

# Site Management with DreamWeaver™

(By the end of this little primer, you should be able to set up and manage a website using Dreamweaver's site management features. Much of the material )

## Introduction

### A Small Refresher on How Websites Are Structured

Firstly, a website is a collection of web pages. Sites are conglomerates of different pages and their elements (i.e. sound, images, media, whatever), and sites can range from a one-page personal manifesto to a corporate behemoth encompassing a gazillion html pages and their related files. For this reason, site management makes sense when it comes to dealing with multiples files and folders.

### What is site management?

Site management in Dreamweaver (DW) allows you to create entire websites in one location on your local disk drive (say on a computer's desktop) and move the files to a remote location (the host server space) without destroying links and relative file locations. (\*see absolute paths, document-relative paths and root-relative paths)

The first thing you need to do is to **define a site**. This creates a **Site Root** or **Root Folder** on your hard drive. You will store all the files you need for your website in this Root Folder (i.e. all images in /root/images; sounds in /root/sounds and so on). Naturally, the size of your website is directly proportional to the difficulty you will encounter in managing and maintaining the pages.

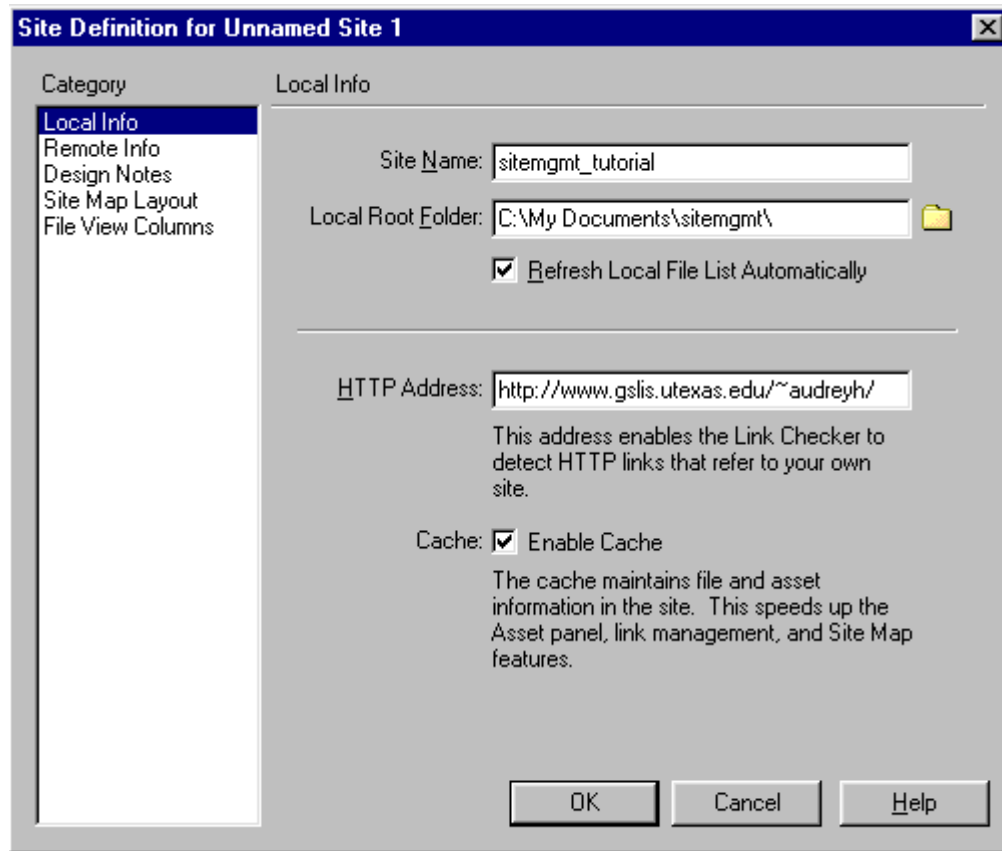
**Why is this cool?** Because when you add a folder or change a folder name using the site management tool, DM automatically updates all references to the folder in the website.

Naturally, some form of information organization will have to take place. Ideally, you should organize your files into subfolders that mirror the navigation structure of your website.

## Creating a New Site:

### 1 Choose Site > New Site

In the site definition box that appears (see Fig.1), make sure that Local Info is selected.



