

Dreamweaver Tips

Translating Layers to Tables

Remember that before you finish up your design, you will have to translate your layers into tables. If you don't do this, your pages will not render properly in many browsers, and you might have layers overlapping.

Go to **Modify ..>Convert..> Layers to Table**

When you get the dialog box, it is usually best to go for the simplest design, so choose "smallest". You can get rid of extra little columns and rows by increasing the number of pixels in the "collapse empty cells less than ..." box.

If you have a more complex layout, then you will want to choose the most accurate option.

Creating a Template

This is ridiculously easy, assuming you have already Defined the Site. (If not, see the handout on creating a site in Dreamweaver.)

Just go to the File menu, and choose **File..>Save as Template.**

Naming Editable Regions

You have a template file now. You will recognize that because the filename will now have a .dwt extension (Dreamweaver template) at the end. This file is not ready to use yet. Now you will want to decide which parts of the template will be editable.

Essentially, the idea is to lock in the layout elements, so that they cannot be moved by accident, and allow for some parts to change from one page to the other.

I recommend picking which cells in your layout you will change from page to page, and making those editable. Usually, they fall into a small number of categories, but there can be many. Let's assume you're going to lock in everything except for one main content area.

Highlight the cell that you'd like to hold your changing content. (CTRL-click in PC, Apple-click in Mac.)

Then got to the Objects Panel and use the Templates pull-down. **Choose Editable Region.** (In PC you can right-click and go to Templates..>New Editable Region) This will bring up a dialog that says New Editable Region. Pick a name that is simple and that you'll recognize.

Go to **File..>Save.** Now you have a template you can use.

Using Your Template

Now that you've got a template, how do you use it?

Also fairly easy. There are two ways you can use a template file. One is to create a new file from your template.

Go to **File..>New File..>** when you get the dialog box, click on the Templates tab. You should see a list of the templates that you have created for each website. The websites will be listed on the left and the templates on the right.

Pick the template you want, and click the Create button in the bottom right of the dialog box.

This will create a brand new file, as yet to be named. Remember to save it into your file structure, and if you're unsure where it should be saved, use the content map you have already drawn up.

The other way to use the Template file is to open up one of the blank files that you've already created in your file structure.

Then go to the Files/Assets palette and click on Assets. To see templates, click on the templates icon on the left edge of the Assets palette (second from bottom). Then, click on the template you'd like to apply to the html file, and click on the "apply" button at the bottom of the palette.

This will apply the layout to your pre-named file. All you have to do now is insert your content for this page, and save.

Notes on Templates

1. You have to convert your layouts to tables before you save as a template. This function is disabled in templates.
2. You will recognize files based on templates because parts of the file will be inaccessible to you. You will only be able to edit the regions that you have defined as editable. You will also be able to tell which template the file is based on, because the design will be outlined in yellow, and the top right corner should have a little yellow tag that says: Template: name of template
3. You can go back and change a template. To do so, open up the original template in the Templates folder. (This gets created automatically.)