

# Do it your self website design 2007!

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You know the old saying: you get what you pay for. That's why most companies take the time to have a professional design team create the look and feel of their site, and all the development needed. Although in some cases such as in a start up business the owner himself will take on the job of webmaster and graphic artist. Lest face the facts having to wear a lot of hats has been a reality for the small business owner for well over 100 years or more. So it would make sense for him to try his hand a building a website on his own. It's a simple matter of the right software and a few well spent hours reading something like "HTML for Dummies" right? The answer to that would be an astounding no! Now if you really want to create your own website all on your own, there are a few things you need to know first.

## The Main Purpose

The first step in this process is to decide on the main purpose or main idea of the site. By this I mean spend about an hour or two before you start to design anything and write a summery of the purpose. This should be about 200 words and contain all the keywords you plain on using in the web pages of your site. The other thing to remember is each page in your website must have an individual purpose of its own.

## Keyword Matching System

As much as I hate this next step it's completely unavoidable and very important to the life or death of your online business. What you have to do now is create what I like to call a "keyword matching system" this is what I do before I build each and every site I develop. Make a list of important words and word phrases somewhere around 75 to 100 in total for a site of about 10 pages. This gives you around 8 to 10 keywords and key phrases per page to start with. Then take every single word and key phrase in that list and write a few sentences using it. I know it's painful to even think about doing this, but if you want success this is the best process.

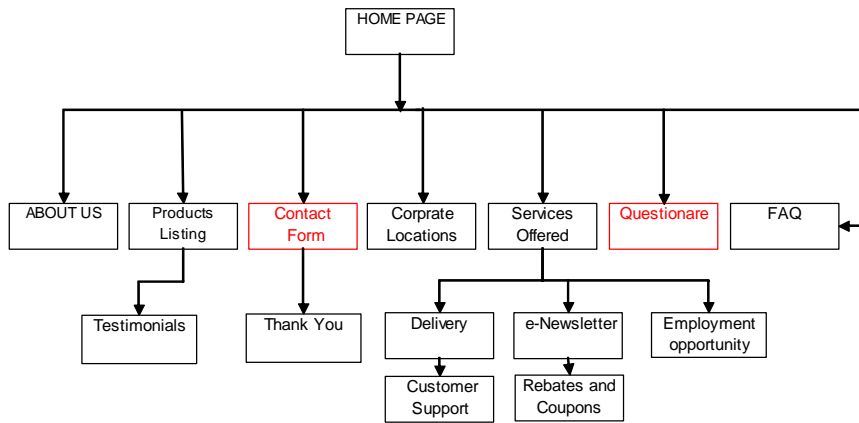
## Page Names

Now you have ten page ideas with some idea of what they will be about, which will help in the next step. Creating the page names is a very important step because the name of a page is the first thing a web browser sees. When those spiders come to index your website they take into consideration a lot of things but the name of a page in the mind of the spider is a sure sign of the purpose of your page. So it's very important to make your page names descriptive for example with a site that sells winter coats a good page name would be

“winterwooljackets.html” not “jackets.html”. This naming convention is the first step to loads and loads of new visitors coming to your new site every day.

## The Web Chart

Developing a web chart is the easiest step in this process and it may sound like overkill but the truth is that if you skip this the rest will be a waist of your time. I find that a white board works the best with an erasable marker so if I make a mistake no big deal. Below you will find a diagram of the web chart for a basic 10 page site.



What this does is it keeps you on the path so you don't get lost outside of the idea. The other thing it does is constructs a visual of the linking structure for the website as a whole. Later on in the development part of this project you will thank me for making you do this.

## CSS Style System

I'd like to point out that while there are a lot of types of development being used out there by some of the best web gurus. I believe sticking to the simplest process is the best. With that in mind it's time to build our CSS document or Cascading Style Sheet for our site. This is the best way to handle formatting and images as well as any design elements where needed. Please don't put down the booklet it's not that hard. Below is a short tutorial to get you through the process. First of all the best product out there for Web Development is Macromedia Dreamweaver CS2 because of the way it handles CSS and keeps your html clean of unneeded code.

