Dreamweaver MX Workshop – Part 1

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Section A: Getting Organized
Creating folders to store your stuff in

The key to being a good web designer is to be very careful about where you put things. This means keeping your files together in a folder.

Website folders
You’ll create two folders for your practice website, one for your html documents and the other for images you will put on the site. The images folder will be inside the mysite folder.

1. On the Desktop, double click on Documents.
2. Right-click in the window and choose New → Folder
3. Name the folder mysite-ps (i.e., add your initials for working in the lab) and hit Enter.

Next:
4. Double-click on the mysite-ps folder to open it.
5. Right-click in the window and choose New → Folder again.
6. Name the new folder images.

You can now close the Documents window.
Section A: Getting Organized

Opening Dreamweaver and getting to know the interface

Now open Dreamweaver MX (usually located in the applications folder on the Desktop, or under Start → Programs → Macromedia → Macromedia Dreamweaver MX)

**Note:** Often Dreamweaver opens with an error message, as shown below. If this happens, just click on "Cancel."

You should now see the Dreamweaver interface:
The first thing we need to do is to tell Dreamweaver where our stuff is. This is called "defining a site."

1. From the **Site** menu choose **Site → New Site**.

2. A site definition window will appear. Click on the **Advanced** tab.

3. In the **Site Name** field type **mysite** or some other name you feel comfortable with.

4. In the **Local Root Folder** field, click on the icon. Go inside your **mysite** folder and choose **Select**.

5. For **Default Images Folder** click on the icon. Go inside the images folder and choose **Select**.

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Section A: Getting Organized

Defining a site: Setting the remote site information

You can just stop after filling out the local Information and click OK but, since we're here, let's also enter the remote site information so that we can upload our files to the server at any moment.

1. Click **Remote Info**
2. Under Access choose **FTP**
3. Under FTP host, type **faculty.lagcc.cuny.edu**
4. Type in your Login, e.g., **abigails**
5. Leave the password field blank unless you are working on your own computer.
6. Click on OK.

![Site Definition for mysite](image)
Section B: Building a simple page

The Properties panel

Dreamweaver is very much like a word processor for the web. Some parts of the interface will be familiar to you from using programs like Microsoft Word. In this section we are going to play around with color, fonts, and links.

Like Word, Dreamweaver always opens with a blank or "Untitled" document. This is the page we'll work on during this section.

Saving the page

1. Choose File → Save as.
2. Call the file default in lower case letters (make sure that the file is being saved in your mysite folder). Default is the standard name for the home page of LaGuardia web sites.
3. Click Save.

The Properties panel
Let's get familiar with the Properties panel…

Try This!
1. Type some text, highlight it, and experiment with size, color, and font.

2. Type some text, highlight it, and make a link by typing a webpage address (e.g., http://www.google.com) into the link field. Then hit Enter.

3. Preview your page in Internet Explorer by hitting F12, then try out the link to see if it works.

Note:
Enter = Paragraph break
Shift + Enter = Hard return
Multiple spaces and tabs don't work!
Section B: Building a simple page

Page Properties

Also, we should know how to change the overall page properties and to give the page a title. In web design, **title** refers to what you see at the top of the browser window, rather than on the page itself. Of course, you can also put the text of the title on the page.

To modify the background color of the page:

1. From the Modify menu choose **Modify → Page Properties**.
2. Click on the **Background** palette and choose a color you like.
3. In the **Title** field type a title for the page, e.g., "My World."

You can also modify the overall link colors and text color for the page with this dialogue box.

**Tip:**
Try the “squint trick” to make sure the page is easy to read. Move back at least a couple of feet from the screen and squint at it. If the color values you chose are too similar they’ll be hard to see.
Section C: Getting fancy with tables and images

Inserting a table

Many webpages are constructed from complex tables that control the positioning of images and text on the page.

1. Choose Insert → Table.
2. Type 1 row and 2 columns.
3. Type a percentage width of 80%.
4. Type a border of 0.
5. Click OK.

You can now type directly into the table cells or copy and paste text that you have already typed into the table. Here’s how a very simple table appears in Dreamweaver:

6. Hit **F12** to see how your page looks in the browser.
7. In Dreamweaver, you can easily adjust the width and height of the table cells by dragging on them.
8. Save your page.
Section C: Getting fancy with tables and images

Table properties

The Properties panel helps you customize a table. When you click in a cell, it shows you all the things you can adjust, for example, background color, width, or alignment of text in a cell.

