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## Getting Started

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| Do You Need to Learn XHTML to Use Dreamweaver? | 4  | then you would be flying blind, without understanding basic Web design     |
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# What Is Dreamweaver CS3?

**Dreamweaver CS3** is the ninth version of Dreamweaver, and it's also the first version of the application to be released as an Adobe product. In 2005, Adobe acquired Macromedia and their entire product line, including Dreamweaver. Dreamweaver is now part of the Adobe CS3 suite of applications, boasting new features and tight integration with the rest of the CS3 suite.

At its roots, Dreamweaver CS3 is a WYSIWYG (**What You See Is What You Get**) XHTML generator. This means if you change something on the

screen in Dreamweaver CS3, it will show you the results instantly and write the proper code for you. In contrast, if you were to code the XHTML by hand in a non-WYSIWIG editor, you would have to write the code and then view the results in a browser, write more code, and check the browser again. The instant feedback of a live design environment such as Dreamweaver CS3 speeds up your workflow tremendously, because you can see whether you like the results while you are working.

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## HTML vs. XHTML

We are at a rather interesting crossover point in the evolution of the World Wide Web. For many years, HTML (**H**yper**T**ext **M**arkup **L**anguage) was the only code you could use to create a Web page. Sure, you could use other technologies such as JavaScript and CSS and server-side languages such as ASP (**A**ctive **S**erver **P**ages), JSP (**J**ava**S**erver **P**ages), Adobe ColdFusion, and such, but at the heart of every Web page was simple HTML. As of October 4, 2001, the W3C (**W**orld **W**ide **W**eb **C**onsortium), which is the Web standards committee, decided to discontinue HTML. Taking its place is XHTML, a language almost identical to HTML with the exception that it has a stricter format and follows XML syntax rules. Does this mean that if you learned HTML you wasted

your time? Heck, no. You can still use HTML, as well as XHTML, to create Web pages. In fact, knowing HTML will help you make the transition to XHTML, so don't worry.

Over the past several years most Web designers have begun to embrace XHTML and have started using it to develop their Web pages. In an effort to ensure you learn the most up-to-date methods, you will see only XHTML code examples throughout this book. Even though you can still use HTML to create Web pages, not using XHTML would be a disservice to you, because it's the most current standard for creating Web pages. This chapter will give you more information about XHTML so you better understand the role it plays in Web design.

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## Roundtrip XHTML

Dreamweaver has gained and maintained a lot of great reviews and customer loyalty because of its use of Roundtrip XHTML, which lets you easily move between Dreamweaver and another text editor, such as BBEdit from Bare Bones Software or Macromedia HomeSite from Adobe,

with very little or no change to your code. Unless you are a programmer (and chances are you aren't if you are reading this book), this probably won't mean a whole lot to you right now. However, moving between different development tools can be important when you are working with a

programmer or in a team environment where everyone might not be using Dreamweaver. It's nice to know you can do this and not worry about Dreamweaver breaking your code by inserting unwanted or proprietary changes. Don't you wish all programs were so respectful?

Many programmers have looked at WYSIWYG editors with skepticism because of their reputation for inflexibility and inclusion of nonstandard code. Dreamweaver CS3 is one of the few WYSIWYG XHTML editors to win the approval of programmers and designers alike. Programmers like the product because they don't have to worry about their code being changed by Dreamweaver. Designers like it because it writes clean code with-

out inserting a lot of proprietary and self-serving tags, and it lets them visually lay out pages without touching a line of code. It's hard to believe a tool could please both of these divergent groups, but Dreamweaver CS3 does it.

Now, truth be told, Dreamweaver can make some minor changes to a page once it's opened. Since the few changes it makes are usually cleaning up bad code, no one really frowns on these changes. In fact, Dreamweaver lets you control how code is rewritten (if at all) within the **Preferences** area of the program, so you still have full control over this feature. We won't get into those issues now; I cover these changes and how to turn them off (if you want to do so) in Chapter 12, "Using XHTML."

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## Do You Need to Learn XHTML to Use Dreamweaver?

Yes and no. If you use a WYSIWYG XHTML editor, then technically you can create an entire Web page without writing a single line of code. However, at some point you will have to edit the code manually to troubleshoot a problem, such as when you encounter an incompatibility between browsers.

