

**SAMS**  
**Teach Yourself**

Macromedia®  
**Dreamweaver® MX**

*in* **24**  
**Hours**

Betsy Bruce

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Betsy Bruce

# Sams Teach Yourself Macromedia® Dreamweaver® MX in 24 Hours

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# About the Author

**BETSY BRUCE** specializes in technology-based training using Dreamweaver and Authorware. Formerly a senior developer for MediaPro, Inc. in Bothell, WA, she is now an independent consultant and trainer. She is a Macromedia certified instructor for Dreamweaver, CourseBuilder for Dreamweaver, Flash, and Authorware. Betsy received her B.S. degree from the University of Iowa. She is a frequent speaker at conferences on creating technology-based training. Born and raised in Iowa, Betsy now lives on the West coast. Her Web site is located at <http://www.betsybruce.com/>.

# Dedication

*This book is dedicated to my father, John Bruce, who was an outstanding educator, man, and father.  
He touched the lives of so many young people, and I was blessed to be his daughter.*

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# We Want to Hear from You!

As the reader of this book, *you* are our most important critic and commentator. We value your opinion and want to know what we're doing right, what we could do better, what areas you'd like to see us publish in, and any other words of wisdom you're willing to pass our way.

You can e-mail or write me directly to let me know what you did or didn't like about this book, as well as what we can do to make our books stronger.

*Please note that I cannot help you with technical problems related to the topic of this book, and that due to the high volume of mail I receive, I might not be able to reply to every message.*

When you write, please be sure to include this book's title and author as well as your name and phone or e-mail address. I will carefully review your comments and share them with the author and editors who worked on the book.

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# Introduction

“Ooooooo, Dreamweaver. I believe you can get me through the night.” Remember that song by Gary Wright? OK, some of you weren’t born yet. The song brought up memories of seventh grade dances for me. I’m glad that Dreamweaver, the software, came along and replaced that vision in my head. Dreamweaver, the software, has helped me through a number of nights developing Web sites and Web applications!

## What Is Dreamweaver MX?

Dreamweaver MX is newest version of Macromedia Dreamweaver, an award-winning HTML editor and Web application development tool. Some people do not exploit the more powerful features of Dreamweaver because they don’t know about them. You will not be one of those people with this book in your hand!

Dreamweaver is excellent at quickly creating forms, frames, tables, and other objects. But Dreamweaver really shines when you need to make your Web page *do* something. Dreamweaver excels at Dynamic HTML (DHTML), the Web functionality that enables timeline animation, the exact positioning of content on a Web page, and the scripting to make it work. Don’t know how to script? No problem! Dreamweaver includes behaviors, scripted functionality that you simply click to add to a certain object.

## Who Should Use Dreamweaver MX?

Whether you are creating your very first Web page or have decided to try Web editing software after coding by hand for years, you are going to love Macromedia Dreamweaver MX. Dreamweaver gives you the freedom to visually design the look of a Web page and the power to make it act the way you want. Dreamweaver gives you the flexibility to create your own personal Web page or an entire corporate intranet site.

## Who Should Use This Book?

This book is for anyone now using Dreamweaver, as well as anyone who is planning to. If you are new to Web development, this book will get you up to speed creating Web pages and Web sites. If you are already a Web developer, you’ll find tips, tricks, and instructions to get all you can out of Dreamweaver MX.

This book covers creating regular Web pages in Dreamweaver MX, including forms, tables, interactivity, animation, and JavaScript. After you have mastered the techniques

covered here, you may want to explore other advanced capabilities of Dreamweaver MX to create Web pages that connect to databases. This book does not cover connecting Web pages to databases. Connecting your Web pages to databases enables you to create Web pages that change dynamically depending on user choices.

## How to Use This Book

Each hour of this book represents a lesson that should take you approximately an hour to learn. The book is designed to get you productively working in Dreamweaver MX as quickly as possible. There are numerous figures to illustrate the lessons in the book.

