The Essential Guide to Dreamweaver CS4 with CSS, Ajax, and PHP

David Powers

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DESIGNER TO DESIGNER™
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The Essential Guide to Dreamweaver CS4 with CSS, Ajax, and PHP

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ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-4302-1610-0

ISBN-13 (electronic): 978-1-4302-1611-7

Printed and bound in the United States of America 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Powers is an Adobe Community Expert and Adobe Certified Instructor for Dreamweaver and author of a series of highly successful books on PHP, including *PHP Solutions: Dynamic Web Design Made Easy* (friends of ED, ISBN: 978-1-59059-731-6) and *PHP Object-Oriented Solutions* (friends of ED, ISBN: 978-1-4302-1011-5), as well as the Dreamweaver CS3 edition of this book. As a professional writer, he has been involved in electronic media for more than 30 years, first with BBC radio and television and more recently with the Internet. His clear writing style is valued not only in the English-speaking world; several of his books have been translated into Spanish and Polish.

What started as a mild interest in computing was transformed almost overnight into a passion, when David was posted to Japan in 1987 as BBC correspondent in Tokyo. With no corporate IT department just down the hallway, he was forced to learn how to fix everything himself. When not tinkering with the innards of his computer, he was reporting for BBC TV and radio on the rise and collapse of the Japanese bubble economy.

David has also translated several plays from Japanese. To relax, he enjoys nothing better than visiting his favorite sushi restaurant.

About the Technical Reviewer

Tom Muck is the coauthor of nine Adobe/Macromedia-related books. Tom also writes extensions for Dreamweaver, available at his site `http://www.tom-muck.com`. Tom is also the lead PHP and ColdFusion programmer for Cartweaver, the online shopping cart software package; is a founding member of Community MX; and has written more than 150 articles on PHP, ColdFusion, SQL, and related topics. Tom has also been an Adobe Community Expert in its various incarnations since 1999.

Tom is an extensibility expert focused on the integration of Adobe/Macromedia products with ColdFusion, PHP, ASP, and other languages, applications, and technologies. Tom was recognized for this expertise in 2000 when he received Macromedia's Best UltraDev Extension Award. He has also written numerous articles for magazines, journals, and websites and speaks at conferences on related subjects.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to this book in a variety of ways. Some—like the production staff at Apress/friends of ED—were involved directly. I'd like to pay particular thanks to my editor, Ben Renow-Clarke, who gave me free rein to shape the book the way I wanted but always maintained a critical eye from the reader's perspective. Thanks, too, to Beth Christmas and Kelly Winquist for keeping the project running smoothly and on time.

I was delighted when Tom Muck, an acknowledged Dreamweaver expert, agreed to act as my technical reviewer again. He saved me from several embarrassing mistakes (any that remain are my responsibility alone), and his deep knowledge of Dreamweaver and other web technologies added valuable perspective throughout the book.

I'm also grateful to Devin Fernandez and Scott Fegette of Adobe, who gave me unparalleled access to the Dreamweaver development team and endured my rants and complaints with good humor when I didn't like some of the changes being made to my favorite web development program. Thanks for restoring the colored icons, guys. Well, that and everything else—this version is a stunner.

Others are probably totally unaware of the role they played in shaping this book, but it was nonetheless significant. I'm referring to participants in the friends of ED and Adobe online forums, who asked how to do certain things with Dreamweaver, JavaScript, or PHP. Many of their ideas have been woven into this new edition.

Finally, thank you for choosing my book.

INTRODUCTION

Dreamweaver isn't a difficult program to use, but it's difficult to use well. I have been using Dreamweaver on a daily basis for about nine years, pushing it to the limit and finding out its good points—and its bad ones, too. The user interface has changed considerably in Dreamweaver CS4, and the introduction of new features, such as Related Files and Live view, is likely to have a big impact on the way even long-term Dreamweaver users create web pages.

The idea of this book is to help you get the best out of Dreamweaver CS4, with particular emphasis on building dynamic web pages using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), Spry—the Adobe implementation of Ajax—and other JavaScript frameworks, and the open source server-side technology PHP. But how can you get the best out of this book?

