

Tools Required:

1. **Graphics Manipulation Program** like Adobe Image Ready, Photoshop or Ulead Photo Impact. I personally use all three on various projects
2. **HTML Editor**, preferably **Macromedia Dreamweaver**. **MS FrontPage** can also work or any other editor for that matter.
3. **Photograph Library** of some sorts where you can get photos to use as part of the shell of your website. I personally use MS Word's "insert clipart" function but I set it to get web collections and photos only. I don't use their clipart.. If I am looking for something financial it must be corporate and not a little pink piggy with a slot on its back... ☺

Ok now that we have the tools, we need to source our data/images/photos. And decide on which colors will be used.

For this example, I am going to draw up a template that has something to do with family, health and children. So I will source a few pics on these.

STEP 1 – Create a folder on your hard drive for this specific project

- Create folder called websites
- Create folder yourdomain.com in website folder
- Create folder RAW DATA in folder yourdomain.com (i.e. /websites/yourdomain.com/RAW DATA

The RAW DATA folder is where I keep all my downloaded pics and info relating to this website/domain I am designing for.

STEP 2 – Source your images/photos/pics

WITH MS WORD

From now on I will use shorthand and hope you follow me in MS Word.!

- Menu - - Insert – Picture – Clipart
- Search in collections – Web collections
- Selected Media Types – Photographs
- I search for "shopping: and pick the image I like and bring it into word
- This will now be copied and pasted in my Photoshop and then saved to the RAW DATA folder..

ON THE INTERNET

Please be careful when sourcing images on the internet. 99% of the time its copyright protected. Google image search IS NOT the way to do it.

- My reliable source (old faithful) is <http://morguefile.com/>
- Search for a few and save the relevant ones to the RAW DATA folder.

I have decided I am going to use this image in my website's shell and so I have copied it to my RAW Data Folder for later use in Adobe Image Ready.

You can source as many pics as you want, some you may use later as part of the website's content as well. It will save time later on if you have a couple handy.