First place this bit of code in red at the top of the page in the head of your document just below the last Meta tag.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>Web and graphic design at Albany Graphics</title>
<link rel="stylesheet" href="style.css" type="text/css">
</head>
```

---

Create a page and call it “**style.css**” and place it in the main directory of the website. Then in Dreamweaver you will make the styles needed. Example Below.

```
.header { background-attachment: fixed; background-image: url(Images/repeter.gif);
background-repeat: repeat; background-position: left bottom}
```

```
.TopBannerLine { font-family: Geneva, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 24px; font-
style: normal; font-weight: bold; font-variant: small-caps; color: #660000}
```

```
.MainContent { font-family: Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12px; font-weight: normal;
color: #000033}
```

```
.TopHeaderName { font-family: Impact; font-size: 36px; font-style: oblique; font-weight:
bold; font-variant: normal; color: #FFFFFF; text-transform: none; left: auto; clip: rect( 22px
)}
```

```
.LeaderinHead { font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 14px; font-
weight: bold; font-variant: small-caps; color: #FFFFFF}
```

```
.whiteTextSmall { font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 12px; font-
weight: normal; color: #FFFFFF}
```

---

OK. I know this seems a bit crazy so let me walk you through it step by step.

#### Creating a CSS Styles Document

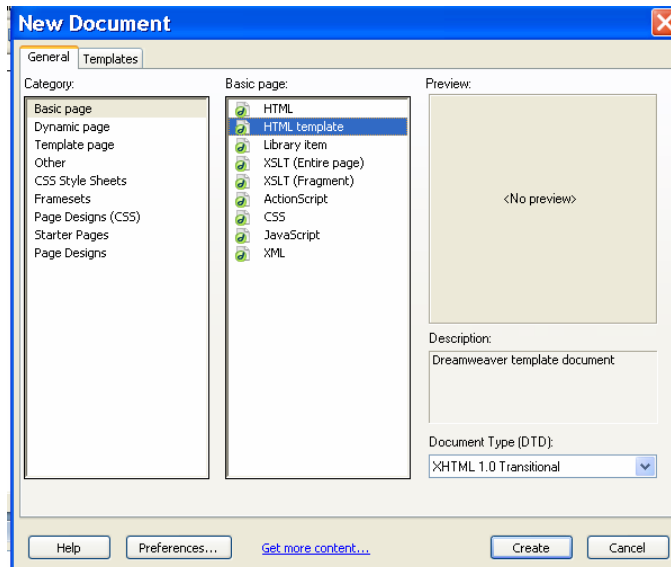
- Open Dreamweaver and go to your site location and click the file new then general tab.
- Then select the CSS page type click create button.
- Start to type this `body { margin:5px 0; padding:0; font: 74% Arial, Sans-Serif; color:#000; line-height: 1.5em; background : #F0F0F0; }`
- Now you have a basic CSS document to connect to the web page. Open the html document you created earlier that you put the `<link rel="stylesheet" href="style.css" type="text/css">` code in the head of the code.
- Click the design tab in Dreamweaver to see the change to your document.
- Your web page should have the color gray for a background and the text will be Arial and about 10 points.

Try playing with some of the code on the page and experiment with different styles. Also keep typing the code don't just copy and past you won't learn if you become a copy case.

The best way to build your web pages is by creating a template page it's called a .dwt file as if there aren't enough acronyms out there. This file is essential in a clean website and a good working navigation. This is because you create it once and then use it over and over again for all of your web pages. Now here's how!

1. Click on the **File** then **New** or just hit **Ctrl+N** this will bring up a page like the one in figure 101 don't forget to pick the Document Type you need for this site.

Figure 101

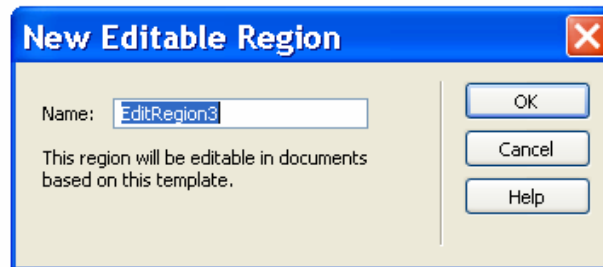


2. When you click the create button it will bring up a new blank untitled page. Now you can start to build just the basic design for your page and anything that will remain the same on all the pages of your website, such as links pictures and content. Don't use the `<table>` tag. In good web development it is better to use the `<div>` tag and styles for positioning and layout. This process is difficult but much better for search results and makes for a more consistent page. If you need help learning CSS or building xhtml without tables go to [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org) or take a look at [www.sitepoint.com/books/css2/](http://www.sitepoint.com/books/css2/) no matter which one you pick it is important to learn this process.

3. Next create the editable regions in your page this will allow you to make changes in content and images later on when you create the rest of your website. Click **Insert +Template Object** and then **Editable Region** in the dialog box type the name of the region. See Figure 102 below but remember no spaces or symbols in the name. But make sure that you use a name that describes the purpose of the region. Is it a text area, or a links box, or maybe it's for a banner you plain to change each week.

**EXAMPLE:** BannerAdChange, or MainContent

Figure 102



**Note:** Remember it is always best to try and not use tables in your design because it makes the page bigger in size and lode slower. Browsers need to spend a lot more time on each page to index it so stick with the <div> tag for positioning and use a CSS document to do the rest. If you need lesions in css the best place for you is <http://www.w3schools.com/css/default.asp> they have a long list of subjects to study and best of all it's free.

4. Now that you have the region created you can ad any other editable regions that you will need. I suggest a main content, navigation, and any part of your site that will change on a regular basis. Here is an example of what it should look like when you are done See figure 103 below.



5. Now that you have a template it's time to make the rest of the pages of your site using the template. The steps are a bit confusing at first but with practice this will seem like child's play.

- Start by clicking on the **File** then **New** or just hit **Ctrl+N** this will bring up the new documents dialog box select the Templates Tab and click on the site you are working with.
- Make sure the update page when template changes check box is selected.
- Click the create button
- A new page is generated with all the information and graphics you placed in the template. Notice that the only place you can type is in the editable regions that you created earlier.
- The last step is to place the unique content and images in the main region and add any other unique information needed. Then just save the page as a html document with a unique name. Remember to give the page a unique title that describes the content.

This is a sample of the code in the web page developed using this system, I hope this clears things up a little. Thanks for your interest in Albany Graphics if you have any questions please feel free to contact the webmaster.

=====

