

A BUSINESS WEBSITE

INFocus

WPL_D501

An enormous amount of time and effort is needed to plan and design a successful business website.

Your website can be extremely useful for marketing your business and thereby increasing sales. In order to do this though you will need to determine aspects such as the main purpose of your site, the content that will be included, where the content is to be sourced, electronic transactions that will be required, and so on.

You must then ensure all of this is included in a clear, attractive, consistent manner that is easy to use and navigate.

In this session you will:

- ✓ gain an understanding of the main purpose of a business website
- ✓ gain an understanding of points to consider when designing a business website
- ✓ gain an understanding of the types of information you can provide on a business website
- ✓ gain an understanding of where you can source the information for a business website
- ✓ gain an understanding of factors to consider for making a website easy to operate
- ✓ gain an understanding of some testing considerations.

PURPOSE OF A BUSINESS WEBSITE

The main purpose of a business website is to attract customers to your business. So how do you do this? You start by focussing on your existing customers to figure out what they want

and to determine how you can make life easier for them. Then you need to reel in potential customers, close the sales and importantly, maintain a long-term relationship with them.

Marketing

For the vast majority of businesses a website can provide a very effective sales channel and marketing tool. We know there are lots of potential online customers out there – but how do you get them to look at your new site?

Ensure you include your website's address on everything you can think of. For example, business cards and stationery, telephone answering machines, advertisements, brochures, Yellow Pages ads, and so on. And ensure you write it in a size that can't be missed!

Give your clients a benefit for finding your site – perhaps you could offer them a discount that they couldn't find out about in any other way.

Start emailing newsletters to your clients regularly. Include helpful tips and information about your products and services. You could also provide a form in your website that makes it easy for your new site visitors to subscribe to your newsletter.

Making Sales Easier

Although we all hate receiving unsolicited emails, it is fine to send emails to people who have shown earlier interest in your company or who have bought from you in the past. Remember that your existing client base is the best place to start. Statistics show that almost half the people who have bought something from you in the past will buy something else if you have another similar product or service to offer.

Online Ordering And Payments

With careful consideration, your website can provide a customer-oriented ordering and payment system. To ensure you get repeat business you should:

- send a confirmation email upon receipt of an order thanking them for their business and detailing the items purchased, quantity, cost, shipping fees, and status (if on back-order, for instance)
- grant customers real-time access to the shipping status of their ordered products via your website
- do everything to ensure the right product is sent to the right customer and by the promised time.

With regard to credit card payments, if your company expects a reasonably small sales volume you will find it more economically viable to set up your site so that it sends an email to you listing the customer's credit card details. You can then manually verify and enter the details on a point-of-sale terminal. However, if your business is expecting large internet sales, it is better if your system links automatically to a bank, which then performs the verification and credit collection (for a fee, of course).

Customer Service

Customer service is the key to winning on the web. If your products and price are the same as your competitors, the only point of differentiation is by your service. This includes ease of doing business, trust, responsiveness, contactability, website navigatability, problem resolution, to name but a few.

In summary then the key things that you must do:

- include your contact details on every page of your site (if you have a free call number, highlight it in bold)
- respond in less than 24 hours to all calls and emails. Ensure you personalise emails to address the customer's query and include a real person's name and contact number on the email
- include a comprehensive Frequently Asked Questions section.

Providing Useful Information

One of the most important purposes of your website is to provide information to your clients. This information must be both valuable and useful. Design web pages so that the most significant and useful text and images are 'above the fold'. This is the top part of a web page that the users will see first. People will only scroll down web pages if they think there's something of interest to them further down the page.

To ensure you keep your existing clients and continue attracting new visitors, the content in your site must be dynamic – if the information isn't constantly changing, your customers will not be back!

DESIGN ELEMENTS OF A BUSINESS WEBSITE

Whether you plan on building your company's website or intend to contract a professional website developer, there are numerous issues that you must consider before you start. Some of

these include corporate image, use of logos and other graphics and/or animations, the language used, and the consistent 'look' of the site.

