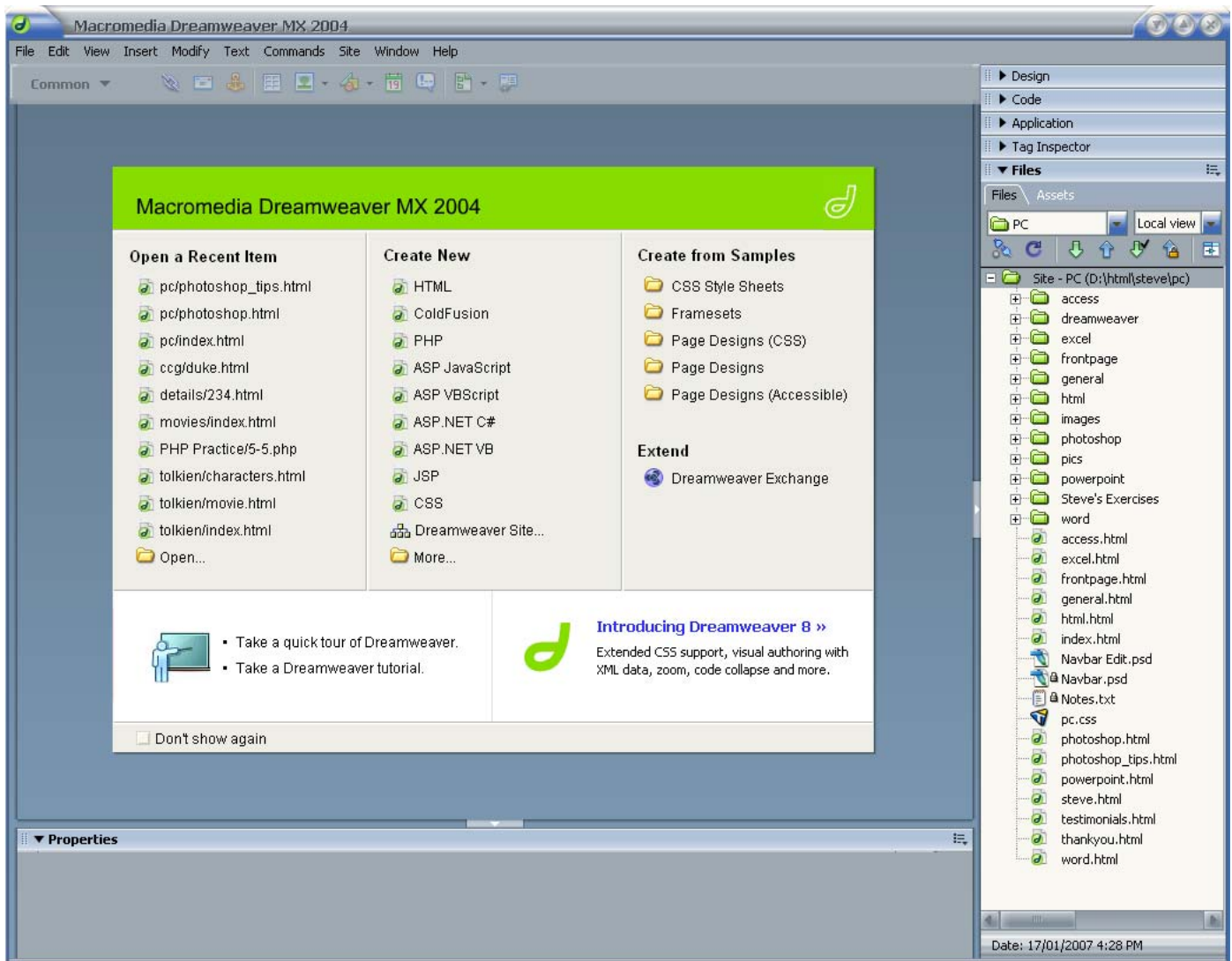
- 1) Use one of the above methods to launch Dreamweaver

When you begin Dreamweaver for the first time, you may be asked what workspace setup you wish to use. Essentially there isn't much difference between them and if you choose one, it is easy to change the layout later. The Designer layout will show your web pages in a WYSIWYG view by default and will place all of your option panels on the right. The Coder view will show your pages in HTML view by default with the panels on the left. It is more suited to experienced HTML coders who are accustomed to applications like Cold Fusion and Homesite which use this sort of layout.