Each lesson begins with an overview and a list of topics. The lesson ends with questions and answers, a quiz, and some exercises that you can try on your own. Within the lessons you'll find the following elements, which provide additional information:



Notes give extra information on the current topic.



Tips offer advice or an additional way of accomplishing something.



Cautions signal you to be careful of potential problems, giving you information on how to avoid or fix them.

And remember: have fun!

# HOUR 3



## Planning and Defining Your Project

You use the Site panel to plan, create, and manage your projects. It's important that you define your Web site before you start working on it so Dreamweaver knows how to set links properly. Defining a new site should always be your first step when you start working on a new project.

In this hour, you will learn

- How to define a Web site using the Site Definition wizard
- How to modify your Web site definition
- How to organize a Web site

### Defining a New Web Site

All Web sites have a *root* directory. The root of your Web site is the main directory that contains files and other directories. When you define a Web site, Dreamweaver considers that directory and all the files within it to be

the entire “universe” of that particular Web site. If you attempt to insert an image from outside this universe, Dreamweaver will prompt you to save the file inside the Web site.

Dreamweaver isn't overly controlling! The program needs to define the internal realm of your Web site so that it knows how to reference other files. For instance, if an image is located in an images directory within the defined site, Dreamweaver knows how to properly reference the image within a Web page. If, however, the image is somewhere outside of the defined site, Dreamweaver can't reference it properly and you will end up with bad links in your Web site. You'll learn more about how Dreamweaver addresses files in Hour 4, “Setting Lots o' Links: Hyperlinks, URLs, Anchors and Mailto Links.”

You'll define a new Web site for every project you create. Even if these projects are related, you may decide to break them down into smaller sites so the number of files isn't unwieldy. For instance, I create eLearning applications, courses that people can take over the Web. When I'm working on a project, I often break individual lessons of a course into separate defined sites. When I need to work on Lesson 1, I open that site, and when I need Lesson 2, I open it. You can have only a single site open in Dreamweaver at one time.

If you do not have any sites yet defined in Dreamweaver, you'll see a Define a Site link in the Site panel. Click on this link and you'll open the Site Definition dialog box. If you already have sites defined in Dreamweaver, you'll see a list of them in the Site panel. Click on the Site menu in the Site panel and select the New Site command.

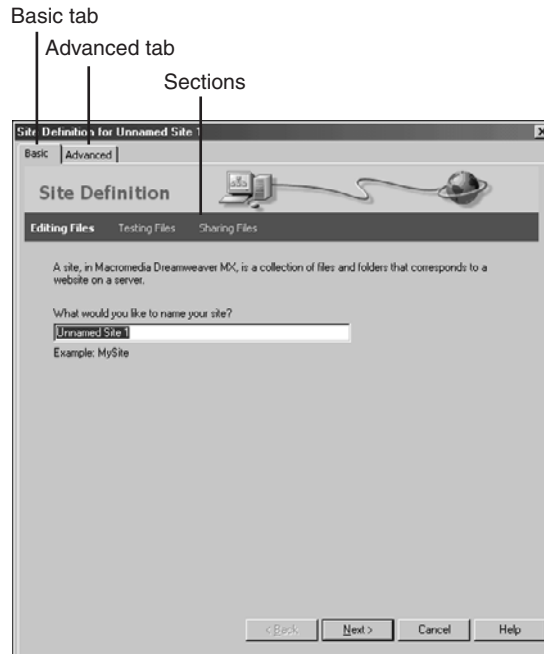
The Site Definition dialog box, shown in Figure 3.1, has two tabs at the top: Basic and Advanced. Make sure you have the Basic tab selected. The Basic tab contains the Site Definition Wizard that walks you through the site definition. You can always go back and change or update your site if you need to.

The Site Definition Wizard has three main sections illustrated by the section names at the top of the wizard. These are

- **Editing Files**—This section helps you set up the local directory where you'll work on the Web site. You tell the wizard whether or not your site uses server-side technologies (the sites in this book do not).
- **Testing Files**—This section is needed only for sites that use server-side technologies.