Your Company's Corporate Image

One of the first things to consider is the image that you want to portray to your customers. Whether you are an outdoor store selling top quality gear, a chocolate boutique selling luxurious chocolates, or a domestic electricity supplier, your website will present a different look, feel and ambiance. You want visitors to remember your site when they leave so that hopefully they will return the next time they need a similar product, service or piece of information.

Get some ideas before starting your design by surfing the web and looking at lots of other sites – including those of other companies operating in the same area as you.

However, don't fall into the trap of building a site similar to that of your competitors. Remember that you are trying to entice potential visitors and build a lasting memory of your site.

Welcome Page

The Welcome Page (or home page) provides visitors to the site with a greeting and a short description of the site. Links to the major sections of the site will direct users to the desired content in the site.

Much like a front door to a business, the welcome page must be appealing and it should give a clear idea of what is contained within the site.

The welcome page should load quickly. It is important not to turn off new visitors by having them wait for a large file to download before they even enter the site. You should also lean towards being conservative when designing your welcome page – don't obscure it with large or numerous moving images or loud sounds.

Use Of Logos

Company logos are good for branding your site in your visitors' memories. You can also use the logo on different pages in your site to help maintain a consistent 'look'.

Language Used

Ensure that the style and tone of the language used in your website suits the business image that you are trying to convey to your audience.

Do NOT use any company jargon or abbreviations on your site. You may well understand them but many of your visitors will not!

Consistency Throughout

Make sure that all of your pages in your website look similar and display consistently. This doesn't mean, for instance, that all graphics must appear in the centre of the page with text to their right, as this could result in a pretty boring site. But you do want your visitors to recognise that they are still in your site as they move from page to page.

So consider:

- how you use colours, backgrounds, fonts, navigation buttons
- how graphics are shown (for example, do they all display with drop shadows)
- the position of menu bars and important text, such as where to get help.

Introductory Animations

Unless your audience is primarily eight years old, think very carefully before you include anything that blinks, spins or moves erratically. Such features could annoy adult visitors and if they do nothing for your customers, they simply increase the download time of your pages.

Domain Names

Think carefully about your proposed domain name – it should reflect your company's name (for example, the domain name for the fictional company that is used throughout this learning guide is terrifictreas.com.au). The domain name is very important because it is your identifier on the Internet. A good domain name makes your site easier to find.

CONDUCTING TRANSACTIONS ON THE WEB

Many businesses want to utilise e-commerce on their websites. This means that when your visitors see products or services they want, they can simply select them; enter their personal,

contact and payment details; and then sit back and await the arrival of their purchase. But in order to get sales and then to have clients come back again, there are certain things to consider.

Shopping Cart Experience

These days most e-commerce sites use a shopping cart feature to record customer orders. This is simply a virtual cart similar to a supermarket shopping trolley. Once customers have finished their shopping they proceed to the checkout to pay for their purchases.

Consider carefully the following because if you don't get this total shopping aspect right and make it easy for the customers, they will simply leave their shopping carts in your 'aisles' and move on to another site.

- Your site must be useful. Your shoppers want to be able to see what they want quickly and easily. So give them easy access to prices, descriptions, checkouts and customer service.
- Consider download time. Long downloads will annoy visitors and they may not hang around. One way to include large graphics on your page is to download the text first and then the graphics – at least your shoppers can be reading something interesting while the rest is still coming! For pages such as products pages, use thumbnails that users can expand as required.
- Provide access to the shopping cart at all times so shoppers can see exactly what they're purchasing and that nothing has been accidentally added or lost.
- Put a price with every product. Don't make a shopper drill to a description to find out the price of a product. This will only annoy them as it wastes time.
- Put the shipping costs up front so the customer knows how much an item will really cost before they get to the checkout.
- Provide multiple payment methods such as credit cards, cheque, bank transfer, PayPal, and so on.
- Tell the customers how they can return items simply if they are not happy with them. Perhaps they could return them to your store (if you have one). You should also include return shipping instructions on the package so that they can send them back in the mail.
- Make the checkout process simple.
- Use a registration process. Having your customers enter their names, addresses and shipping information just once will result in a faster checkout time. Also, customers are more likely to come back again as you have their details, so shopping will be quicker next time. An additional use of the registration process could be to include the option for them to receive a regular newsletter.

