

Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies

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Dreamweaver® CS6 For Dummies®

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by Janine Warner

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About the Author

Janine Warner is an author, a speaker, and a web designer.

Since 1995, she's written and coauthored more than a dozen books, including every edition of *Dreamweaver For Dummies*, *Web Sites Do-it-Yourself For Dummies*, and *Teach Yourself Visually Dreamweaver*. She is the host of a growing collection of training videos for web design, Adobe Dreamweaver, and Cascading Style Sheets. She has also created videos for Kelby Training and Total Training. You can learn more about her books and videos, and find many free tutorials on web design, social media, and SEO on her website at www.DigitalFamily.com.

Janine is a popular speaker at conferences and events throughout the United States and abroad, and she's been a guest lecturer at more than 20 universities. An award-winning journalist, her articles and columns have appeared in a variety of publications, including *The Miami Herald*, *Shape Magazine*, and *Layers magazine*.

Janine has extensive Internet experience working on large and small websites. From 1994 to 1998, she ran Visiontec Communications, a web design business in Northern California, where she worked for a diverse group of clients including Levi Strauss & Co., AirTouch International, and many other small- and medium-sized businesses.

In 1998, she joined The Miami Herald as their Online Managing Editor. A year later, she was promoted to Director of New Media. She left that position to serve as Director of Latin American Operations for CNET Networks, an international technology media company.

Since 2001, Janine has run her own business as a writer, speaker, and consultant. She lives and works with her husband in Los Angeles. To learn more, visit www.JanineWarner.com or www.DigitalFamily.com.

Dedication

To all those who aspire to share their stories and passions on the web: May all your dreams come true.

Author's Acknowledgments

More than anything, I want to thank all the people who have read my books or watched my videos over the years. My readers and students are my greatest inspiration, and I sincerely enjoy it when you send me links to your websites. You'll find my e-mail address on my site at www.DigitalFamily.com.

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Over the years, I've thanked many people in my books — family, friends, teachers, and mentors — but I have been graced by so many wonderful people now that no publisher will give me enough pages to thank them all. So let me conclude by thanking everyone who has ever helped me with a website, a book, or any other aspect of the writing and research that go into these pages. Okay, now I think I can go to sleep tonight without fearing I've forgotten anyone. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

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Introduction

In the last few years, the Internet has experienced extraordinary growth and has gone through incredible changes. As more and more users access the web with smartphones, tablets, Google TV, and Apple TV, web designers have been forced to design sites that work on tiny mobile screens as well as giant television sets.

Simultaneously, the technologies that work best on the web are changing. The once popular design tool Adobe Flash is losing its audience because videos and animations created in Flash don't work on the iPad or iPhone. Fortunately, emerging new technologies, including HTML5 and CSS3 (the latest flavors of the Hypertext Markup Language and Cascading Style Sheets, respectively), make it possible to add new design features and greater interactivity without the need for Flash.

I can't cover every detail of all these technologies in this book, but I do give you a solid introduction to modern web design. You discover how the newest features in Dreamweaver CS6 make it easier to create web pages that meet modern standards and adapt to all the screens used to view websites today.

In this fully updated version of Dreamweaver For Dummies, I added a new chapter to introduce CSS3 and help you transform the boxy look of old-fashioned web pages into the smoother styles made possible by CSS3 additions, including rounded corners, drop shadows, and almost any font you want.

Over the years, web design has evolved into an increasingly complex field, and Dreamweaver has evolved with it, adding features that go way beyond the basics of combining a few words and images. Adobe's dedication to keeping up with changing standards and adding new features with each new version is why Dreamweaver is such a popular program among professional web designers, as well as among a growing number of people who want to build sites for their hobbies, clubs, families, and small businesses.

In the 15-plus years that I've been writing about web design, I've seen many changes — from the early days (before Dreamweaver even existed) when you could create only simple pages with HTML 1.0, to the elaborate designs you can create with Dreamweaver today using HTML, CSS, jQuery, multimedia, and more.