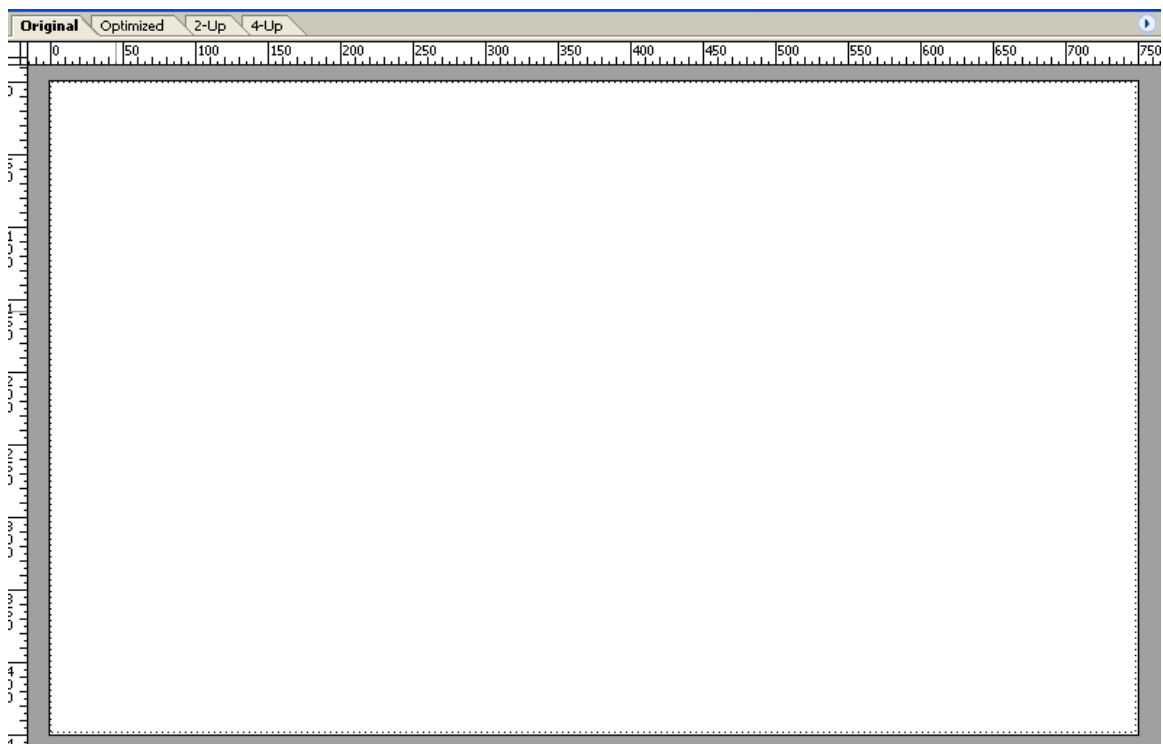


STEP 3 – Designing the shell (template) for SOHO

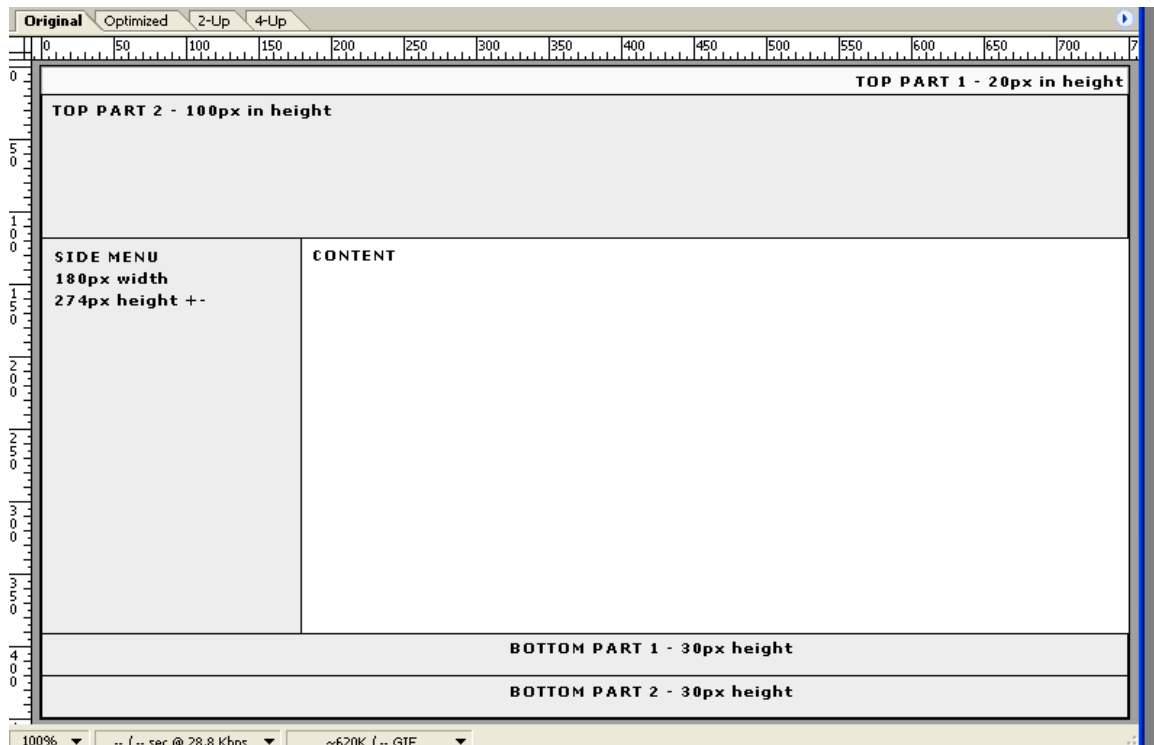
Now we are ready to fire-up our Photograph Manipulating program, of which I use Adobe Image Ready because it allows me to later on “export” the sliced file to HTML.

(I do certain things for certain reasons that will only become apparent later on. So please bear with me. and yes, some things may not be true WC3 etc. compliant, but it has always worked for me and I get good Search-Engine results which is all that matters to me actually...)

1. Create a new page – 750px X 450px (i.e. Width X Height in pixels) on White Background . There is your blank canvass now. :

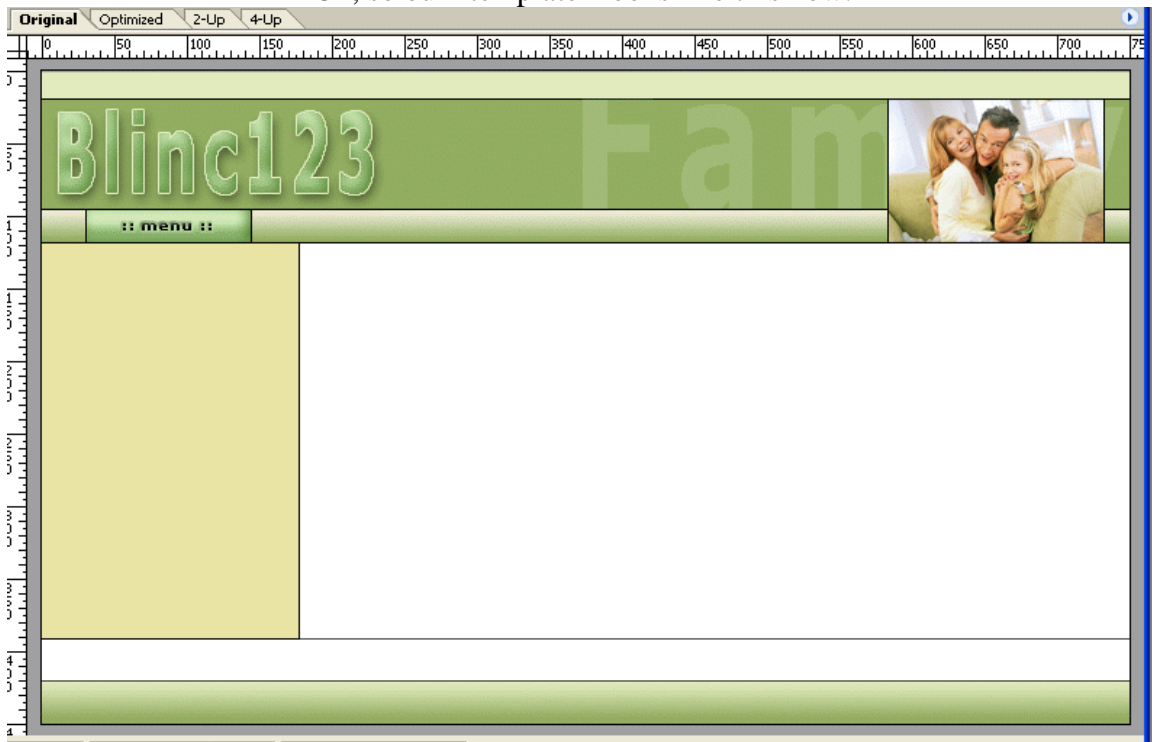


2. The next thing I do is to decide where my page elements are going to be. I normally divide it into 5 or 6 groups when I create a template for SOHO.
 - a) Top Part 1 (20px height)
 - b) Top Part 2 (100px height)
 - c) Side Menu (180px width and +- 274px height)
 - d) Main Content
 - e) Bottom Part 1 (30px height)
 - f) Bottom Part 2 (30px height)