- **Sharing Files**—This section enables you to tell Dreamweaver how you want to transfer files to a server or other central location to share. You’ll explore this functionality in Hour 21, “Managing and Uploading Your Project.”

**FIGURE 3.1**  
*The Basic tab of the Site Definition dialog box walks you through setting up a site definition.*



## Using the Site Definition Wizard

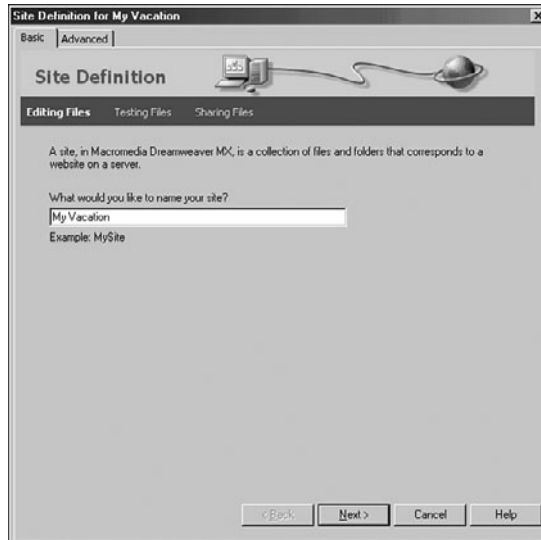
In the Site Definition Wizard, give your site a name, as shown in Figure 3.2. This name is used only inside Dreamweaver, so you can use spaces and characters if you want. The site name should be meaningful, identifying the purpose of the Web site when you drop down the Site menu to change sites. My Dreamweaver copy has about 30 to 40 sites defined at times. I need clear names so I can quickly find the site I want to edit. Click the Next button.

The next page, Editing Files (Part 2 shown in Figure 3.3), enables you to specify whether you will be using server-side scripting to create dynamic Web pages. Our Web pages will be regular HTML pages, so you should select the top radio button that says No, I do not want to use a server technology. Click the Next button.

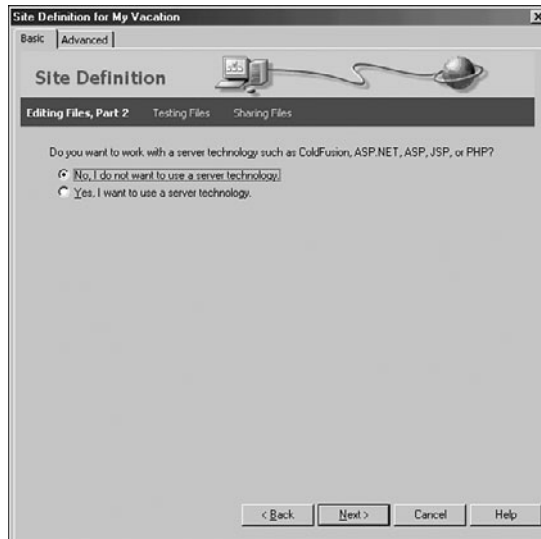


**FIGURE 3.2**

*Your site name is used by Dreamweaver only to identify this site.*

**FIGURE 3.3**

*Part 2 of the Editing Files section of the Site Definition Wizard enables you to tell Dreamweaver whether you will be using server-side scripting in your site.*

