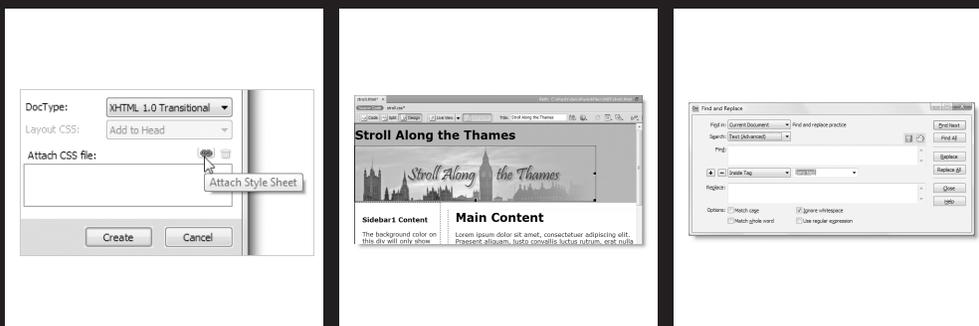


5 CREATING A CSS SITE STRAIGHT OUT OF THE BOX



THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO DREAMWEAVER CS4 WITH CSS, AJAX, AND PHP

In this chapter, I'll lead you through the process of creating a page using one of the 32 built-in CSS layouts in Dreamweaver CS4, showing you how to get the most out of the CSS Styles panel in Current mode. The CSS layouts were originally introduced in Dreamweaver CS3 and provide a very solid foundation for creating a standards-compliant website consisting of header, sidebar, main content area, and footer. For a sneak preview of where this chapter ends up, load `stro11_final.html` from `examples/ch05` into a browser, or take a look at Figure 5-7 later in this chapter. If you're new to CSS, you may find some parts of this chapter daunting, but come along for the ride. Even if you don't understand how all the style rules fit together, you'll pick up some cool techniques that will give your own sites that extra lift.

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

- Attaching external style sheets when creating a new page
- Making sure conditional comments are applied correctly
- Adapting a Dreamweaver CSS layout
- Getting the most out of the CSS Styles panel in Current mode
- Understanding the impact of the CSS cascade
- Refining selectors in the New CSS Rule dialog box
- Using Dreamweaver's Find and Replace feature

Using a built-in CSS layout

If you click HTML or PHP in the Create New section of the welcome screen, Dreamweaver opens a blank page using your default settings (see “Setting new document preferences” in Chapter 2). You get a much bigger choice with `File > New`, which opens the New Document dialog box (see Figure 5-1).

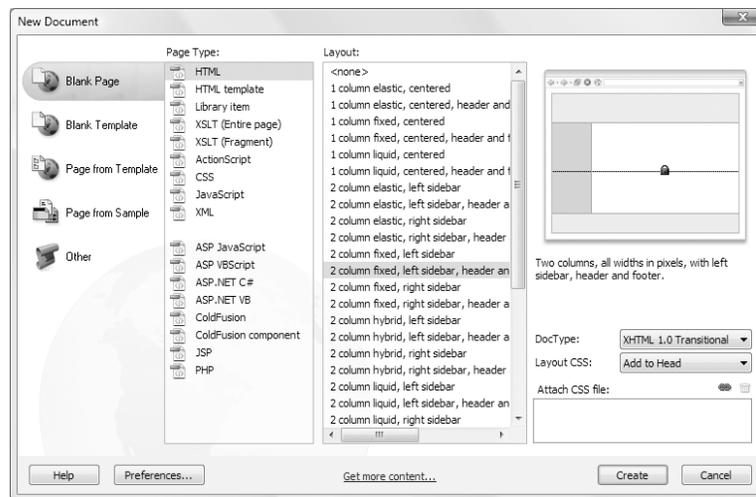


Figure 5-1. Open the New Document dialog box to select one of the built-in CSS layouts.

CREATING A CSS SITE STRAIGHT OUT OF THE BOX

In both the Blank Page and Blank Template categories, the Layout column offers you a choice of 32 CSS layouts when the Page Type is suitable for a complete web page, such as HTML or PHP. You can also choose just a blank page by selecting `<none>` from the top of the Layout column. The dialog box remembers your choices the next time you open it.

Choosing a layout

The layouts cover the most commonly used conventions of web page design: one-, two-, and three-column pages, with and without a header and footer. They have been tested in all the main browsers and provide a rock-solid basis for building a site.

The minimum versions required for the CSS layouts are Firefox 1.0, Opera 8, Safari 2.0 (Windows and Mac), and Internet Explorer 5.5 (Windows).

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You can choose four different types of column widths, identified by simple diagrams, as follows:

- **Fixed:** The width is defined in pixels. 
- **Elastic:** The width is defined in ems. 
- **Liquid:** The width is defined as a percentage. 
- **Hybrid:** The main column width is defined as a percentage; other columns are defined in ems. 

As you select each layout, a diagram appears on the right of the New Document dialog box showing the style together with a brief description, as shown in Figure 5-1.

Deciding where to locate your style rules

When you select a layout, the Layout CSS menu at the bottom right of the New Document dialog box is activated (it's grayed out when `<none>` is selected). The menu has three options, as follows:

- Add to Head: This embeds the style rules in the `<head>` of the document.
- Create New File: This puts all the style rules in an external style sheet.
- Link to Existing File: This discards all style rules associated with the layout and links to an existing style sheet.