Introduction

There was a time, not long ago, when the idea of using an application to develop websites was considered a travesty! The idea that an application could create code that would be clean, would be efficient, and would display properly in virtually any web browser seemed like pure fantasy.

Dreamweaver has forever changed how we think about web development. It is no longer the realm of the professional programmer. It is no longer a tangled mess of complicated codes and files. With the help of Dreamweaver, web development has become both a structured and a creative process. As a website development environment, it keeps your pages nice and neat and your links in working order. As a visual design tool, it frees you from the complexities of coding and allows you to focus on the content and look and feel of your site.

What is truly unique about Dreamweaver is that it can author virtually any type of website with any appearance. You may have heard someone say, “That site was made with such and such a tool.” In Dreamweaver, the application helps you create your designs as you envision them, rather than trying to force you into a mold.

What Is Dreamweaver CS4?

Dreamweaver CS4 is the latest release of Adobe’s award-winning HTML editor and web application development tool. Dreamweaver offers tools that can be adapted to a very design-centric environment, or a code-centric programming focus. The depth and maturity of the tools ensure that everyone, regardless of their skill level or needs, will be able to use Dreamweaver effectively.

Dreamweaver, like most Adobe products, is fully cross-platform. The Mac OS X and Windows versions of the software offer the same features, with very slight variations in look and feel. Projects that you create in Dreamweaver can easily be shared among Windows and Mac users alike.

Dreamweaver’s openness doesn’t end at the desktop—it extends to the servers it supports, as well. Using the built-in tools, you can create websites that are ready for almost any modern web server—and transfer them to your remote host without ever leaving the application.

Making use of the latest web technologies, Dreamweaver makes it simple to add design elements using Cascading Style Sheets, and dynamic interfaces with Spry AJAX components. These features can help you create a new, modern website, or transform an existing site into a
compelling online experience featuring animation, drag-and-drop elements, drop-down menus, and much, much more!

**What’s New in This Edition?**

In Dreamweaver CS4, Adobe has given Dreamweaver a much-needed spring-cleaning. The application is sleeker, is easier to navigate, and gets rid of older, problematic features. A few of the changes you’ll find in this edition are listed here:

- An updated user interface with callouts for quick reference
- New CSS features for quickly assigning and working with styles
- Adobe Photoshop Smart Objects for embedding live Photoshop files in your designs
- Adobe Bridge, a central hub for managing CS4 suite resources
- Spry AJAX effects and other third-party AJAX options
- InContext Editing, Adobe’s new hosted content management option
- Information on gathering web statistics from finished sites
- New “Try It Yourself” step-by-step guides for testing out some of the most interesting Dreamweaver CS4 features

Dreamweaver never ceases to amaze with the range of features it provides. This update makes those features even more accessible than ever before. As you work through the 24 hours in this book, you’ll find information on everything from the basics of site file structures all the way to content management systems and version control.

**Who Should Use Dreamweaver CS4?**

One word: everyone. First-time web developers will love the ability to visually develop a site using tools that feel natural and provide instant feedback. Experienced developers may choose to start a layout visually and then switch to a code view to finish it off by hand. Dreamweaver gives you the flexibility to work the way you want, without getting in the way.

**Who Should Use This Book?**

This book is for anyone new to Dreamweaver CS4 and anyone already using the application who wants to take it to the next level. Beginners will quickly learn how to create new pages, create and manage CSS, and deploy websites. More experienced readers will find the tips and tricks they need in order to use the application to its fullest.
Conventions Used in This Book

This book uses several design elements and conventions to help you prioritize and reference the information it contains:

- New terms appear in a **semibold** typeface.
- When you are asked to type or enter text, that text appears in **bold**.
- Menu options are separated by a comma. For example, when you should open the File menu and choose the New Project menu option, the text says “Select File, New Project.”
- A special **monospace** font is used on programming-related terms and language, and code.
- Placeholders—words or characters that represent the real words or characters you would type in code—appear in *italic monospace*.
- Some code statements presented in this book are too long to appear on a single line. In these cases, a line-continuation character is used to indicate that the following line is a continuation of the current statement.
Dreamweaver makes it very easy to open and edit single web pages—much like you would a word processing document. If you’re planning to create multiple pages, however, the very first thing you should do is define a site. That’s what you’ll do this hour. Defining a site gives you a home base to work from. Without a site definition, Dreamweaver may run into difficulties linking or organizing your files.

You use Dreamweaver’s Files panel to plan, create, and manage projects. Eventually you’ll have lots of files: web pages (HTML, or hypertext markup language, files), image files, CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) files, and other types of files. It’s important that you define your website to start off on the right foot.

**Defining a New Website**

This hour introduces creating a storage directory for your website and then telling Dreamweaver about it. This directory will be the home of your site, and you’ll build a logical structure beneath it with directories to hold supporting files such as images, scripts, and style sheets (more about this in later hours). Many beginning web developers simply start making web pages, skipping the site definition step—this is not recommended. You’ll make your web development life easier by completing this important step before any development takes place.

Every website has a root directory. The **root** of a website is the main directory that contains files and other directories. When you define a website, Dreamweaver considers that directory and all the files (or other directories) within it to be the entire universe of that particular website. If you attempt
to insert an image from outside that universe, Dreamweaver prompts you to save the file inside the website.

Dreamweaver needs you to define your website so that it knows how to find files. For instance, if an image is located in an images directory within the site, Dreamweaver knows how to properly reference the image within a web page. If, however, the image is somewhere outside the defined site, Dreamweaver might not be able to reference it properly, and you might end up with bad links in your website. You learn more about how Dreamweaver links to files in Hour 5, “Adding Links: Hyperlinks, Anchors, and Mailto Links.”

You have to define a new website for every project you create. Even when projects are related, you might decide to break them down into smaller sites so that the number of files isn’t unwieldy in a single site. For instance, I create websites for a college within a major university. Rather than trying to create a single site for the entire college, I find it easier to break down the information into different sites by department. This creates more manageable chunks of information than lumping everything together. Regardless of the size of your site, you can have only a single site open in Dreamweaver at once.

To begin defining a website, open the Manage Sites dialog box by selecting Site, Manage Sites, as shown in Figure 3.1.

The Manage Sites dialog box, shown in Figure 3.2, is where you can create, edit, duplicate, remove, export, and import Dreamweaver site definitions. The title says it all: This is where you manage your websites! To begin defining a new site, click the New button in the Manage Sites dialog box and choose Site. The Site Definition dialog box appears.

The Site Definition dialog box is where you name your site and point Dreamweaver to where the files are stored on your computer. You can define a site even if you don’t have any files; you simply define the site in an empty directory that is ready to hold all the web pages you create.
Using the Site Definition Wizard

The Site Definition dialog box, shown in Figure 3.3, has two tabs at the top: Basic and Advanced. You begin by using the settings on the Basic tab, so make sure that tab is selected. The Basic tab contains the Site Definition Wizard, which walks you through the site definition. Later this hour, you learn how to edit your site definition using the Advanced tab in the Site Definition dialog box.

The Site Definition Wizard has three stages, shown as the section names at the top of the wizard:

- **Editing Files**—This section enables you to set up the local directory where you’ll store the website. You tell the wizard whether your site uses server-side technologies. The sites and web pages in this book do not use these technologies, which connect web pages, servers, and often databases.

- **Testing Files**—This section is needed only for sites that use server-side technologies. We can skip over it!
TRY IT YOURSELF

Filling In the First Editing Files Site Setup Section

Fill in the Editing Files section of the wizard using the following steps:

1. In the Site Definition Wizard (refer to Figure 3.3), give your site a name. This name is used only inside Dreamweaver, so it can be anything you want. The site name should be meaningful—it should identify the purpose of the website when you drop down the Site menu to change sites.

   My Dreamweaver installation has about 30 to 40 sites defined at times, so clear names help me quickly find the site I want to edit.

   2. If you know the final HTTP address of your site, you can enter it here on the first page of the wizard; it’s also fine to leave this empty.

   3. Click the Next button.

Filling In the Editing Files, Part 2, Section

The next page of the wizard, Editing Files, Part 2, enables you to specify whether you will be using server-side scripting to create dynamic web pages.

TRY IT YOURSELF

Completing the Editing Files, Part 2 Site Setup Section

Fill in the Editing Files, Part 2, section of the wizard:

1. Your web pages in this book are regular HTML pages, so you should click the top radio button that says No, I Do Not Want to Use a Server Technology, as shown in Figure 3.4.

2. Click the Next button.

TIP

HTML and Dynamic Websites

Although we concentrate on HTML web pages, that doesn’t mean they can’t be interactive and dynamic experiences for the end user. You learn how to create pages with animation and how to change content later in the book.
Filling In the Editing Files, Part 3, Section

The next page, Editing Files, Part 3, helps you specify where the files in your site are located. The site that you are creating here is your development site, not the final site that other people will view over the Web. You have to move the files in your development site to a server for people to view the files over the Web (doing so is the subject of Hour 22). The website located on a web server and available to the public is called the live site. I always work on an up-to-date copy of a website that is located on my local hard drive. You can store your development files in two places:

- On your local machine
- On a network drive

Fill in the Editing Files, Part 3, section like so:

1. Select the top radio button, Edit Local Copies on My Machine, Then Upload to Server When Ready (Recommended), to elect to store the development files on your local machine; this is where most web developers store their files. If you are working in a networked environment (at your office, for instance), you could use the Edit Directly on Server Using Local Network selection.
2. As shown in Figure 3.5, the text box at the bottom of the dialog box asks you to enter the location of the site directory. Click the folder icon to the right of the text box to navigate to the directory where you will store your local site, the files you will work on in Dreamweaver. Either use an existing directory on your hard drive or create a new directory for your site.

3. Click the Next button.

**TRY IT YOURSELF**

**Completing the Editing Files, Part 3 Site Setup Section**

You enter the directory that houses your development files.