Who this book is for

I like to credit my readers with intelligence, so this book isn't "Dreamweaver CS4 for the Clueless" or "Dreamweaver CS4 for Complete Beginners." You don't need to be an expert, but you do need to have an inquiring mind. It doesn't teach the basics of web design, nor does it attempt to list every single feature in Dreamweaver CS4. The emphasis is on building modern, standards-compliant websites. If you're at home with the basics of HTML and CSS, then this book is for you. If you have never built a website before and don't know the difference between an <a> tag and your Aunt Jemima, you might find this book a bit of a struggle.

> *In this edition, I use HTML to refer equally to Hypertext Markup Language and Extensible Hypertext Markup Language (XHTML). HTML 4.01 and XHTML 1.0 are essentially the same. The only difference is that XHTML 1.0 applies stricter rules in the way it is written (see* `http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/#diffs` *for the details). All the code examples adhere to the rules of XHTML 1.0, the default setting in Dreamweaver CS4.*

I frequently dive into Code view and expect you to roll up your sleeves and get to grips with the code. It's not coding for coding's sake; the idea is to adapt the code generated by

Dreamweaver to create websites that really work. I explain everything as I go along and steer clear of impenetrable jargon. As for CSS, you don't need to be a candidate for inclusion in the CSS Zen Garden (http://www.csszengarden.com), but you should understand the basic principles behind creating a style sheet.

What about Ajax and PHP? I don't assume any prior knowledge in these fields. Ajax comes in many different guises; this book concentrates mainly on Spry, the Adobe Ajax framework (code library) that is integrated into Dreamweaver CS4. Most Spry features are accessed through intuitive dialog boxes. However, Chapter 8 gets inside the code, exploring not only Spry, but the improved support in Dreamweaver CS4 for other JavaScript libraries, such as jQuery (http://jquery.com/) and the Yahoo! User Interface (YUI) Library (http://developer.yahoo.net/yui).

Dreamweaver also takes care of a lot of the PHP coding, but it can't do everything, so I show you how to customize the code it generates. Chapter 10 serves as a crash course in PHP, and Chapter 11 puts that knowledge to immediate use by showing you how to send an email from an online form—one of the things that Dreamweaver doesn't automate. This book doesn't attempt to teach you how to become a PHP programmer, but by the time you reach the final chapter, you should have sufficient confidence to look a script in the eye without flinching.

"Do I need Dreamweaver CS4?"

Most definitely, yes. Although the PHP features remain basically unchanged since Dreamweaver 8.0.2, the changes to the Document window and Property inspector are so substantial that you would have considerable difficulty using this book with an earlier version of Dreamweaver. If you're still using Dreamweaver CS3, get a copy of the CS3 version of this book. If you want to use PHP in an earlier version of Dreamweaver, I suggest you read my *Foundation PHP for Dreamweaver 8* (friends of ED, ISBN: 978-1-59059-569-5) instead. Inevitably, some things have changed since those books were published, but all important corrections and updates are listed on the relevant errata pages at http://friendsofed.com/.

What's different from the CS3 edition?

I hate it when I buy a book and find myself reading familiar page after familiar page. This book is a revised edition of *The Essential Guide to Dreamweaver CS3 with CSS, Ajax, and PHP* (friends of ED, ISBN: 978-1-59059-859-7), updated to take account of the changes in Dreamweaver CS4. Most of the examples are inherited from the previous edition, but many of them have been reworked to take advantage of new features, such as Live view, Related Files, and the Code Navigator. I have also reorganized the exercises with the PHP server behaviors in what I hope you will agree is a more logical sequence. Chapter 14 offers a gentler introduction to interaction with a database before tackling the vital subject of server-side validation in Chapter 15.

I have also devoted more attention to working with Spry, as well as with other JavaScript libraries. Chapter 8 explores hand-coding with Spry and introduces web widgets that use jQuery and the YUI Library.