Security

Even if your site is spectacular, easy to use, quick and stable, visitors will not buy anything unless they are totally comfortable the site is secure. Provide hacker-safe and credit card security compliant order pages by using software from a reputable internet security company. You could include a small logo on the order/checkout page with the security company's name and a link to a window of text describing how their personal and payment data will be transferred to the internet securely, as shown. You could also use small padlock icons on the page to reinforce the fact that your site is secure.

Remember that if buyers feel confident to give you their commerce and you respond by fulfilling your promises, there is a solid chance that they will be back.

Privacy

A very important concept you must remember is to include your privacy policy – and make this prominent! Nobody will give you their email and other personal details if they think that you will pass them on to third parties.



DirectOne Payment Solutions

The site you are visiting has been enabled for secure credit card payments processing using DirectOne Payment Solution's highest standards of security, coupled with easy integration.

DirectOne has been providing secure online payments for over many years to hundreds of merchants across Australia.

All payment pages served by DirectOne are secured by our own 128-bit SSL certificate supplied by GeoTrust.



Your credit card details are passed directly to the merchant's bank without ever being stored on either their system or DirectOne system. DirectOne at no time handles your money because the transaction is between you and the merchant's bank.

DirectOne securely facilitates the transaction, protecting both you and the merchant and providing detailed reporting and invoice tracking numbers.

If you wish to know more about DirectOne Payment Solutions, please click on "Contact Information" on the left of screen.

Thank you for using DirectOne Payment Solutions

PROVIDING BUSINESS INFORMATION

Websites provide the ideal medium for including all sorts of information for your clients or staff. Years ago when large departments first built intranets, they usually started by including their

policies, procedures, manuals, training materials and other large documents. Each of these often filled many screens and people were expected to read this. Things have changed these days.

Optimal Screen Sizing

In general, web pages should be designed so that they contain no more than one or two screens worth of information. Users can easily lose their sense of context when the navigational buttons, major links and the page's title scroll off the screen.

But, there are times when it is fine to use long web pages. If you expect that users will not read a particular document online but instead will print it, it is easier for them to print one longer document rather than having to print many smaller documents.

You can make long pages friendlier by positioning 'jump to top' buttons at regular intervals down the page. That way, your users will never have to scroll far to find a navigation button that quickly returns them to the top of the page.

You can also make use of hyperlinks to named anchors that are positioned at appropriate points within a longer document. For example, you could include a sub-menu at the top of a long web page and hyperlink each entry to the related sub-heading below.

Downloads

Does your business have catalogues, brochures and price lists? Do you have paper forms that your clients complete and send back to you? Do you have long documents that you want to include but don't expect your users to read online? The list goes on and on.

It is very simple to create hyperlinks to these files which let your users view, print or even save them to their own computers.

PDFs

Portable Document Format (PDF) files are simply another type of file that you can make available for downloading and printing. There are several advantages in using PDF files: all computers can read PDF files (as long as they have Adobe Reader installed on them) and PDF files cannot be changed once downloaded onto a user's computer.

Since it is necessary for a user to have Adobe Reader installed on their computer, you should include a link to the Adobe site. The hyperlink to the free Adobe Reader download web page is:

<http://get.adobe.com/uk/reader/>



SOURCES OF CONTENTS

The first things that will entice your visitors to your site will be the content, how it is presented and the time that it takes to display. You want your visitors' time to be memorable so you need

to determine what they will be looking for and where you are going to source that information. Remember to plan this carefully – don't simply do it 'on the fly'.