3. When we switch to HTML, the groups will look like this:
 - a) Top Part 1 will become #PAGETITLE#
 - b) Top Part 2 will become #LOGO# (or you can hardcode your logo)
 - c) Side Menu will become #VMENU#
 - d) Main Content will become #CONTENT#
 - e) Bottom Part 1 will become #TMENU#
 - f) Bottom Part 2 will become #PAGETITLE# and #COPYRIGHT#
4. Now we can start filling our sections/groups with pictures and colors as we choose. This example template is going to be pretty standard, but you can go crazy. (As long as you stay in your boundaries of the sections and always keep in mind what will be displayed in the end in those sections. Like the top 1 and bottom 1 and two will contain text etc.

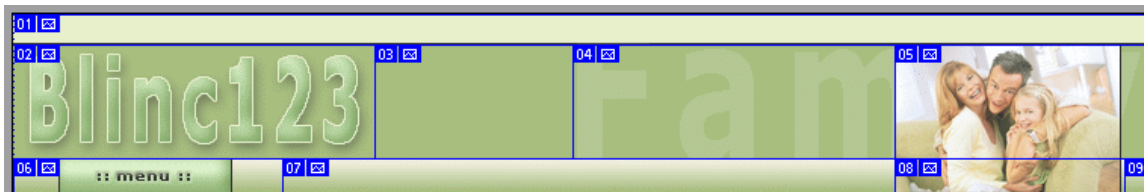
Ok, so our “template” looks like this now:



All I basically did was to colour the previously created grey blocks with some shades and so on. I like to keep my #CONTENT# and #TMENU# on white. And the #VMENU# on a clean solid color.

5. Now I am ready to “slice” the image. Slicing will make it in smaller more web friendly parts. I will keep the slices mostly in the same sizes as I specified earlier, with a few exceptions which I will indicate.
6. How my slices work:

The TOP Section



- a) The Top Slice is one slice i.e. 750px X 20px (slice1)
- b) The Logo Slice I have chopped into 4 slices of various sizes but all of their height is 75px (slices 2 – 5)
- c) then I sliced the menu indicator block in 4 sizes but all equal height of 24px (i.e. the small green block that says menu) (slices 6 – 9)

The Middle Section



d) These are pretty straightforward. I have sliced it into 4 sections, the top two slices (slice 10 and 11) Slice 10 is 179px width by 8px height. This is the main slice that will be repeated in the background in our menu system later on. Slice 11 is also 8px in height, the main reason is to equalize the field as the MENU and CONTENT slices have to be in the same “row”.

e) The MENU Slice and CONTENT slices (12 and 13) are both 264px in height. (obviously both’s widths are equal to the previous two slices on top of it) (i.e. slice 10’s width = slice 12’s width) Again, it’s important that the section that is going to be used for the MENU and the CONTENT must be in the same “row”

The Bottom Section



f) The bottom section slices are a bit tricky.

Slice 14 is a straight trough slice of 750px X 2px

Slice 15 is a straight trough slice of 750px X 26px

Slice 16 is a straight trough slice of 750x 3px

g) the very bottom slices are sliced into 3 sections.