You can also select the entire table at any time (move your mouse over one corner until you see the four-pointed icon and click), and adjust its overall properties:

Tip:
If you’re not sure what an icon means, hover your cursor over it for a couple of seconds. The icon’s name or function will appear.
Section C: Getting fancy with tables and images

Inserting an image

Let’s download an image from a stock photography website:
⇒ Using Internet Explorer, go to http://www.freefoto.com or http://www.istockphoto.com

Find an image you want then save it to your website folder as follows:
⇒ Right-click on the image and choose **Save Picture As**
⇒ Browse to your *mysite/images* folder and click **Save**.

Now we’ll insert the image into the webpage:

⇒ Click on the 📸 image icon (a tree.) Or choose **Insert → Image** from the menus.
⇒ Click on the image you saved in your images folder and click **OK**.

Remember that the larger an image is, the longer it will take to download. If you want to make an image smaller, it’s best to use a graphics program such as Photoshop or Fireworks. Changing the image size in Dreamweaver will make the image display smaller on screen, but it does not alter the size of the image. The image will still have the original larger file size, and it will print as large as the original was. To reduce the image size:

⇒ Select the image (a border appears), then click **Edit** in the Properties window.
Fireworks should open automatically. Click No if you see this dialogue box:

1. In Fireworks, click the Scale tool (on left, under black arrow)
2. Drag on the corner of the image to reduce its size.

3. Click the Crop tool (next to Scale tool) and draw a box around the image. You will be drawing on top of the blue line. Double click on the center of the image.
4. Click the button that says 2-Up.

5. Select the picture on the right. Then click the Done button.

6. Return to Dreamweaver and click on the button in Properties.
Section C: Getting fancy with tables and images

Using Alt Tags

One very important thing to remember is that sometimes visitors to your site may not be able to see images, whether because of physical disabilities, or because they are not willing or able to access the site’s graphics. Designers can use the Alt tag to describe what an image conveys.

To use the Alt tag:
1. Select the image
2. In the Properties menu Alt window, write a brief descriptive phrase. For example, a description like picture of place setting on table is more helpful than table for someone who cannot see the image.

After you’ve put a description in the Alt tag, users can access the description of the image whether or not they can see it.

Types of Tables

picture of place setting on table
Appendix

Additional Exercises:
- Try copying and pasting some text from a Word document into a Dreamweaver page.
- Try exiting Dreamweaver and coming back in as if it is a new day. Can you remember how to get back to where you were?

Resources for Learning More Dreamweaver (and other stuff!)

Useful Book
Dreamweaver MX (this is an older version of DW, but it is what LaGuardia currently has) on amazon.com (for $16.49):
http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/0201844451/

Note: this publisher has many “Visual Quick Start” Guides for various software. They are usually excellent for finding the answers to specific task-related questions.

Purchasing Dreamweaver
If you plan to get involved in designing web sites, it is very helpful to have your own copy of Dreamweaver. Through an educational discount with Journey Ed (http://www.journeyed.com/search.asp) you qualify to purchase it for about $199. Normally the price is $399.

Online course
If you are interested in DW and don’t have the opportunity to go to a class in person, you might want to try a six-week online course through the html writers’ guild: www.hwg.org

It costs $50 to become a member, but members receive a 50% tuition discount for all classes (a savings of $80 – 120 per course.) I’m currently taking a class in Flash, and it’s been very helpful.

Lynda Weinman’s Online Training Library
Join for a month or a year, or purchase the tutorial videos or podcasts individually at:
http://www.lynda.com. A comprehensive library of resources from specific software including DW, Fireworks, Photoshop, Flash etc, to courses in programming, to design and color concepts. Some lessons are available free. If you are a self-directed, self-paced learner, you’ll find great materials here.

Color Scheme Generator
a very cool tool for choosing your site’s colors

Visibone Color Lab
http://www.visibone.com/colorlab/
Shows you how colors look together and gives their numerical information.

Yale Style Manual
http://info.med.yale.edu/caim/manual/contents.html
Good advice on layout and writing for the web

Finding images (some of these are free and some charge)
http://www.freefoto.com
http://www.istockphoto.com
http://www.webshots.com
http://www.photodisc.com
http://www.corbis.com