Brochures And Catalogues

If you have current printed brochures describing your company and product catalogues, they will provide an excellent starting point for your website.

Use the best marketing information on your home page ensuring it evokes the corporate image you are trying to portray.

Use the information in your product catalogues to set up your products pages. Remember to group like products together on different web pages, for instance, one page may list your women's swimwear range, while another may include your children's swimwear range, and so on.

Client Testimonials

Client testimonials can be used to highlight your fantastic customer service, ability to fulfil promises and so on, and are an excellent source of information for your website. These will help to make new visitors to your site more confident that if they request a product or service, they will get what they want, when they want it.

Staff Profiles

Including staff profiles on your site is one way to add a human touch to an otherwise impersonal media. Visitors can see that there really are people involved with the company and this helps them to visualise who they are communicating with.

FAQs

Write an extensive list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) gleaned from your staff who have intimate knowledge of your customers' most common concerns.

Ensure it is written in simple, clear language devoid of company jargon. After all, you don't want it to raise more questions than it answers.

Ensure it is extremely easy to find the FAQs from every page on your site.

Consider including a hit counter in the FAQ section. FAQ visits can serve as an early warning system. For instance, if you have a large number of hits searching for shipping costs, you know that you need to move this information so it is more accessible to your customers.

Business History

Adding business history is not a necessary component of your website. But, if the history is particularly interesting or unusual you may choose to include it for interest-sake only. If you do include the business history, ensure it is placed on a separate page – and that it is not included as part of the home page content. The home page is reserved for giving visitors what they want – it must not include unnecessary information.

EASE OF OPERATION

If visitors find your website difficult to use, not only will they not return but they may also recommend that others do not bother as well. Some of the factors that affect how easy your site

is to operate include download time, how easy it is to navigate around the site without getting lost, and whether or not you can quickly find the information you require.

Homepage Downloading Time

Users aren't prepared to hang around. Research has shown that on average you have about ten seconds to catch and keep a visitor. In that time you have to show the users what the site is about and what it offers them. It is therefore imperative that you keep page sizes as small as possible. This means you should use a small logo and include images only if it is absolutely necessary. You can also design your pages so the text loads first. This will give the users something to read while the graphics load. You can also use tags with the graphics so that users can identify the graphic as it is loading.

Avoid using long vertical or nested tables as they take a long time to load. Instead use a series of tables which make your pages appear to load faster as the top tables will load first or better still, use CSS for your page layout.

Size Of Download Files

To minimise the downloading time of your site, ensure all graphics in your site are as small as possible.

All graphics should be GIF (Graphic Interchange Format), JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) or PNG (Portable Network Graphics) files. These file formats are cross-platform meaning that they can be viewed on all types of computers. They are also compressed making their file size as small as possible.

Navigation

The navigation of your site must be well designed. Whatever style you use for this (whether it is buttons, plain text or graphics or a combination of these) it must be clear, simple and consistent from page to page.

The primary navigation system to the main sections of your site should be kept together at either the top, bottom or off to a side of the page. If you have a long scrolling page, it is useful to place a navigation system at both the top (fancier version) and bottom of the page (all-text links).

You must never use only graphical navigation links in your site – always include equivalent text-based links elsewhere on your page. Many people surf the net with their graphics turned off as it speeds up downloading time. Additionally, people with sight problems often use text readers to access information on the internet and these applications cannot read graphical information.

Provide an alternate (Alt) label on all graphical links (such as buttons made using a graphics application) as the text in these labels will display while the graphics are loading and it can be read by a text reader.

Another way to help visitors understand your site and how it is organised is to offer a site map.

Search Facilities

You should design larger websites to include a search engine. This allows users to home in on things in which they're particularly interested.