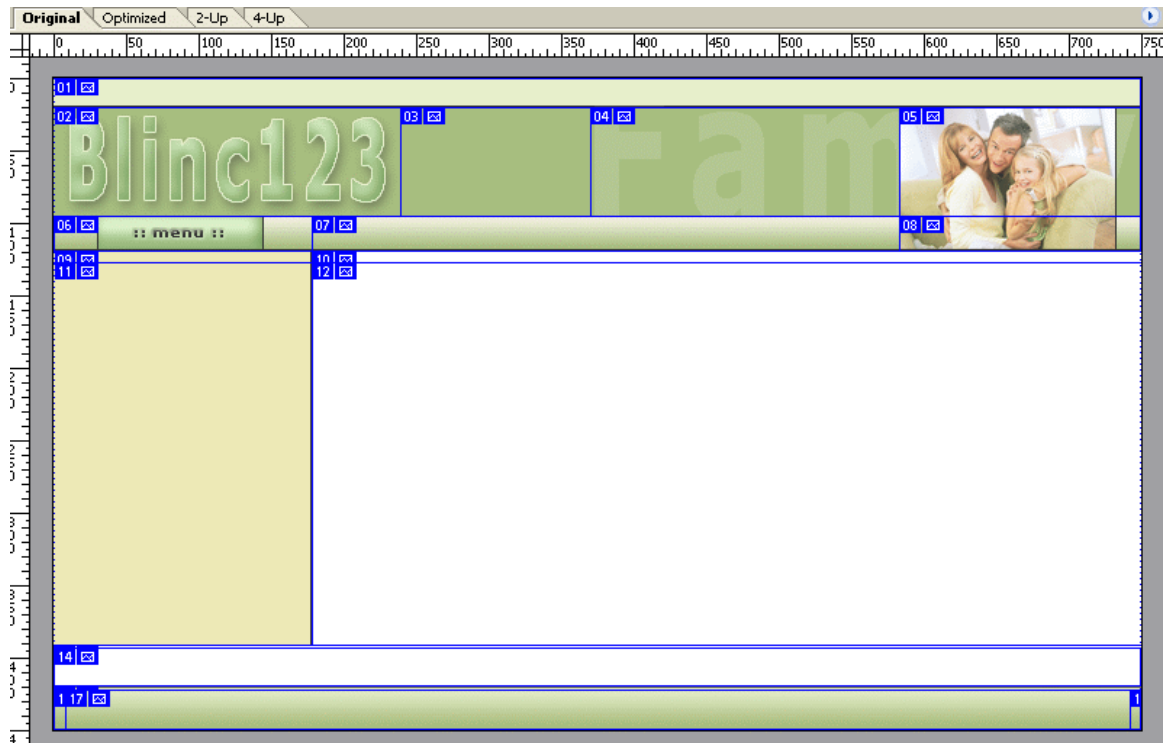
Slice 17 is 8px X 28px

Slice 18 is 734px X 28px

And the last slice is again 8px X 28 px

When we switch to HTML, slices 12, 13 and 14 will be deleted and replaced with either a color or a “repeater” image. More on that later though...

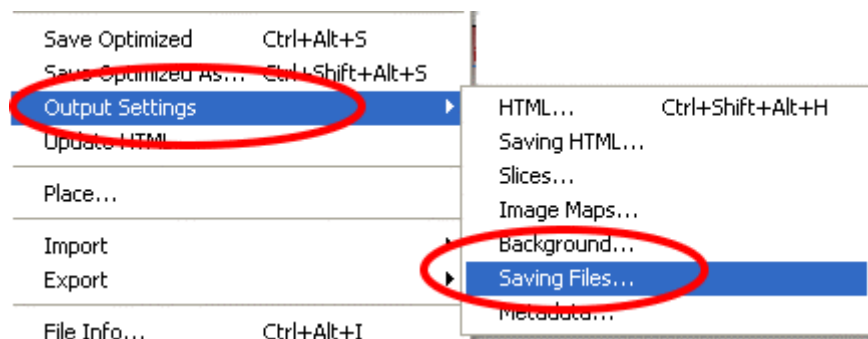
This is what my sliced image looks like in the grand scheme of things:

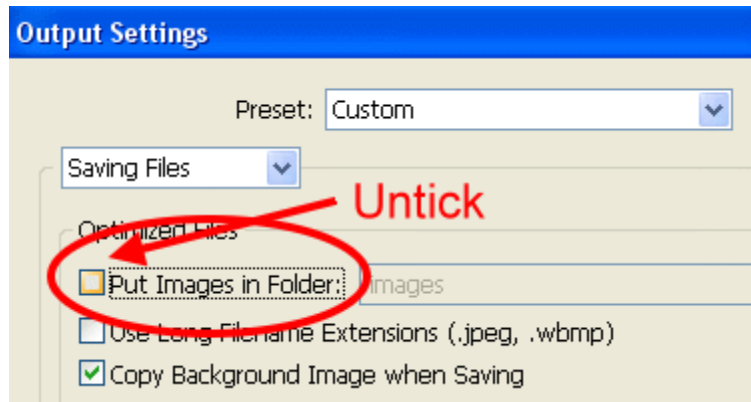


7. I am now ready to “Export” or “output” to HTML In Adobe Image Ready this is fairly easy.

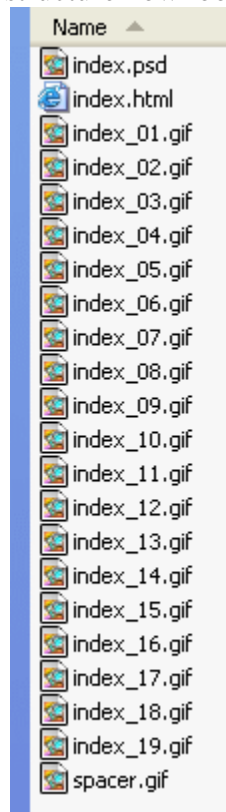
- I have already saved this image as “index.psd” in my /websites/mydomain.com/ folder. (yes in the root of it, NOT in the raw data folder) and
- I have set Image Ready’s settings to save my slices as “.gif” and
- to NOT to put the images into a separate folder.

As our SOHO template requires the images to be in the same folder where the index.html file is. (This is all under “File>Output Settings”)





8. Create the index.html and images now by using the “Saved Optimized as” link in Image Ready. Save it to the folder we created in the beginning from the domain you are working on. My directory structure now looks like this:

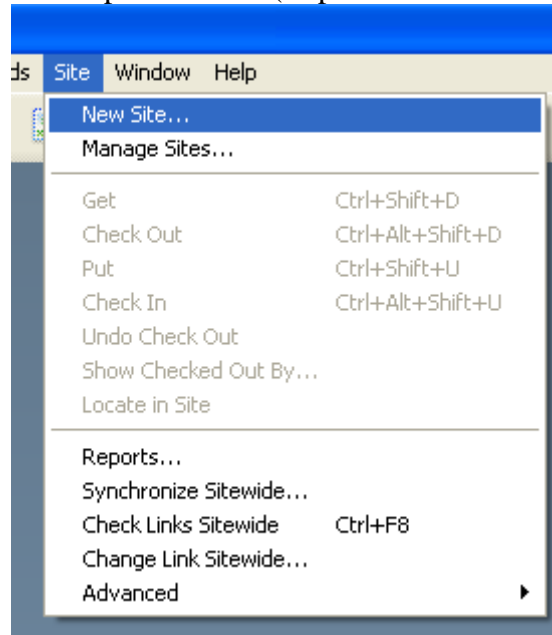


9. After Exporting, I am now going to edit the index.html file that was created. I will use my favorite HTML Editor, namely Macromedia Dreamweaver. You can use any HTML Editor you are comfortable with. But in this tutorial I am only going to cover Dreamweaver.