If you're not sure what those acronyms mean yet, don't worry. I remember what it was like to figure out all this stuff, too, so I designed this book to introduce you to the basic concepts before you get into the more advanced features. To prepare you for the ever-changing world of web design, I show you how to use Dreamweaver to create websites that take advantage of the latest advances in web technology — including CSS3, covered in the new Chapter 7.

One of the challenges of web design today is that web pages are not only displayed on different kinds of computers but also downloaded to computers with monitors as big as widescreen televisions — or as small as the little screens on cell phones. As a result, creating websites that look good to all visitors is a lot more complex than it used to be — and standards have become a lot more important. This book shows you not only how to use all the great features in Dreamweaver but also how to determine which of those features best serve your goals and your audience.

About This Book

I designed Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies to help you find the answers you need when you need them. You don't have to read through this book cover to cover, and you certainly don't have to memorize it. Consider this a quick study guide and a reference you can return to. Each section

stands alone, giving you easy answers to specific questions and step-by-step instructions for common tasks.

Want to find out how to change the background color in page properties, design CSS style rules to align images, or add an interactive photo gallery with the Swap Image behavior? Jump right to the pages that cover those features. (Hint: the Table of Contents and index can help you find the sections that interest you most.) Don't worry about getting sand on this book at the beach or coffee spilled on the pages at breakfast. I promise it won't complain!

You find templates, artwork, and other goodies to use with this book at www.DigitalFamily.com/bonus.

Using Dreamweaver on a Mac or PC

Dreamweaver works almost identically on Macintosh or Windows computers. To keep screenshots consistent throughout this book, I've used a computer running Windows 7. However, I've tested the program on both platforms, and whenever I find a difference in how a feature works, I indicate that difference in the instructions.

Conventions Used in This Book

Keeping things consistent makes them easier to understand. In this book, those consistent elements are conventions. Notice how the word *conventions* is in italics? I frequently put new terms in italics and then define them so you know what they mean. It just makes reading so much nicer.

When I type actual URLs (web addresses) within regular paragraph text, they look like this: www.digitalfamily.com.

I also assume that your web browser doesn't require the introductory `http://` for web addresses. If you use an older browser, remember to type that quaint prefix before the address (also make sure you include that part of the address when you're creating links in Dreamweaver).

Even though Dreamweaver makes understanding HTML pages easier, you may want to wade into HTML waters occasionally. I include HTML code in this book when I think it can help you better understand how things work in Design view. Sometimes it's easier to remove or edit a tag in Code view than Design view. When I do provide examples — including filenames, file extensions, attributes, and tags, such as the following code that links a URL to a web page — I set off the HTML in monospaced type:

```
<a href="http://www.digitalfamily.com">Learn more about Dreamweaver at Janine's DigitalFamily website</a>
```

When I introduce you to a new set of features, such as options in a dialog box, I set those items apart with bullet lists so you can see that they're all related. When I want you to follow instructions, I use numbered step lists to walk you through the process.

What You're Not to Read

If you're like most of the web designers I know, you don't have time to wade through a thick book before you start working on your website. That's why I wrote *Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies* in a

way that makes it easy for you to find the answers you need quickly. You don't have to read this book cover to cover. If you're in a hurry, go right to the information you need most and then get back to work. If you're new to web design or you want to know the intricacies of Dreamweaver, skim through the chapters to get an overview — and then go back and read what's most relevant to your project in greater detail. Whether you're building a simple site for the first time or working to redesign a complex site for the umpteenth time, you find everything you need in these pages.

Foolish Assumptions

Although Dreamweaver is designed for professional developers, I don't assume you're a pro — at least not yet. In keeping with the philosophy behind the For Dummies series, this book is an easy-to-use guide designed for readers with a wide range of experience. If you're interested in web design and want to create a website, that's all I expect from you.

If you're an experienced web designer, Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies is an ideal reference for you because it gets you working quickly with this program — starting with basic web-page design features and progressing to more advanced options. If you're new to web design, this book walks you through all you need to know to create a website, from creating a new page to publishing your finished project on the web.