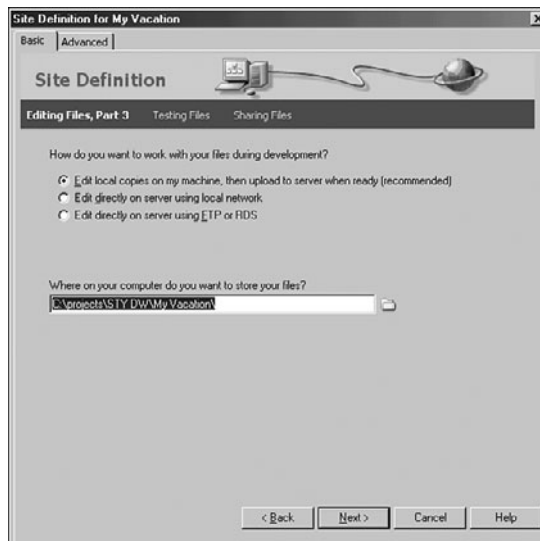


The next page, Editing Files, Part 3, helps you specify where the files in your site are located. The site that you edit in Dreamweaver is your *development* site; it isn't the final site that other people will view on the Web. You can store your development files in three places: on your local machine, on a network drive, or on a server somewhere. Select the top radio button, electing to store the development files on your local machine. If you are

working in a networked environment (at your office, for instance), you could use either of the other two choices. However, do not ever link to the final live version of your Web site for development. You do not want to make a mistake on the real site; always make sure you are working on a copy of the site.

The textbox at the bottom of the dialog box, shown in Figure 3.4, asks you to enter the location of the site directory. Click the folder icon to the right of the textbox to navigate to the directory. Use an existing directory on your hard drive or create a new directory for your local site. Click the Next button.

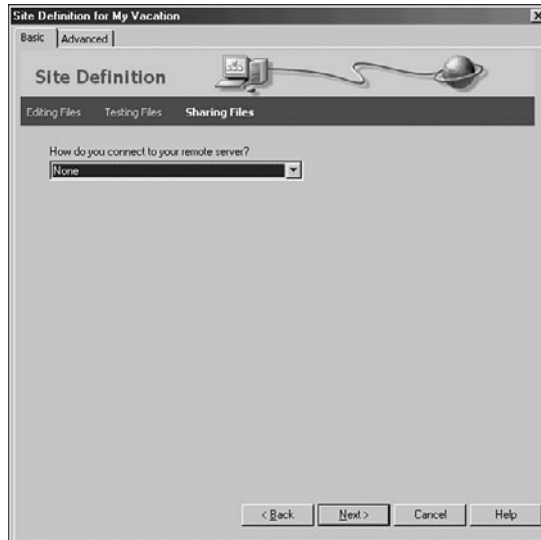
**FIGURE 3.4**  
*You enter the directory that will house your development files.*



File and directory names containing spaces, punctuation, or special characters may cause problems on some Web servers. You can use underscores instead of spaces in names. In addition, file names are case-sensitive on some Web servers.

The next section enables you to configure how you share files. You may set up a central location where members of your team can save files once they are finished editing them. Or, you may set up a location on a public Web server where you intend to share your Web site with the Web community. You'll learn how to set this section up and transfer files in Hour 21. For now, simply drop down the top menu and select None as shown in Figure 3.5. Click the Next button.

**FIGURE 3.5**  
*To set up the connection information later, simply select None.*



The last page of the wizard displays a summary of your site, as shown in Figure 3.6. 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 (the menu in the Site panel or the menu in the Document window). Click the Done button.

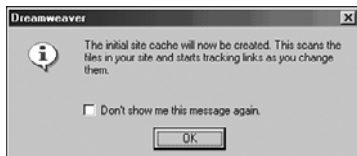
**FIGURE 3.6**  
*The Site Definition Wizard displays a summary of your site definition.*



After you click the Done button, Dreamweaver displays a message telling you that it will now create the initial site cache, as shown in Figure 3.7. When you click OK, a progress

bar appears (and disappears very quickly if you have nothing in your site yet). The initial site cache is created each time you create a new site. The site cache is used to store information about the links in your site so they can be quickly updated if they change. Dreamweaver continues to update the cache as you work.