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2. As shown in Figure 3.5, the text box at the bottom of the dialog box asks you to enter the location of the site directory. Click the folder icon to the right of the text box to navigate to the directory where you will store your local site, the files you will work on in Dreamweaver. Either use an existing directory on your hard drive or create a new directory for your site.

3. Click the Next button.

**Filling In the Sharing Files Section**

The next section in the Site Definition Wizard enables you to configure how you upload files to a server and share them with the world. You can also set up a central location where members of your team can share files. You learn how to configure remote servers and transfer files in Hour 22. Fill in the Sharing Files section in the following way:

1. Drop down the top menu and select None, as shown in Figure 3.6.

2. Click the Next button.

**Reviewing the Summary**

The last page of the wizard displays a summary of your site, as shown in Figure 3.7. You can come back to this wizard at any time to change your site...
definition by selecting the Edit Sites command from the Site menu (either the one in the Files panel or the one in the Document window). Click the Done button to finish defining your site to finish creating your site definition.

**FIGURE 3.6**
To set up the remote connection information later, simply select None.

**FIGURE 3.7**
The Site Definition Wizard displays a summary of your site definition.

### Building the Site Cache

After you click the Done button, Dreamweaver displays a message, telling you that it will now create the initial site cache. When you click OK, a
progress bar like the one in Figure 3.8 appears (and disappears very quickly if you have nothing in your site). The initial site cache is created each time you create a new site. The site cache stores information about the links in your site so that they can be quickly updated if they change. Dreamweaver continues to update the cache as you work.

**Using the Files Panel**

After you’ve defined your site, the site title you specified appears in the Site drop-down menu at the top of the Files panel (shown in Figure 3.9). As you create web pages and save them to your site, they appear in the Files panel. You use the Files panel to open web pages to edit in Dreamweaver. Right now you might not have any web pages in your site, but eventually you’ll want to use the Files panel to create folders to organize the many web pages you’ve created.

The Site drop-down menu is where you access the websites you have defined. If you work on multiple projects, you have multiple sites to choose from. For instance, you might have your own personal website defined, plus a site for your child’s school or a site for a client whose website you are creating.

There is no special procedure for importing an existing website into Dreamweaver. If a copy of the existing website exists in a folder on your hard drive, simply define a site in Dreamweaver which points to that folder. That is all you need to do. All the files are available to edit in Dreamweaver, and you can easily modify web pages and then save them. Open a web page by double-clicking the filename listed in the Files panel.
So far you’ve used the collapsed version of the Files panel, but the next section introduces the expanded version of the Files panel.

**Expanding the Files Panel**

There is a larger version of the Files panel, available to use when you need to work with files in your site and need access to more site-oriented commands. To open the expanded Files panel, perform the following actions:

1. Click the Expand/Collapse button in the Files panel, shown earlier in Figure 3.9.

   The Expanded Files panel, shown in Figure 3.10, is a larger representation of the Files panel and has two panes: Local Files (on the right, by default) and Remote Site (on the left), which you set up in Hour 22. Because you have not yet defined a remote site, you should not have any files in the Remote Site pane at this point.

   ![Expanded Files Panel](image)

   **FIGURE 3.10**
   The Expanded Files panel has two panes: Local Files and Remote Site.

   When you click the Files Expand/Collapse button on the Macintosh, the Expanded Files panel opens in a new window. On Windows, it expands to fill the majority of the screen.

2. Click the Expand/Collapse button again to return to the smaller version of the Files panel.
Creating New Files in the Files Panel

You can create new files and new folders right in the Dreamweaver Files panel. Right-click in the Files panel to open the Files panel menu. This context menu, shown in Figure 3.11, has two commands of interest at the top: New File and New Folder. You use those commands to create files and folders (also called directories) in the Files panel.

1. Right-click in the Files panel.

   You need to be careful about what is selected when you select the New Folder command so that you do not nest the folder within another folder. To add a folder at the site root, select the top line in the Files panel, which begins with the word Site.

2. Select the New Folder command. An untitled folder is added to your site.

3. Name the new folder images.

4. Repeat steps 1 and 2 and create a folder called css.

The websites you create need directories for organization; probably every site will at least have an images directory for all the images in the site. To create an images directory, follow these steps:

▼ TRY IT YOURSELF

Creating an Images Directory

FIGURE 3.11
The Files panel context menu contains commands to create new folders and files in a website.
Now try adding a new file to your site with these steps:

1. Right-click on the root folder and select the New File command.
2. A new untitled web page is created in the website. Name the web page `index.html`, which is one of the popular default page names for many servers.

Using the **default page name** enables users to find your page more easily by just entering a basic web page address without the specific page appended. Another common default page name is `default.htm`. Both the `.htm` and the `.html` file extensions are acceptable. The `.htm` file extension became popular because the older versions of Microsoft Windows could handle only three-character file extensions; this is no longer a limitation in newer versions of Windows. After you add the new folder and a new file, the site should look as shown in Figure 3.12.

**Editing a Site Definition**

So far in this hour, you have used the wizard on the Basic tab in the Site Definition dialog box to define a website. Now let’s explore the Advanced tab and use it to edit site settings.

To edit the site definition, follow these steps:

1. Open the Manage Sites dialog box again by selecting the Manage Sites command from the Site menu, or by choosing Manage Sites from the File panel’s Site drop-down menu.
2. Select the site you just created from the list and then click the Edit button. The Site Definition dialog box opens again.

**TIP**

**Name Files Consistently**

I think it’s a good idea to name everything with lowercase letters. Some servers and scripting languages are case-sensitive. When you name everything with lowercase letters, you don’t need to remember whether you used uppercase letters.

**FIGURE 3.12**

You can add files and folders in Dreamweaver’s Files panel.

**TIP**

**A Quick Way to Edit Site Definitions**

A fast way to open the Site Definition dialog box is by simply double-clicking the name of the site in the Files panel’s Site drop-down menu.
3. Click the Advanced tab at the top of the dialog box. As shown in Figure 3.13, this is another view of the information you entered into the wizard.

The left side of the Site Definition dialog box shows categories, and the right side lists the selected category’s properties. Select the Local Info category. Don’t some of these fields look familiar? That’s because they are the same fields you set up using the wizard.

TRY IT YOURSELF

Setting a Default Images Folder

Set up a default images folder in the Local Info category in this way:

1. Select the folder icon next to the Default Images Folder text box.

2. Navigate to the images folder you just created. Now Dreamweaver knows where you keep your images for the site.

3. Click the OK button to save your changes.

4. Click the Done button to close the Edit Sites dialog box.

TIP

Check Case Sensitivity

In the Advanced tab of the Site Definition dialog box is the Use Case-Sensitive Link Checking check box. If you select this setting, Dreamweaver checks that the links in your site use the same case (uppercase or lowercase) as the filenames. This is very useful if you are eventually uploading your website to a case-sensitive UNIX server.
You learn about other advanced options later in this book. In Hour 22, you set up the Remote Info category in order to upload your files to a remote website. In Hour 23, “Maintaining a Website,” you explore the Cloaking and the Design Notes categories.

Consideration Site Organization

There are many opinions about the proper way to organize a website. Some people like to compartmentalize all the files into directories and subdirectories. Some people like to have a very shallow structure, with many files in a single directory. As you get more experienced at web development, you’ll find your ideal method of organization. It’s nice to exchange ideas with other web developers or hobbyists so that you can learn from the successes and failures of others and they can learn from yours.

I have a Projects directory on my hard drive, represented in Figure 3.14. The Projects directory contains a directory for each project on which I’m working. Within each project directory is a Web directory. This is the directory where I keep all the development files for the site and the directory that I set as the root in Dreamweaver.

This directory structure enables me to put other files, such as correspondence, contracts, invoices, and spreadsheets, in the client’s folder without making them part of the website. It’s good practice to keep other files separate from those you plan to transfer to the Web. You might prefer to have one directory that contains all your websites. Do whatever works best for you.

Put some thought into how you’ll organize the files in your website before you start a project. You probably want to create a separate images folder to hold your images, as shown in Figure 3.15. If you have other types of assets, such as sound or video, you might want to create separate folders for those too. I always create a scripts directory to hold external JavaScript files and external Cascading Style Sheets files; you explore these in the later hours of this book.

I try to logically break up sections of websites into separate directories. If your website has obvious divisions (departments, lessons, products, and so on), you can create directories to hold the web pages for each division. You’ll be surprised at how even a small website becomes quickly unmanageable when all the files are dumped into one directory.
Most websites use many image files. If you have different sections in your website, do you want to have separate images directories in each section? It might be a good way to organize your site. Then again, if images are used across multiple sections, it might make the images hard to find. Make sure that your organizational logic isn’t going to break down as you add files to your site.

Luckily, if you do have to rearrange assets, Dreamweaver updates any links for you. When you move a file, Dreamweaver asks you whether you want to search and update links to that file. That’s what the site cache is created for. However, it is still best to make wise design decisions at the beginning of a big project.

**Summary**

In this hour, you learned how to define a website and determine its root. You learned how to quickly add files and folders to a site. In addition, you learned how to use the Files panel and expand it into the Expanded Files panel. You also learned how to open a site and edit it using some of the advanced site definition features. And you explored ideas about how to organize a site.

**Q&A**

**Q.** How do I import a website into Dreamweaver?

**A.** There is no set procedure for importing a site. You simply define a site exactly as you did this hour, pointing to the root directory of the site you’d like to import. Dreamweaver presents all the files in the Files panel, enabling you to open and edit them. If the site you need to import is on a web server, you first need to read Hour 20, “Creating a Form and Collecting Data,” and set up remote site settings pointing to the server.