For some, XHTML can be quite intimidating at first glance—your first reaction may be to avoid it at all costs. After all, when you design pages using Adobe Photoshop, QuarkXPress, or Adobe InDesign, you don't need to look at raw Adobe PostScript code anymore, even though the early pioneers of desktop publishing had to know how to program in PostScript just to create a page layout. Designing for print also doesn't include the inherent problem of having to design for multiple browsers and devices displaying the page; a printed page is a printed page, no matter who's viewing it.

In the past, if you didn't know some XHTML, you were at the mercy of a programmer, who might have more control over your design than you liked.

With Dreamweaver CS3, you can get by without understanding or writing a single line of code. However, it won't be long before you need to look at the code and make some changes manually, especially if you intend to be a true professional Web designer or developer. So, I strongly recommend you take the time to learn XHTML. Most people who don't learn XHTML are at a disadvantage in the workplace, especially when they need to troubleshoot problems on their Web pages.

How do you learn XHTML? You can learn it in lots of ways—you can take a class at school, take an online class, buy a training CD-ROM, or buy a book. An easy way to learn XHTML (and the way many designers first begin to learn XHTML) is to view the source code of pages you like. In XHTML, the code is visible to anyone who uses a browser. To view the source code of a page—whether it is in HTML or XHTML—in your browser, choose **View > Page Source** (Firefox), **View > Source** (Internet Explorer), or **View > View Source** (Safari). Once you get comfortable with some of the elements, you will likely be able to deconstruct how these pages were made.

# What Does XHTML Do?

XHTML is a derivative of SGML (**S**tandard **G**eneralized **M**arkup Language), an international standard for representing text in an electronic form that can be used for exchanging documents in an independent manner. XHTML is also the replacement for HTML.

At its heart, XHTML allows for the markup of text and the inclusion of images, as well as the capability to link documents. **Hyperlinks**, which are at the core of any Web page's success, are what let you jump between pages in a site or to view pages on other Web sites. These hyperlinks, or **links**, are references contained within the markup. If the source of the link moves, or the reference to the link is misspelled, it won't work. One of the great attributes of Dreamweaver CS3 is its many site management capabilities, which help you manage your internal links so they are automatically updated if the links are changed.

The last published version of HTML was 4.01. It was replaced by the newer standard, XHTML 1.0, which already exists as a formal recommendation sanctioned by the W3C. The next version of XHTML, version 1.1, is a formal recommendation but is more suitable for internal applications and isn't quite ready for mass public consumption.

So then, how is XHTML different from its close companion HTML? The most visible difference between the two markup languages is in their syntax, with all opening tags requiring a closing tag. Here are some of the key differences:

- All element and attribute names are in lowercase. For example, `<p>` is a valid XHTML element, but `<P>` is not valid.
- All attribute values must be contained within quotation marks (single or double). For example, in HTML you can write `<td nowrap>`, but in XHTML you have to write `<td nowrap="nowrap">`. Be consistent in the type of quotation marks

you use; don't mix single quotation marks with double quotation marks, or vice versa.

- All nonempty elements must have a closing tag. For example, `<p>This is good text.</p>` is a valid XHTML element, but `<p>This is bad text.` is not valid.
- All empty tags should be written with a space and a slash at the end of the tag. For example, `<br />` is a valid XHTML tag, but `<br>` is not. This method of closing empty tags ensures your pages are compatible with older browsers while honoring the XHTML specifications.

Before you panic, I'll point out that Dreamweaver CS3 will write all the XHTML code for you. This gives you the freedom to create your Web pages in a visual way while letting Dreamweaver CS3 create the code behind the scenes. So if you don't have the patience or desire to learn XHTML, you really don't have to do so. Of course, I strongly suggest you take the time to learn XHTML because it will help you build and troubleshoot more complex pages.

XHTML follows the XML rules and syntax guidelines. Because XML has very rigid requirements for writing code, XHTML is a more structured markup language than HTML. This more structured approach to markup languages allows one document to be viewed on multiple devices (browsers, cell phones, personal digital assistants, and so on) by simply creating different style sheets for each device. (You will learn about style sheets later in the book.) In a nutshell, XHTML is basically HTML 4.01 reformatted using the syntax of XML, which is described later in this chapter. You will be glad to know Dreamweaver CS3 has full support for XHTML. In fact, Dreamweaver CS3 can even convert your existing HTML documents to XHTML. You will learn more about this in Chapter 12, "Using XHTML."

