

# **USD WEB SERVICES ADOBE DREAMWEAVER TIPS AND TRICKS**



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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## ADOBE DREAMWEAVER TIPS AND TRICKS

<b>THE LATEST</b>	<b>1</b>
CLEAN UP WORD HTML	1
CLEAN UP HTML/XHTML	1
<b>CASCADING STYLE SHEETS</b>	<b>3</b>
USING THE CSS STYLES PANEL	3
CSS RESOURCES	4
<b>EXTENSION TREASURES</b>	<b>5</b>
MAIL SPAM BLOCKER	5
LOREM IPSUM GENERATOR	5
CROUTONS	6
<b>BEHAVIORS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CLOAKING</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SELECT RECENTLY MODIFIED</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>LINKING BY POINTING</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>ADDING IMAGE DESCRIPTIONS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>META TAGS</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS</b>	<b>9</b>

## The Latest

The most current version of Dreamweaver is CS3. If you're not sure what version you have, go to Help → About Dreamweaver.

## Clean up Word HTML

If you've ever created a Web page in Microsoft Word and then actually looked at the HTML code behind it, then you know that Word inserts a few hundred unnecessary lines of code for every HTML tag. This slows down your page tremendously, since browsers read code from top to bottom and it will take a while for the browser to read through the unnecessary additions. To delete all of this unwanted junk without having to manually go in and edit the code, use the Clean Up Word HTML feature in Dreamweaver.

Open your Word document saved as HTML in Dreamweaver. Then, select Commands → Clean Up Word HTML. Work from the basic menu and select the version of Word you are using as well as the exact attributes you would like to clean up.

- **Remove All Word Specific Markup** removes all Microsoft Word-specific HTML, including XML from HTML tags, Word custom meta data and link tags in the head of the document, Word XML markup, conditional tags and their contents, and empty paragraphs and margins from styles. You can select each of these options individually using the Detailed tab.
- **Clean up CSS** removes all Word-specific CSS, including inline CSS styles when possible (where the parent style has the same style properties), style attributes beginning with "mso," non-CSS style declarations, CSS style attributes from tables, and all unused style definitions from the head. You can further customize this option using the Detailed tab.
- **Clean up <font> Tags** removes HTML tags, converting the default body text to size 2 HTML text.
- **Fix Invalidly Nested Tags** removes the font markup tags inserted by Word outside the paragraph and heading (block-level) tags.
- **Set Background Color** allows you to enter a hexadecimal value to set the background color of your document. If you do not set a background color, your Word HTML page will have a gray background. The default hexadecimal value set by Dreamweaver is white.
- **Apply Source Formatting** applies the source formatting options you specify in HTML Format preferences and SourceFormat.txt to the document.

## Clean up HTML/XHTML

This feature is similar to Clean up Word HTML, but it focuses on cleaning up extraneous HTML code. Using this feature might be helpful if you're moving a site previously designed in Microsoft FrontPage into Dreamweaver. Programs like FrontPage normally tend to add globs of extra unnecessary code to your files, and

running Clean up HTML will take care of this problem and make your code as light as possible. You'll find that your pages load faster, since the browser doesn't have to work as hard to load your pages.

Common things this command fixes are: empty tags, redundant nested tags, HTML comments, or any specific tags. For example, you might want to run this command to eliminate the unnecessary `<font>` or `<span>` tags.

To use this command, select **Commands** → **Clean up HTML**.

