

**USD WEB SERVICES  
ADOBE DREAMWEAVER  
CSS DEVELOPMENT**



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES  
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

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### **DREAMWEAVER CSS DEVELOPMENT**

#### INTRODUCTION TO CSS

Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) are a collection of formatting rules that control the appearance of content on a Web page. When you use CSS to format a page, you separate content from presentation. The content of your page—the HTML code—resides in the HTML file itself, while the CSS rules that define the presentation of the code reside in another file (an external style sheet) or in another part of the HTML document (usually the <head> section). With CSS you have flexibility and control over the exact appearance of your page, from precise positioning of layout to specific fonts and styles.

CSS lets you control many properties that cannot be controlled with HTML alone. For example, you can specify different font sizes and units (pixels, points, and so on) for selected text. By using CSS to set font sizes in pixels, you can also ensure a more consistent treatment of your page layout and appearance in multiple browsers.

#### *WHAT IS CSS*

CSS is an excellent addition to plain HTML.

With plain HTML you define the colors and sizes of text and tables throughout your pages. If you want to change a certain element you will therefore have to work your way through the document and change it.

With CSS you define the colors and sizes in "styles." Then as you write your documents you refer to the styles. Therefore: if you change a certain style it will change the look of your entire site.

Finally, CSS can be written so the user will only need to download it once—in the external style sheet document. When surfing the rest of your site the CSS will be cached on the users computer, and therefore speed up the loading time.

## WHY CSS

With CSS, you will be able to:

- Define the look of your pages in one place rather than repeating yourself over and over again throughout your site. (Ever get tired of defining colors and fonts each time you start a new cell in a table?)
- Easily change the look of your pages even after they're created. Since the styles are defined in one place you can change the look of the entire site at once. (Ever get tired of replacing tags throughout your site when you want to change the look of a certain element?)
- Define font sizes and similar attributes with the same accuracy as you have with a word processor—not being limited to just the seven different font sizes defined in HTML.
- Position the content of your pages with pixel precision.
- Redefine entire HTML tags. Say for example, if you wanted the bold tag to be red using a special font - this can be done easily with CSS.
- Define customized styles for links - such as getting rid of the underline.
- Define layers that can be positioned on top of each other (often used for menus that pop up).

Your pages will load faster, since they aren't filled with tags that define the look. The style definitions are kept in a single CSS document that is only loaded once when a visitor enters your site.

The one disadvantage is:

- CSS will only work on version 4 browsers or newer. However, more than 95% of all browsers live up to that.

## CODING DIFFERENCES

A style is a definition of fonts, colors, etc. Each style has a unique name: a selector. The selectors and their styles are defined in one place, normally in a central CSS file. In your HTML contents you simply refer to the selectors whenever you want to activate a certain style.

For example, instead of defining fonts and colors each time you start a new table cell, you can define a style and then, simply refer to that style in your table cells.

Compare the following examples of a simple table:

### Classic HTML

```
<table>
<tr><td bgcolor="#FFCC00" align="left"><font face="arial" size="2"
color="red"><b>this is line 1</b></font></td></tr>
<tr><td bgcolor="#FFCC00" align="left"><font face="arial" size="2"
color="red"><b>this is line 2</b></font></td></tr>
<tr><td bgcolor="#FFCC00" align="left"><font face="arial" size="2"
color="red"><b>this is line 3</b></font></td></tr>
</table>
```

### With CSS

```
<table>
<tr><td class="subtext">this is line 1</td></tr>
<tr><td class="subtext">this is line 2</td></tr>
<tr><td class="subtext">this is line 3</td></tr>
</table>
```

While CSS lets you separate the layout from the content, it also lets you define the layout much more powerfully than you could with classic HTML.

## *SELECTORS*

There are three different types of selectors:

### **HTML selectors**

HTML selectors are used to define styles associated to HTML tags. In other words these are used to redefine the general look for an entire HTML tag.

Syntax:     HTMLSelector {Property:Value;}

Example:    p {margin-top: 0 px; }

### **Class selectors**

Class selectors are used to define styles that can be used without redefining plain HTML tags.

Syntax:     .ClassSelector {Property:Value;}

Example:    .leftalign {margin-left: 0px; }

Class selectors are used when you want to define a style that does not redefine an HTML tag entirely. When using a class selector, you simply apply it to the tag in the form `<p class="leftalign">`

### **ID selectors**

ID selectors are used to define styles relating to objects with a unique ID.

Syntax:     #IDSelector {Property:Value;}

Example:    #footer {font-size: 10px; }

Another special type of ID selector is used for link states. These include `a:link`, `a:hover`, `a:active`, and `a:visited`.