Every chapter has been completely revised and rewritten, and I have added a chapter on the basics of inserting content in a web page in Dreamweaver. This is mainly for the benefit of readers migrating from another web development program, such as Adobe GoLive, which has now been discontinued. It will also help newcomers to web development. However, as I mentioned earlier, you should already know the basics of HTML and CSS. Another new chapter deals with the mechanics of deploying a database-driven website on the Internet. You'll find details of all the major new features in Dreamweaver CS4 in the following chapters:

- Chapter 1 covers the changes to the user interface, Live Code, and screen sharing.
- Chapter 2 describes how to integrate your sites with Subversion version control.
- Chapter 3 shows you how to work with Photoshop Smart Objects.
- In Chapter 4 you'll begin working with the Related Files toolbar and Live view, and in Chapter 6 you're introduced to the Code Navigator—new tools that are used throughout the book.
- Chapter 8 covers the JavaScript Extractor and JavaScript web widgets.
- Chapter 13 describes in detail how to prepare pages for use with Adobe's new online service, InContext Editing.
- Chapter 19 shows you how to use the Spry Data Set wizard to create data sets from both HTML and XML data sources in a visually intuitive way.

Even though this book is about 200 pages longer than the previous edition, there are so many new features in Dreamweaver CS4 that I needed to drop some material. With reluctance, I decided the installation instructions for Apache, PHP, and MySQL in the Dreamweaver CS3 edition had to go. I did this for several reasons. Covering every combination of operating system and software was becoming too complicated. Separate instructions are needed for Windows XP and Vista, as well as for Mac OS X 10.4 and 10.5. With the release of MySQL 5.1, PHP 5.3, and Mac OS X 10.6 expected during the lifetime of this book, printed instructions rapidly go out of date. Perhaps most importantly, the all-in-one installation packages—XAMPP for Windows (`http://www.apachefriends.org/en/xampp-windows.html`) and MAMP for Mac OS X (`http://www.mamp.info/en/mamp.html`)—are reliable and easy to install.

Windows- and Mac-friendly

I have personally tested everything in this book in Windows and Mac OS X. The overwhelming majority of screenshots were taken on Windows Vista, but I have included separate screenshots from the Mac version where appropriate. I have also pointed out significant differences between the Windows and Mac versions of Dreamweaver, although there aren't many of them.

Keyboard shortcuts are given in the order Windows/Mac, and I point out when a particular shortcut is exclusive to Windows (some Dreamweaver shortcuts conflict with Exposé and

Spotlight in the Mac version). The only place where I haven't given the Mac equivalent is with regard to right-clicking. Since the advent of Mighty Mouse, right-clicking is now native to the Mac, but if you're an old-fashioned kind of guy or gal and still use a one-button mouse, Ctrl-click whenever I tell you to right-click (I'm sure you knew that anyway).

Some Mac keyboard shortcuts use the Option (Opt) key. If you're new to a Mac and can't find an Opt key on your keyboard, in some countries it's labeled Alt. The Command (Cmd) key has an apple and/or a cloverleaf symbol.

Using the download files

All the necessary files for in this book can be downloaded from `http://www.friendsofed.com/downloads.html`. The files are arranged in five top-level folders, as follows:

- `examples`: This contains the `.html` and `.php` files for all the examples and exercises, arranged by chapter. Use the File Compare feature in Dreamweaver (see Chapter 2) to check your own code against these files. Some exercises provide partially completed files for you to work with. Where indicated, copy the necessary files from this folder to the `workfiles` folder so you always have a backup if things go wrong. The easiest way to do this is to open the file in the `examples` folder and use File ➤ Save As to save the file to its new destination.
- `extras`: This contains a Dreamweaver extension that loads a suite of useful PHP code fragments into the Snippets panel, as well as a saved query for the Find and Replace panel, and SQL files to load data for the exercises into your database.
- `images`: This contains all the images used in the exercises and online gallery.
- `SpryAssets`: This contains the finished versions of Spry-related style sheets. With one exception, it does *not* contain the external JavaScript files needed to display Spry effects, widgets, or data sets. Dreamweaver should copy the JavaScript files and unedited style sheets to this folder automatically when you do the exercises as described in this book.
- `workfiles`: This is an empty folder, where you should build the pages used in the exercises.

Copy these folders to the top level of the site that you create for working with this book (see Chapter 2).

