

Site Maintenance Using Dreamweaver

As you know, it is possible to transfer the files that make up your web site from your local computer to the remote server using FTP (file transfer protocol) or some other means. There are many popular programs for doing this ... for example, Fetch (Mac) or WS_FTP (Windows). Using this method requires the developer to constantly keep track of which files are updated and, as a result, in need of being transferred to the server. Dreamweaver includes powerful site management capabilities that make the process of [synchronizing files](#) between your local computer and the server virtually transparent. In order to take advantage of these capabilities, you must create a “Site,” as described below. In addition to synchronizing files, Dreamweaver also facilitates the process of [checking hyperlinks](#), [changing a file name](#), or [visually representing the links](#) between the many files in your site. But, before beginning, it is good to take a bit of time to consider the manner in which the various files within your site will be organized.¹

Organizing the site structure

Organizing your site carefully from the beginning can save you frustration and time later on. If you begin creating documents without thinking about where in your folder hierarchy they should go, you may end up with a huge, unwieldy folder full of files, or with related files scattered through a lot of similarly named folders.

The usual way to set up a site is to create a folder on your local disk that contains all the files for your site (referred to as the local site), and to create and edit documents within that folder. You then copy those files to a web server when you are ready to publish your site and allow the public to view it. This approach is better than creating and editing files on the live public website itself, because it allows you to test changes in the local site before making them publicly viewable, and then when you're finished, you can upload the local site files and update the entire public site at once. Once you set up the local site with Dreamweaver, you can more easily manage your site files, track links, update pages, and more.

Break down your site into categories Put related pages in the same folder. For example, your teaching materials, musical examples, and software reviews might all go in one folder, and the promotional material for your rock band might go in another folder. Use subfolders where necessary (e.g., for images, sound files, etc.). This type of organization will make your site easier to maintain and navigate.

Decide where to put items such as images and sound files It's convenient to place all your images, for example, in one location, so that when you want to insert an image into a page you know where to find it. Designers sometimes place all of the non-HTML items to be used on a site in a folder called Assets. That folder may contain other folders—for example, an Images folder, a Shockwave folder, and a Sound folder. Or you might have a

¹ Some of the information on these pages is taken from the Help files provided with Dreamweaver MX.

separate Assets folder for each group of related pages on your site, if there aren't many assets shared among such groups.



Use the same structure for local and remote sites Your local site and your remote website should have exactly the same structure. If you create a local site using Dreamweaver and then upload everything to the remote site, Dreamweaver ensures that the local structure is precisely duplicated in the remote site.

Creating a New Site ([back to top](#))

To begin the Site Definition process:

1. Open the New Site dialog (Site→New Site...)²
2. There are two methods for creating a web site:
 - a. Basic – uses a “wizard” to step you through the basic process
 - b. Advanced (the method we will use) – allows the developer more control over the site
3. Click on the “Advanced” tab to select the appropriate mode³

Configuring settings for your local files:

4. Click on “Local Info” in the list of categories
5. Enter a name in the “Site Name” textbox; this is the label that will be used within Dreamweaver to refer to the site you are creating
6. Identify the folder on the local computer that will serve as the “root directory” of the site you are creating
 - a. this must be a unique folder for this site and this site only⁴

² At any time, you can edit the settings for a site previously created by selecting “Edit Site...” from the Site menu. (Site→Edit Site...). Alternatively, you can use the menus available in the Site *panel* (Window→Site or press F8). There are many more site maintenance options available (recreate cache, check links, etc.) from the Site panel menu than there are from the Site menu in the menu selections at the top of the main Dreamweaver window. The distinction between the main menus and the panel menus is an important one to keep in mind.

³ This tutorial will focus only on the first two (Local Info and Remote Info) of the many categories of information you can enter to create a site. Feel free to explore the other options.

- b. you can either type in the path to the folder or click on the folder icon (recommended) and browse to the folder using an interface similar to Finder (Mac) or Windows Explorer (PC)
7. Make sure there is a check in the box next to “Refresh Local File List Automatically,” so that the list of files you see in the Site Files list will always be up-to-date without requiring you to “refresh” the list manually
8. Two optional (but recommended) settings:
 - a. identify an images folder for the site by clicking on the folder icon to the right of the “Default Images Folder” textbox
 - i. usually this will be a folder labeled “images” contained inside of the root folder for your site; if this is a new site, you can create the “images” folder inside of your site root directory as you proceed by clicking on the “new folder” icon on the Finder (Mac) or Windows Explorer (PC) toolbar
 - b. provide the absolute address (including “http://”) to the root folder of your web site on the remote server; e.g., `http://www.myserver.com/mysite/`
 - i. on the PubWeb server, a person with username “abc123” would enter the following info: `http://pubweb.northwestern.edu/~abc123/`
9. Make sure there is a check in the box next to “Enable Cache,” which speeds up the site maintenance processes
 - a. at any time, you can manually update the information in cache memory by accessing the Site menu in the “Site” panel⁵ (not the Site menu in the main Dreamweaver window, then selecting “Recreate Site Cache”