**Q.** If I need to move files within my site, is it okay to do it within Dreamweaver?

**A.** If you need to do some housekeeping or rearranging, it’s best to do it within Dreamweaver. Dreamweaver automatically updates links to files and warns you if deleting a file will affect other files within your site. Be sure to take care of these tasks within Dreamweaver and not elsewhere; otherwise, you might break links or other dependencies between files in the site.
Workshop Quiz

1. Why do you need to define a website?
2. What is the purpose of the Files panel?
3. True or false: You must go through a conversion process to import an existing website into Dreamweaver.

Quiz Answers

1. You define a website so that Dreamweaver knows where the root of the site is and what your site management preferences are.
2. The Files panel can be used to create new files and folders, edit existing files, and access site management features.
3. False. No conversion process is necessary to import an existing website into Dreamweaver.

Exercises

1. Try defining a new website. Add some files and folders to the new site. Name one of the files index.htm.
2. Search for Site Map in Google (http://www.google.com) and look at the organization of other sites on the Web. The folders used to store web pages might or might not reflect the same structure outlined in the site map. Click some of the pages and look at the folder structure in the URLs.
3. Open up the Site Definition dialog box and explore the other categories in the Advanced tab (Design Notes or Cloaking, for instance). We cover the other categories in upcoming hours.
Symbols

<> (angle brackets), 19
* (asterisk), 12
. (period), 114
# (pound sign), 114
/ (slash), 98

Accessibility settings (Table dialog box), 248-249
accessing Spry framework, 374
accordions, 383
Acrobat Reader, 213
Action property (forms), 402
actions, 348, 357
Active link color option (Page Properties dialog), 102
ActiveX controls, 208
Add Separator button (Insert bar, Favorites category), 481
Add to Favorites button (Assets panel), 235
Adobe Bridge, 198
Adobe Dreamweaver CS4 Unleashed (Ruvalcaba), 434
Adobe Exchange website, 473, 482-483
advanced handhelds, 295-297
Advanced tab (Site Definition dialog box), 445, 448
AIFF file format, 208, 215
AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML), 373
definition of, 373
external AJAX libraries, 394-396
overview, 373-374
Spry framework
accessing, 374
accordions, 383
capabilities of, 374-376
collapsible panels, 383
data sets, creating, 389-394
effects, 378-381
external JavaScript and CSS files, 376-378
Repeat Lists, inserting, 390
Spry panel CSS, editing, 386
tabbed panels, 381-382
ToolTips, 384-385
alerts, 142
Align menu (Property Inspector), 164
aligning
hotspots, 175-176
table cells, 253-254
text in web pages, 86
alignment icons (Property Inspector), 86
Alt menu (Property Inspector), 162
alt text. See alternative text
alternative content to Flash media, 211
alternative style sheets (CSS), 282
alternative text
adding to images, 161-163
Missing Alt Text report option (Reports menu), 162
anchors (named), 103-104
as invisible elements, 104
linking to, 105
Point-to-File icon (Property Inspector), 106-108
animating AP divs, 344-345
anti-aliasing text, 191
AP divs
advantages of, 346
animating, 344-345
background colors/images, 340-341
banner divs, 266
creating, 337
definition of, 336
Drag AP Element behavior, 350, 365-369
Eye icon column header, 342
hidden AP divs
applying behaviors to, 370
creating, 357
inserting, 265-266
multiple AP divs, selecting, 339
naming, 338-339
nesting, 337, 342-343
overlaps, 339
positioning, 339
preferences, setting, 337-338
resizing, 338
Set Text of Container behavior, 351, 363-364
Show-Hide Elements behavior, 351, 356-357
stacking orders, 341
visibility, changing, 336, 341-342
Z-index property, 336
AP divs category (Preferences dialog box), 337
AP Elements panel
naming AP divs, 339
Prevent Overlaps check box, 342
selecting AP divs, 339
Appear/Fade effect (Spry), 378-381
Appearance (CSS) settings (Page Properties dialog box), 75-78
applets (Java), 222-224
Application bar, 27
Apply button (Assets panel, Template category), 300
Apply Comment drop-down menu option (Coding toolbar), 144
Apply Source Formatting command, 149
Apply Source Formatting option (Clean up Word HTML dialog box), 153
applying
class selectors (CSS), 117
CSS styles, 85
ASP scripts, 433
ASPNET scripts, 433
assets, 227
adding to web pages, 234-235
color assets, 231
copying to websites, 239
creating, 237-239
definition of, 227
editing, 239
favorites
creating, 235-236
deleting from, 236
organizing, 236
image assets, 230-231
link assets, 231-232
listing, 229
lists, jumping to items in, 235
managing, 228-229
movie assets, 232
previewing, 230
script assets, 232-233
viewing by category in Assets panel, 229
Asynchronous JavaScript and XML. See AJAX
attributes
of tags, 138
of text fields, 405-407
audio files
deleting parameters, 218
ingesting parameters, 218
embedded players, 219-221
file formats, 214-215
finding, 213
links, 219
looping, 217
multiple parameters, 218
parameters list, 217
Play Sound behavior, 352
streaming, 207
web pages
adding to, 213-214
playback controls, 216
authoring tools, 20
Auto Indent option (View Options menu), 142
automatic indent, 142
Autoplay option (Property Inspector), 210
avi files, 208
avoiding spam, 107-108

Background category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 118-120
backgrounds
AP divs, 340-341
cells, 254
color, 77
images, 77
Spry menu bars, 330
backup templates, 309
Baseline image alignment (Property Inspector), 165
Basic tab (Clean up Word HTML dialog box)
Apply Source, 153
Clean Up CSS option, 153
Fix Invalidly Nested, 153
Remove All Word, 152
Show Log on Completion, 153
Beatnik file format, 215
behaviors, 13, 348
adding
to actions, 357
to web page objects, 354-355, 362
applying to hidden AP divs, 370
Behaviors panel, 349
behaviors

Call JavaScript, 350
Change Property, 350
Check Browser, 352
Check Plugin, 350
Control Shockwave, 352
definition of, 348
deprecated behaviors, 351-352
Drag AP Element, 350, 365-369
editing, 359
Effects, 350
execution order, changing, 363
Go to Timeline Frame, 352
Go to URL, 350, 364-365
hidden AP divs, creating, 357
Hide Pop-Up Menu, 352
hyperlinks
attaching to, 357
null links, 356
Jump Menu, 350
Jump Menu Go, 350
Open Browser Window, 350, 360-361
Play Sound, 352
Play Timeline, 352
Popup Message, 350, 362
pre-installed behaviors list, 349-351
Preload Images, 351
Set Nav Bar Image, 351
Set Text of Container, 351, 363-364
Set Text of Frame, 351
Set Text of Status Bar, 351
Set Text of Text Field, 351
Show Pop-up Menu, 352
Show-Hide Elements, 351, 356-357
Stop Timeline, 352
Swap Image, 13, 351
Swap Image Restore, 351
templates, 315
trigger events, setting, 359
triggering with buttons, 370
Validate Form, 351, 421-424
Behaviors panel, 349. See also behaviors
Show Events For menu, 353
versus Server Behaviors panel, 355
blank values (lists), 413
Blind Up/Down effect (Spry), 378
Block category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 118-120
<br> tag, 73
Blockquote tag, 92
blurry images, sharpening, 168
<body> tag, 139-141
Book menu (References panel), 153-154
Border category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 118, 122
Bottom image alignment (Property Inspector), 165
Boutell, Tom, 297
Box category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 118, 121
box elements, 345
box model (CSS), 259-261
Bridge (Adobe)
adding file metadata, 202-203
advantages, 205
Bridge Home, 204
browsing files, 200-201
Favorites panel, 201
file metadata, 203
filtering files based on metadata, 203
Get Photos from Camera feature, 204
Image Editing feature, 204
Image Searches feature, 204
overview, 198-199
previewing files, 201-202
user interface, 199-200
Brightness and Contrast tool, 168
broadband connections, 207
broken links, fixing, 464
browsers
Check Browser behavior, 352
CSS requirements, 111
events
definition of, 348
displaying information on, 348-349
onBlur, 353
onChange, 353
C

cache, building, 57
Café Press, 12
Call JavaScript behavior, 350
Cascading Style Sheets. See CSS
case-sensitivity, 69

cells (tables)
aligning contents of, 253-254
headers, 248
layout tables, 254
merging, 252-253
moving backward in, 249
padding, 248
selecting, 245
selecting groups of, 245
spacing, 248
splitting, 252-253
td tag, 244
centering page content, 274-275
certificates (servers), 431
CGI scripts, 426-427
Change Link Sitewide command
(Files panel), 464
Change Properties behavior, 350
changing, 267
Char Width attribute (text fields), 406
check boxes, 409-410
Check Browser behavior, 352
Check In/Check Out, 447-450, 455
Check Page menu (Document toolbar), 43
Check Plugin behavior, 350
checked values, 409
choosing
fonts, 8
hosting providers, 435
Class property (forms), 402
class selectors, 86
applying, 117
creating, 115-117
removing, 117-118
classes (CSS)
applying, 117
creating, 115
Clean Up CSS option (Clean up Word
HTML dialog box), 153
Clean up Word HTML dialog
box, 152-153
cleaning up HTML created with Word,
151-153
Clear History command (History
panel), 480
Clear property (CSS), 265
Clear setting (CSS Rule Definition
dialog box), 122
clearing floating elements, 272-273
client-side script, 415
Clip setting (CSS Rule Definition
dialog box), 123
Cloaking feature, 309
closing panels, 46
Code Coloring category (Preferences
dialog box), 148
Code Format category (Preferences
dialog box), 149-150
Code Hints category (Preferences dialog box), 150
Code Inspector, 144
Code Navigator, 144-145
code preferences
code hints, 150
color preferences, 148
formatting preferences, 149-150
rewrite preferences, 151
Word documents, cleaning up in, 152
Code Rewriting category (Preferences dialog box), 151
code validation, 154-155
Code view, 42
   Coding toolbar, 142-144
   View Options menu, 141-142
Coding toolbar, 142-144
ColdFusion, 12, 433
Collapse Full Tag option (Coding toolbar), 143
Collapse Selection option (Coding toolbar), 143
collapsible panels, 383
Collapsible Panels widget (Spry), 383
collapsing panel groups, 45-46