How This Book Is Organized

To ease you through the learning curve associated with any new program, I organized Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies as a reference. This section provides a breakdown of the four parts of the book and what you can find in each one. Each chapter walks you through the features of Dreamweaver step by step, providing tips and helping you understand the vocabulary of web design as you go along.

Part I: Creating Great Websites

Part I introduces you to the basic concepts of web design as well as the main features of Dreamweaver. In Chapter 1, I give you an overview of the many approaches to web design, so you can best determine how you want to build your website before you get into the details of which features in Dreamweaver are best suited to any particular design approach. In Chapter 2, I start you on the road to your first website — including creating a new site, importing an existing site, creating new web pages, applying basic formatting, and setting links. To make this chapter more interesting and help you see how all these features come together, I walk you through creating a real web page as I show you how the features work.

In Chapter 3, I move on to graphics, with an introduction to creating graphics for the web, an overview of the differences in formats (GIFs, JPEGs, and PNG files), and detailed instructions for adding and positioning graphics in your pages. In Chapter 4, you discover Dreamweaver's testing and publishing features, so you can make sure that all your links work and that your website will look good in the most important web browsers. You also find everything you need to start uploading pages to the Internet.

Part II: Creating Page Designs with Style

Chapter 5 provides an overview of how Cascading Style Sheets work and how they can save you time. CSS has become the way to create page designs and manage formatting on web pages, and these features have been nicely improved in Dreamweaver CS6. In this chapter, you find descriptions of the style definition options available in Dreamweaver as well as instructions for

creating and applying styles. In Chapter 6, I take you further into CSS, introducing you to the power of <div> tags, how to create CSS layouts, how to create centered CSS designs and fluid layouts, and how to use Dreamweaver's newest CSS testing features. In Chapter 7, I introduce the newest features in Dreamweaver and show you how to add some of the hot new design options, such as drop shadows and gradients, which were made possible by CSS3.

In Chapter 8, I introduce you to some of my favorite Dreamweaver features, including sophisticated template capabilities that enable you to create more consistent designs and make global updates across many pages at once. I also cover Dreamweaver's Library items, which come in handy for commonly used elements, such as the copyright on all of your web pages. In Chapter 9, you discover how to use HTML table features (and when they're still recommended on the web).

Part III: Making Your Site Cool with Advanced Features

In Part III, you discover how cool your site can look when you add interactive images, audio, video, and drop-down menus. In Chapter 10, you find instructions for creating an interactive photo gallery with the Swap Image behavior, as well as how to use other features in Dreamweaver's Behaviors panel — including the Open New Browser behavior. In Chapter 11, you discover how great the Spry features are for adding AJAX interactivity to your site. You find instructions for creating and customizing drop-down lists, collapsible panels, and more. In Chapter 12, you find out what it takes to add multimedia to your web pages, including how to insert and create links to a variety of file types — from Flash to video and audio files. In Chapter 13, I cover Dreamweaver's HTML form options, which you can use to add feedback forms, surveys, and much more.

Part IV: The Part of Tens

Part IV features two quick references to help you develop the best websites possible. Chapter 14 provides a collection of online resources where you can register domain names and find hosting services, as well as a few services that can help you take care of more advanced challenges (such as setting up an e-commerce system). In Chapter 15, you find ten ways to promote your website, from search engine optimization to social media and beyond.

Icons Used in This Book

This icon points you toward valuable resources on the web.

This icon reminds you of an important concept or procedure that you'll want to store away in your own memory banks for future use.

This icon signals technical stuff that you may find informative and interesting, though it isn't essential for using Dreamweaver. Feel free to skip over this information.

This icon indicates a tip or technique that can save you time and money — and a headache — later.

This icon warns you of any potential pitfalls — and gives you the all-important information on how to avoid them.

Where to Go from Here

To familiarize yourself with the latest in web design strategies and options, don't skip Chapter 1, which guides you through the many ways to create websites that you have to choose from today. If

you're ready to dive in and build a basic website right away, jump ahead to Chapter 2. If you want to find out about a specific trick or technique, consult the Table of Contents or the index; you won't miss a beat as you work to make those impossible web design deadlines. Most of all, I wish you great success in all your web projects!