# What Does XHTML Look Like?

If you have ever seen HTML code, you will find instant comfort in looking at XHTML code. Because XHTML is a reformatting of HTML, many things look the same or have minor differences. Although XHTML and HTML have some distinct and critical differences, they are both markup languages and share many common traits, which lessens the learning curve if you're already familiar with HTML.

Here are some of the basic elements of an XHTML document written in correct syntax:

1. `<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN" "http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">`
2. `<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml">`
3. `<head>`
4. `<title>Untitled Document</title>`
5. `</head>`
6. `<body>` This is where the content of your page will be placed.
7. `</body>`
8. `</html>`

Here is a breakdown of these XHTML code elements:

1. **DTD (Document Type Definition) or DOCTYPE:** This URL (Uniform Resource Locator) points to a file outlining the available elements, their attributes, and their appropriate usage. Three XHTML DTDs are available:
  - XHTML Transitional lets you maintain backward compatibility with older browsers while still providing access to HTML 4.01

elements. (This is the DOCTYPE I'll be using throughout this book.)

- XHTML Strict removes many of the HTML elements that were designed to control the appearance of a page and how the user interacts with those elements. This is the truest form of XHTML elements.
  - XHTML Frameset gives you access to the HTML elements needed to create framesets.
2. **XML namespace:** This URL points to a file that gives detailed information about the particular XML vocabulary used on the page, which is XHTML in this case.
  3. **Opening head tag:** The `<head>` tag contains all the header information.
  4. **Opening title tag:** The `<title>` tag defines the page title, which appears at the top of the browser window and in a user's bookmark list.
  5. **Closing head tag:** All XHTML tags must be closed, so this is the closing `</head>` tag.
  6. **Opening body tag:** All your visible content will be placed inside the `<body>` tag.
  7. **Closing body tag:** You guessed it! This is the closing `</body>` tag.
  8. **Closing html tag:** Last, but not least, is the closing `</html>` tag.

This example represents only a smidgen of the available XHTML tags, attributes, and values. But it covers the basics and is a great place to start your XHTML education. I give more examples of XHTML in Chapter 4, "Learning the Basics," and Chapter 12, "Using XHTML."

# File-Naming Conventions

Working with XHTML is much more restrictive than working with other types of computer media. One of the strictest parts about XHTML is its file-naming conventions:

- **Don't use spaces:** Save your files using no spaces between the file name elements. For example, the file name **about lynda.html** is illegal because of the space between the words *about* and *lynda*. Instead, write this file name as **about\_lynda.html** or **aboutlynda.html**.
- **Avoid capital letters:** Avoid capitalization in your file names. **AboutLynda.html** will work as a file name, but any time you link to the file you will have to remember the correct capitalization. If you're using a Unix or Linux server, file names are case-sensitive; users typing the link directly into their browsers will most likely type everything lowercase. It is far easier to simply use all lowercase letters.
- **Avoid illegal characters:** The following chart lists the characters to avoid when naming files:

| File-Naming Conventions |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Character               | Usage  |
| .                       | Periods are reserved for file name extensions or suffixes, for example .gif and .jpg.  |
| "                       | Quotation marks are reserved for HTML to indicate the value of tags and attributes.  |
| / or \                  | Slashes (/) indicate files are nested in folders. If you include a slash in your file name, HTML may lose your references, thinking you are specifying a folder. A backslash (\) isn't allowed on Windows servers. |
| :                       | Colons are used to separate certain script commands on Windows and Mac computers. Avoid them in your file names so as to not confuse a file name with a script command.  |
| !                       | Exclamation marks are used in comment tags.  |

## File Name Extensions

You may be curious about the many extensions used after the dot at the end of a file name. The following

chart lists the meaning of some extensions you'll run across during your development adventures:

| File Name Extensions |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Extension            | Usage   |
| .htm, .html          | These two extensions are commonly used to denote an HTML file. The three-letter extension works just as well as the four-letter version. Older DOS systems didn't allow for four-letter extensions, which is why you sometimes see .html abbreviated as .htm. |