- **Remove Empty Container Tags** removes any tags that have no content between them. For example, `<b></b>` and `<font color="#FF0000"></font>` are empty tags, but the `<b>` tag in `<b>some text</b>` is not.
- **Remove Redundant Nested Tags** removes all redundant instances of a tag. For example, in the code `<b>This is what I <b>really</b> wanted to say</b>`, the `b` tags surrounding the word `really` are redundant and would be removed.
- **Remove Non-Dreamweaver HTML Comments** removes all comments that were not inserted by Dreamweaver. For example, `<!--begin body text-->` would be removed, but `<!-- TemplateBeginEditable name="doctitle" -->` wouldn't, because it's a Dreamweaver comment that marks the beginning of an editable region in a template.
- **Remove Dreamweaver Special Markup** removes comments that Dreamweaver adds to code to allow documents to be automatically updated when templates and library items are updated. If you select this option when cleaning up code in a template-based document, the document is detached from the template.
- **Remove Specific Tag(s)** removes the tags specified in the adjacent text box. Use this option to remove custom tags inserted by other visual editors and other tags that you don't want to appear on your site (for example, `blink`). Separate multiple tags with commas (for example, `font,blink`).
- **Combine Nested `<font>` Tags When Possible** consolidates two or more font tags when they control the same range of text. For example, `<font size="7"><font color="#FF0000">big red</font></font>` would be changed to `<font size="7" color="#FF0000">big red</font>`.

Unfortunately this feature only works on a page-by-page basis. However, you can run a site report (**Site** → **Reports**) which can help identify pages with common problems and narrow down the number of pages to clean.

## Cascading Style Sheets

Templates, tables, and layouts are all cool, but cascading style sheets are cooler. Every publication, whether it's electronic or paper-based, needs some sort of balance between style and content in order to be effective. Cascading style sheets help streamline your content while enhancing and designing the underlying style—such as backgrounds, text sizes and weights, and borders. No tables, bordered cells, or heavy HTML needed!

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.

The key components behind CSS are selectors. A selector defines *when* a browser defines a style. For example, when the selector is p (for the <p> tag), the rule you specify will be applied to every <p> tag. You can create a CSS document, add the styles to the selectors you want to modify, and then apply the style sheet to your pages when you are ready.

In edit mode of the CSS panel (accessible via the Window menu), begin defining how you want to use CSS. One fun use of CSS is to change the way a link looks when moused over. For this, you'll have to modify the link (<a>) tag.

Create a new style and check off the "Use CSS Selector" option. In the Selector area, choose "a: hover" and name the style (filename.css) after clicking OK. You will be presented with a style definition wizard to select the parameters for your newly created style. For a: hover, I usually like to set the decoration to none and then choose a grayish background color for the link. When live, the link will be lightly colored and not underlined when the mouse rolls over it. It will look like a standard link at all other times.

### 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.

### CSS Resources

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.

## Extension Treasures

As you become familiar with the process of using extensions, you might want to explore the extensions and resources that are available through the Adobe Exchange Web site (<http://www.macromedia.com/exchange>).

To search for extensions and begin installing and using the ones that catch your eye, use the following procedure:

1. Log on to the Adobe Exchange Web site (<http://www.macromedia.com/exchange>).
2. From the available extensions, select one that you want to use. Click the Download link to download the extension package.
3. Save the extension package in the Dreamweaver MX 2004/Downloaded Extensions folder of your installed Dreamweaver folder.
4. In the Extension Manager, select File → Install Extension. In Dreamweaver, select Commands → Manage Extensions to start the Extension Manager.

The Extension Manager automatically installs the extension from the Downloaded Extension folder into Dreamweaver. Some extensions need Dreamweaver to restart before you can use them. If you are running Dreamweaver when you install the extension, you might be prompted to quit and restart the application.

To view basic information on the extension after its installation, go to the Extension Manager (Commands → Manage Extensions) in Dreamweaver. The following are some good extensions that I've used either on personal or professional Web sites:

### Mail Spam Blocker

One simple downloadable extension from Adobe Exchange is called Mail Spam Blocker. This allows you to hide e-mail addresses in the code of your document, meaning crawlers and robots rummaging the Web for valid e-mail addresses to spam will come up short when it comes to your pages.