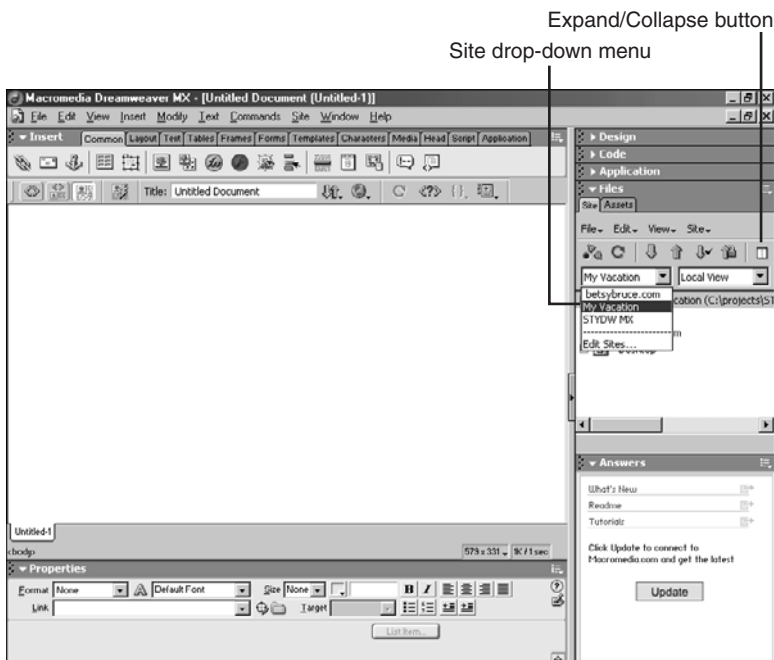
**FIGURE 3.7**  
*Dreamweaver tells you it is creating a cache for your site. This file speeds updating links when you move or rename a file.*



## Using the Site Panel

You'll select the site you'd like to work on in the Site panel, shown in Figure 3.8. You can then select the Web page you'd like to edit from the Site panel or create a new one. In Windows, the Site panel enables you to browse files on your computer. To get a bigger view of the site and more functionality, select the Expand/Collapse button in the Site panel to open the Site window. Mac users use the Site window instead of the Site panel; it can be opened using the Site Files command in the Site menu.

**FIGURE 3.8**  
*The Site panel enables you to change sites and open Web pages.*



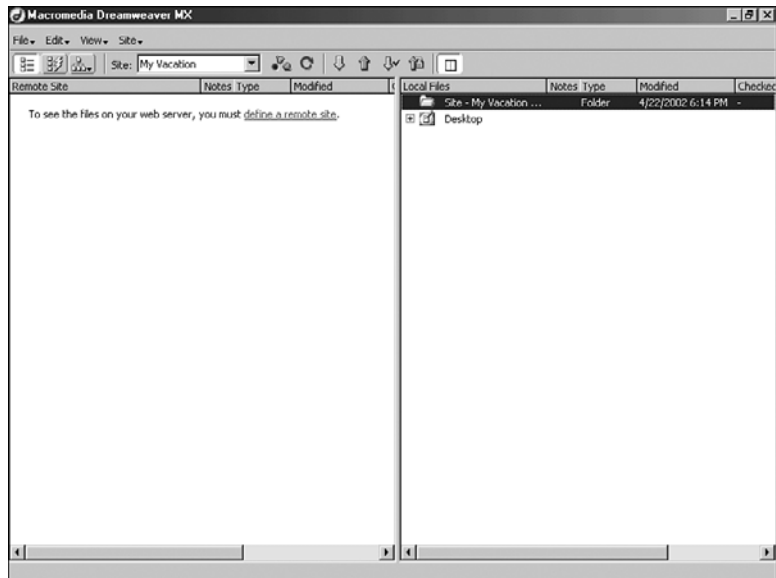
The Site panel enables you to quickly locate and launch all the files in your Web site. You may want to leave it open all the time and use it to open files. If you use the Site panel to open files, you won't need to constantly select the Open command and navigate to files. You can move, rename, delete, copy, paste, and open files in the Site panel.

## Using the Site Window

Open the Site window by clicking the Expand/Collapse button (Windows) or selecting the Site Files command in the Site menu (Mac). The Site window, shown in Figure 3.9, is a larger representation of the Site panel and has two panes: the local files (on the right by default) and the remote site (on the left). Since you did not define a remote site, you will not have any files in the remote site.