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## File Name Extensions *continued*

| Extension | Usage  |
|-----------|--|
| .gif      | GIF images.  |
| .jpg      | JPEG images.   |
| .png      | PNG images (also used for Adobe Fireworks CS3 source files). |
| .swf      | Adobe Flash files.   |
| .mov      | Apple QuickTime movie files.                                 |
| .avi      | AVI movie files.   |
| .aif      | AIFF sound files.  |
| .flv      | Flash Video files.   |

## What Is CSS?

**CSS** is used for many purposes, but its primary function is to separate the presentation of a page from its structure. **Presentation** has to do with the way a page “looks,” whereas **structure** has to do with the “meaning” of the page’s content. For example, an `<h1>` tag defines that the text within is a header and that the text carries some special meaning (the text may be a headline or title, for instance). Whether that header is blue, purple, big, small, italic, or whatever, has to do with its presentation. It’s important to separate the two so the structure of a page isn’t compromised in order to make it look good. Using CSS has several other advantages, which are discussed in Chapter 6, “Working with Cascading Style Sheets.”

You can use CSS to specify the font used for the text on the page, to lay out an entire Web page, and to do much more. CSS today plays a much

more important role in the Web development process than it did just a few years ago. With better support for CSS between browsers, many developers use it on all their pages. In fact, Dreamweaver CS3 uses CSS by default for setting page properties, such as background color and image, default text colors, page margins, and such. Formatting and presentation that used to be done with HTML (which is considered improper usage of HTML these days) is now being done with CSS. Using CSS will help every Web designer create efficient and modern Web pages.

Dreamweaver CS3 has incredible support for CSS, including creating complex and modern CSS layouts, that far exceeds previous versions of the product. You will learn a lot of basic CSS in this book in Chapter 6, “Working with Cascading Style Sheets,” and Chapter 9, “Using Layout Tools.”

# What Does CSS Look Like?

Unless you've already begun exploring CSS, you probably don't have any idea what CSS looks like. CSS is a deceptively simple language with few pieces to the puzzle.

Here is a basic CSS rule written in correct syntax:

1. **body** {
2.   **font-family: Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif;**
3.   **color: #000000;**
4.   **background-color: #FFFFFF;**
5. }

Here's a breakdown of these CSS elements:

1. **Selector and start of declaration block:** The selector tells the browser which element to style in the document. This can be an HTML element, an element with a specific class applied, or even an element with a specific ID. The text **body** is the selector, and the left curly braces ({} ) is the start of the declaration block.
2. **Declaration:** A declaration consists of a property (in this case **font-family**) followed by a value (**Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif**) followed by a semicolon to end the declaration. This declaration specifies the font for the entire document. You can specify as many declarations as you want inside the declaration block.
3. **Declaration:** This declaration specifies the color for the body text on the page to **#000000**, which is the hex value for black. Color declarations can use either hex colors or certain named colors, but it's always best to stick with hex.
4. **Declaration:** This declaration sets the background color of the page to white.
5. **End of declaration block:** The right curly brace ends the CSS rule. Once you've ended a declaration, you're ready to start the next one.

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## What Is XML?

**XML** is a set of guidelines for delimiting text through a system of tags so it can be read and processed by any device capable of reading a text file. You can think of it as a system for customizing Web content that must follow a set of specific syntax rules. Since XML is a text format following rigid guidelines, you can imagine why so many developers like to work with XML data; you can do just about anything with a text file, regardless of what computer and operating system you are using. For this reason, XML is used to move data between different computers and different operating systems, which makes it perfect for e-commerce solutions and for sending and retrieving data from a database.

Dreamweaver supports templates, covered in Chapter 16, *"Using Templates and Library Items."* One of the advanced features of Dreamweaver CS3 is the ability to export and import XML files through a template. Because XML is so complex and deep and because the use of databases is outside the scope of this book, I don't include any XML exercises in any of the chapters. Here are some places you can go to learn more about XML:

- **World Wide Web Consortium:**  
[www.w3.org/xml/](http://www.w3.org/xml/)
- **W3 Schools—XML:**  
[www.w3schools.com/xml/](http://www.w3schools.com/xml/)
- **A List Apart:**  
[www.alistapart.com/stories/usingxml/](http://www.alistapart.com/stories/usingxml/)

# What Is DHTML?

**DHTML** is a collection of different technologies. This can include any combination of XHTML, JavaScript, CSS, and the DOM (**D**ocument **O**bject **M**odel). By combining these technologies, you can author more dynamic content than what basic HTML affords.