color
   assets, 231
   background color
      AP divs, 340-341
      setting global properties, 77
code preferences, 148
   custom colors, 76-77
   of hyperlinks, 102
library item highlights, 305
of Spry menu bars, 330
Syntax Coloring option (View Options menu), 142
text color
   global properties, 76
   selecting via Text Color text box (Property Inspector), 84
   value identification software, 77
websafe colors, 230
Color category (Assets panel), 231
Color Picker, 76-77, 102, 186
Color setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 120-122
ColorCop, 77

columns
   adjusting width, 252
   creating, 251, 270-272
   displaying width of, 244
   Eye icon header, 342
   removing, 250
   selecting, 245
   setting number of, 244, 247
commands
   deleting, 480
   recording, 478-479
   renaming, 480
   running, 480
Commands menu, 25
comments, 144
Common category objects (Insert panel), 29-32
common gateway interface, 427
Compare command (Synchronize command), 463
compound selectors, 126, 269
configuring Subversion version control, 452-453
conflicts, 290-291
Connect/Disconnect button (Files panel), 446
content management
   Contribute, 316
   InContext Editing, 316-317
   overview, 315
context menus, 47
contrast (images), 168
Contribute (Adobe), 316, 467
Control Shockwave behavior, 352
converting inline styles, 144
copying
   assets to websites, 239
   image maps, 173
   images in Photoshop, 192
copying/pasting text to web pages, 70-71
copyright laws, 7
Crop tool, 168
cropping images via Photoshop, 183-185
CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)
   box model, 259-261
   browser requirements, 111
   built-in sheets, 406
classes
  applying, 117
  creating, 115

Clean Up CSS option (Clean up Word HTML dialog box), 153

creating for handheld devices
  Device Central, 295
  Handheld style sheet, 294
  iPhone and advanced handhelds, 295-297
  overview, 294

creating for mobile devices
  alternative style sheets, 282
  external style sheets, 282-285
  media attribute, 279-281
  previewing style rendering, 281-282

creating for print
  adding print-only messages, 293-294
  hiding elements, 286-289
  hiding hyperlinks, 291-293
  identifying style conflicts, 290-291
  modifying default fonts, 289-290
  overview, 286

CSS-Positioning, 112, 259

CSS Rule Definition dialog box, 118-120, 122, 124

CSS Styles panel, 9, 112-114. See also CSS styles
  CSS Rule Definition dialog box, 118-124
  Edit Style button, 127-128

.csv file extension, 197

Cursor setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 123

custom colors, creating, 76-77

custom guides
  adding to layout tables, 275
  creating, 275

custom guides
  adding to layout tables, 275

styles
  applying, 85, 117
  creating, 115-116
  deleting, 85
  editing, 127-128
  inheritance, 132-133
  moving, 128-129
  naming, 115
  placing definitions in, 115
  precedence, 132
  redefining HTML tags, 124
  removing from objects, 117-118
  renaming, 85
  settings, 118-124
  viewing, 81, 84
  styling text with, 112-114
  templates, 315
  uses of, 111
custom snippets
creating, 473-476
 keyboard shortcuts, 478

Customize Favorites command (Insert bar), 481
customizing
 bulleted lists, 87
 menu bars, 327-328
 numbered lists, 87

data sets (Spry), 389-394
dcr files, 210

Default image alignment (Property Inspector), 165
Delete command (Synchronize command), 463
Delete Library Item button (Assets panel), 300
deleting
 asset favorites, 236
 columns (tables), 250
 CSS styles, 85, 117-118
 forms, 415
 recorded commands, 480
 rows (tables), 250
 sound file parameters, 218
 synchronized files, 462
delimited data files, 198
delimiters, 255
dependent files, 450
deprecated behaviors, 351-352
deprecated tags, 82
design notes
 author information, 466
 Contribute (Adobe), 467
 web pages, adding to, 465-466
 Design view, 42, 139
 Detach from Original button (Property Inspector), 305
development sites, 55
Device Central, 295
DHTML (Dynamic HTML), 335-336
directories
 definition of, 52
 parent directories, 98
 root, 51
 SpryAssets, 376
 Templates, 308
disabling extensions via Extension Manager, 483
Display setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121
displaying
 AP divs
 Show-Hide Elements behavior, 351, 356-357
 assets by category in Assets panel, 229
 event information, 348-349
 HTML tag hierarchies (tables), 245
 library item attributes, 305
<div> tag, 336
divs. See AP divs
docking panels, 46
doctype tag, 69, 138
document-relative paths (hyperlinks)
 definition of, 94
 examples of, 96-98
Document toolbar, 42-43
document type declaration, 138
Document window, 42
 Code view
 Coding toolbar, 142-144
 View Options menu options, 141-142
 Design view, 139
 Flash files, 211
 Shockwave files, previewing, 211
 Split Code view, 138, 141
 Split view, 142-144
 Status bar, 44-45
 Tab groups, 22
toolbar, 42
 Welcome screen, 21-22
domains
 names, 94
 as URL components, 95
down() function, 345
downloading
 multimedia players, 208
templates, 308
Drag AP Element behavior, 350, 365-369
DreamHost, 435
Dreamweaver Exchange, 134
Dreamweaver menu, 26
drop-down menus, 413
Dynamic HTML (DHTML), 335-336
dynamic web pages
definition of, 12
server-side scripting, 433

E

Edit button (Assets panel), 300
Edit Image Settings option, 168
Edit menu commands, 23
Edit Style button (CSS Styles panel), 127-128
Edit Tag mode (Quick Tag Editor), 146
Edit tool, 168
editable regions (templates)
creating, 310
highlight color, adjusting, 311
layers, 311
making existing regions, 310-311
making new editable regions, 311-313
naming, 311
optional regions, 311-313
placement of, 312
editing
assets, 239
behaviors, 359
CSS styles, 127-128
default fonts, 289-290
history steps via History panel, 479
images, 167-168
keyboard shortcuts, 476-477
library items, 306-307
menu bars, 329-332
navigation bars, 325
page margins, 267
sound file parameters, 218
tags, 145-147
templates, 314
website definitions, 61-62
Editing Files section (Site Definition Wizard), 53-56
editors, associating with file extensions, 167
effects (Spry)
adding to rollover images, 192-193
Appear/Fade effect, 380-381
Effects behavior, 350
overview, 378
removing, 380
Squish effect, 379-380
Effects behavior, 350
e-mail spam, avoiding, 107-108
Email Link dialog box, 109
Email Link object, 107
embedded audio players, 219-221
Embedded Media HTML Generator, 218
embedding server-side scripts in web pages, 434
Enable Design Notes option (Site Definition dialog box), 465-466
Encoding command, 81
Enctype property (forms), 402
errors, syntax error alerts, 142
events, 348
browser support, 353
definition of, 348
information, displaying, 348-349
onBlur, 353
onChange, 353
onClick, 354
onFocus, 354
onLoad, 354
onMouseDown, 354
onMouseOver, 354
onMouseUp, 354
onSelect, 354
onSubmit, 354
overview, 352-353
trigger events, 359
Excel
file extensions, 197
importing table data from, 197-198, 205
Expand All option (Coding toolbar), 143
Expand/Collapse button (Files panel), 446
expanding
Files panel, 59
panel groups, 45-46
Property Inspector, 47
Export Table dialog box, 255
exporting
table data, 254-255
web pages from page layout software, 9
Extensible Hypertext Markup Language. See XHTML
Extension Manager, 482-483
Extensible Markup Language. See XML
extensions, file. See file extensions
extensions, software, 337
Adobe Exchange website, 473, 482-483
definition of, 351
disabling via Extension Manager, 483
installing via Extension Manager, 482-483
overview, 134
Extensions category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119, 123
external AJAX libraries
Lightview, 394-396
overview, 394
external links, 464
external style sheets
creating from scratch, 129-130
importing styles into, 128-129
editors, associating with, 167
.JPEG, 166, 171
.GIF, 166
.lbi, 302
.lck, 449
.MOV, 208
.PNG, 167
.prn, 197
.sound formats, 214-215
.swf, 210
.WAV, 208
file locations (websites), specifying, 55
file management
Check In/Check Out, 447-450, 455
Select Newer Local command (Files panel), 460
Select Newer Remote command (Files panel), 460
Synchronization command (Files panel), 461-462
File Management menu (Document toolbar), 43
File menu commands, 23
file sharing (websites), 56
File Types/Editors option (Preferences dialog box), 167
file:/// prefix, 231, 240
filenames as URL components, 95
files
browsing with Adobe Bridge, 200-201
creating, 60-61
linking to, 284-285
media type, setting, 282-284
saving styles in, 130
Eye icon column header, 342
favorites
creating, 235-236
deleting, 236
favorites lists, 481
organizing, 236
Favorites category (Insert bar), 481
Favorites panel (Adobe Bridge), 201
feathering image edges via Photoshop, 185-186
fields
hidden fields, 429
text fields
adding to forms, 403-404
attributes, 405-407
Text Field AutoClear snippet, 407
Validation text fields (Spry), 424-425
fieldset> tag, 416
fieldsets, adding to forms, 416
file extensions
.AIFF, 208
.AVI, 208
.csv, 197
.dcr, 210
dependent files, 450
extensions. See file extensions
filtering based on metadata, 203
help files, 47-48
metadata
  adding with Adobe Bridge, 202-203
definition of, 202
moving within websites, 64
naming, 61, 69
orphaned files, 464-465
previewing with Adobe Bridge, 201-202
saving, 69
synchronized files, deleting, 462
synchronizing on local and remote sites, 459-463
transferring
  dependent files, 450
to remote sites, 449
updating, 315
XML files, 388
Files panel, 445. See also files
  Change Link Sitewide command, 464
Connect/Disconnect button, 446
creating new files in, 60-61
Expand/Collapse button, 446
expanding, 59
functions of, 58-59
Get button, 446
Put button, 446
Refresh button, 446
Select Newer Local command, 460
Select Newer Remote command, 460
Synchronize command, 461-462
Filter setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 124
filters, 192-193
Find and Replace dialog boxes, 484-485
finding sound files, 213
Firefox, 89, 208
firewalls, 442
Fix Invalidly Nested and Unclosed Tags check box, 151
Fix Invalidly Nested Tags option (Clean up Word HTML dialog box), 153
Flash files, 209
  alternative content, 211
  as sound files, 215
assets, 232
file extensions, 210
looping, 210
previewing, 211
quality settings, 211
resizing, 212
  support websites, 214
Float property (CSS), 265
Float setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121
floating page elements, 269-270
folders, 52
<font> tag, 82, 485
Font-family setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119
Font-size setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119
Font-style setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119
Font-variant setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119
Font-weight setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119
fonts
  choosing, 8
  modifying default fonts, 289-290
  pixels versus points, 75
  selecting, 82-83
  of Spry menu bars, 330
  web pages, 75
Form Delimiter option (Preferences dialog box), 399
form-hosting websites, 427
Form ID property (forms), 402
<form> tag, 404
Format menu (Property Inspector), 72
Format Source Code drop-down menu option (Coding toolbar), 144
formatting
  Apply Source Formatting option (Clean up Word HTML dialog box), 153
code preferences, 149-150
forms, 402
processing