STEP 4 – Getting the index.html file ready for SOHO to use

4.1 Setup the site first

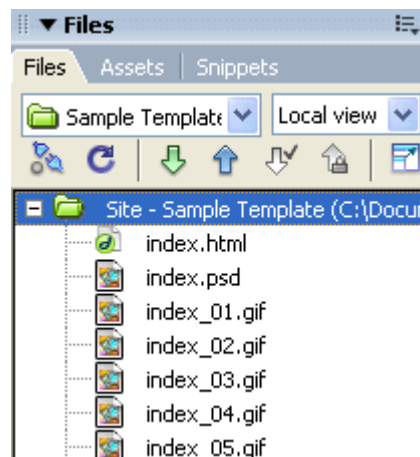
Fire up Dreamweaver and setup a new site. (Top Menu: Site>New Site)



Click on the Advanced Tab

Now complete the following field with the relevant data.

- 1) Site name: I normally use the domain name I am building the site for
- 2) Local Root: Browse to the folder where your index.html is saved.
- 3) Leave the default images blank as our images are not saved in a separate folder.
- 4) HTTP Address: Type the domain your working on here i.e.
<http://www.yourdomain.com>
- 5) Click ok. We are not going to use Dreamweaver's ftp function for this exercise so we don't need to specify remote connection etc.
- 6) Your Dreamweaver screen should now list your website files on the right.

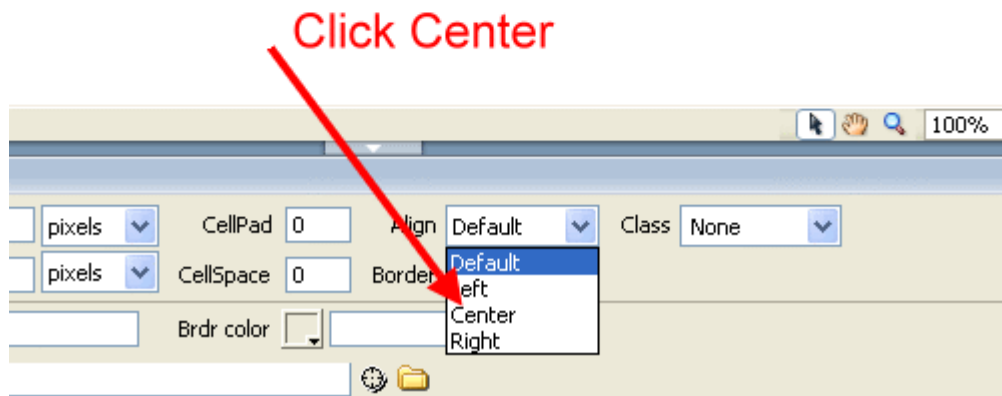
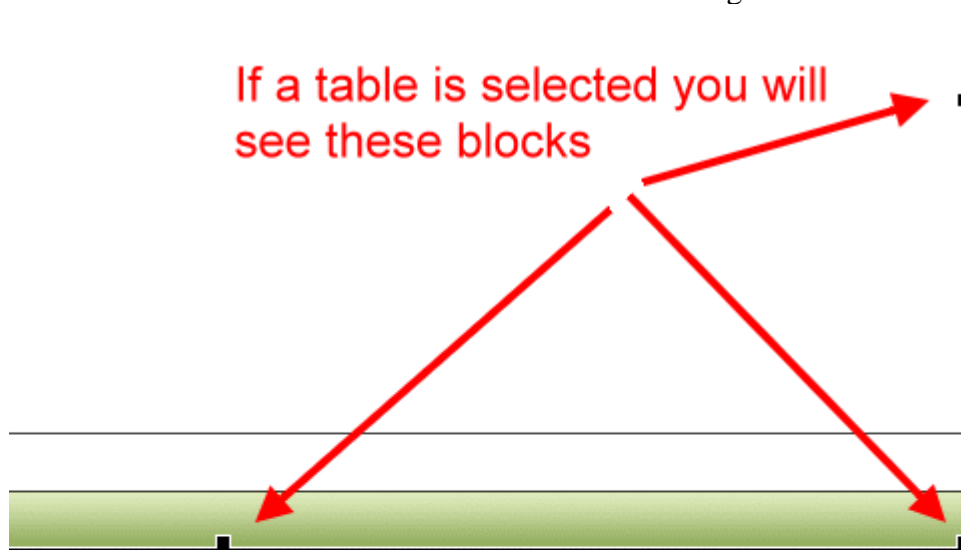


4.2 Editing index.html to SOHO specifications

We will now prepare the index.html file to work with SOHO. It's actually very easy. Double-Click the index.html file and DreamWeaver will now open it for you on the main screen.