**FIGURE 3.9**

*The Site window has two panes, the local files and the remote site.*

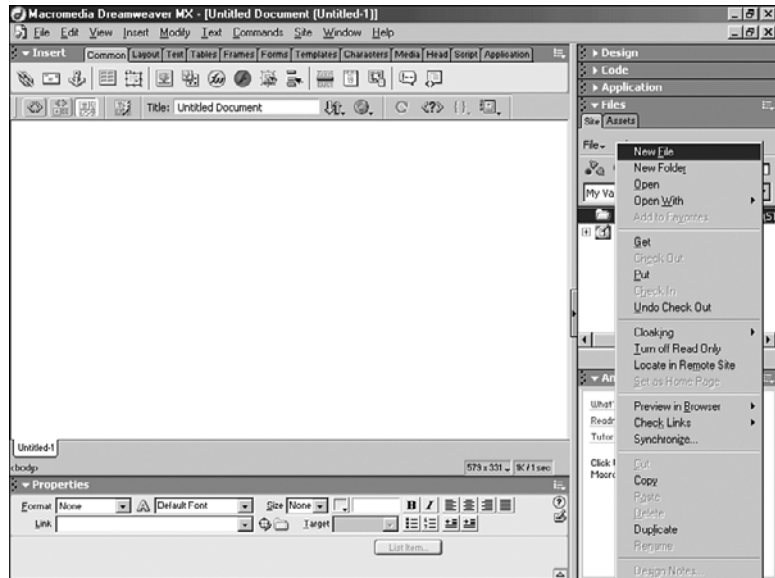


On the Mac, the Site window is a separate window from the Document window. You can keep this window open all the time if you'd like access to it. Windows users should go ahead and click the Expand/Collapse button in the Site window toolbar to collapse the window and return to the Document window. Mac users should stay in the Site window.

## Creating a Quick Prototype

You can create a directory structure right in the Dreamweaver Site panel. The Site panel enables you to create new directories and new files. A context menu displays when you right-click (Control+click on the Mac) on the top line of the site files (the one with the open green folder that represents the site root). The context menu, shown in Figure 3.10, has two commands of interest at the top: New File and New Folder. You'll use those commands in this section to create files in your site.

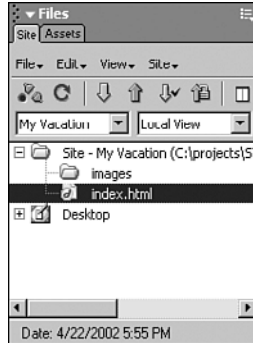
**FIGURE 3.10**  
*The Site panel context menu contains commands to create new folders (directories) and files in your Web site.*



First, create an images directory. From the Site panel context menu, select the New Folder command. An untitled folder is added to your site. Give this folder the name Images. Next add a file to the root directory. Right-click (or Control+click) on the root folder and select the New File command. Make sure you aren't clicking on the images folder because then you will create the new file in that folder instead of in the root folder. Dreamweaver then creates a new Web page. Title the Web page `index.html`, which is the *default page name* for many servers. A default page will load into the browser as the default page only when the user points to the directory the page is in. The results should look like Figure 3.11.

**FIGURE 3.11**

*Use the Site panel context menu to quickly add files and folders to the Web site.*



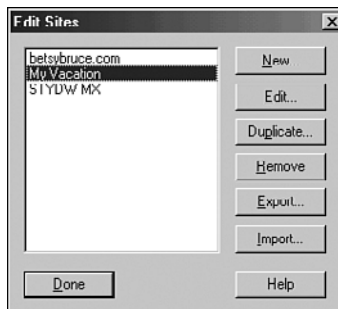
I think it's a good idea to name everything with lowercase letters. Some servers and scripting languages are case sensitive. When I name everything with lowercase letters, I never incorrectly enter the name.