For technical updates to this book, visit www.dummies.com/go/dreamweavercs6fdupdates.

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Part I

Creating Great Websites

Chapter 1 compares different layout techniques you can use in Dreamweaver and provides an introduction to the toolbars, menus, and panels that make up Dreamweaver's interface. In Chapter 2, you dive into setting up a website, creating web pages, and adding text, links, and meta data for search engines.

In Chapter 3, you find an introduction to web graphics with instructions for using Photoshop (or Photoshop Elements) to optimize images in GIF, PNG, and JPEG formats. Chapter 4 covers managing, testing and publishing your site, so you can make sure that everything works beautifully before you publish your site to a web server.

1

The Many Ways to Design a Web Page

In This Chapter

Organizing your site's design and files

Comparing static and dynamic site options

Saving time with static and dynamic templates

Choosing between tables, frames, layers, and CSS

Handling browser differences in web design

Customizing your Dreamweaver workspace

In the mid-1990s, learning to create websites — and teaching others how to do it — was easy. More than a dozen years and a dozen books later, the process is a lot more complex. I've come to realize that one of the first things to understand about web design is that there isn't just one way to create a website anymore.

In this chapter, I begin with an introduction to the many ways you can create a website and the tools Dreamweaver offers to make those designs possible. I also introduce you to the basics of HTML and how websites and browsers work. At the end of this chapter, you find a quick tour of the Dreamweaver CS6 interface to help you get comfortable with the workspace.

Understanding How Web Design Works

In a nutshell, building a website involves creating individual pages and linking them to other pages. You need to have a home page, the first page visitors see when they arrive at your web address, (also known as your URL), and that page needs to bring them into the rest of the pages of the site, usually with links to each of the main sections of the site. Those pages, in turn, link to subsections that can then lead to deeper subsections.

After you create a website, you can test all the links on your own hard drive and then upload the pages to a web server when everything is ready and working well. You can read more about setting up a site and using Dreamweaver to create pages on your local computer in Chapter 2. In Chapter 4, you discover how to upload your pages to a web server when you're ready to publish your site on the Internet.

The most important thing to remember is that you need to create a folder on your local computer that will mirror your website on your web server when you publish your site. That's why the site setup process in Chapter 2 is so important — because it sets up Dreamweaver to help you create these two versions of your site: the version you create and edit on your computer and the copy you need to maintain on the web server.

Although you have to save all the files in your site in one main folder, you can create subfolders to organize the site. Thus a key part of planning a website is determining how to organize the pages of your site into sections and how those sections should link to one another. Dreamweaver makes creating pages and setting links easy, but how you arrange the pages and links is up to you.

If you're just planning to create a small website, you may think you don't need to worry about how your site will grow and develop. Think again. All good websites grow, and the bigger they get, the harder they are to manage. Planning the path of growth for your website before you begin can make a tremendous difference later. Neglecting to think about growth is probably one of the most common mistakes among new designers. This oversight becomes even more serious when more than one person is working on the same site. Taking a little time to organize the structure of your site, and developing a few consistent conventions for tasks such as naming files, can make everything else go more smoothly.

Managing your site's structure

Managing the structure of a website has two sides: the side that users see, which depends on how you set up links, and the side that's behind the scenes, which depends on how you organize files and folders.

What the user sees

The side that the user sees is all about design and navigation. When users arrive at your home page, where do you direct them? How do they move from one page to another in your site? A good website is designed so that users navigate easily and intuitively and can make a beeline to the information most relevant to them. As you plan, make sure that users can

Access key information easily from more than one place in the site

Move easily between pages and sections

Return to main pages and subsections in one step

Setting links is easy in Dreamweaver; the challenge is to make sure that those links are easy for visitors to follow. One of the best ways to ensure that visitors can easily move around your site is to create on every page of your site a navigation or menu bar that includes links to the main pages of your site. You find instructions in Chapter 6 for creating a menu bar with CSS. In Chapter 11, you find out how to use Dreamweaver's Spry features to create a menu with a drop-down list using AJAX. And in Chapter 8, you find instructions for using Dreamweaver's template and library features, which make menus easier to include on your pages — as well as faster to update if you add or change a menu link later.