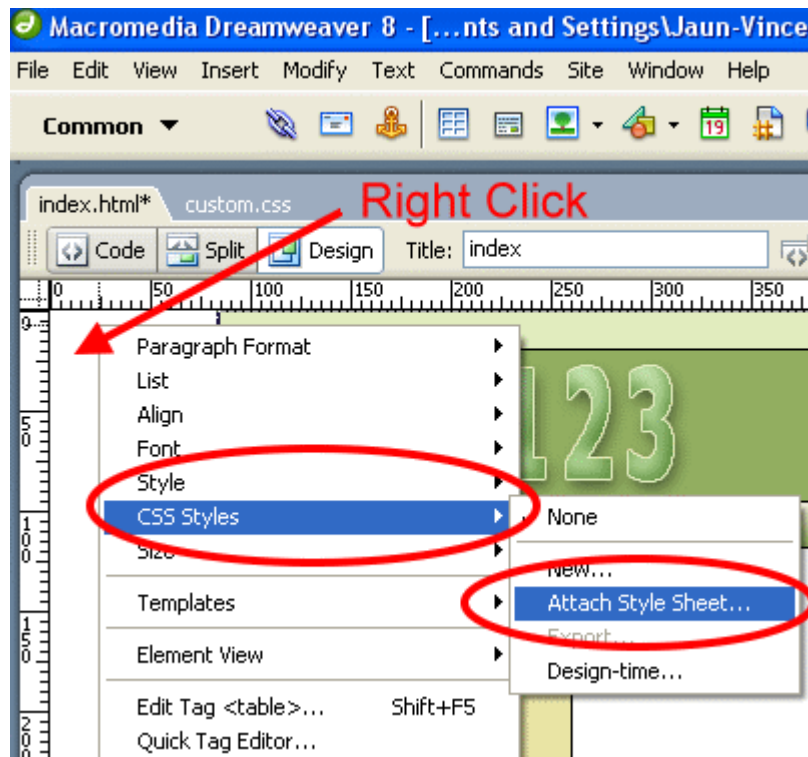
Depending on how you want your website to display, you can now either align the site in the centre of the screen or leave it as default on the left. I like it in the centre for certain templates, but for others I prefer the left. It's your choice. For this exercise, I will move the website to the centre.

Select the whole table. At the bottom of the screen select "Align>Center"

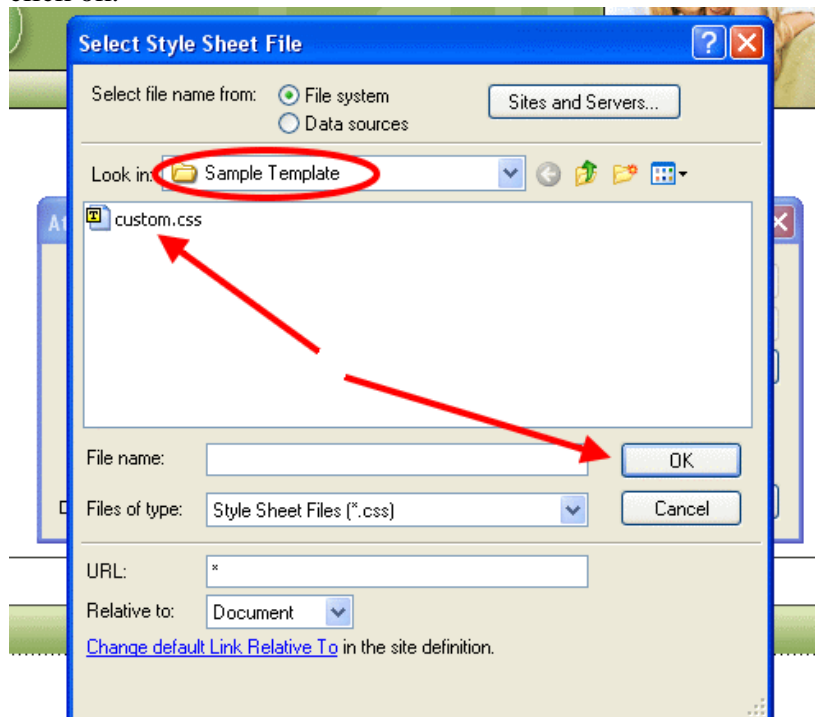


The first thing we want to do is assign a custom.css file to this index.html file and get the Meta-tags in order. Attached in the .zip file of this sample template I have included the custom.css to make it easier for you. You can offcourse create a new .css from scratch but why re-invent the wheel? So, copy the sample to your folder that contains the index.html (i.e. this newly created website)

Somewhere on a white spot next to the table right-click and choose “CSS Style>Attach Stylesheet



Click Browse, then ensure you are in the correct folder and select the custom.css file and click ok.



DW will now have attached the stylesheet. To check if it was done, drop to “Code View”