**Fig. 1: Site Definition Screenshot**

### 2 Enter the following options:

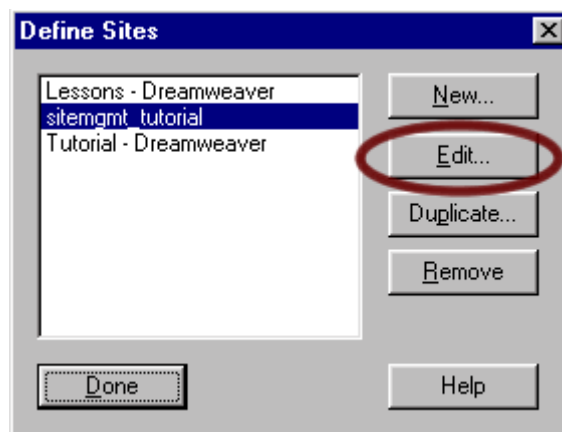
- Enter a name for your site in the **Site Name field**. E.g. 'sitemgmt\_tutorial' This makes it easier to identify which site that you are working on and it can be anything you want it to be.
- In the **Local Root folder field**, specify the folder on your local disk where site files, templates and or other items will be stored. Use the folder icon to locate a zip disk or desktop or anyplace where you want your files stored. Create a folder if none exists. (I created the folder 'sitemgmt' in "My Documents" located on my C drive.) When DW resolves root-relative links, it does so relative to this folder (see **root-relative paths**).
- Check '**Refresh Local File List Automatically**' – this tells the software to automatically refresh the local file list every time you copy a file into your local site.
- In the HTTP Address field, **enter the URL that your web site will use**. This allows DW to verify links within the site that use absolute URLs. For e.g., the absolute HTTP address for my personal website is <http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~audreyh/>.

- Check **'Enable Cache'**.
- Click **'OK'**
- A warning message will appear to let you know that the initial site cache needs to be created. Check the box if you don't want to see the message again.
- Click **'OK'**

**The Site Files window will open and you will need to set up the Remote Info options in order to begin using the site management features to publish files directly to your server space.**