What's behind the scenes

The second side to managing your website structure happens behind the scenes (where your users can't see the information, but you want some kind of organizational system to remember what's what). Before you begin designing and linking the pages in your site, think about how to keep track of all the text, images, animations, and other files that make up your site. At minimum, consider the following:

A file-naming system: For example, naming image files consistently can make them easier to find if you need to edit them later. For example, if you use small, thumbnail images as well as bigger versions, give both files similar names to make it easier to match them later. An easy way to do that is to add th to the thumbnail versions, like this: bird.jpg and bird-th.jpg. Similarly, giving the main section pages in your site names that match the text of the links on your pages can make setting the links easier. For example, if the navigation bar on your home page includes an About Us page and a Contact page, you can easily figure out what page a link should point to if your pages are named aboutus.html and contact.html.

A folder structure: When your website grows past a handful of pages, organizing them in separate folders or directories can help you keep track. Fortunately, Dreamweaver makes this easy by providing a Files panel where you can see all the files of your site — and even move and rename files and folders (see Chapter 2 for more on how to use Dreamweaver's Files panel).

Exploring HTML, XHTML, and HTML5

Contrary to popular belief, HTML isn't a programming language. Rather, it's a markup language: That is, HTML is designed to mark up a page, or to provide instructions for how a web page should look. HTML is written by using tags, which are markup instructions that tell a web browser how to display the page. For example, to apply italic formatting to text, you (or Dreamweaver) insert the HTML tag ``, which stands for emphasis, where you want the italics to begin and end. Most tags in HTML include both an open tag and a close tag, indicated by the forward slash `/`. Thus, to make the name of this book appear in italics, I would write the code like this:

```
<em>Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies</em>
```

Another challenge of HTML is that the tags have changed over time, and so has the acronym. When I'm referring to the code in a general way, I use the acronym HTML, but the two most popular versions of HTML today are really called XHTML and HTML5.

XHTML, a stricter version of HTML, is the recommended language to use for most websites today. HTML5, which has garnered lots of hype, is the newest version. However, HTML5 hasn't yet been approved as a standard and many of its tags are not yet supported by web browsers, so Dreamweaver (and I) still recommend you do most of your design work today in XHTML.

Although I don't recommend that everyone start using HTML5 yet, because the advantages don't outweigh the challenges today, I'm bullish about the new design features of CSS3. As you discover in Chapter 7, you have little reason to hold back on adding the wonderful design enhancements made possible by the new rules in CSS3, no matter what version of HTML you use.

You have two ways to see what the code behind a web page looks like:

In most browsers, choose View □ Source.

If you're using Dreamweaver (as shown in Figure 1-1), you can click the Split button (upper-left corner of the workspace) to see the code and the design areas of the program at the same time in Split view.

If you want to see only the code, click the Code button. However, while I'm working on the site design, I find Split view is a useful way to keep an eye on what's going on behind the scenes — and, as a bonus, you can learn a lot of HTML as you go along.

Photos by Ken Riddick

Figure 1-1: Use Split view in Dreamweaver to display the page design and the code behind the page.

Dreamweaver offers four view options:

Code view: In code view, you see only the HTML and other code.

Split view: In Split view, the page is divided so you can see the code in one part of the workspace and a view of how the page should be displayed in a web browser in the other part.

Design view: In Design view, you see only the page as it should be displayed in older web browsers.

Live view: In Live view, you get a more accurate preview of how your pages will look in the latest web browsers, and you get an interactive view, where you can test rollovers and other interactive features without having to leave Dreamweaver and launch another program.

In Dreamweaver's Split view, the Code and Design views are completely integrated. If you select something in Design view — say, the headline shown in Figure 1-1 — you see the same text highlighted in Code view, enabling you to find your place easily in the code.