## Editing a Site Definition

You may need to change properties of your site definition or add information that you left out when you initially defined the site. The Edit Sites dialog box, shown in Figure 3.12, enables you to modify any of the sites you have defined in Dreamweaver. You can create a new site here or edit, duplicate, or remove an existing site. Open the Edit Sites dialog box by selecting the Edit Sites command from the Site menu.

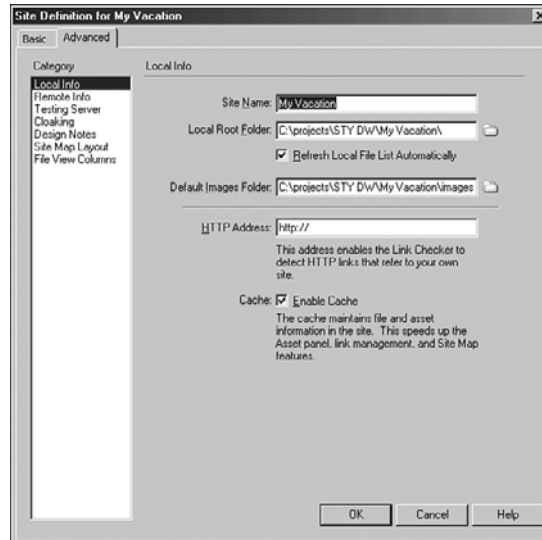
**FIGURE 3.12**

*The Edit Sites dialog box enables you to edit, duplicate, or remove existing sites.*



Select the site you just created, and click the Edit button in the Edit Sites dialog box. The Site Definition dialog box opens again. Click on the Advanced tab at the top of the dialog box. This is another view of the information that you entered into the wizard, shown in Figure 3.13. There are categories on the left side of the dialog box with the selected category's properties displayed on the right.

**FIGURE 3.13**  
*The Advanced tab contains all of the site properties.*



In the Local Info category, select the folder icon next to the Default Images Folder textbox. Navigate to the images folder you just created. Now Dreamweaver knows where you'll keep your images for the site. Click the OK button to save your changes. Click the Done button to close the Edit Sites dialog box.



You can import and export site definitions to XML files that you can share with others or use to define the site on a different computer. This feature, described in Hour 21, could save you a lot of time.

## Considering Site Organization

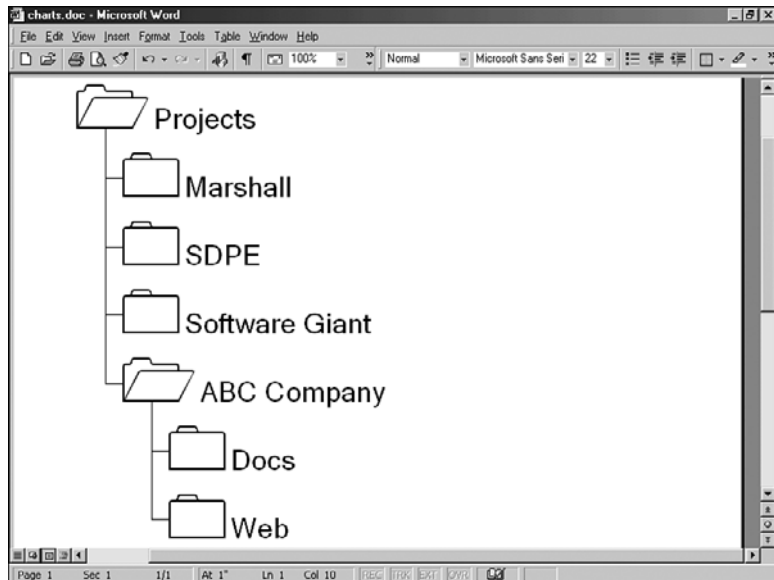
There are many opinions on the proper way to organize a Web site. Some people like to compartmentalize all the files into directories and subdirectories. Some people like to have a very shallow structure, with many files in a single directory. As you get more experienced at Web development, you'll find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

I have a directory on my hard drive called Projects, shown in Figure 3.14. The Projects directory contains a directory for each project I'm working on. Within each project directory there is a directory called Web, set as the root directory for the project. 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.