Support for this book

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, but mistakes do slip through. If you find what you think is an error—and it's not listed on the book's corrections page at `http://www.friendsofed.com`—please submit an error report to `http://www.friendsofed.com/errataSubmission.html`. When ED has finished with the thumbscrews and got me to admit I'm wrong, we'll post the details for everyone's benefit on the friends of ED site. I also plan

to post details on my own website at http://foundationphp.com/dwcs4/updates.php of changes to Dreamweaver or other software that affect instructions in the book.

I want you to get the best out of this book and will try to help you if you run into difficulty. Before calling for assistance, though, start with a little self-help. Throughout the book, I have added "Troubleshooting" sections based heavily on frequently asked questions, together with my own experience of things that are likely to go wrong. Make use of the File Compare feature in Dreamweaver to check your code against the download files. If you're using a software firewall, try turning it off temporarily to see whether the problem goes away.

If none of these approaches solves your problem, scan the chapter subheadings in the "Contents" section, and try looking up a few related expressions in the index. Also try a quick search on the Internet: Google and the other large search engines are your friends. My apologies if all this sounds obvious, but an amazing number of people spend more time waiting for an answer in an online forum than it would take to go through these simple steps.

If you're still stuck, visit http://www.friendsofed.com/forums/. Use the following guidelines to help others help you:

- Always check the book's updates and corrections pages. The answer may already be there.
- Search the forum to see whether your question has already been answered.
- Give your message a meaningful subject line. It's likely to get a swifter response and may help others with a similar problem.
- Say which book you're using, and give a page reference to the point that's giving you difficulty.
- Give precise details of the problem. "It doesn't work" gives no clue as to the cause. "When I do so and so, x happens" is a lot more informative.
- If you get an error message, say what it contains.
- Be brief and to the point. Don't ask half a dozen questions at once.
- It's often helpful to know your operating system, and if it's a question about PHP, which version of PHP and which web server you're using.
- Don't post the same question simultaneously in several different forums. If you find the answer elsewhere, have the courtesy to close the forum thread and post a link to the answer.

The help I give in the friends of ED and Adobe forums is not limited to problems arising from my books, but please be realistic in your expectations when asking for help in a free online forum. Although the Internet never sleeps, the volunteers who answer questions certainly do. They're also busy people, who might not always be available. Don't post hundreds of lines of code and expect someone else to scour it for mistakes. And if you do get the help that you need, keep the community spirit alive by answering questions that you know the answer to.

Layout conventions

To keep this book as clear and easy to follow as possible, the following text conventions are used throughout.

Important words or concepts are normally highlighted on the first appearance in **bold type**.

Code is presented in `fixed-width font`.

New or changed code is normally presented in **`bold fixed-width font`**.

Pseudo-code and variable input are written in *`italic fixed-width font`*.

Menu commands are written in the form Menu ➤ Submenu ➤ Submenu.

Where I want to draw your attention to something, I've highlighted it like this:

> *Ahem, don't say I didn't warn you.*

Sometimes code won't fit on a single line in a book. Where this happens, I use an arrow like this: ➥.

```
This is a very, very long section of code that should be written all on ➥
the same line without a break.
```

1 DREAMWEAVER'S NEW LOOK—MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Dreamweaver CS4 has a new look. At first glance, the changes might look superficial: a slightly different default layout of panels and a charcoal-gray livery. The program now shares the same user interface (UI) as other Creative Suite programs, making it easier for designers to create their basic design in Photoshop or Illustrator, and then prepare it for the Web in Dreamweaver.

Although the changes to the UI are important, it's the underlying functionality that really matters, and that's where Dreamweaver CS4 has changed dramatically. New features, such as Related Files, Live view, and the Code Navigator, make this the most significant release of Dreamweaver since Dreamweaver MX in 2002. The changes are aimed at helping designers and coders alike, and are likely to have a big impact on the workflow of existing users. Whether you're a newcomer to Dreamweaver or an old hand, to get the best out of the program, you need to find your way around the UI and new features.