CGI scripts, 426-427
FormMail script, 428-429
GET method, 427
parsing data, 426-427
POST method, 427
server-side scripts, 434-435
properties, 402
radio buttons, 408-409
search forms, 11
selecting, 402
submissions, 430
Text Field AutoClear snippet, 407
text fields
adding, 403-404
attributes, 405-407
multi line fields, 406
password fields, 406
single line fields, 406
sizing, 407
Textarea objects, 407
Validate Form behavior, 351
validating, 12
with Spry Validation text field, 424-425
with Validate Form behavior, 421-424
Forms category objects (Insert panel), 35-37
Forms section (Snippets panel), 413
forward slash (/), 98

frames

Go to Timeline Frame behavior, 352
Set Text of Frame behavior, 351
FreeScripts, 427
FTP access
firewalls, 442
Passive FTP, 445
proxy servers, 442
remote sites, 441-442
server connections, 445
full paths, 94
function calls, 347
functions
definition of, 347
down(), 345
MM_swapImage(), 347

G
generic buttons, 413-415
Get button (Files panel), 446
Get command (Synchronize command), 463
GET method, 427-450
Get Photos from Camera feature (Adobe Bridge), 204
GIF file format, 166
global properties, setting in web pages, 74-75
background, 77
headings, 79
HTTP requests

page fonts, 75
page margins, 78
text color, 76
Go buttons, 418
Go to Timeline Frame behavior, 352
Go to URL behavior, 350, 364-365
Google Analytics, 468-471
grammar checking, 70
graphics. See images
groups
check box groups, 410
radio button groups, 408-409
Grow/Shrink effect (Spry), 378
guides
in images, 189
in layout tables, 275-276

H

H Space, 165
Hand tool, 44
handheld devices, CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)
Device Central, 295
Handheld style sheet, 294
iPhone and advanced handhelds, 295-297
overview, 294
hard drives, saving web pages to, 6
Head Content option (Design view), 139
<head> tag, 139-141
header cells (tables), 248
headers (web pages), 115
Heading 1 through Heading 6 option (Property Inspector), 72
headings (web pages), 79
Headings settings (Page Properties dialog box), 79
Height setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121-123
Help, 27, 47-48
hidden AP divs
applying behaviors to, 370
creating, 357
hidden characters, displaying, 142
Hidden Characters option (View Options menu), 142
hidden fields, 429
Hide Panels/Show Panels command, 45
Hide Pop-up Menu behavior, 352
hiding
AP divs, 351, 356-357
elements through CSS, 286-289
hyperlinks, 291-293
panels, 45, 138
high resolution files, 169
Highlight effect (Spry), 378
Highlight Invalid Code option (Coding toolbar), 143
Highlight Invalid HTML option (View Options menu), 142
hints (code), 150
History panel
Clear History command, 480
commands, saving, 479
history steps, editing, 479
home pages (websites), 96
horizontal rules, 88
HostGator, 435
hosting providers, 435
hotspots, 172
aligning, 175-176
creating, 174-175
overlapping, 176
.htm extension, 69
.html extension, 69
HTML (Hypertext Markup Language), 6, 335
cleaning up HTML created with Word, 151-153
definition of, 6
overview of, 19
Roundtrip HTML, 20
tags, 138
behaviors, 357
redefining via CSS styles, 124
searches, 485
tables, 245
text within tags, searching, 486
validating code, 154-155
viewing in web browsers, 6
HTTP requests, 426
hyperlinks

absolute paths, 94-96
adding to websites, 99-101
assets, 231-232
behaviors, attaching to, 357
breadcrumbs, 322
broken links, fixing, 464
color preferences, 102
definition of, 93, 322
document-relative paths
definition, 94
examples, 96-98
external links, 464
hiding, 291-293
image maps
copying/pasting, 173
creating, 173
definition of, 172
hotspots, 172-176
naming, 173
Link Checker, 464-465
linked images, 172
mailto links, 107-108
managing, 463-465
named anchors, 103-105
null links, 356
to PDF files, 212-213
site root-relative paths
definition, 94
examples, 98
to sound files, 219
targeted links, opening new web browser windows, 332
text, incorporating into, 99
underline, turning on/off, 103, 134
updating, 463
URLs, changing, 464
web page examples, 8
Hypertext Markup Language.
See HTML

ICE (InContext Editing), 316-317
id selectors, 266
Ignore command (Synchronize command), 463
Image buttons, 413-415
Image category (Assets panel), 230-231
Image Editing feature (Adobe Bridge), 204
Image Size dialog box, 185
images
adding to web pages, 159-163
alternative text, adding, 161-163
assets, 230-231
background images
AP divs, 340-341
setting global properties, 77
copying in Photoshop, 192
creating via Photoshop
adding shapes, 190-191
adding text, 188-189
setting resolution, 187
sizing images, 187
cropping via Photoshop, 183-185
editing, 167-168
feathering edges via Photoshop, 185-186
file formats
GIF, 166
JPEG, 166
PNG, 167
guides, 189
image maps
copying/pasting, 173
creating, 173
definition of, 172
hotspots, 172
aligning, 175-176
creating, 174-175
overlapping, 176
naming, 173
Image Preview dialog box, 171
linked images, creating, 172
null links, 356
mailto links, 107-108
portfolio, 278-279
robots.txt, 334-335
site root-relative paths
definition, 94
examples, 98
site root-relative paths
to PDF files, 212-213
site root-relative paths
to sound files, 219
site root-relative paths
Invisible Elements category (Preferences dialog box)

importing
CSS styles into external style sheets, 128-129
existing websites to remote sites, 451
images into web pages, 159-163
table data, 197-198, 205, 254-255
templates, 308
websites, 64

InContext Editing (ICE), 316-317

InContext Editing category objects
(Common category, 29-32
Forms category, 35-37
InContext Editing category, 38
Layout category, 33-35
Spry category, 37-38
Text category, 39-41
overview, 27-28

Insert HTML mode (Quick Tag Editor), 147
Insert Jump Menu dialog box, 417
Insert menu, 24
Insert Navigation Bar dialog box, 323-324

Insert panel
objects
Common category, 29-32
Forms category, 35-37
InContext Editing category, 38
Layout category, 33-35
Spry category, 37-38
Text category, 39-41
overview, 27-28

Insert Rollover Image dialog box, 177
Insert Spry Repeat List dialog box, 390
insertion points, 404
inspectors, 144
installing
extensions via Extension Manager, 482-483
Lightview, 395-396
interactivity, 13-14
Internet Explorer, 208
invalid code preferences, highlighting, 142
invisible elements, turning on/off, 104-105

Invisible Elements category
(Preferences dialog box, 399

linking in Lightview, 396
optimization software, 169
optimizing for web pages, 168-171
organizing, 240
pixelated images, 171
placeholder images, 310
Preload Images behavior, 351
previewing, 160-161
properties, 163
resizing via Photoshop, 183-185
restoring, 178
reverting in Photoshop, 187
rollover effects, 13, 177, 192-193, 323-325
rotating via Photoshop, 183-185
Set Nav Bar Image behavior, 351
sliced images, 194
Smart Objects, 195-197
spacer images, 256
spacing (web page elements), adjusting, 165
Swap Image behavior, 351
Swap Image Restore behavior, 351
text, aligning with, 164
tiling, 341
tracing images, 268-269
undoing changes in Photoshop, 187
web page examples, 8

Import Tabular Data dialog box, 197-198

indenting
automatic indent, 142
Indent button (Property Inspector), 87-88
Indent Code option (Coding toolbar), 144

inheritance of CSS styles, 132-133
inline styles, converting, 144

Insert After text box (Snippets panel), 476
Insert bar, 481
Insert Before text box (Snippets panel), 476
Insert Block radio button (Snippets panel), 474-475
Insert button (Assets panel), 300
iPhone, 295-297
item labels (lists), 412
item values (lists), 412