Configuring settings for the remote server:

10. Select the “Remote Info” category
11. From the “Access” drop-down box, select “FTP”
 - a. there are other options for transferring files, but FTP (file transfer protocol) is the one most often used
12. In the “FTP Host” textbox, type in the URL for your server
 - a. for PubWeb, this would be “pubweb.northwestern.edu” (notice that there is no `http://`)
 - i. for PubWeb sites, make sure that you do *not* erroneously add “www” to the beginning of this entry
13. In the “Host Directory” textbox, type the path to your files
 - a. on the PubWeb server, the person referenced above would type the following: `~abc123/public_html/`⁶
14. Enter the Login (i.e., your NUnet username) and password you use
15. Make sure you are connected to the internet, then click on the “Test” button to check the connection to your remote server

⁴ You will find that creating a site that overlaps the directory structure of another site can cause problems ... and Dreamweaver will provide a warning message if you attempt to do this.

⁵ From the main Dreamweaver menu bar, select Window→Site or press F8.

⁶ On PubWeb, every user’s HTML files are contained in a subfolder named “public_html” that is located inside a folder identified by the NUnet username. Therefore, to access these files directly, you must append “public_html” to the Host Directory path.

- a. if successful, proceed with the following steps
 - b. if you do not connect successfully, you will need to troubleshoot and make sure that you entered all Remote Info accurately ... one minor typo will cause the connection to fail. DO NOT proceed until you have successfully tested the connection.
16. I strongly advise that, after testing the connection successfully, you **remove the check from the box next to “Save”** to the right of the Password textbox; otherwise, anyone who uses Dreamweaver on the local computer will be given direct access to your local files AND the files on your remote server.
 17. You may wish to review the remaining options in the Remote Info category. For now, just leave them all at their default (unchecked) values.
 - a. Feel free to explore the other categories of information in the Site Definition property window. For the time being, it is wise not to change any of these values unless you are absolutely certain of the function. Any value set incorrectly could cause the connection to fail.
 18. When finished exploring, click on the “OK” button, then click on “Done” in the “Edit Sites” dialog box.

Site Maintenance Tasks ([back to top](#))

Now that you have created a “Site” in Dreamweaver, many powerful capabilities are at your disposal. It is possible to create many sites in Dreamweaver and easily navigate from one to the other with a single mouse click: simply select one of the sites listed in the “Site Files” drop-down list in the Site panel (Site→Site Files).

Other capabilities include:

Synchronizing Files

Once you’ve created files in your local and remote sites, you can synchronize the files between the two sites. Use the Site→Synchronize command in the Site *panel* (not the main menu) to transfer the latest versions of your files to and from your remote site. If your remote site is an FTP server (like ours), then synchronizing your files uses FTP, since we selected that option in the “Remote Info” category when we created our site.

Before you synchronize your site, Dreamweaver lets you verify which files you want to put onto or get from your remote server. Dreamweaver also confirms which files have been updated after you complete the synchronization.

To see which files are newer on the local site or the remote site, without synchronizing, do one of the following:

- Choose Edit→Select Newer Local or Edit→Select Newer Remote (Windows, from the Site panel).
- Choose Site→SiteFiles→View→Select Newer Local or Site→Site Files View→Select Newer Remote (Mac).

To synchronize your files:

1. In the Site panel, choose a site from the Current Sites list pop-up menu.
2. Select specific files or folders.

If you want to synchronize the entire site, skip this step.

3. In the Site panel, do one of the following to synchronize:
 - o Choose Site→Synchronize.
 - o Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Macintosh), and then select Synchronize from the context menu.

The Synchronize Files dialog box appears.

4. Select the appropriate options in the dialog box that appears.
5. Click on the “Preview” button.
6. Dreamweaver will provide a list of all the files that need to be updated to synchronize your local and remote sites
 - o you may “uncheck” any files that you do not want to update for any reason; only files that have a check mark next to them will be updated
 - o To this point, Dreamweaver has made no changes to either your local or remote site; if you click on the “Cancel” button the Synchronnization process will be terminated and no files will be updated
7. Click on the “OK” button to initiate the synchronization process

Dreamweaver automatically synchronizes files. If the files are already in sync, Dreamweaver lets you know you that no synchronization is necessary.