In the past this required special software but now you can get site search engines for free. For example: www.freefind.com, <http://intra.whatuseek.com> or <http://www.buildwebsite4u.com/tools/site-search.shtml>.

TESTING CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR WEBSITE

An easy-to-use, great-looking website with dependable customer service is one that people will always remember. That's what you want to achieve because no matter how fast your site is

or how reasonable your prices, if no one remembers it they won't come back! Here are a few final pointers to think of while testing your website.

Graphics

- Do the graphics download quickly?
- Does the text load before the graphics?
- Have you included alternate labels for all graphics?
- Are all graphics saved in GIF, JPEG or PNG file format?
- If you have included animations, do they add value to your site?

Customer Service

- Send an email to your contact address and check how long it takes to receive a response. Is it less than 24 hours? Has it been personalised to your problem and signed off by a real person?
- Do you have contact telephone numbers on every page? Are they highlighted?
- Are the most commonly-received questions written clearly, free of jargon and placed in a prominent position in the FAQ section?
- If you can purchase products from your site, have you installed an order confirmation system that responds in less than 24 hours? Do you allow your customers to check the shipping status?

Corporate Identity

- Does the whole site reflect the intended corporate identity?
- Does the whole site communicate your brand to your visitors?
- Have you used language that is appropriate to the corporate image you want to portray?

Navigation

- Check every link regularly to ensure they are still working, particularly any links to external website addresses.
- Ensure your links are worth jumping to. For example, don't send your visitors off to 'under construction' pages, or to an enlargement of a photo that contains no additional information to its thumbnail image.
- Is the navigation system clear and simple?
- If you have used graphical navigation buttons, have you remembered to also include the same text links?
- Have you included a site map?
- Have you provided a useful search engine?

And Lastly. . .

- If you are using e-commerce facilities such as shopping carts, electronic payments and so on, have you installed appropriate security measures?
- Have you included your privacy policy?

DREAMWEAVER BASICS

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Dreamweaver provides an effective interface for quickly creating high quality, professional-looking web pages. It also provides a range of powerful tools for incorporating the latest web design elements into your pages.

But before you begin working in Dreamweaver, there are several things you will need to familiarise yourself with. As with any other application there's always new jargon to understand, plus you will need to learn how to open and close files and work with the various windows and panels that comprise the workspace.

In this session you will:

- ✓ gain an understanding of some common web terminology
- ✓ learn how to start **Dreamweaver**
- ✓ gain an understanding of the **Dreamweaver** workspace
- ✓ gain an understanding of the document window
- ✓ learn how to open files
- ✓ learn how to work with the **Document** window
- ✓ gain an understanding of panels and panel groups
- ✓ learn how to work with panels and panel groups
- ✓ gain an understanding of the **Files** panel
- ✓ gain an understanding of the **Properties** inspector
- ✓ learn how to work with the **Properties** inspector
- ✓ learn how to exit **Dreamweaver**.

COMMON WEBSITE TERMINOLOGY

Before you even start Dreamweaver there are some very common terms that you are likely to come across while building a website. **HTML** is the code created automatically as you build your

page; **JavaScript** is the code that provides interactivity and functionality for your site; and **CSS** are the style sheets that control the layout and presentation of your HTML.

HTML

For many years **HTML (Hypertext Markup Language)** was the only code that you could use to create web pages. In 2001 HTML was discontinued and replaced with **XHTML (Extensible Hypertext Markup Language)** to ensure web pages are more universally compatible with different browsers and devices. XHTML is almost identical to HTML and as such, we will refer to XHTML code in this course as HTML.

HTML comprises a set of predefined **tags** that are used to mark text and other content on the page. For example, **h1** indicates the highest level or most important heading. Although HTML includes many tags, it will not have enough tags to define everything in your site – for example, HTML has no sidebar or footer tag.