How web browsers work

Web browsers such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, and Safari are designed to decipher HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and other code — and display the corresponding text, images, and multimedia on a computer screen. Essentially, browsers read the code in a web page and interpret how to display the page to visitors. Unfortunately, because web browsers are created by different companies and the code they display has evolved dramatically over the years, not all web browsers display web pages the same way. Differences in browser display can lead to unpredictable (and often frustrating) results because a page that looks good in one browser may be unreadable in another. For more information on browser differences and testing your pages to make sure they look good to all your visitors, see Chapter 4.

Here are a few points to help you better understand the similarities and differences among older versions of HTML, XHTML, and the latest, HTML5:

All versions of HTML include tags that are designed to be hierarchical. Examples are the <h1> (heading 1) through <h6> (heading 6) tags, which are ideally suited to formatting text according to its importance on a web page. Reserve the <h1> tag for the most important text on the page, such as the top headline. The <h2> tag is ideal for subheads or secondary headings, <h3> for the third level of headings, and so on. A headline formatted with the <h1> tag looks like this:

```
<h1>This is a headline</h1>
```

HTML5 adds new tags. HTML5 adds a collection of tags designed to make webpages more semantic, or more meaningful. New tags, including <header> and <footer>, can be used to identify the type of content in a webpage.

XHTML tags must be written in lowercase. HTML5 and older versions of HTML are not case sensitive.

In XHTML, all tags must include the closing slash. A few tags can stand alone, such as the
 tag, which adds a line break. As a rule, XHTML tags must have a close tag, even if there's only one tag, and the close tag must always contain a forward slash (/). Thus the line break tag is
 in HTML and
 in XHTML.

Some tags are more complex, and the open and close tags don't always match. More complicated tags, such as the tags used to create links or insert images into pages, are more challenging to use because they include link information, and the close tag doesn't always match the open tag. For example, the code to create a link to another website looks like this:

```
<a href="http://www.digitalfamily.com">This is a link to DigitalFamily.com</a>
```

At their heart, all versions of HTML are just text — and believe it or not, you can write HTML in a plain-text editor as simple as Notepad, SimpleText, or TextEdit. However, you have to be careful to type all the code perfectly because there is no room for error or typos in HTML. After writing code yourself, even to create a simple page, you're sure to appreciate how wonderful it is to let Dreamweaver write the code for you.

If (at first glance) you think that HTML code looks like hieroglyphics, don't give up too quickly. With just a little practice, you can start to recognize at least the most common tags, such as <h1> (heading 1) tag used to format the headline shown in Figure 1-2.

Figure 1-2: A heading 1 tag highlighted in Code view.

Comparing Static and Dynamic Sites

Websites fall into two very broad categories: static sites, which are generally built with a program such as Adobe Dreamweaver, and dynamic sites, which combine advanced programming with a database to generate web pages dynamically.

A static site is like a unique book, where each page has been created by hand. The process can be compared to illuminated manuscripts, where monks toiled for years and each page was an individual work of art. Static websites are made up of a collection of individual pages with the .html or .htm extension. You might think that all websites are made up of individual pages (and in a way they are), but with static site, each page is saved as a separate file.

In contrast, a dynamic site works more like a warehouse full of words, images, videos, and colors with a super-fast clerk who can run at light speed through the aisles, grabbing items and assembling them into pages as you read them. With a dynamic site, the pages you view in a web browser are created as they are delivered to the browser, so they're not saved as individual pages but as pieces of pages that can be mixed and matched. That gives dynamic sites many advantages, but it also makes them a lot more complicated to create. On a large website such as Amazon.com, for example, this dynamic process makes it possible for Amazon to create a page with recommended books for you that looks different from the page it recommends to me, even though we're both entering the same URL into a web browser.

If you're just creating a simple profile or small business site, go with a static site. Dynamic websites are often not worth the extra effort, unless you're creating a site that you expect to grow to 100 pages or more.

Although you can create custom dynamic websites in Dreamweaver using popular technologies such as PHP or ASP.NET, most programmers who are creating sites with this level of complexity use more advanced programming tools, such as Eclipse or Microsoft Visual Studio.