In this chapter, you'll learn about the following:

- Using the OWL 2.0 UI
- Switching panels to iconic mode
- Converting the Insert panel into a tabbed Insert bar
- Using the Related Files feature to edit files linked to a web page
- Selecting options for Split view
- Previewing pages inside the Document window with Live view
- Navigating directly to style rules with the Code Navigator
- Editing HTML and Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) markup with the revamped Property inspector

Another important change with Dreamweaver CS4 is that Bridge and Device Central have become optional components. Bridge is a powerful file organizer (like Windows Explorer or Mac Finder on steroids). It has many features designed to appeal to designers and photographers, such as file previews, and keyword and metadata management. Device Central lets you see what your website will look like on a range of mobile devices. Both Bridge and Device Central are integrated with other Creative Suite programs, but many Dreamweaver users were unhappy that they had no choice whether to install them with the previous version. Adobe listened to the complaints, and has made many programs bundled with Dreamweaver CS4 optional. However, one optional program that you should install is Extension Manager, which is used to install extensions that add extra features and functionality to Dreamweaver. I'll show you how to use Extension Manager in Chapter 8, but the main emphasis throughout this book is, of course, on Dreamweaver CS4.

This chapter covers the nuts and bolts of the Dreamweaver interface. It's written with both newcomers and old hands in mind. If you're upgrading from a previous version of Dreamweaver, a lot of things will be instantly familiar; the UI is a subtle blend of old and new. However, even when things look the same, they often work slightly differently. For example, pressing F4 still hides most panels, but moving your mouse to the edge of the screen brings back anything hidden on that side (read "Temporarily hiding panels," if you want to disable that behavior). Because there are so many features in the UI, you might

want to skim quickly through this chapter to see what it contains, and come back later when you need to find out how a particular feature works.

Let's begin with an overview of the Dreamweaver CS4 interface.

Exploring the UI

The common interface shared by all programs in Adobe Creative Suite 4 is officially known as OWL 2.0. OWL stands for OS (operating system) Widget Library. OWL not only gives a common feel and look to CS4 programs, but it also eliminates most differences in the way each program operates in Windows and Mac OS X. With only a few minor exceptions, the Mac version of Dreamweaver now looks and works identically to its Windows counterpart.

Inspecting the default workspace

The Dreamweaver CS4 workspace is infinitely configurable, and you can save your own layouts. Figures 1-1 and 1-2 show what greets you when you first open the program in Windows and Mac OS X, respectively.

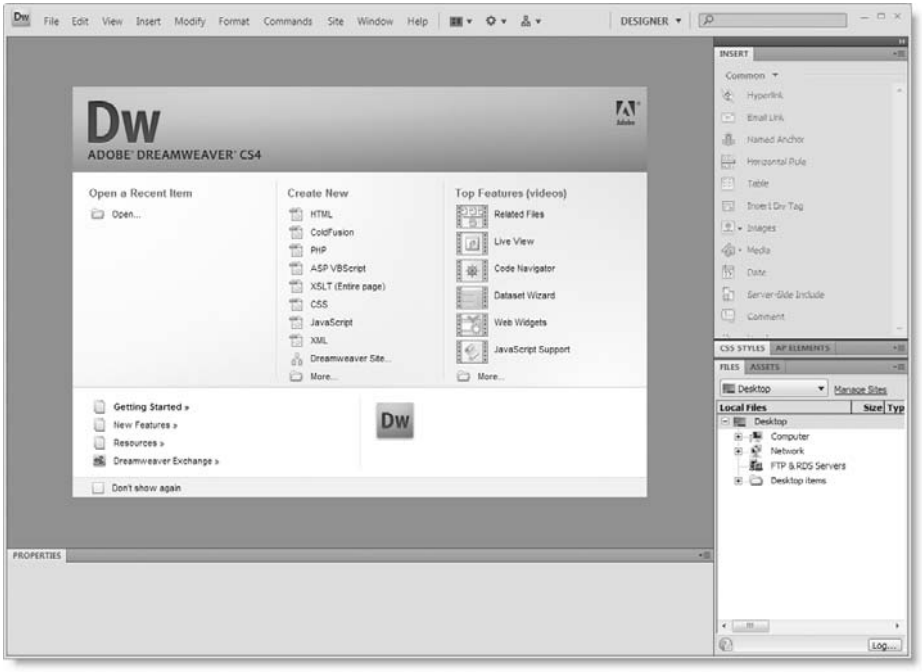

Figure 1-1. The default layout when you first open Dreamweaver CS4 in Windows