J-K

Java applets
adding to web pages, 222-224
versus JavaScript, 222

JavaScript
actions, 348
Call JavaScript behavior, 350
client-side script, 415
function calls, 347
functions, 347
in rollover images, 177
resources, 370
versus Java, 222
Jeroen Wijering, 220-221
JPEG file format, 166, 171
JSP scripts, 433
Jump Menu behavior, 350
Jump Menu Go behavior, 350
jump menus
forms, creating in, 416-417
Go buttons, 418
JW FLV Media Player, 220-221
keyboard shortcuts
editing, 476-477
printing, 478
saving, 477
snippets, 478
library items, 15
adding to web pages, 303-306
attributes, 305
compared to templates, 308
content, adding to, 303
creating, 299-301
from existing content, 301-302
from scratch, 301-303
detaching from original items, 305
editing, 306-307
external AJAX libraries, 394-396
highlight color, selecting, 305
.lbi file extension, 302
opening, 305
recreating, 305
saving, 306
servers, sharing on, 304
updating, 306-307
uses of, 299
versus templates, 301
Lightview, 394
installing, 395-396
linking images in, 396
line numbers, displaying, 142
Line Numbers option
Coding toolbar, 143
View Options menu, 142
Link Checker, 464-465
Link color option (Page Properties dialog), 102
Link option (Property Inspector), 172
links. See hyperlinks

Liquid Audio file format, 215

List category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 118, 122

List Item button (Property Inspector), 87

List style image setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 122

List style position setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 122

List style type setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 122

List/Menu objects, 411-413

listing website assets, 229

lists
  blank values, 413
  creating in forms, 411-413
  item labels, 412
  item values, 412
  multiple values, selecting, 412
  nested lists, 87
  Repeat Lists, inserting, 390
  Select objects, 413
  sizing, 411
  unordered lists, 87
  versus menus, 413
  widths, adjusting, 413

Live view (Document toolbar), 42

Line-height setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 119

Local Info category (Site Definition Wizard), 62

local sites
  link management, 463-465
  Select Newer Local command (Files panel), 460
  Synchronization command (Files panel), 461-462
  transferring files to, 445

local websites, synchronizing files on local and remote sites, 459-463

locating sound files, 213

Location Toolbar property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360

locking guides in layout tables, 276

Loop option (Property Inspector), 210

looping
  Flash files, 210
  sound files, 217

M

$mailprog variable (FormMail scripts), 428

mailto links, 107-108

Manage Sites dialog box, 52-54

managing
  favorites lists, 481
  files
    Check In/Check Out, 447-450, 455
    Select Newer Local command (Files panel), 460
    Select Newer Remote command (Files panel), 460

Synchronization command (Files panel), 461-462

links, 463-465

Margin setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 122

margins
  changing, 267
  of web pages, 78

Mark as Already Synchronized command (Synchronize command), 463

Matt’s Script Archive, 427

Max Chars attribute (text fields), 406

media attribute (CSS), 279-281

Menu bar. See also menu bars

  Commands menu, 25
  Dreamweaver menu, 26
  Edit menu, 23
  File menu, 23
  Help menu, 27
  Insert menu, 24
  Site menu, 26-27
  Text menu, 25
  View menu, 24

Menu Bar property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360

menu bars. See also Menu bar

  creating, 326-327
  customizing, 327-328
  definition of, 322
  editing, 329-332
menus

commands
  recording, 478
  saving recorded commands, 479
creating in forms, 411-413
drop-down menus, 413
Jump Menu behavior, 350
Jump Menu Go behavior, 350
jump menus, 416-418
Select objects, 413
Show Pop-up Menu behavior, 352
versus lists, 413
merging table cells, 252-253
messages
  Popup Message behavior, 350, 362
  popup messages, 362
  print-only messages, 293-294
<meta> tag, 139
metadata
  adding with Adobe Bridge, 202-203
definition of, 202
filtering files based on metadata, 203
Metadata panel (Bridge), 202
Method property (forms), 402
Microsoft Visual SourceSafe access, setting for remote sites, 444
Middle image alignment (Property Inspector), 165
MIDI file format, 215

mirroring websites, 439
Missing Alt Text report option (Reports menu), 162
MM_swapImage() function, 347
mobile devices, CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) for
  alternative style sheets, 282
  Device Central, 295
  external style sheets, 282-285
  Handheld style sheet, 294
  iPhone and advanced handhelds, 295-297
  media attribute, 279-281
  overview, 294
  previewing style rendering, 281-282
Modify Navigation Bar dialog box, 325
modifying. See editing
MOV files, 208
Move or Convert CSS drop-down menu (Coding toolbar), 144
Movies category (Assets panel), 232
moving
  AP divs, 339
  CSS styles, 128-129
  website files, 64
MP3 (MPEG 3) file format, 214
multi line text fields, 406
multimedia files
  ActiveX controls, 208
  bandwidth, 207
  browsers, 208
  file formats, 214-215
Flash files, 209
  alternative content, 211
  as sound files, 215
  assets, 232
  file extensions, 210
  looping, 210
  previewing, 211
  quality settings, 211
  resizing, 212
  support websites, 214
multimedia players, 208, 216
PDF files, linking to, 212-213
Shockwave files
  Control Shockwave behavior, 352
  previewing, 211
sound files
  adding to web pages, 213-214
  deleting parameters, 218
  editing parameters, 218
  embedded players, 218-221
  finding, 213
  links, 219
  looping, 217
  multiple parameters, 218
  parameters list, 217
  playback controls, 216
multimedia players, 208, 216
named anchors, 103-104
   as invisible elements, 104
   linking to, 105
Point-to-File icon (Property Inspector), 106-108

naming
   AP divs, 338-339
   CSS styles, 115
   domains, 94
   editable regions (templates), 311
   files, 61
   form objects, 406
   hidden fields, 429
   image maps, 173
   templates, 309
   website files, 69
   websites, 54

navigation
   breadcrumbs, 322
   hyperlinks. See hyperlinks
   menu bars
      creating, 326-327
      customizing, 327-328
      definition of, 322
      editing, 329-332
   navigation bars
      creating, 323-325
      definition of, 322
      editing, 325
      Set Nav Bar Image behavior, 351
   Navigation Toolbar property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360

nesting
   AP divs, 337, 342-343
   lists, 87
   tables, 256

Netscape, 208

New CSS Rule dialog box, 115-116
New Document dialog box, 67-68, 187, 313
New Favorites Folder button (Assets panel), 236
New Library Item button (Assets panel), 300
New Optional Region dialog box, 311

None buttons, 413
None option (Property Inspector, Format menu), 72

notes (design)
   author information, 466
   Contribute (Adobe), 467
   web pages, adding to, 465-466

null links, 356
numbered lists, 87

Ordered List button (Property Inspector)
organizing

asset favorites, 236
images, 240
websites, 63-64

orphaned files, 464-465

Outdent button (Property Inspector), 87-88
Outdent Code option (Coding toolbar), 144
Oval Hotspot tool, 175
Overflow setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 123

overlapping
AP divs, 339-341
hotspots, 176

P

<p> tag, 73
packets, 430
padding (cells), 248
Padding setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 122

page layouts, 9-10
cells, adding, 275
centering page content, 274-275
clearing floating elements, 272-273
color, 254
columns, 270-272
compound selectors, 269
CSS box model, 259-261

CSS page layouts
Clear property, 265
creating, 261-262
Float property, 265
view options, 263-264
definition of, 259
divs
banner divs, 266
inserting, 265-266
floating page elements, 269-270
guides
adding, 275
creating, 275
locking, 276
turning on/off, 275
id selectors, 266
nested tables, 256
page margins, 267
resolution, selecting, 260
tracing images, 268-269
Zoom tool, 276

page margins, 267
Page Properties dialog box, 74, 268

Active link color option, 102
Appearance (CSS) settings, 75-78
Headings settings, 79
hyperlink color, setting, 102
Link color option, 102
Rollover link color option, 102
Title/Encoding settings, 79-81
Visited link color option, 102

Page Source command (web browsers), 6
Page-break-after setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 123
Page-break-before setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 123

pages. See web pages
panel groups, expanding/collapsing, 45-46

panels, 45, 58
accordions, 383
closing, 46
collapsible panels, 383
docking/undocking, 46
hiding/showing, 45
opening, 45
resizing, 46
Spry panel CSS, editing, 386
tabbed panels, 381-382
toggling on/off, 138

Paragraph option (Property Inspector, Format menu), 72

paragraph tags, 73
Parameters dialog box, 218
parent directories, 98
parsing data, 425-427
Passive FTP, 445
password text fields, 406
pasting image maps, 173

paths
absolute paths, 94-96
document-relative paths
definition of, 94
textures of, 96-98
site root-relative paths  
definition of, 94  
examples of, 98  
as URL components, 95

PDF (Portable Document Format)  
files, linking to, 212-213

Pen tool (Photoshop), 190-191

period (.), 114

Photoshop  
images  
copying, 192  
creating, 187-191  
cropping, 183-185  
feathering edges of, 185-186  
resizing, 183-185  
reverting, 187  
rotating, 183-185  
undoing changes to, 187  
Smart Objects, 195-197  
New Document dialog box, 187  
overview, 181-182  
Pen tool, 190-191  
rollover images, 192-193  
Show Guides command, 189  
sliced images, 194  
Text tool, 188-189  
website, 182

PHP scripts, 433

pictures. See images

pixelated images, 171

d pixels versus points (fonts), 75  
placeholder images, 310

preferences dialog box  
AP divs category, 337  
Code Coloring category, 148  
Code Format category, 149-150  
Code Hints category, 150  
Code Rewriting category, 151  
File Types/Editors option, 167  
Invisible Elements category, 399

Preformatted option (Property Inspector, Format menu), 72

Preload Images behavior, 351

Preload Rollover Image check box (Insert Rollover Image dialog box, 177

Prevent Overlaps check box (AP Elements panel), 342

Preview panel (Bridge), 202

Preview/Debug in the Browser menu (Document toolbar), 43

previewing  
assets, 230  
files with Adobe Bridge, 201-202  
Flash movies, 211  
images, 160-161  
Shockwave movies, 211  
style rendering, 281-282  
web pages  
in Device Central, 295  
in web browsers, 89-91

primary navigation, 321
print, designing CSS for

CSS Styles panel
  applying CSS styles, 85
  class selectors, 86
  deleting CSS styles, 85
  renaming CSS styles, 85
  viewing CSS styles, 84