Tags are always enclosed by angled brackets. For example:

```
<p>This is a paragraph.</p>
```

The tag **<p>** is used to indicate the start of a paragraph and **</p>** the end of a paragraph. The text **This is a paragraph.** is the text that will display on the web page in the browser.

To help further describe your page elements you will often use the **ID** and **class** attributes of tags to attach additional meaning. For example:

```
<p ALIGN="center">This is a centred paragraph.</p>
```

In this example, the **ALIGN** attribute for the **p** tag is set to the value **center** (note the American spelling) causing the paragraph to be centred on the page.

Neither tags nor attribute names are case sensitive. **<P>** and **<p>** will work in exactly the same way. Case sensitivity may be important, however, when naming values for attributes. For example, if the image for a button is named **Button1.gif**, you should refer to it as **Button1.gif** in HTML rather than **BUTTON1.GIF** or **button1.gif**. In fact, it is best practice to name all files that will be used in websites using only lowercase characters.

JavaScript

JavaScript is a scripting language that is often used for adding interactivity and functionality to web pages such as creating rollovers, opening browser windows and validating forms.

You don't need to worry about learning JavaScript because Dreamweaver adds the script automatically as you build pages. By using **behaviours** (you'll learn more about these later in this course), Dreamweaver will add the appropriate JavaScript automatically to the page.

CSS

CSS, or **Cascading Style Sheets**, is another standard web technology you'll need to become familiar with when designing websites. CSS is a collection of styles that control the layout and presentation of your HTML.

The main purpose of using CSS is to separate structure and presentation. That way, your HTML code is left to describe the meaning of the content while the CSS controls the typography and layout. Even better, your site is easier to update and maintain as your CSS can be maintained in a single external file. For example, if you want to change how your main heading looks site-wide, you can change a single rule and the change will cascade out through the entire site. Another advantage of using CSS is the ability to change style sheets for different devices such as screen devices and hand-held devices. This means the same content can be given two very different looks for two different devices.

Dreamweaver integrates CSS into every workflow and process that can affect layout and styling. As a result, you will need to understand how CSS works and have a site-wide strategy in place prior to building pages. This is essential for ensuring efficient and consistent style application and creation throughout your site.

STARTING DREAMWEAVER

Like most programs, you can start Dreamweaver via the Windows **Start** menu or by using a shortcut on the desktop or the Windows Taskbar. The **Welcome Screen** will display by default

when you start Dreamweaver. From here you can open a recently-used file or create a new file with a single click. You can also access training videos or be notified of updates with internet connectivity.

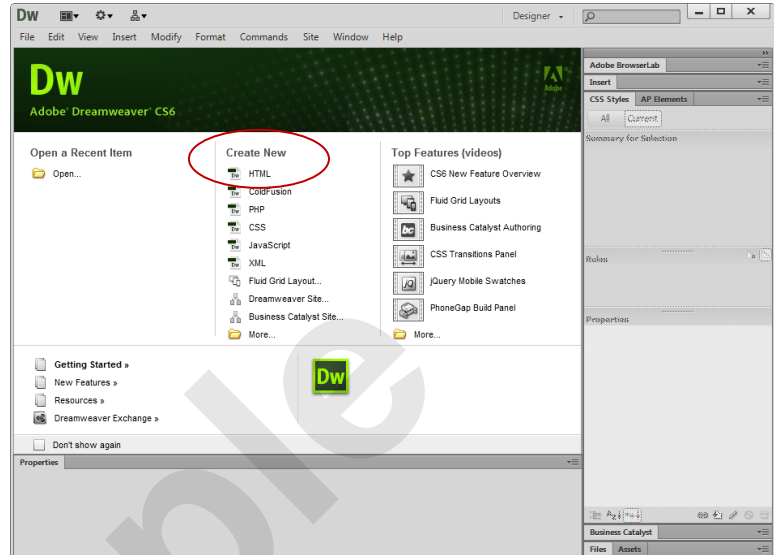
Try This Yourself:

Before starting this exercise ensure that your computer is switched on...

