

How to work with external Cascading Style Sheets

Many web professionals find that using an *external style sheet*--a style sheet that exists in its own file--offers a number of advantages over including styles in the header of an HTML file. These advantages include:

- Flexibility: With CSS stored in one file, you can easily change the appearance of all documents that refer to the external style sheet (**Figure 1**).
- Consistency: All documents sharing the same style sheet will have a similar appearance.

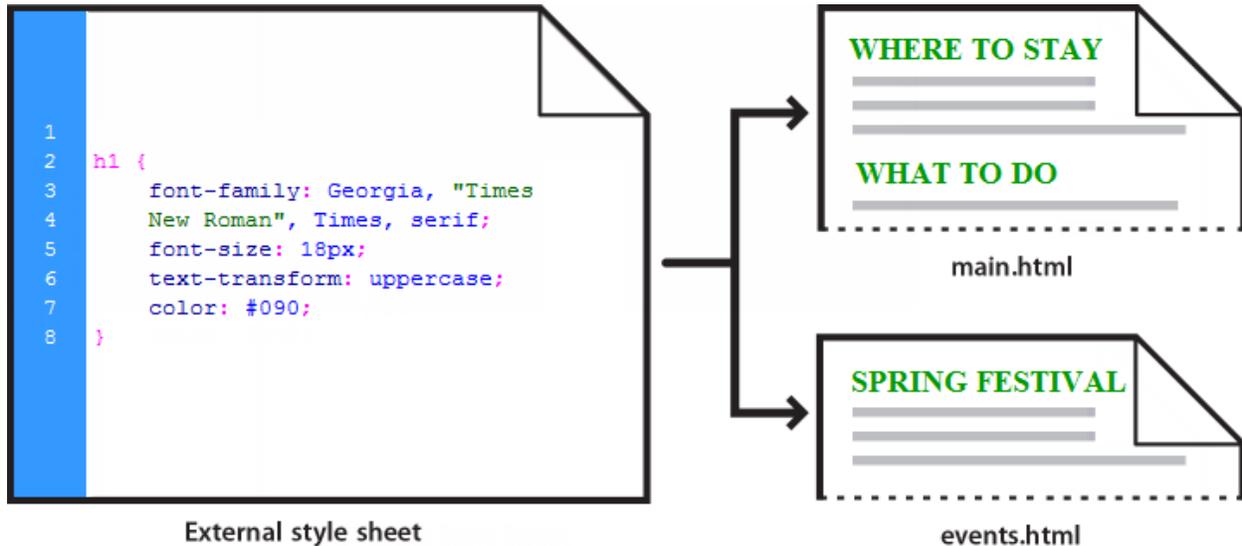


Figure 1 Updating a CSS rule in one place updates all elements

Using an external style sheet separates *form* from *content*. Separating form from content is a widely-adopted principle in web design which allows, among other benefits, for content to be shared in a range of contexts.

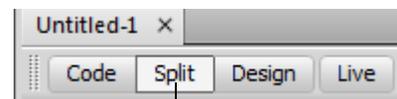
Exporting CSS rules to an external style sheet

You can convert an internal CSS style sheet to an external one by creating a new CSS style sheet, moving the CSS rules over, then removing the internal CSS. You can easily attach an external CSS style sheet to one or more web pages.

To create a new a style sheet:

1. Start Dreamweaver, open a web page you've previously worked on that contains internal CSS rules.
2. In the Document toolbar, click the Show Code And Design Views (Split) button (**Figure 2**).

Being able to view the code that Dreamweaver generates for creating styles will be useful to help you understand and write your own CSS syntax later on.



Show Code And Design Views button

Figure 2 Document window view options

3. Choose Windows > CSS Designer.

The CSS Designer panel opens (**Figure 3**).

4. In the Sources pane of the CSS Designer panel, click the plus symbol to add a CSS source and choose Create a New CSS File (**Figure 4**).

The Create A New CSS File dialog box opens (**Figure 5**).

5. Type an name for the new CSS file in the text field and confirm that Link is selected as the Add As option.
6. Click OK.

Dreamweaver attaches the style sheet to your document (**Figure 6**).

The newly-created CSS file is added to the Document toolbar, a link to the external CSS is inserted into the head section of the HTML page, and the CSS file is included in the Sources pane of the CSS Designer panel.