I used to teach the basics of dynamic site creation in Dreamweaver, but today better options exist. Instead of reinventing the wheel by creating their own dynamic site system with Dreamweaver, many web designers are using Content Management Systems (CMS), such as WordPress and Joomla.

Following are some of the most popular content management systems:

WordPress (www.wordpress.org): WordPress.com offers WordPress on a free hosting service; at www.wordpress.org, you can download the WordPress program for free and install it on your own server. One of the most popular and powerful blogging tools, WordPress is increasingly used as a CMS for more complex sites. You'll find many great extensions for WordPress. After a site is built, teaching people to use the administrative tools to update the site (even if they don't know HTML) is relatively easy, making this an especially popular tool among web designers who are creating sites that they want their clients to be able to update themselves.

Joomla (www.joomla.org): Joomla offers many of the features of WordPress. Joomla is a good choice for magazine-style sites and directories because it enables you to create categories and subcategories far more easily than in WordPress.

Drupal (drupal.org/): Designed by programmers for programmers, Drupal offers more advanced functionality for creating highly complex, interactive websites. If you're a designer, not a

programmer, the learning curve for Drupal is steeper than for WordPress or Joomla.

You can use Dreamweaver to create and edit templates for any of the content management systems listed here. Before you do, however, you have to set up a web server on your local computer. You learn more about how to work with these programs in the section, “Working with Templates in Dreamweaver,” later in this chapter.

If you’re interested in learning more about WordPress, check out *WordPress For Dummies, 4th Edition*, by Lisa Sabin-Wilson (Wiley).

Most of this book is dedicated to helping you create static websites — but that doesn’t mean you can’t get many of the same benefits of dynamic sites, including the capability to update pages quickly. As you find in this book, you can combine CSS (covered in Chapters 5–7) with Dreamweaver’s .dwt template features (covered in detail in Chapter 8) and get many features of a big-budget website without all the complicated programming skills. (You find a general description of Dreamweaver’s template features, as well as a look at the differences among templates, in the next section.)

Static pages work well for small and medium-sized websites, such as a professional profile or online gallery. Because static web pages are written in plain text, you can create them in a program as simple as Notepad or SimpleText, although tools such as Dreamweaver make designing pages a lot easier because you don’t have to remember all the cryptic HTML tags.

A static website offers a few advantages, especially if you’re just starting out. A static website

Is easy to learn to develop: Anyone who can resize a photo has a head start on the skills needed to create and arrange graphic elements on a static page.

Gives you complete control over the design of each page: You can tweak the size, colors, fonts, and arrangement of the elements on each page individually, and you can edit templates for these kinds of sites more easily than the templates for dynamic sites.

Is easy to build, test, and publish to a web server: You can create and test static web pages on any personal computer and then host them on any commercial web server — and you need only FTP access (built in to programs such as Dreamweaver) to publish pages to the Internet.

Working with Templates in Dreamweaver

The term template is used in different ways for different kinds of design work (on and off the web), but essentially a template is a shortcut in the design process. By working with Dreamweaver templates, you can set or adjust almost any aspect of a site’s design or functionality, including a header, logo, navigation bar, or sidebar. Whatever you include in a Dreamweaver template, you can then apply to any new page based on the template, which automatically applies the settings you want to appear throughout your site. Moreover, if you want to adjust the overall settings in your site, you can make those updates once in the template, update your pages, and — voila — all pages based on the template are updated automatically.

But not all templates are created equally. Although they all share those basic characteristics, many kinds of templates are in use on the web today. For example, templates for static websites (which you find instructions for creating in Chapter 8) are quite different from the kinds of templates you would use if you were creating a blog with WordPress.

You can download many kinds of templates from the web, but they don’t all work in all programs.

For example, if you download templates designed for Adobe Flash, you won't be able to use them in Dreamweaver (although you can insert Flash files in Dreamweaver, as you discover in Chapter 12).

You can edit many kinds of templates in Dreamweaver. Before you start using Dreamweaver to create or edit templates, however, it's helpful to better understand how they are different. The following sections cover two of the most common types of templates in use on the web today (and what you should know about how they differ). See the nearby sidebar, "So many Dreamweaver template options," for a complete list of template options.