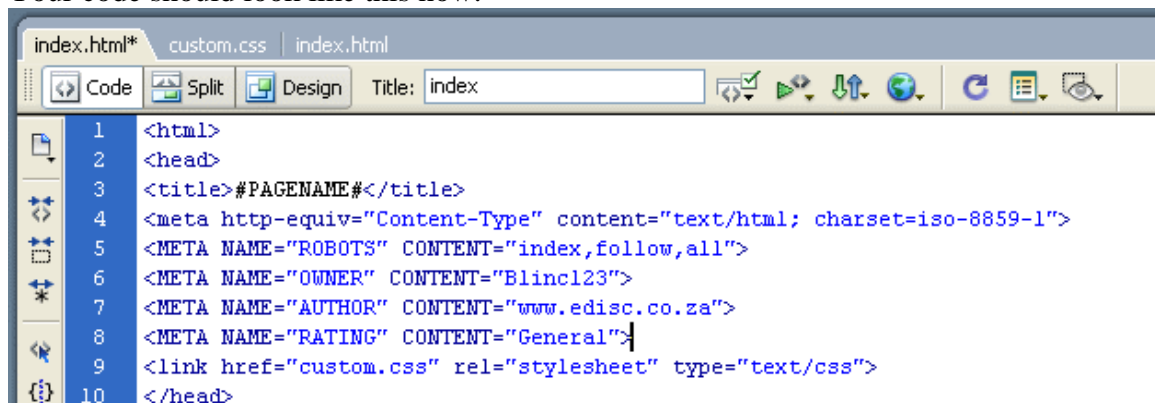


While we are in Code View, let's fix the Meta-Tags

- 1) Change the <title> tag to #PAGENAME#
- 2) Now add a ROBOTS, OWNER, AUTHOR and RATING Tag (Just insert the following underneath the “Content-Type” tag (above the custom.css line)
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="index, follow, all">
<META NAME="OWNER" CONTENT="Blinc123">
<META NAME="AUTHOR" CONTENT="www.edisc.co.za">
<META NAME="RATING" CONTENT="General">

The owner can be the owner of the website, the author can be you, a name, or like I did, a website. It doesn't really matter. The Rating is normally General, but if it's Adult Content you would change it to the appropriate rating here. But in general, you can leave it as is.

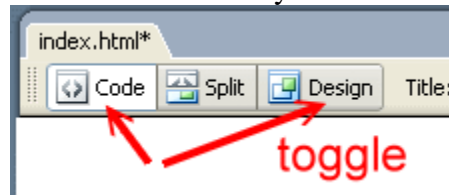
Your code should look like this now:



- 3) Ok that's done, let's move on.

Drop back to Design View

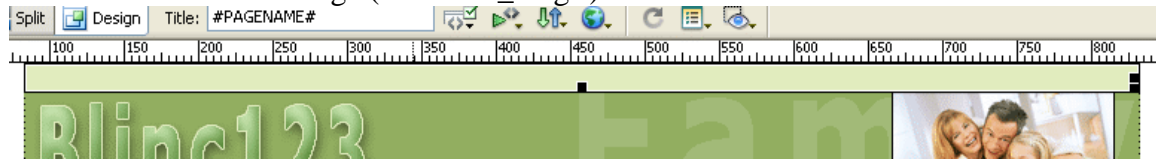
To toggle between Design and Code view is easy...



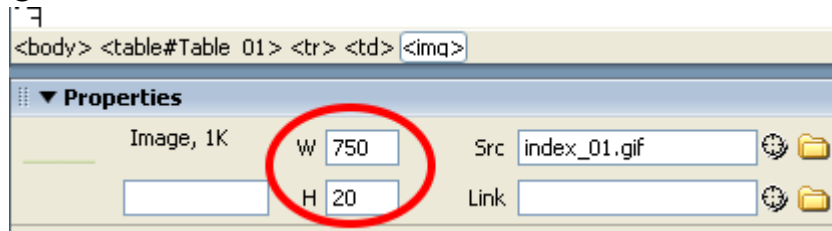
Now we are going to move certain images to the “background” so we can use text over it, and other images we are going to delete and replace with a single color where can.

I will start from the top and do row for row (or column for that matter)

Select the first row’s image (i.e. index_01.gif)

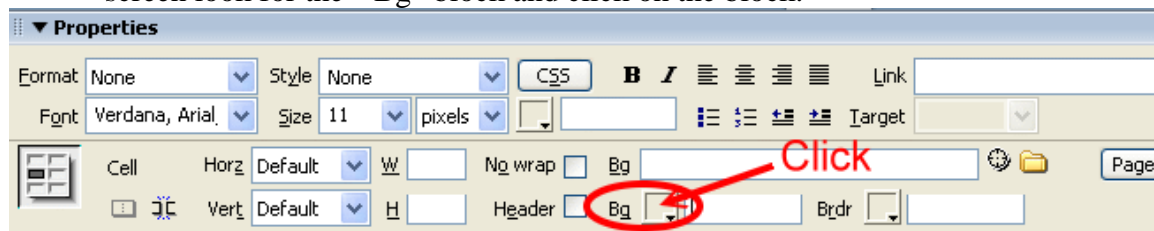


Note the width and the height at the bottom left. This is what I love about Dreamweaver, ☺



Since this is a single color image, we can remove it completely and replace it with a table-background colour.

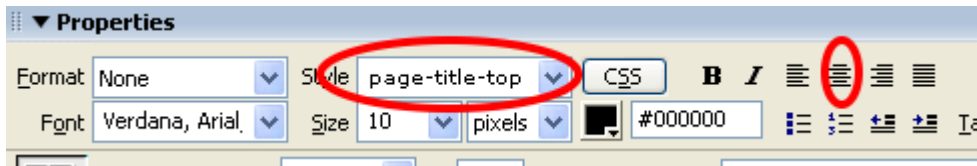
- 1) With the image still selected press Home on the keyboard. At the bottom of the screen look for the “Bg” block and click on the block.



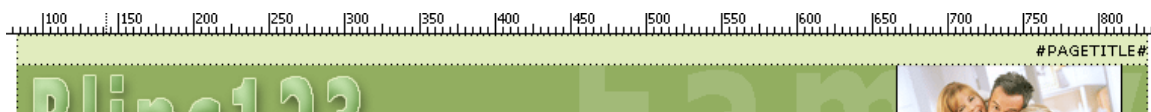
- 2) With the eyedropper tool, click somewhere on the top line to get the same green color as we used in the image. If you have done it correctly, the color should now be set as #E1ECBE
- 3) Now look to the left of the Bg block, for the H block. This is to specify the height for this row. Click there and enter 20. When finished, click on the top image again and press delete. Your background color will now display and it will look like the original template. The only difference now is we can put text in that row.