Checking Links in a Page or Sitewide ([back to top](#))

Fixing broken links (links that no longer follow a valid path or point to a nonexistent file) on a large site can be a tedious and time-consuming problem. This is because a large site can contain hundreds of links to internal and external documents, and the links might change over time. Orphaned files (files that still exist in the site but no other files in the site link to) can be a problem too, because they take up disk space and may confuse other team members working on the site.

Use the Check Links feature to search for broken links and unreferenced files in an open file, a portion of a local site, or an entire local site. The only links that Dreamweaver verifies are links to documents within the site; Dreamweaver compiles a list of external links that appear in the selected document or documents, but does not verify them.

When Dreamweaver finishes checking links in the specified files, it opens the Link Checker panel (in the Results panel group). This dialog box displays a list of broken links, external links (links that Dreamweaver can't check), and orphaned files.

To check links within the current document:

1. Choose File→Check Page→Check Links.

The report appears in the Link Checker panel (in the Results panel group).

2. To save the report, click the Save Report button in the Link Checker panel.

Note: The target browser report is a temporary file—it will be lost if you don't save it.

To check links within a portion of a local site:

1. In the Site panel, choose a site from the Current Sites pop-up menu.
2. In Local view, select the files or folders to check.
3. Initiate the check by doing one of the following:
 - Right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Macintosh) one of the selected files, and then choose Check Links > Selected Files/Folders from the context menu.
 - Choose File→Check Page→Check Links.

The report appears in the Link Checker panel (in the Results panel group).

4. In the Link Checker panel, select a specific link report from the Show pop-up menu to view another report.

Your report choices are Broken Links and External Links. You can check for Orphaned Files when you check links across an entire site (see the next procedure).

5. To save a report, click the Save Report button in the Link Checker panel.

To check links in the entire site:

1. In the Site panel, choose a site from the Current Sites pop-up menu.
2. Choose Site→Check Links Sitewide.

The report appears in the Link Checker panel (in the Results panel group).

3. In the Link Checker panel, select a specific link report from the Show pop-up menu to view another report.

Your report choices are Broken Links, External Links, and Orphaned Files.

4. A list of files that fit the report type you selected appears in the Link Checker dialog box.

Note: If you select Orphaned Files as your report type, you can delete orphaned files from the Link Checker panel directly by selecting a file from the list and pressing the Delete key.

A list of files that fit the report type you selected appears in the Link Checker panel.

5. To save a report, click the Save Report button in the Link Checker panel.

Changing File Names ([back to top](#))

One of the difficulties inherent in maintaining a web site as more and more files are added is keeping track of the many links between files. If you ever change the name of a file, it is imperative that all links to that file are updated to reflect the new name, or those links will become “broken” and will no longer function as intended. A significant advantage of enabling Dreamweaver’s cache – remember that you placed a check in this box when you created the site following the instructions above – is that this process occurs automatically. In order to take advantage of this capability, however, it is absolutely essential that you change the file name from within Dreamweaver’s “Site” panel ... *not* using Finder (Mac) or Windows Explorer (PC).

To change a file name and all associated links:

1. In the “Site” Panel, select the file that you wish to change, then click on it a second time (do not *double-click* the file) or it will open in the work area.
2. When the text becomes highlighted, simply type in the new file name, then press RETURN (Mac) or ENTER (PC).
3. After you enter the new filename, Dreamweaver will automatically search through your entire site to locate references to the changed file.
4. If any links need to be updated, an “Update Files” dialog box will appear, giving you the option either to update the files or leave them as they are
 - a. there are very few circumstances under which you should choose *not* to update the files; in doing so, you would essentially be creating broken links
5. To complete the process, simply click on the “Update” button
 - a. the files will automatically be opened, updated, and re-saved, making the job of site maintenance much easier than it once was!!

Using Site Map View ([back to top](#))

Use the site map to view a local folder for a Dreamweaver site as a visual map of linked icons, to add new files to a Dreamweaver site, or to add, modify, or remove links. The site map is ideal for laying out a site structure. You can quickly set up the entire structure of the site and then create a graphic image of the site map.

Note: The site map applies to local sites only. To create a map of a remote site, copy the contents of the remote site into a folder on your local disk, and then use the Edit Sites command to define the site as a local site.