- 2) If the **Workspace Setup** option appears, select *Designer* and click **OK**.

When Dreamweaver opens it will look similar to the example on the following page.




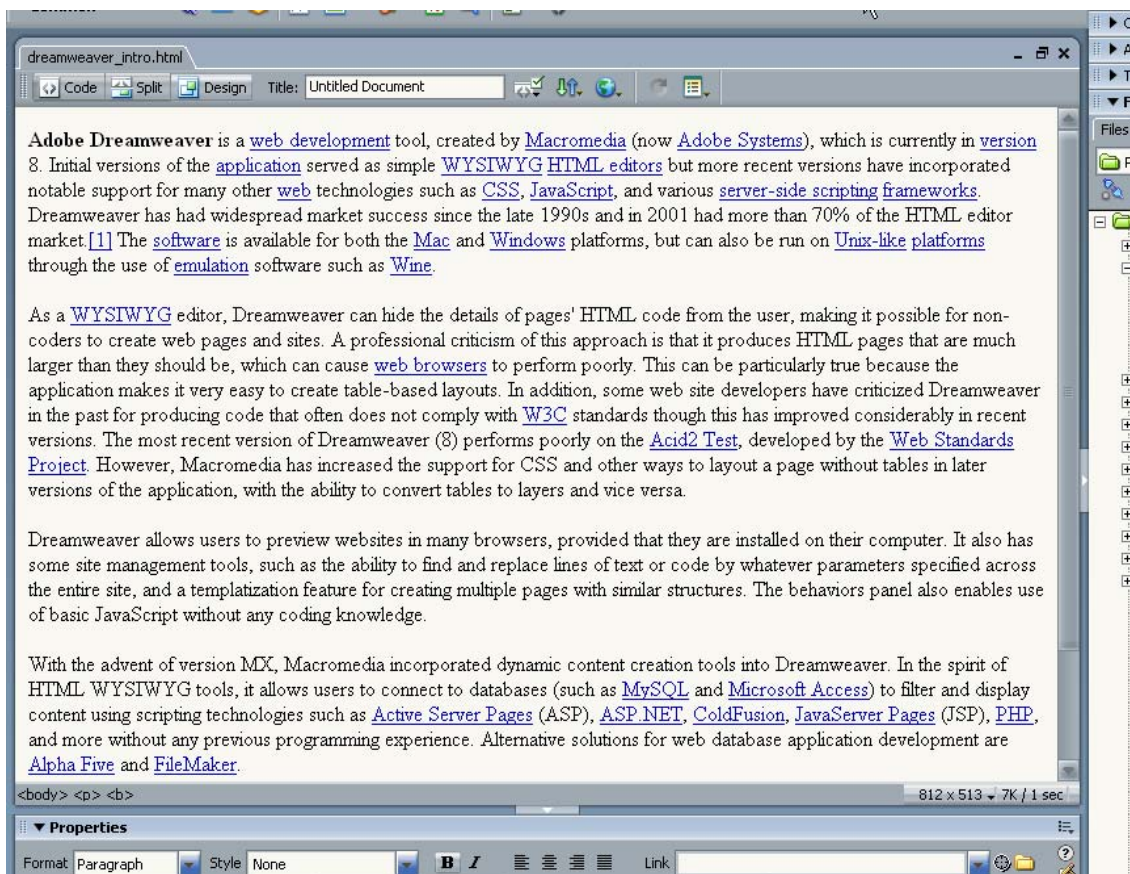
Like most applications, the top is taken up with menus and toolbars. To the right are a variety of useful Options Panels. A properties panel can be seen at the bottom. The main area of the screen is where you will see any web pages that you are editing. While there is no page open, you will see an introductory screen like the one above. This allows you to open recently edited pages, create new files or gain access to a wide range of tutorials and other helps.

Note These exercises were prepared using Dreamweaver MX 2004 (version 7). Some differences may be evident in earlier or more recent versions.

Exercise 2 – Looking at a Web Page in Dreamweaver

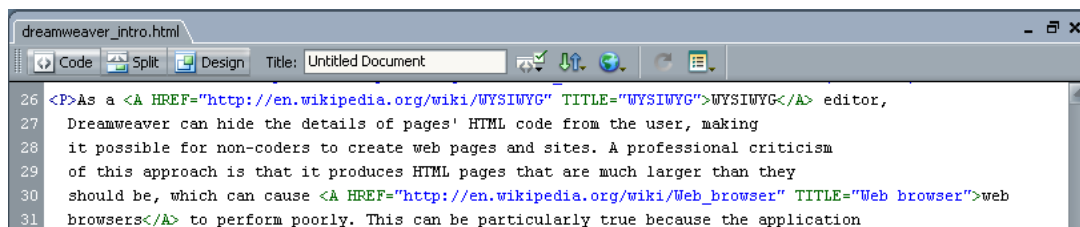
To open a document you can do one of the following.