I use the top row for my Page Title. Basically because I have seen good results on the search-engines. So, for this exercise, we will do the same.

You should still be in this row with the green background. Type #PAGETITLE#, now select this and go down to the bottom of the screen and select “Style”. Then select “page-title-top”. Then click the “align” button to align it where you want. I normally align this text to the far right.

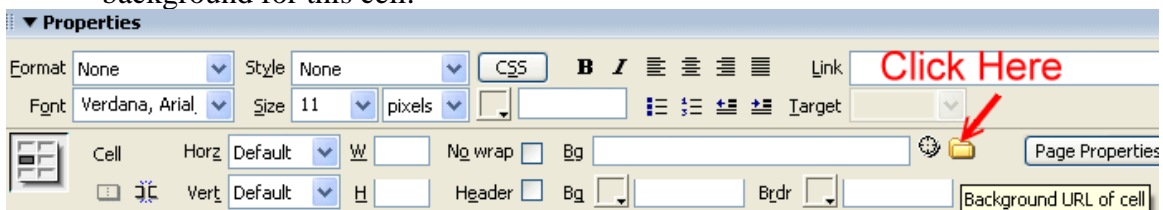


Your screen should look like this:



We are going to repeat the same procedure for the rest of the tags. Except, now we will specify a background image instead of deleting the image and giving a color.

- 1) Click on index_07.gif and NOTE THE HEIGHT at the bottom, now press Home on the keyboard.
- 2) At the bottom in the Properties, click the yellow folder next to the Bg field, and select “image_07.gif” from the list. DW will now use this image as the background for this cell.



- 3) In the H block, enter the Height. (i.e. 24 in this case)
- 4) Now click on the image again and delete it.
- 5) I use this space for the #PAGENAME# tag so type this in. Select and change the Style to “page-name”

Next we will add the place where SOHO will create the Menu system. I have sliced a smaller image to use as a background i.e. we will use index_10.gif instead of index_12.gif

Follow steps 1 – 4 above but use index_10.gif as the background image.

When done, type #VMENU# in the cell and change the style to “vmenu_main_on”. You can also set the Vertical alignment to Top.

If you completed this successfully, your template should look like this:



Next we will tell SOHO where to put the actual contents of the site. Since the main cell is white, we will only delete this image and set the background color to white.

Click on index_13.gif, press delete, click the Bg block and select white as color.

Now type #CONTENT# and set the Vertical Alignment to Top.



As you can see, we are slowly getting there.

Do the same for the cell with index_15.gif in. This time note the height and put that in as well. This is where our Bottom Menu will reside. So once you have cleared the image, set the bg as white, set the height, type #TMENU#, select and change the style to “bottom-menu” and align the text to the center of the cell.

The very last item is the bottom of our website i.e. index_18.gif. This works similar to index_07.gif. So, set index_18.gif as the background, remember to enter the Height. When done type #PAGETITLE#, select and change the style to “page-title-bottom”, underneath it I like to use the #COPYRIGHT#. So do that now. What will probably happen is once you have pressed enter next to #PAGETITLE#, DW will stretch that cell into one ugly thing. Don’t worry! Drop to code view and change

```
<p class="page-title-bottom">#PAGETITLE#</p>
<p class="page-title-bottom">#COPYRIGHT#</p>
```

To look like this:

```
<span class="page-title-bottom">#PAGETITLE#</span><br>
<span class="page-title-bottom">#COPYRIGHT#</span>
```

That should fix it up nicely. ☺

Next to the Copyright tag, I like to put that I designed the site so you can do that too with a link to your website.

If you did everything correctly, your screen should look like this:



Your template is now ready to be used by SOHO.

All we still need is a small thumbnail (200px in width) and it must be in .jpg format. So you can now press F12 on your keyboard to preview what the site will look like. Press Print Screen on the keyboard, go to your favorite Image/photo Editor and press paste. You can now select what is needed, crop it, resize to 200px in width and save it as screenshot.jpg



Before you upload your template you may want to specify a background color for your website. The white may look a bit dull. So you can either specify a background-color in your css or right-click on a whitespace in DW and add the bg color through there.

In the custom.css you can add this at the top:

```
body {  
    background-color: #006600;  
}
```

And change #006600 to the color of your choice. On that same note, you may want to change the Menu System colors as well, in this sample it's all black (#000000). This is all done in the custom.css file and is clearly marked. If you don't know how to use .css, best is to find a tutorial on the net somewhere to explain the basics.

Right, you can now decide what you are going to call your template as you will need to create a folder for it.

I use CuteFTP as my FTP client, but you can use any FTP client of your choice.

To upload your template, connect to your site and go to this folder:

/public_html/sohoadmin/program/modules/site_templates/pages

Chances are that the default templates are in there as well.

Create a new folder using the same type of naming constraints. I am going to name my template: CORPORATE-MainTemplate_Green-Khaki

So that is the folder name I will create.

Upload all your image files, the index.htm and the custom.css file to this folder. (It's not necessary to upload the index.psd file)

Now login to SOHO, go to Template Manager and select your template from the list and set as default. Remember to set your menu system in SOHO to also use "text" links to enable the bottom menu to work.

That's it. You have now created a custom template for SOHO! ☺

FYI: I use the "PAGETITLE" tag at the top and bottom of my pages. You don't have to. I do it because the Search-Engines likes it...

If you found this tutorial helpful... visit my website <http://www.onlineworknet.com> and click on one or two Google Ads ;)