

FRAMING PAGES



Figure 13.1 Each frame is a distinct document with its own content—including different link and background colors and background images. When you click a link in one frame, the content appears in another window.



Figure 13.2 Designer Derek Powazek uses unusual frames layouts such as this one in his storytelling site The Fray (www.fray.com). The picture on the left stays visible while you scroll through the story on the right.

Web pages that use frames can be extremely versatile, because they allow you to keep parts of your Web site stationary—such as a logo or some navigation bars—while allowing others to change their content. Using frames, you don't have to place the same elements onto every Web page that you build, and the viewer won't have to reload them each time in the browser. A frames-based page is divided into several windows within windows, like the panes in an old-fashioned window (**Figure 13.1**). Frames pages can also blur obvious borders (**Figure 13.2**).

Although a frames-based page acts like a single Web page, each frame contains a single HTML document that can include completely separate contents and independent scrollbars.

The glue that holds together these documents is called the frameset definition document, or the frameset page; a frameset is a set of frames, and the frameset page is what defines them as a set.

Frames and Navigation

You can use frames to create some nifty layouts. Because each page is a discrete HTML document, it can contain any HTML element except the `<frameset>` tag—although we'll find out how to embed frames within frames in the section called *Nested Framesets*.

As I mentioned earlier, frames are best used when you want part of your page, such as a toolbar or a table of contents, to be visible the entire time the page is in the window—regardless of what kind of scrolling or clicking your visitors do.

Each document in a frameset is an individual HTML document. In the background, the frameset page acts as mission control, holding together all the documents. Each frame has a default document anchored to it so that something will load when the frames page is loaded. **Figure 13.3** presents a diagram of the frame structure. You can see the code for a frameset page in **Figure 13.4**—the frameset page is holding together the twelve frames pictured.

✓ Tip

- The frameset page is called that because it includes the `<frameset>` tag, which defines the layout of the frames-based page, the location and names of the initial pages that occupy each frame, and details about the appearance and actions of the frames.

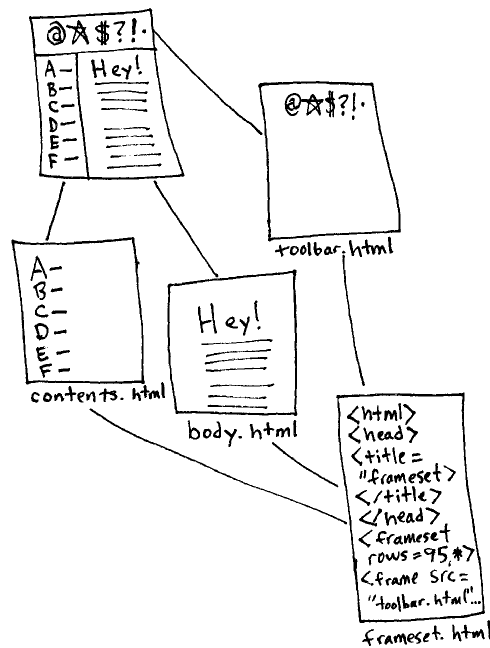


Figure 13.3 An infinite number of pages can be associated with a frames page via links so that your main design remains, while any number of pages can open in different frames within your main page.

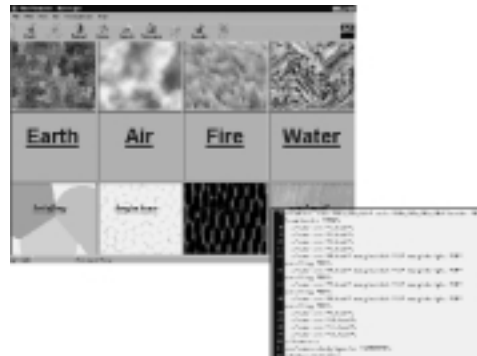


Figure 13.4 A frames-based page is held together behind the scenes by a frameset page, which keeps track of what belongs where. This page has twelve individual frames. The code is for the frameset page that holds these frames together.

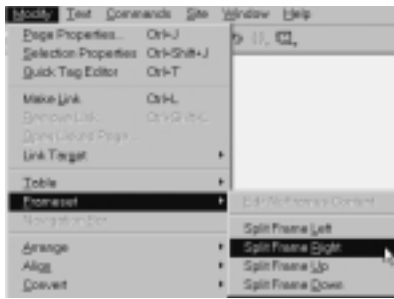


Figure 13.5 Choose Modify > Frameset from the Document window menu bar.