Detach from Original button, 305
expanding, 47
form properties, 402
image properties, viewing, 163
Indent button, 87-88
library item attributes,
  viewing, 305
Link option, 172
List Item button, 87
Loop option, 210
Open button, 305
Ordered List button, 87
Outdent button, 87-88
overview, 46-47
Point-to-File icon, 106-108
Recreate button, 305
rows (tables), 252
Text Color text box, 84
tables, 247
Text Font menu, 82-83
Text Size menu, 83-84
Unordered List button, 87
Vis menu, 341-342
proxy servers, 442
Put button (Files panel), 446

Put command (Synchronize command), 463
PUT method, 449-450

Q
query files, saving searches as, 486
query strings as URL components, 96
Quick Tag Editor, 145-146
  Edit Tag mode, 146
  Insert HTML mode, 147
  Wrap Tag mode, 147
QuickTime file format, 215

R
radio buttons, adding to forms,
  408-409
RDS access, 443
Reader, 212
RealMedia file format, 214
Recent Snippets drop-down menu
  option (Coding toolbar), 144
@recipients variable (FormMail
  scripts), 428
recording commands, 478-480
Recreate button (Property
  Inspector), 305
references, accessing, 153-154
References panel, 153-154, 348-349
Remove from Favorites button (Assets panel), 236
removing
class selectors (CSS), 117-118
columns (tables), 250
CSS styles from objects, 117-118
forms, 415
guides from images, 189
rows (tables), 250
Spry effects, 380
synchronized files, 462
underline from hyperlinks, 134
renaming
CSS styles, 85
recorded commands, 480
Repeat Lists (Spry), inserting, 390
Replace All button (Find and Replace dialog), 485
Replace button (Find and Replace dialog), 485
reports, generating, 467-468
Reports dialog box, 468
Reports menu, 162
repositioning AP divs, 339
requests (HTTP), 426
required elements, designating in forms, 423
Resample command, 168
Reset buttons, 413
Resize Handles property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
resizing
AP divs, 338
Flash files, 212
images via Photoshop, 183-185
lists, 411
panels, 46
playback controls (sound files), 216
Plugin objects, 216
tables, 252
text fields, 407
resolution
of images, 187
of web page layouts, 260
restoring images, 178
reusability, 15
reverting images in Photoshop, 187
rewriting code preferences, 151
Right image alignment (Property Inspector), 165
rollover effects, 13, 177, 192-193, 323-325
Rollover link color option (Page Properties dialog), 102
root directories, 51
rotating images via Photoshop, 183-185
Roundtrip HTML, 20
rows (table)
adjusting height, 252
creating, 249-251
removing, 250
selecting, 245
setting number of, 244, 247
<tr> tag, 244

Rule Definition dialog box, 115
rules (CSS), 113
running recorded commands, 480

S

Sams Teach Yourself JavaScript in 24 Hours, Fourth Edition (Moncur), 370
Save As command (web browsers), 6
Save Page As command (web browsers), 6
saving
CSS styles in external style sheets, 130
keyboard shortcuts, 477
library items, 306
Link Checker reports, 465
recorded commands, 479
searches as query files, 486
web pages, 6, 89
website files, 69
Word documents as web pages, 152
workspace, 46

scratch-building templates, 308

scripts, 12
assets, 232-233
CGI scripts, 426-427
client-side script, 415
FormMail
$mailprog variable, 428
processing forms, 428-429
@recipients variable, 428
@referers variable, 428
@valid_ENV variable, 429
server-side scripting
ASP, 433
ASP.NET, 433
ColdFusion, 433
dynamic web pages, 433
embedding in web pages, 434
enabling in websites, 54
JSP, 433
PHP, 433
processing forms, 434-435
Scripts category (Assets panel), 232-233
Scrollbars as Needed property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
searches
fine-tuning, 485
query files, saving as, 486
search forms, 11
source code, 485
tags
font tags, 485
specific tags, 485
text within tags, 486
text, 485
secondary navigation, 321
security of form submissions, 430
Select File dialog box, 100
Select Image Source dialog box, 160-161
Select Newer Local command (Files panel), 460
Select Newer Remote command (Files panel), 460
Select objects, 413
Select Parent Tag option (Coding toolbar), 143
Select Table command (Table Selector menu), 245
selecting forms, 402
selectors (CSS), 88
class selectors
applying, 117
creating, 115-117
removing, 117-118
compound selectors, 126, 269
definition of, 113-114
favorites lists (Insert bar), adding to, 481
id selectors, 266-267
tag selectors, 124-125
Server Behaviors panel, 355
server-side scripting
ASP, 433
ASP.NET, 433
ColdFusion, 433
dynamic web pages, 433
JSP, 433
PHP, 433
processing forms, 434-435
web pages, embedding in, 434
websites, enabling in, 54
servers
certificates, 431
FTP connections, 445
library items, sharing, 304
proxy servers, 442
remote servers, 449
Server Behaviors panel, 355
template backups, 309
web pages, uploading, 15
Set Magnification menu, 44
Set Nav Bar Image behavior, 351
Set Text of Container behavior, 351, 363-364
Set Text of Frame behavior, 351
Set Text of Status Bar behavior, 351
Set Text of Text Field behavior, 351
Shake effect (Spry), 378
shapes, adding to images (Photoshop), 190-191
sharing library items on servers, 304
Sharing Files section (Site Definition Wizard), 54-56
Sharpen tool, 168
Shockwave, 209, 214
assets, 232
Control Shockwave behavior, 352
file extensions, 210
previewing, 211
shortcuts (keyboard)
editing, 476-477
printing, 478
saving, 477
snippets, 478
Show Code Navigator option (Coding toolbar), 143
Show Events For menu (Behaviors panel), 353
Show Guides command (Photoshop), 189
Show-Hide Elements behavior, 351, 356-357
Show Log check box (Update Pages dialog box), 307, 314
Show Log on Completion option (Clean up Word HTML dialog box), 153
Show Pop-up Menu behavior, 352
showing syntax error alerts, 142
single line text fields, 406
site cache, building, 57
Site Definition dialog box
Advanced tab
Check In/Check Out, 448
viewing remote site, 445
Enable Design Notes option, 465-466
Site Definition Wizard, 52-55
Editing Files section, 56
Local Info category, 62
remote sites, defining, 439-443
Sharing Files section, 54-56
Testing Files section, 53
Use Case-Sensitive Link Checking check box, 62
Site menu commands, 26-27
site root-relative paths (hyperlinks)
definition, 94
examples, 98
sites. See websites
sizing
AP divs, 338
Flash files, 212
images, 187
lists, 411
navigation bar buttons, 325
playback controls (sound files), 216
Plugin objects, 216
Spry menu bars, 331
tables, 252
text, 83-84
text fields, 407
slash (/), 98
sliced images, creating, 194
Slide Up/Down effect (Spry), 378
Smart Objects, 195-197
snippets. See also Snippets panel
custom snippets, 473-476
definition of, 473
keyboard shortcuts, 478
Snippets panel
Forms section, 413
Insert After text box, 476
Insert Before text box, 476
Insert Block radio button, 474-475
Snippets panel

spell checking web pages, 70
Split Cell dialog box, 253
Split Code view, 138, 141
Split view, 43, 142-144
splitting table cells, 252-253
spreadsheets, importing table data to, 197-198, 205, 254-255
Spry category objects (Insert panel), 37-38
Spry framework
  accessing, 374
  accordions, 383
  capabilities of, 374-376
  collapsible panels, 383
  data sets, creating, 389-394
  effects
    Appear/Fade effect, 380-381
    overview, 378
    removing, 380
    Squish effect, 379-380
  external JavaScript and CSS files, 376-378
  menu bars
    creating, 326-327
    customizing, 327-328
    editing, 329-332
  Repeat Lists, inserting, 390
  Spry panel CSS, editing, 390
  tabbed panels, 381-382
  ToolTips, 384-385
  Validation text fields, 424-425
SpryAssets directory, 376
  Squish effect (Spry), 378-380
  stacking orders (AP divs), 341
  Stakenburg, Nick, 394
  states of buttons, 323, 333
  static web pages, 12
  statistics about websites, generating, 468-471
  Status bar, 44-45, 351
  Status Bar property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
  Stop Timeline behavior, 352
  storing website files, 55
  streaming sound/video, 207
  Style setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 122
  styles. See CSS (Cascading Style Sheets)
  Submit buttons, 413-414
  Subversion version control
    configuring, 452-453
    online resources, 454
    overview, 452
    tools, 453-454
  Swap Image behavior, 13, 351
  Swap Image Restore behavior, 351
  .swf files, 210
  Synchronize command (Files panel), 461-463
  synchronized files, deleting, 462
  synchronizing files, 459-463
  Syntax Coloring option (View Options menu), 142
Syntax Error Alerts in Info Bar option
   Coding toolbar, 143
   View Options menu, 142
System Color Picker, 76-77