Creating and editing Dreamweaver templates

Dreamweaver templates (extension .dwt) offer many advantages without requiring advanced programming skills. When you create Dreamweaver templates with the .dwt extension, you can use HTML and CSS to create static websites that include many of the high-end features found on dynamic sites — such as the capability to create new pages quickly and to update every page in your site with the click of a button.

Although you can use Dreamweaver to create templates that use advanced programming (such as PHP or Java), the .dwt Dreamweaver template is a much simpler option that's ideal for small- to medium-size websites — which is why I've dedicated much of Chapter 8 to making the most of Dreamweaver templates.

Editing WordPress, Joomla, and Drupal templates

Templates like the ones you get with a blogging program such as WordPress use the extension .php because they're written in the PHP (Hypertext Preprocessor) programming language. Although you can create PHP pages and templates in Dreamweaver and use them for more than just WordPress, these types of files are far more complex to create than .dwt Dreamweaver templates.

So many Dreamweaver template options

Dreamweaver supports many kinds of technologies, as well as the templates that go with each. When you create new pages in Dreamweaver by choosing File □ New, you have the option to create a blank page or a blank template. When you create a simple HTML template, Dreamweaver uses the .dwt extension. Dreamweaver also supports Microsoft ASP and ASP.NET, and you can create templates using either ASP JavaScript or ASP VBScript (both of which use the .asp extension) — or you can use ASP.NET C# or VB (which use the .aspx extension). The templates for a site created using Java end in .jsp. And if you use Adobe's ColdFusion technology, your templates end in .cfm.

The big lesson is this: Make sure you have the right kind of template for the kind of site you're creating — and rest assured that Dreamweaver supports just about any kind of technology you can use to create a website today.

Because so many people use WordPress (such as the blog shown in Figure 1-3) and so many sites offer WordPress template downloads, many people are confused about why WordPress templates don't work in Dreamweaver in the same way that .dwt Dreamweaver templates work.

Figure 1-3: The Sips from the Firehose blog was created with WordPress.

WordPress templates offer many of the same benefits as Dreamweaver templates — except that templates for blogs such as WordPress draw their content from a database. As a result, they include HTML and CSS (as do the Dreamweaver templates), plus much more complicated code in the PHP programming language, which describes how content from the database should be displayed in a web page.

As a result, to make WordPress, Joomla, or Drupal templates work in Dreamweaver, you must first set up your computer as a web server and install MySQL and WordPress. Because so many people are using these programs, you can get all the software you need in one nifty package from MAMP.com (for Mac) and XAMP.com (for Windows). You will find links to these tools, as well as instructions for using them to set up your computer as a web server, at www.digitalfamily.com/cms-blogs/setting-up-a-web-server.html. *

Start creating websites that wow with Dreamweaver CS6!

Powerful yet easy to master, Dreamweaver is the dominant professional web development tool. Web design expert Janine Warner has updated her bestselling *Dreamweaver For Dummies* guide for Dreamweaver CS6 and walks you through the essential steps to building the website you've always wanted. Both beginning and intermediate web developers will get the information they need from this easy-to-follow reference to Dreamweaver CS6. Dreamweaver is the gold standard for website development software; this book covers what both beginners and intermediate-level users need to know to develop sites for online commerce, education, customer service, and other uses. Covers the basics, including customizing your workspace, setting up your site, creating pages, and publishing your site to the web. Explains how to work with text, graphics, and links; manage and test your site; add audio, video, and Flash files; build dynamic sites; connect to a database; and more. This new edition introduces CSS3 and shows how to create and edit CSS styles, save time with Dreamweaver templates, create HTML tables, add interactivity with behaviors, and show off with multimedia. Delves into making HTML forms, creating AJAX features with Spry, and managing websites with InContext and Business Catalyst.

Web developers will find just what they need to channel their creative energy into effective, eye-catching websites with *Dreamweaver CS6 For Dummies*.

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