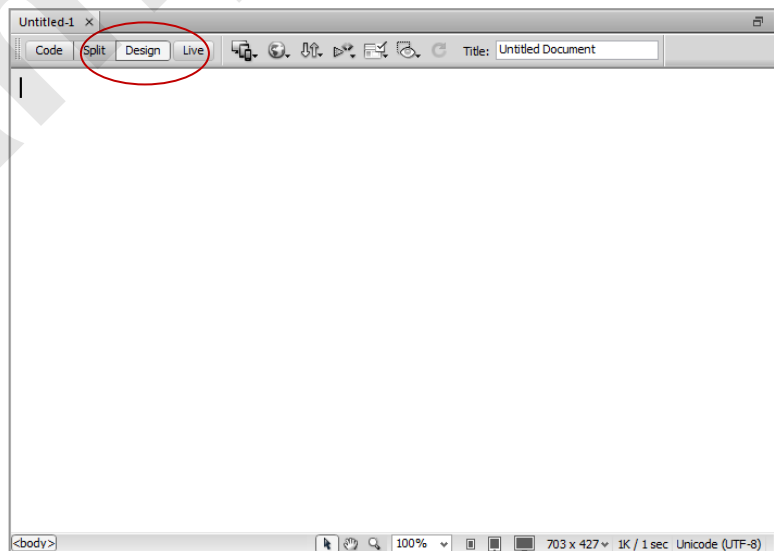
- 1 Click on the Windows **Start** button at the bottom left corner of the screen to display the menu, then select **All Programs > Adobe Dreamweaver CS6**

After a few moments the Welcome Screen, some panels and the Properties inspector may appear. The Welcome Screen provides you with quick access to different options and tasks that you may want to do. Let's open a new HTML (or technically XHTML) page...

- 2 Click on **HTML** under **Create New** to open a new, blank HTML page in a **Document window**
- 3 If your Document window doesn't appear as shown, click on **[Design]** in the toolbar to change to **Design view**



- 1 Notice the new option: **Fluid Grid Layouts** in Top Features...



- 2

For Your Reference...

To **start Dreamweaver**:

1. Click on the Windows **Start** button
2. Select **All Programs > Adobe Dreamweaver CS6**

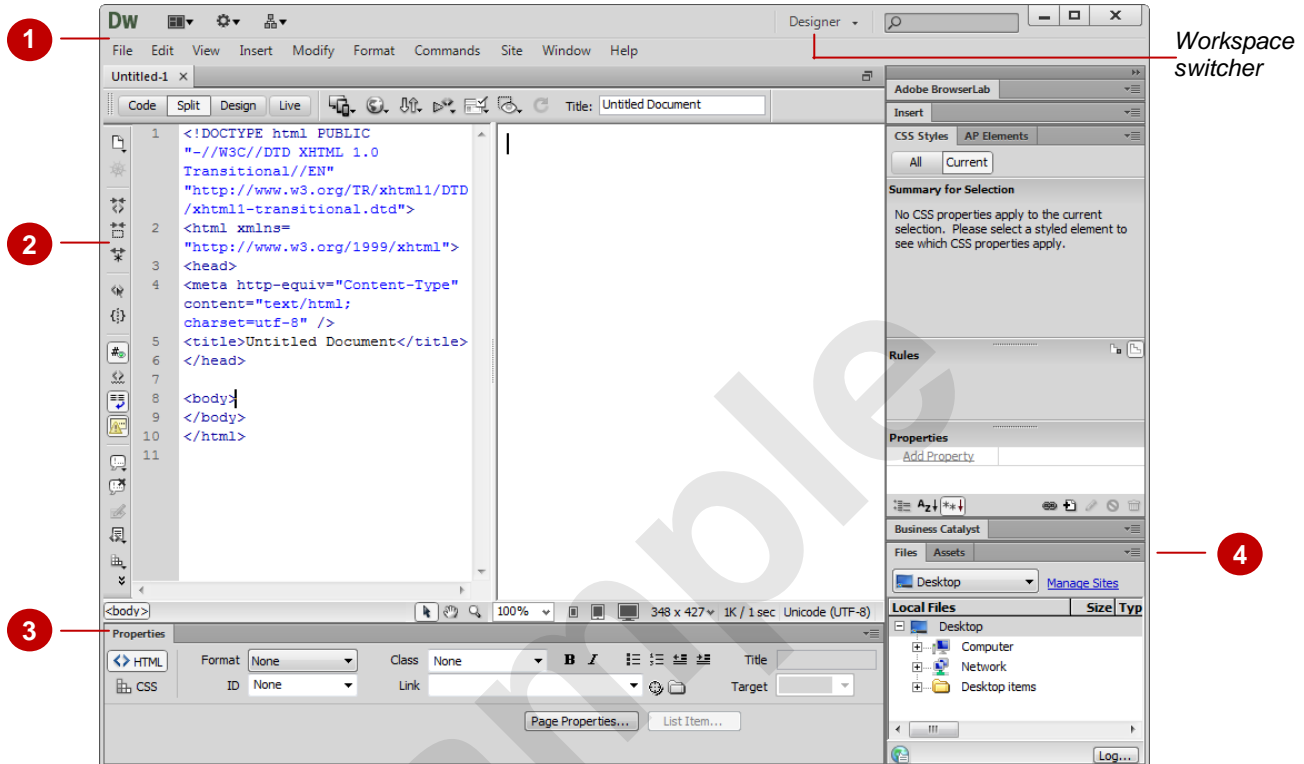
Handy to Know...

- If you don't want to see the **Welcome Screen** each time you start Dreamweaver or close all files, you can hide it by ticking **Don't show again**. You can redisplay it again by selecting **Edit > Preferences** and ticking **Show Welcome Screen** in the **General** category.

THE DREAMWEAVER WORKSPACE

The Dreamweaver workspace lets you create and work on documents and view object properties. The workspace comprises many elements (such as toolbars, windows, panels and

inspectors) integrated into a single larger application window. The main components are shown in the default Dreamweaver workspace below.



1 In the new version of Dreamweaver, the **Application bar** is now integrated as a part of the main **Menu bar** (which provides access to the main working commands). It includes the quick launch icons **Layout**, **Extend Dreamweaver** and **Site** and the **Workspace Switcher** (the default workspace is **Designer** as shown above). The **Search** box is displayed to the right of the **Application bar**.

2 The **Document window** displays the active document which is a new, blank document in the example above. By default, the Document window displays in **Split view** in the **Designer** workspace (**Code view** to the left and **Design view** to the right). In this default view, the Document window includes the **Document toolbar** along the top and the **Coding toolbar** to the left of the Code pane. Different toolbars are visible in the various views and workspaces and they can be shown and hidden as desired by right-clicking on a toolbar.

3 The **Properties inspector** displays and lets you change various properties for the selected object or text. Each object has different properties. The **Properties inspector** is divided into two tabs – structural properties appear on the **HTML** tab and cascading style sheet properties appear on the **CSS** tab.

4 Dreamweaver includes various **panels** to help you monitor and modify your document. For example, the **Files panel** (lists the file structure of your website although not in the above example as we don't have a website defined at this stage), **Assets panel** (lists all assets such as images in your site), **CSS Styles panel** (lists all CSS style sheets and individual styles in your site) and the **Insert panel** (contains tools that let you insert objects such as images and hyperlinks). All panels are listed in the **Window** menu.

Welcome screen The **Welcome screen** displays, by default, when you first open Dreamweaver and when you have no documents open.

The **Welcome screen** lets you open a recently-used document (these are listed under **Open a Recent Item**) or create a new document (you can select the desired document type under **Create**).