Figure 13.6 The Split Frame Left and Split Frame Right commands both split the current frame in half with a vertical frame border.



Figure 13.7 The Split Frame Up and Split Frame Down commands both split the current frame in half with a horizontal frame border.

Setting Up a Frames Page

Dreamweaver will automatically create a frameset when you divide a page into more than one frame.

To create frames by splitting the page:

1. Start Dreamweaver, and open a blank window, if necessary.
2. From the Document Window menu bar, select Modify > Frameset > (**Figure 13.5**).

From there, choose one of the following options:

- ◆ Split Frame Left (**Figure 13.6**)
- ◆ Split Frame Right (**Figure 13.6**)
- ◆ Split Frame Up (**Figure 13.7**)
- ◆ Split Frame Down (**Figure 13.7**)

The window will split to display two frames.

You'll see new borders around each of the frames, as well as the entire page. The frame border outlines each frame. Around the outside of the page, the frame border appears dashed, indicating that the entire frameset page is selected.

Wherefore Untitled Frame 6?

Occasionally, you'll close a document on which you've created no frames, and Dreamweaver will ask you if you want to save an untitled frameset page. Why? Who knows. Just go ahead and click on No, you don't want to save the changes. You won't be losing any data.

Creating Frames by Dragging

You can also create a frame border and drag it to create multiple frames on a page.

To create a frame by dragging:

1. Create a new window, if you like, by pressing Ctrl+N (Command+N).
2. From the Document window menu bar, select View > Visual Aids > Frame Borders. A heavy outline will appear around the blank space in the window (**Figure 13.8**).
3. Mouse over one of the outside borders, and the mouse pointer will turn into a double-headed arrow.
4. Drag it to a new location (**Figure 13.9**), and release the mouse button when you've positioned the border where you choose (**Figure 13.10**).

You now have two frames in the window.



Figure 13.8 The heavy outline that appears should resemble the frame borders you've seen on pages around the Web.

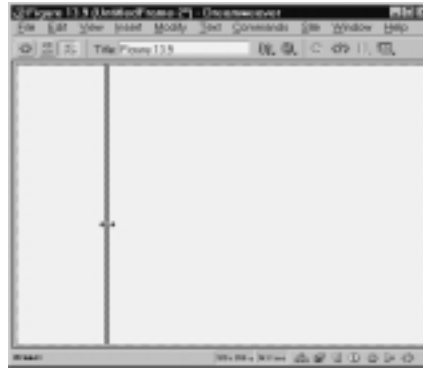


Figure 13.9 Click on an outside border, and you can create a new frame by splitting the original page.



Figure 13.10 Let go of the mouse button when the frame border is where you want. Ta-da! You now have two frames.

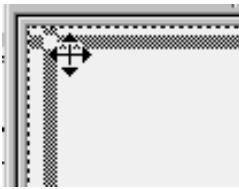


Figure 13.11 If you grab the corner of the page, the pointer will turn into a four-headed arrow, or a grabbing hand on the Mac. Drag the cursor to the middle of the page and let go to create four frames at once.

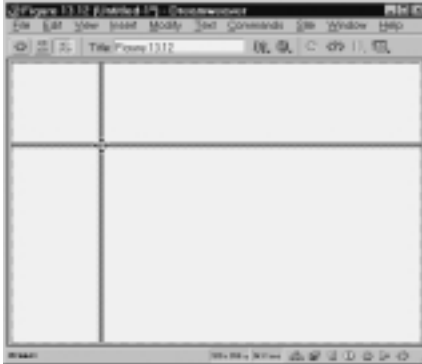


Figure 13.12 Here, I grabbed the top-left corner border, and I'm splitting the page into four frames.

✓ Tips

- If you mouse over one of the corners of the page, the mouse pointer will turn into a four-headed arrow (**Figure 13.11**), or a grabbing hand on the Mac. You can drag the corner into the page and release the mouse button to create four new frames at once.
- To split existing frame borders, hold down the Alt (Option) key while dragging a border or a corner border: (**Figure 13.12**).