Some of the effects possible with DHTML include animation, drag and drop, and complicated roll-overs (buttons that change when a cursor moves over them). With Dreamweaver CS3, you can create some fancy DHTML just by clicking a few buttons.

Just like with XHTML, Dreamweaver CS3 codes DHTML effects behind the scenes. However, DHTML has some serious cross-platform issues, because the behind-the-scenes code is supported quite differently between browsers. Fortunately, Dreamweaver CS3 lets you target specific browsers, as well as test the compatibility of your DHTML effects.

DHTML uses a combination of XHTML, JavaScript, CSS, and the DOM. The following chart gives a short description of each:

| DHTML Technologies |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Technology         | Explanation   |
| XHTML              | eXtensible HyperText Markup Language—the default markup for basic Web pages and the root of DHTML.  |
| JavaScript         | A scripting language used to manipulate Web pages.  |
| CSS                | Cascading Style Sheets—a presentation language supported by version 4.0 and newer browsers, which allows for better control over the appearance and positioning of elements on a Web page.                    |
| DOM                | Document Object Model—the specification for how objects in a Web page are represented. The DOM defines what attributes are associated with each object and how the objects and attributes can be manipulated. |

# What Is JavaScript?

**JavaScript** was developed by in 1995 and has become almost as popular as HTML. It actually has nothing to do with the Java programming language, but Netscape licensed the name from Sun Microsystems in hopes of increasing acceptance of the new scripting protocol. It's not certain whether it was the name that did the trick, but JavaScript has become almost as widely adopted as HTML itself. The most common uses of JavaScript are creating rollovers, resizing browser windows, and checking for browser compatibility.

You can access most of the JavaScript routines through the **Behaviors** panel in Dreamweaver CS3, which you will learn about in Chapter 11, "Adding Rollover Images," and Chapter 14, "Applying Behaviors." This book covers many JavaScript techniques, including rollovers, browser sniffing, and external browser windows. You will not have to learn to write JavaScript by hand in order to use it within Dreamweaver CS3, which is fortunate for non-programmers, because JavaScript programming is far more complicated than XHTML.

# What Is a Web Application?

In broad terms, a **Web application** is a Web site that delivers dynamic data instead of static data that has to be updated manually. (Amazon.com and eBay.com are great examples of a Web application.) Web applications have also been referred to as *data-driven*, *database-driven*, and *dynamic* sites. In almost all cases, a Web application involves a database and server-side scripting, such as ASP, Adobe ColdFusion, PHP, and so on. Web applications aren't just one thing; they can take on many forms and serve many purposes. They can be used to handle e-commerce, inventory

tracking, online auctions, and just about anything using a large amount of information. So, what do Web applications have to do with learning Dreamweaver CS3? Well, Dreamweaver CS3 can create complete Web applications, in addition to static Web sites. Although creating Web applications is outside the scope of this book, you should know that you can use Dreamweaver CS3 to create them. As you advance your skills, you will find that you will not outgrow Dreamweaver—the sky is the limit as far as its capabilities are concerned.

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## Extending Dreamweaver

One of the greatest features of the Dreamweaver community is the way people share objects, commands, behaviors, and server behaviors, which are like plug-ins for Dreamweaver that let you add programming functionality without typing a single line of code. These prebuilt elements can be shared and distributed, much the way Photoshop plug-ins work. If you visit the Adobe Dreamweaver Exchange ([www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?view=sn120](http://www.adobe.com/cfusion/exchange/index.cfm?view=sn120)), you'll find numerous

ways to get more out of Dreamweaver CS3 (and other versions of Dreamweaver) without having to learn a complex programming language. In addition, you'll find a collection of third-party sites to help you extend the capabilities of Dreamweaver CS3. Tons of extension developers are out there, so I can't list them all. You can find a pretty comprehensive list at [www.dwfaq.com/Resources/Extensions/](http://www.dwfaq.com/Resources/Extensions/).

Now that you have a basic foundation in these key areas, you are ready to learn more about Dreamweaver CS3. The next chapter will introduce you to the Dreamweaver CS3 interface and prepare you for the many step-by-step exercises throughout the rest of the book.

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