T
Tab groups, 22
tabbed panels, 381-382
Tabbed Panels widget (Spry), 381-382
Table dialog box
   Accessibility settings, 248-249
   Cell Padding setting, 248
   Cell Spacing setting, 248
   table values, setting, 244
Table Selector menu
   Select Table command, 245
   Table Widths option, turning on/off, 244
   table widths/height, clearing, 252
<table> tag, 244
Table Widths option (Table Selector menu), 244
tables
   adding to web pages, 243-245
cells
   aligning contents of, 253-254
   color in layout tables, 254
   headers, 248
   merging, 252-253
moving backward in, 249
padding, 248
selecting, 245
selecting groups of, 245
spacing, 248
splitting, 252-253
columns
   adjusting width, 252
   creating, 251
   displaying width of, 244
   removing, 250
   selecting, 245
   setting number of, 244, 247
data
   adding, 249
delimited data files, 198
exporting, 254-255
importing, 197-198, 205
sorting, 249-250
HTML tags, 244-245
nested tables, 256
Property Inspector, 247
resizing, 252
rows
   adjusting height, 252
   creating, 249-251
   removing, 250
   selecting, 245
   setting number of, 244, 247
   selecting, 245
Table Widths option (Table Selector menu), 244
TTS browsers, 248-249
for visually impaired users, 248-249
web page layouts
   adding cells, 275
color, 254
guides, 275-276
   nested tables, 256
   Zoom tool, 276
   width/height values, 244, 252
tag menus, 150
tag selectors, 44, 124-125
tags
   attributes, 138
   behaviors, 357
   &lt;blockquote&gt;, 92
   &lt;body&gt;, 139-141
   &lt;br&gt;, 73
   Collapse Full Tag option (Coding toolbar), 143
deprecated tags, 82
   &lt;div&gt;, 336
   &lt;doctype&gt;, 69, 138
   &lt;fieldset&gt;, 416
   Fix Invalidly Nested Tags option (Clean up Word HTML box), 153
   &lt;font&gt;, 82
   &lt;form&gt;, 404
   &lt;head&gt;, 139-141
   &lt;label&gt;, 415
   &lt;legend&gt;, 416
   &lt;meta&gt;, 139
making existing regions editable, 310-311
making new editable regions, 311-313
naming, 311
optional regions, 311-313
placement of, 312
editing, 314
files, updating, 315
importing from web, 308
naming, 309
placeholder images, 310
placeholder text, 311
versus library items, 301
web page templates, 15

Templates category (Assets panel), 299-300, 310
Templates directory, 308
Testing Files section (Site Definition Wizard), 53
text. See also CSS
  aligning in web pages, 86
  alternative text
  adding to images, 161-163
  Missing Alt Text report option, 162
  anti-aliasing, 191
  color
  selecting via Text Color text box (Property Inspector), 84
  setting properties in web pages, 76
  copying/pasting, 70-71

etags
  entering in web pages, 70
  fonts
  pixels versus points, 75
  selecting via Text Font menu (Property Inspector), 82-83
  setting properties in web pages, 75
  formatting, 72-73, 84-85
  hidden characters, displaying, 142
  hyperlinks, incorporating into, 99
  indenting, 87-88
  nested lists, 87
  placeholder text, 311
  searches, 485
  Set Text of Container behavior, 351, 363-364
  Set Text of Frame behavior, 351
  Set Text of Status Bar behavior, 351
  Set Text of Text Field behavior, 351
  size, changing, 83-84
  spell checking, 70
text fields
  adding to forms, 403-404
  attributes, 405-407
  multi line fields, 406
  password fields, 406
  single line fields, 406
  sizing, 407
  Text Field AutoClear snippet, 407
Validation text fields (Spry), 424-425
text within tags, searching, 486
Textarea objects, 407
unordered lists, 87
Validate Form behaviors, 351
Word Wrap option (View Options menu), 141

text fields
adding to forms, 403-404
attributes, 405-407
multi line fields, 406
password fields, 406
single line fields, 406
sizing, 407
Text Field AutoClear snippet, 407
Validation text fields (Spry), 424-425

Text Font menu (Property Inspector), 82-83

Text indent setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121

Text menu, 25

Text Size menu (Property Inspector), 83-84

Text tool (Photoshop), 188-189

Text-transform setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 120

Textarea objects, 407

TextTop image alignment (Property Inspector), 165

tiling images, 341
timelines, 352

Title text box (Document toolbar), 43

Title/Encoding settings (Page Properties dialog box), 79-81
titles, adding to web pages, 79-80
toolbars
Coding, 142-144
Document, 43

ToolTip, adding, 384-385

Top image alignment (Property Inspector), 165

<tr> tag, 244

Tracing Image dialog (Page Properties dialog box), 268

tracing images, 268-269

tracking code, 469

transfer methods (remote sites), selecting, 440

transferring files
dependent files, 450
to remote sites, 445-449

trigger events, 359

trustworthiness of online information, 6

TTS (text-to-speech) browsers
alternative text for images, 161-162
tables, accessing, 248-249

Type category (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 118-119

u-Law file format, 215
underlining hyperlinks, 103
undocking panels, 46
undoing changes to images, 187

uniform resource locators (URLs), 93-96

Unordered List button (Property Inspector), 87
unordered lists, 87

Update Current Page command (Assets panel), 307, 315
Update Files dialog box, 463
Update Pages dialog box, 307, 314

Update Site command (Assets panel), 307, 315

updating
files, 315
library items, 306-307
links, 463
web pages, 314

uploading
form files, 431-432
web pages, 15
URL (uniform resource locator), 93-96
   Go to URL behavior, 350, 364-365
   links, changing in, 464
   home pages, 96
URL to Display property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
URLs category (Assets panel), 231-232
Use Case-Sensitive Link Checking check box (Site Definition Wizard), 62

V

V Space, 165
@valid_ENV variable (FormMail scripts), 429
Validate Form behavior, 351, 421-424
Validate Markup menu (Document toolbar), 43
validating
   code, 154-155
   forms, 12
      with Spry Validation text field, 424-425
      with Validate Form behavior, 421-424
Validation text fields (Spry), 424-425
value identification software (color), 77
values, checked values, 409
vector-based graphics, 209
URL (uniform resource locator)
VeriSign, 431
version control, Subversion version control, 444
   configuring, 452-453
   online resources, 454
   overview, 452
   tools, 453-454
Vertical-align setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121
video. See multimedia
View menu, 24
View Options menu
   Code view, 141-142
   Document toolbar, 43
viewing
   AP divs
      Show-Hide Elements behavior, 356-357
      Show-Hide Elements behaviors, 351
assets by category in Assets panel, 229
CSS styles, 81, 84
Document toolbar, 43
event information, 348-349
files with Adobe Bridge, 201-202
hidden characters, 142
HTML code in web browsers, 6
HTML tag hierarchies (tables), 245
image properties, 163
library item attributes, 305
panels, 45, 138
web pages in web browsers, 89-91
views
   Code view, 141-144
   Design, 138-139
   Split Code, 138, 141
   Split, 142-144
      switching between, 138
Vis menu (Property Inspector), 341-342
visibility (AP divs), changing, 336, 341-342
Visibility setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 123
Visited link color option (Page Properties dialog), 102
Visual Aids menu (Document toolbar), 43, 104-105
Visual SourceSafe access, setting for remote sites, 444

W

.WAV file format, 208, 215
web browsers
   Check Browser behavior, 352
   CSS requirements, 111
events
      definition of, 348
      displaying information on, 348-349
      onBlur, 353
widgets (Spry)

widgets (Spry)

onRequest, 353
onClick, 354
onKeyDown, 354
onKeyUp, 354
onMouseDown, 354
onMouseOver, 354
onMouseUp, 354
onSelect, 354
onSubmit, 354
overview, 352-353
support for, 353

web browsers. See browsers
web hosting, 15

web pages. See also websites
elements of, 7-9
exporting from page layout software, 9
interactivity, 13-14
previewing, 89-91
saving, 6, 89
saving Word documents as, 152
static web pages, 12
updating, 314
uploading, 15

Web Photo Album, 178

web servers, 15

WebDAV access, setting for remote sites, 443-444
web safe colors, 230

website navigation, 321

websites. See also web pages
assets
color assets, 231
copying to websites, 239
creating, 237-239
editing, 239
images assets, 230-231
link assets, 231-232
listing, 229
movie assets, 232
previewing, 230
script assets, 232-233
viewing by category in Assets panel, 229

Café Press, 12
defining, 51-58
development sites, 55
Dreamweaver Exchange, 134
importing, 64

local sites
link management, 463-465
Select Newer Local command, 460
Synchronization command, 461-462
transferring files to, 445
mirroring, 439
moving files within, 64
naming, 54
organizing, 63-64

remote sites
defining, 439-443
FTP access, 441-442
importing existing websites to, 451
LAN information, 443
link management, 463-465
Microsoft Visual SourceSafe access, 444
RDS access, 443
Select Newer Remote command (Files panel), 460
selecting transfer methods, 440
Synchronization command (Files panel), 461-462
transferring files to, 445-449
viewing settings via Advanced Tab, 445
WebDAV access, 443-444
root directories, 51
site cache, 57
statistics, generating, 468-471
trustworthiness of, 6

Welcome screen, 21-22
what you see is what you get (WYSIWYG), 20

White-space setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121

widgets (Spry)

Accordion widget, 383
Collapsible Panels widget, 383
widgets (Spry)

Tabbed Panels widget, 381-382
ToolTip widget, 384-385
Width setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 121-123

Wikipedia, 6
Window Height property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
Window Name property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
Window Size drop-down menu, 44-45
Window Width property (Open Browser Window behavior), 360
windows, 43
wizards, Site Definition Wizard, 52
defining remote sites, 439-443
Editing Files section, 53-56
Local Info category, 62
Sharing Files section, 54-56
Testing Files section, 53
Use Case-Sensitive Link Checking check box, 62
Word documents, 152
Word Wrap option (View Options menu), 141
Word-spacing setting (CSS Rule Definition dialog box), 120
workspaces, saving, 46
Wrap Selection radio button (Snippets panel), 474-476
Wrap Tag mode (Quick Tag Editor), 147

Wrap Tag option (Coding toolbar), 144
WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get), 20

Y-Z

YouTube, 12
z-index values, 123, 336, 341
Zoom tool, 44, 276

X

XHTML (Extensible Hypertext Markup Language), 6, 69
cleaning up HTML created with Word, 151-153
code preferences
code hints, 150
code rewriting, 151
color, 148
formatting, 149-150
document type declaration, 138
overview, 137
syntax, 137-138
tags, 138
validating code, 154-155

XML (Extensible Markup Language), 373
attributes, 388
displaying with Spry data source, 389-390
elements, 388
files, creating, 388
overview, 387
reusing with Spry data set, 390-394