Once installed, you'll see a new menu in Dreamweaver if you visit Insert → Mail Spam Blocker. You'll need to input the e-mail address that you wish to hide and click OK. If you look at the source code behind this address, you'll see that the usual "mailto:email@address.com" format is not there. The e-mail address, however, still functions properly when you double click on it in a browser in order to send the person a message.

### Lorem Ipsum Generator

Lorem Ipsum is the recognised filler text, to help create dummy documents. This object will enable you to fill up your Web pages with text, even before you have been given your copy. This is especially useful so that you can plan and design your Web

pages and test content within them to better merge text and aesthetics in your final product.

## Croutons

Another extension that you can download is called Croutons. If you've worked at all with our departmental page templates, then this is an automated way of doing the "breadcrumb trail" that's beneath the header on most USD Web pages.

Once installed, you'll see a new menu item in Dreamweaver if you go to Commands → Kaosweaver.com → Croutons. Just insert the item at the top of your Web pages. You will need to make the following selections:

- Length of Trail: the number of clicks you'd like it to remember
- Direction of Trail: horizontal or vertical
- Delimiter for Horizontal: the characters you'd like separating the links as they appear including spaces, this should be something like ">>" or "|"
- Delete from Page Titles: this is the text that you'd like taken out of the titles of your pages if there is something consistent.

## Behaviors

Technically speaking, a behavior in Dreamweaver is the combination of an action and an event. You do something such as click a link (the action) and a new window pops up (the event) as a result. By adding behaviors, you add both HTML and JavaScript to your Web page, meaning content will be dynamically enhanced as a result. A standard linked image, for example, might result in a different image when you mouse over it. This is dynamic and functional at the same time.

There are four steps to adding a behavior: picking a tag (one tag may harbor several behaviors), choosing target browsers in which you want the behavior to function, selecting an action, and entering the parameters of the behavior. One downside of behaviors is not all browsers will be able to carry out all behaviors, and the browser that you select in Dreamweaver in your Behaviors panel is the browser for which your behaviors will be shown.

Dreamweaver makes adding behaviors ranging from time-stamping to rollovers very easy and convenient. And that's just the beginning. The behaviors that you'll see available depend upon what browsers you're targeting as well as whether you're trying to enhance a graphic or text. To attach a behavior:

1. Select an element on the page, such as an image or a link. To attach a behavior to the entire page, click the <body> tag in the tag selector at the bottom left of the Document window.
2. Select Window → Behaviors to open the Behaviors panel.
3. Click the Plus (+) button and select an action from the Actions pop-up menu. Actions that are dimmed in the menu can't be chosen. They may be dimmed because a required object doesn't exist in the current document. For example, the Control Shockwave or Flash action is dimmed if the document contains no

Shockwave or Adobe Flash SWF files. If no events are available for the selected object, all actions are dimmed. When you select an action, a dialog box appears, displaying parameters and instructions for the action.

4. Enter parameters for the action, and click OK.
5. The default event to trigger the action appears in the Events column. If this is not the trigger event you want, select another event from the Events pop-up menu. (To open the Events pop-up menu, select an event or action in the Behaviors panel, and click the downward-pointing black arrow that appears between the event name and the action name.)

Some examples of behaviors you can apply (for 4.0 and later browsers) include the following:

- **Swap Image** sets one image to change once another image on the page is moused over or clicked.
- **Open Browser Window** displays content in a new window set to your specifications.
- **Set Text of Status Bar** sets the status bar to read text of your choosing while page is loaded in the browser

## Cloaking

Have you ever stored Microsoft Word or Adobe Photoshop files in your sites folder but they're not files that you wish to upload to the server? Fine: just cloak them, and you can still store them in the sites folder (where they're handy in case you need to refer to them) but they won't cause you problems when you're uploading your entire site. You also won't have to worry about those large image files taking up too much space on the remote server.

Cloaked files will be in your site's folder, yet they will be completely ignored by the uploader when you are putting files to the remote site.