## USING DREAMWEAVER

CSS can be defined for entire sites by simply writing the CSS definitions in a plain text file that is referred to from each of the pages in the site. You'll want to have a css directory in your Web site and then to start you'll store a single css file (such as styles.css) within that directory.

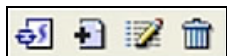
### Using the CSS Styles Panel

You use the CSS Styles panel to create, edit, and remove CSS styles, as well as to attach external style sheets to documents.

To open the CSS Styles panel, select Window → CSS Styles. The CSS Styles panel lets you look at the style definition of the styles associated with the current document, as well as the hierarchy of the styles. The CSS Styles panel displays style definitions of custom (class) CSS styles, redefined HTML tags, and CSS selector styles.

When you create or attach a CSS style sheet, the style's name and attributes appear in the CSS Styles panel. The CSS Styles panel lists all the selectors defined in all style tags and externally linked or imported style sheets. When you create a custom (class) style, it appears in the CSS Styles panel, the Style pop-up menu in the Property inspector, and in the Text > CSS Styles submenu.

The following buttons are located at the bottom of the CSS Styles panel:



- **Attach Style Sheet** opens the Link External Style Sheet dialog box. Select an external style sheet to link to or import into your current document.
- **New CSS Style** opens the New CSS Style dialog box. You use the New CSS Styles dialog to select the type of style you're creating—for example, to create a class style, redefine an HTML tag, or to define a CSS selector.
- **Edit Style Sheet** opens the CSS Style Definition dialog box. Edit any of the styles in the current document or in an external style sheet.
- **Delete CSS Style** removes the selected style from the CSS Styles panel, and removes the formatting from any element to which it was applied.

## IN-CLASS TUTORIAL

## *ATTACHING A STYLE SHEET*

First create a new HTML page and then create a new CSS page and save both. Attach the style sheet to the Web page by using the Attach Style Sheet icon in the CSS panel. When you create styles in an external style sheet, you can control the appearance of multiple Web pages from a central location, instead of setting styles on each individual web page.

## *CREATING A NEW CSS STYLE*

Use the CSS panel to create CSS styles and change the appearance of the following items:

- The <a> tag should have no decoration
- The a:hover ID selector should have a grey background; add characteristics for the remaining three link ID selectors (always with no decoration)
- The <h1> tag is a bigger size and has a background color
- The <h2> tag has a background color
- The <li> tag has a square bullet type

Refer back to your style sheet to see how the various selectors are being added to the document. Dreamweaver is making it possible for you to add these styles through a graphical interface rather than coding each item individually by hand.

## *APPLYING A CLASS*

Create a class and then apply it to one tag on your Web page. The class should be called .rightindent and then set its properties so that the margin is indented to the left 10 pixels. Applying classes individually lets you alter the look of certain aspects of a page without needing to affect all instances.

As a second example, create a class called .extrabottom and add padding to the bottom. Apply this class to one of the lists on your Web page. Notice how you are able to change the look of one list with this class, but it does not alter the look of all lists. If you do wish to alter the look of all lists, simply add the bottom padding to your modification of the <li> tag.

## *USING CSS FOR POSITIONING*

CSS-P allows you to explicitly determine the position of HTML elements, providing powerful layout control both for static documents and for dynamic, animated HTML-based content.

Our example will be a very basic one where we'll insert 8 images onto a new HTML Web page and position them next to one another and pad them apart. Lastly we'll want to add a border.

## CSS RESOURCES

Learning what CSS can do sometimes requires seeing how it has been utilized and showcased on sites throughout the Internet. Some sites are built completely upon CSS nowadays. Check out Wired News (<http://www.wired.com>), ESPN (<http://www.espn.com>), and Playlist Magazine (<http://www.playlistmag.com>) for some examples. Another site, CSS Vault (<http://www.cssvault.com>), has a directory of sites done with CSS.

Many good CSS resources are available on the Internet. The World Wide Web Consortium has resources on both learning and validating CSS. For learning, visit <http://www.w3.org/Style/CSS/learning>, and for validating, you can see <http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/>.

EchoEcho.com (<http://www.echoecho.com>) has great tutorials that explain the different types of CSS selectors and shows you how to work with them in detail.

For looking at sites built with CSS, CSS Vault (<http://www.cssvault.com>) has a gallery of everything that is possible with CSS-P updated monthly with new Web sites making use of the technology. CSS Zen Garden (<http://www.csszengarden.com>) shows the artistic side of CSS.