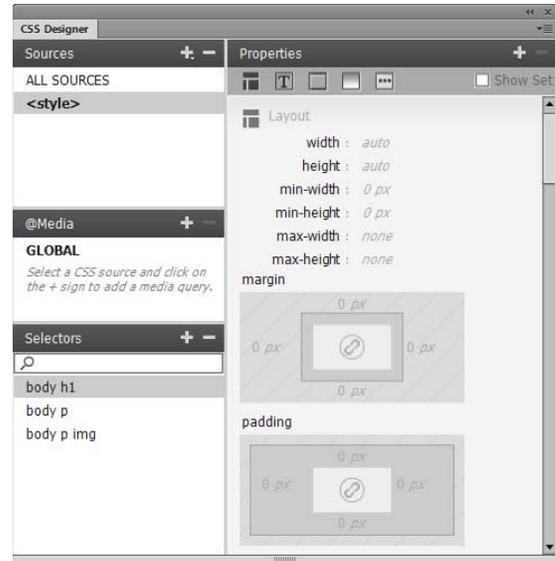


Figure 3 CSS Designer panel

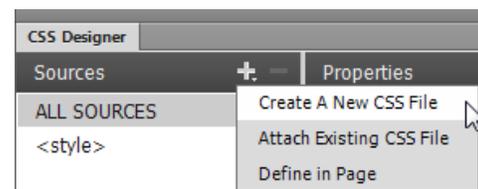


Figure 4 Select a CSS source

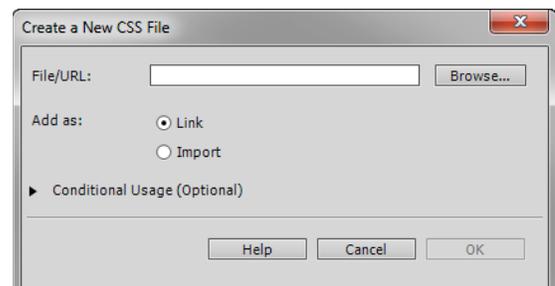


Figure 5 Create A New CSS File dialog box

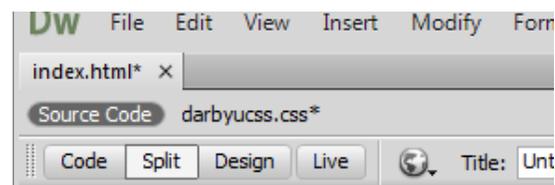


Figure 6 Create Dreamweaver

7. In Code View, drag to select the two or more styles you previously created. Be sure to include the selectors and everything that falls between, including the braces (Figure 7). Do not include the opening and closing <style> tags.
 8. Select Edit > Cut.
 9. Click the newly-created CSS document in the Document toolbar.
 10. Place the cursor on the first available line beneath the @charset line of code.
 11. Select Edit > Paste.
- The copied CSS styles are pasted from the Clipboard into the CSS document.
12. Select File > Save.
 13. Return to the HTML document in the document window.

15. Select File > Save.

```

7 <style type="text/css">
8 body h1 {
9     font-family: Constantia, "Lucida Bright", "DejaVu
    Serif", Georgia, serif;
10    text-transform: uppercase;
11    color: #990000;
12    text-align: center;
13 }
14 body p {
15    color: #006600;
16    font-family: "Lucida Grande", "Lucida Sans
    Unicode", "Lucida Sans", "DejaVu Sans", Verdana,
    sans-serif;
17    font-size: 14px;
18    margin-right: 5px;
19    margin-left: 5px;
20 }
21 body p img {
22    margin-top: 5px;
23    margin-left: 5px;
24    margin-right: 5px;
25    margin-bottom: 5px;
26    border-color: #330000;
27    border-width: 2px;
28 }
29 </style>
    
```

Figure 7 Selecting CSS styles

- Notice in the Design View that all formatting for the text remains as it was before, despite removing the internal CSS rules. This is because the HTML page is now importing the rules from the newly-created CSS file.
14. In the Sources pane of the CSS Designer panel, click the <style> source and the click the minus symbol to remove the internal CSS tags (Figure 8).

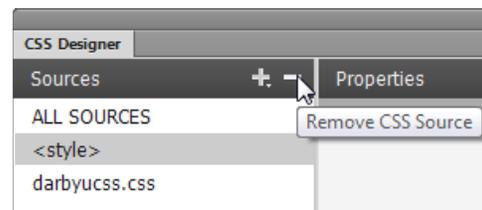


Figure 8 Delete a CSS source

The <style> tags are removed from the head section of the HTML document.

Attaching an external style sheet

Once you create an external style sheet you can easily attach it to multiple documents, and instantly change any style in all your documents by making changes to the external style sheet.

To attach an external style sheet:

1. Open a document in Dreamweaver that does not have any internal or external CSS associated with it.
2. Choose Windows > CSS Designer.