```
<html>
<head>
<!-- TemplateBeginEditable name="doctitle" -->
<title>This is the test page for CSS Design</title>
<!-- TemplateEndEditable -->

<!-- TemplateBeginEditable name="head" --><!-- TemplateEndEditable -->
<link href="../../JohnWorkCss/CSS/styles.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css">
</head>
```

```

<body>
<!-- header image -->
<div align="center"><p align="center" class="header"> </p>
</div>
<div align="center"></div>
<div align="center">
  <div align="center" style="width:700px; position: relative;"><!-- TemplateBeginEditable
name="mainContent" -->
    <p>&nbsp;</p>
    <p><br>
    </p>
  <!-- TemplateEndEditable --></div>
  </p>

</div>
<!-- footer image -->
<div align="center">
<p align="center"><br>
  <br>
  <a href="http://www.albanygraphics.com" target="_blank">HOME</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">FAQ</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">SERVICES</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">PRODUCTS</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">OUR HISTORY</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">CONTACT</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">DESIGN SAMPLES</a> | <a
href="http://www.albanygraphics.com">TEMPLATES</a> </p>
</div>
</body>
</html>

```

**Note:** Notice the section in red it's the links to the other pages you will make later. Keep in mind the names of these pages and include the here then when you make the rest of the web pages the navigation will be working.

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