To cloak, right click the file or folder in the Files panel and select Cloaking → Cloak. A red slash will then appear on the file or folder you have chosen. To uncloak, right click once again on the file or folder that you wish to uncloak and select Cloaking → Uncloak.

## Select Recently Modified

This is a great feature hidden away in Dreamweaver MX 2004. It lets you select files you've modified during a particular period of time, or for the past number of days. It is a great way to select a bunch of files you've modified for uploading to the Web server without having to go one by one or uploading the entire site.

To use this feature, go to the Files Panel → right-click on the root site folder → Select Recently Modified. You can select criteria here and then upload any files modified within your specified timeframe.

## Linking by Pointing

Rather than browsing for a file or typing in a file name, Dreamweaver provides an alternative method to creating links by allowing the Web designer to point to a file that needs to be linked. This feature will take care of the relative link to another file in your account so that you don't run the risk of mistyping or mislinking it by hand.

To begin, make sure your Property Inspector is open beneath your page and that your site panel is open in the right-hand portion of your screen. Highlight a piece of text that you would like to link, locate the small Point-to-File icon in the Property Inspector, click once, and drag your mouse to the file that you would like to link. Your cursor will drag a line from the Point-to-File icon to the link that you select to visually demonstrate that you are linking that file.

## Adding Image Descriptions

Not everyone is going to be using a graphical Web browser to view your Web page. Think of those using lynx, for example, who see nothing but textual Web pages. For these people, graphical images are not an effective means of communication. That is why you must insert an image description, normally designated by an alt tag, along with each of your images.

To insert an alt tag, simply insert an image and with the image still selected, type a word or two of text into the alt text window in the Property Inspector. Then, when your graphic loads on the Web, your text will appear whenever you move your mouse over the image. More importantly, the text will appear in place of the image in the event that the page is not being viewed in a graphical Web browser.

This feature is also useful for assisting the visually impaired. For those who have their Web browser set to speak Web contents to them, the alt tag is what the computer will read. If you have not set your images to have descriptions, then there will be nothing to read, meaning that some of your site visitors will not "see" useful content.

## Meta Tags

On their own meta tags are a simplistic concept, but when you combine them with some neat tricks, you can make sure that your Web pages are better cataloged by various search engines—or not at all—depending on the visibility you wish your site to have. Dreamweaver has several meta tag menu items that can help you catalog your page to the extent that you would like.

To begin adding meta tags to the head portion of your Web page, select Insert → Head Tags → Meta. You will see areas for inputting a value and content. For value, insert "Author" and for content, insert your own name. This is a meta tag that I find useful, since it includes your name in the code in case your source code is ever stolen. Another useful tag usage concerns robots, which travel around Web sites and index content. If you don't want your page being indexed at all, then use "Robots" as your value and insert "no index, no follow" as your content. This means that when robots come across your page, they are instructed to leave without cataloging it for search engine use.

If you do want your page to show up in search engine queries, then select Insert → HTML → Head Tapes and start inputting keywords that pertain to the content of your Web site. Your site will be indexed according to these keywords and will score higher in search engine queries pertaining to your subject.

## Keyboard Shortcuts

Keyboard shortcuts can make your workflow much more efficient in any application you are using. Some of the following are the shortcuts for steps you'd routinely take in Dreamweaver.

- **Preview in browser:** F12 for primary browser, Control-F12 for secondary browser
- **Cycle through open documents:** Control-Tab
- **Cycle between design and code views:** Control-~
- **Insert image:** Control-Alt-i
- **Insert table:** Control-Alt-t
- **Insert link:** Control-l

You can also make your own keyboard shortcuts. To do this, go to Edit → Keyboard Shorts. To begin, select the item you wish to change. Type the new keyboard shortcut name into the "Press Key" box. Dreamweaver will list any other command that might already use that name, if any. If the name's not already taken, then press the Change button to save your new shortcut.