- Click the **Open** option in the introductory screen.  **Open...**
 - Select **Open** from the **File** menu.
 - Press **[Ctrl] [O]** on your keyboard.
- 1) Use one of the above methods to activate the file open command and open the file called *dreamweaver_intro.html*. The main screen area will now be taken up with the document you have opened.



Across the top of the editing window are three buttons labelled **Code**, **Split** and **Design**. Currently we are in **Design** view.

- 2) Click the button for **Code** view. Instead of seeing the WYSIWYG view of the page you will now see the HTML code for the page.



- 3) Click the **Split** button. The top half of the window will display the HTML while the bottom half displays the same page in WYSIWYG view. Editing the page in one view will update the page in the other view.
- 4) For people who are familiar with HTML this is often the preferred view since it offers the best of both worlds but for the time being we'll stick with the Design view. Click the **Design** button to return to **Design View**.

- 5) Click on the first word of the document, *Adobe*.

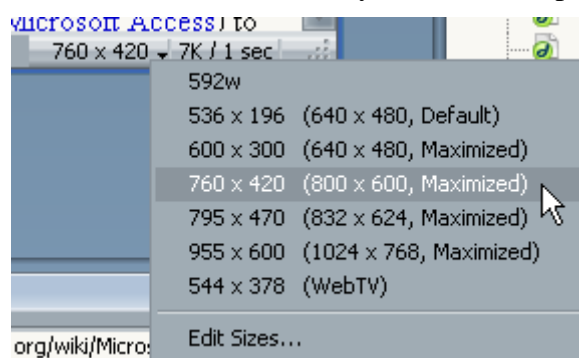
Take a look at the bottom of the editing window and you will notice a series of letters in brackets. `<body>` `<p>` `` These represent HTML tags and they tell us that the part of the document you have selected is in the body of the document, it is part of a paragraph and it is part of text that has been formatted bold.

- 6) Click inside one of the links in the document. `<body>` `<p>` `<a>` Again we can see that what we have selected is in the body of the document and is in a paragraph, only this time instead of bold text we have anchor text. In HTML links are properly referred to as anchors.
- 7) Look at the bottom right corner of the editing window. Here you will see some information that tells you some useful things about your page.

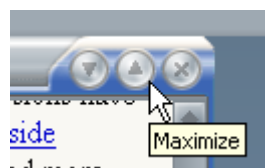
812 x 513 7K / 1 sec

In the example shown here, it is telling us that the current editing area measures 812 pixels wide by 513 pixels high. It also says the current file is 7 kilobytes in size and would take approximately 1 second to download on a standard dial-up modem. Knowing this kind of information can help you to design your page in a way that is suitable for your audience. For instance, checking your page in different sizes can show you how well everything fits when your page is viewed by computers set at different screen resolutions.

- 8) Click the **Restore** button in the top right corner of the editing window.
- 9) Now you can click the document size box to get a preview of how the document might look at different screen sizes. Try some of the options.



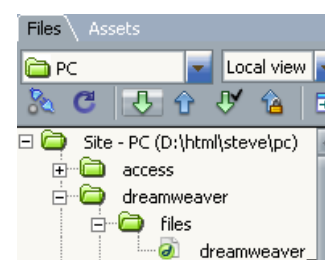
- 10) When you have seen some of the different size options, maximise the window once more.



- 11) Click the **Close** button to close the document. Don't save any changes.



Tip You can also double click a file name in the file list to open that file for editing. The file list is usually displayed in the side panel. More on the file list panel later.



Exercise 3 – Web Worksheet

Time to see if you've been paying attention. Answer the following questions in the spaces provided.

1) What is the W3C and what is it for? _____

2) What is the difference between HTML editing and WYSIWYG editing? _____

3) Do a bit of research and briefly describe CSS, ASP and PHP as they relate to the web. www.webopedia.com and www.wikipedia.com would both be good starting points. _____

CSS _____

ASP _____

PHP _____