The CSS Designer panel opens (Figure 9).

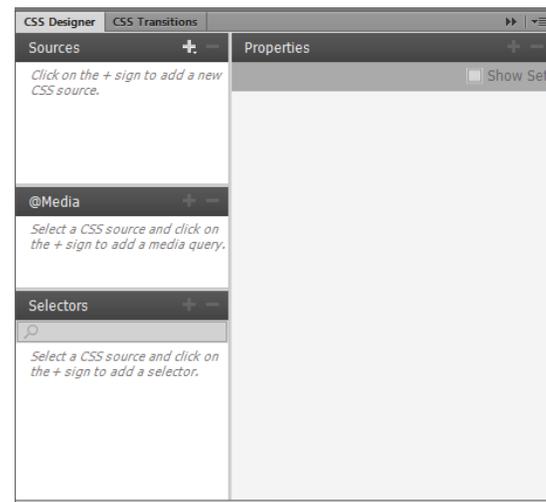


Figure 9 CSS Designer panel

- In the Sources pane of the CSS Designer panel, click the plus symbol to add a CSS source and choose Attach Existing CSS File (**Figure 10**).

The Attach Existing CSS File dialog box opens (**Figure 11**).

- Click Browse, navigate to your saved style sheet, select it, and click OK.

Dreamweaver attaches the style sheet to your document.

The newly-created CSS file is added to the Document toolbar, a link to the external CSS is inserted into the head section of the HTML page, and the CSS file is included in the Sources pane of the CSS Designer panel.

You can attach the same style sheet to multiple documents. When you make changes to the style sheet, those changes will appear in all documents the style sheet is attached to.

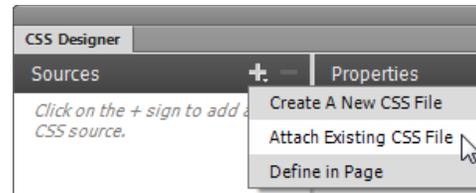


Figure 10 Select a CSS source

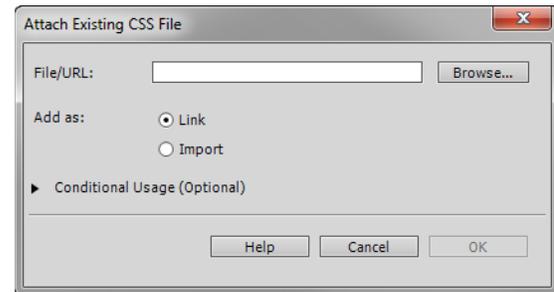


Figure 11 Attach External CSS File dialog box

Creating external style sheets

You can also create external style sheets directly from the New Document dialog box.

To edit create an external Style Sheet:

- Select File > New to create a new document.

The New Document dialog box opens (**Figure 12**).
- In the Blank Page category of the New Document dialog box, select CSS for Page Type.
- Click Create.

The untitled CSS page opens in Dreamweaver in Code View (**Figure 13**).
- Choose File > Save.

The Save As dialog box opens.
- Navigate to the location of the site root folder.
- Type an name for the new CSS file in the File Name text field and click OK.
- Use the CSS Designer panel Sources pane to attach this new CSS file to the HTML page you are working on.

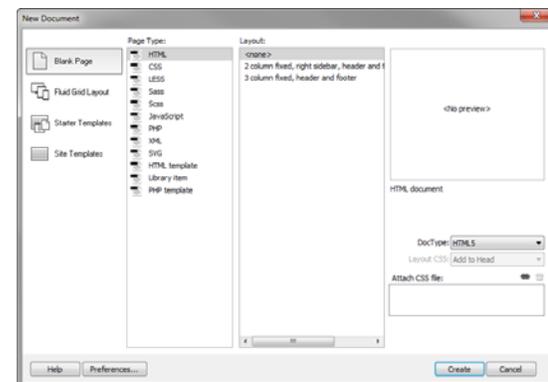


Figure 12 New Document dialog box

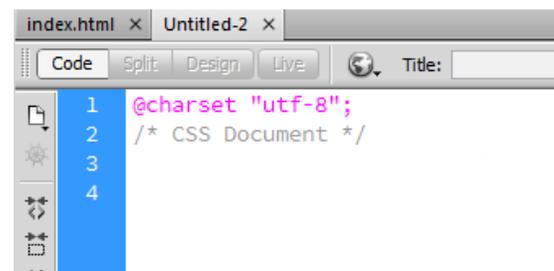


Figure 13 New, blank CSS document