**FIGURE 3.14**

*An example directory structure, in which the Web site is housed in the Web directory.*



This directory structure enables me to put other files in the client's folder without making them part of the Web site. It's good practice to keep other files separate from those you plan to transfer to the Web. You may prefer to have one directory that contains all of your Web sites. Whatever works best for you.

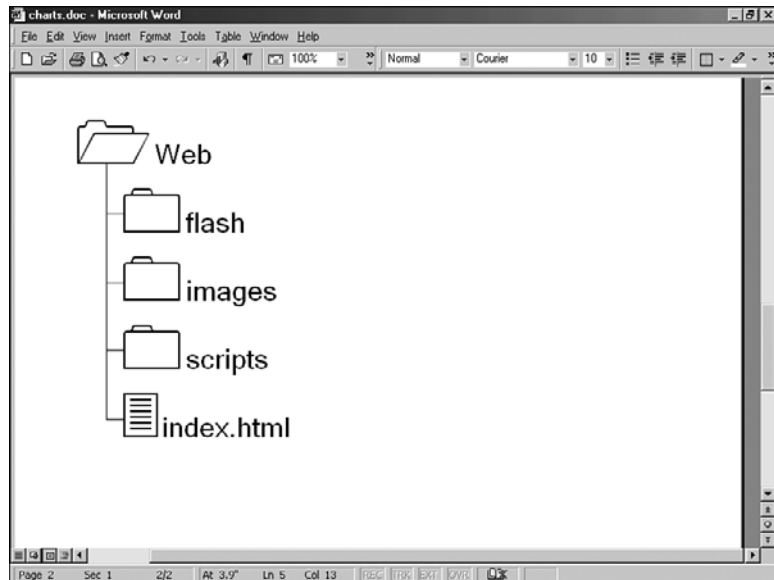
Put some thought into how you'll organize the files in your Web site before you start a project. You will probably want to create a separate images folder to hold your images, as shown in Figure 3.15. If you have other types of assets, such as sound or video, you might want to create separate folders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

If you have different sections of your Web site, do you want to create separate directories for the images in each section? It might be a good way to organize your site. Then again, if the same graphics are used across multiple sections, it might just make the images hard to find. Make sure that your organizational logic isn't going to break down in the future.

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

**FIGURE 3.15**

*Organize your Web site into images and other directories.*



I also try to logically break up sections of Web sites into separate directories. If your Web site has obvious divisions (departments, lessons, products, and so on), you can create directories to hold the Web pages in each of the sections. You'll be surprised at how even a small Web site becomes quickly unmanageable when all the files are dumped into one directory.

## Summary

In this hour, you learned how to define a Web site and determine its root. You learned how to quickly add files and folders to your site. You learned how to use the Site panel and expand it to the Site window. And you explored ideas about how to organize your site.

## Q&A

### **Q** How do I import a Web site into Dreamweaver?

**A** There is no 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 will present all of the files in the Site panel, enabling you to open and edit them.

**Q** If I'm uploading my site to the Web server, won't people be able to see my site while it's still in progress?

**A** Yes, if they know the URL. It's better to create a "staging area" somewhere that isn't public on your server as your remote site until you are ready to launch your completed site. When you are finished, you can either upload the entire site to its final location or ask your Webmaster to direct the proper URL to your staging area.

## Workshop

The Workshop contains quiz questions and activities to help reinforce what you've learned in this hour. If you get stuck, the answers to the quiz can be found following the questions.

### Quiz

1. Why do you need to define a Web site?
2. What does the Dreamweaver cache do?
3. True or False. You must go through a conversion process to import an existing Web site into Dreamweaver.

### Answers

1. You define a Web site so that Dreamweaver knows where the root of the site is.
2. Enabling the cache speeds up some Dreamweaver features, such as updating hyperlinks.
3. False. No conversion process is necessary to import an existing Web site into Dreamweaver.

### Exercises

1. Try defining a new Web site. Add some files and folders.



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