## Defining Remote Info Options

**1 Go to Site > Define Sites > Select 'your site name' > Edit**



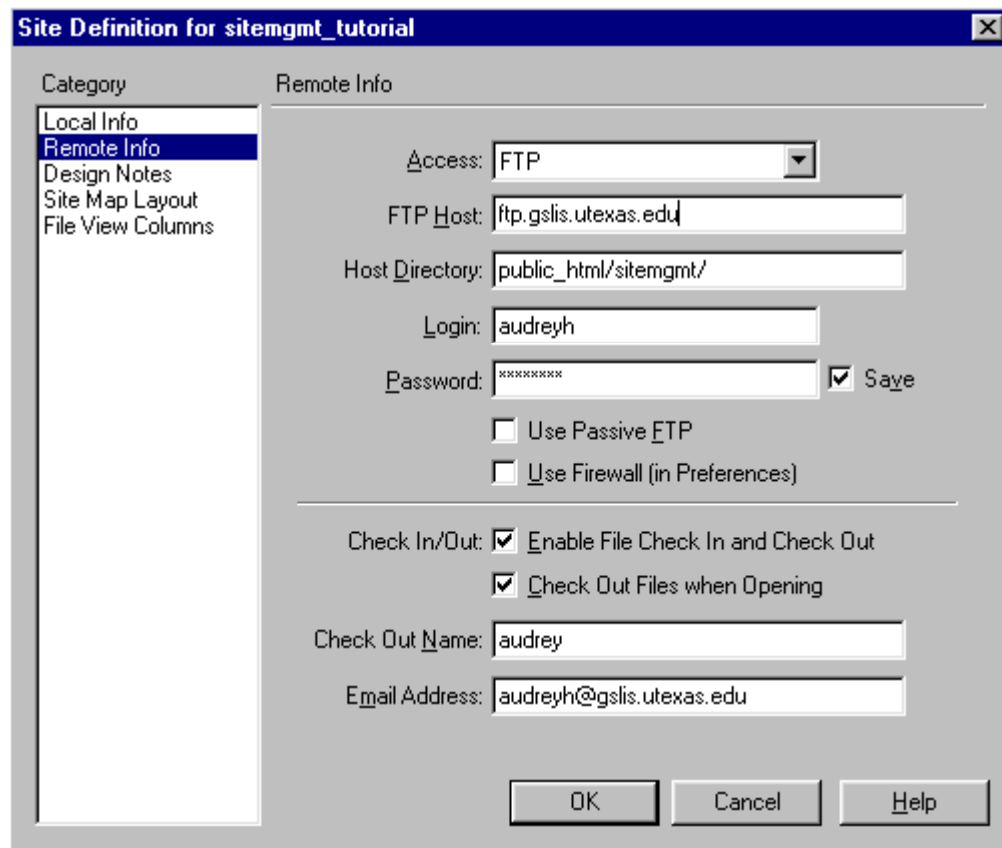
**Fig. 2: Define Sites Screenshot**

**2 Enter the following options:**

- Click on **FTP** (if you're using FTP to connect to a web server)
- Enter the host name of the FTP host; such as "**fiat.gslis.utexas.edu**"
- Enter the name of the host directory where your public files are being stored; most commonly "**public\_html**" (**NOT "public.html" or "public\_html/"**) – in Fig. 3, I specified the folder "public\_html/sitemgmt" where I will store the files for this site.
- Enter your login/password info
- Do not check the boxes "Passive FTP" OR "Firewall" if using GSLIS servers

### **For collaborative purposes**

- Check "Enable File Check In and Check Out"
- Check "Check Out Files when Opening"
- Enter your Check Out Name and your Email Address (so that teammates will know who is working on what and how to contact them)
- Click **"OK"**
- Click **"Done"**



**Fig. 3: Remote Info Screenshot**

### Tips on Site Management

- Avoid using special characters and spaces when naming files and folders; use underscores in places of spaces and avoid in particular, colons, slashes, periods and apostrophes.
- Aim for consistency in file management; use standard organization procedures such as creating a files exclusively for images, html pages, flash media, sounds, and so on.
- Explore the other features of site management such as the
  - i. **Site map feature** - Use the site map to view a local site as a visual map of linked icons, to add new files to a site, or to add, modify, or remove links. The site map is ideal for laying out a site structure. You can quickly set up the entire structure of the site and then create a graphic image of the site map. (**Note:** The site map applies to local sites only. If you want to create a map of a remote site, copy the contents of the remote site into a folder on your local disk and use the Define Sites command to define the site as a local site.)
  - ii. **Using Site window to organize files** - DW lets you duplicate the structure of your local site on a remote server, or duplicate a remote Web site's structure on your local system. The relative links you create on your local site continue to work after you transfer files to the remote site, because the structure of the two sites is identical.

When you transfer files between local and remote sites, DW maintains parallel file and folder structures between them. When transferring files between sites, DW automatically creates necessary folders when they do not yet exist in a site. You can also synchronize the files between your local and remote sites; DW copies files in both directions as necessary, and removes unwanted files as appropriate.

iii. **Collaboration features** - DW contains features to make collaborative work on a Web site easier. You can check files in and out of a remote server so that other members of a Web team can see who is working on a file. You can add **Design Notes** to your files to share information with team members about a file's status, priority, and so on. You can also use the **Workflow Reports** feature to run reports on your site to display information on the check in/check out status, and to search for Design Notes attached to files.

iv. **Testing your links sitewide** - Use the **Check Links feature** to search for broken links and un-referenced files in an open file, a portion of a local site, or an entire local site. The only links that DW verifies are links to documents within the site; DW compiles a list of external links that appear in the selected document or documents, but it does not verify them.

## **The Jargon of Absolute, Document-relative, and Root-relative Paths And Why You Should Care to Know**

Understanding the file path between the document you're linking from and the document you're linking to is essential to creating links.

When you create a local link (a link from one document to another on the same site), you generally don't specify the entire URL of the document you're linking to; instead, you specify a relative path from the current document or from the site's root folder.

**The following are the three types of link paths:**

**(a) Absolute paths** (e.g. <http://www.yahoo.com>): in short, the complete URL of a link.

**(b) Document-relative paths** (e.g. `courses/accessibility.html`): Document-relative paths are the most appropriate paths to use for local links in most Web sites. They're particularly useful when the current document and the linked document are in the same folder and are likely to remain together. You can also use a document-relative path to link to a document in another folder, by specifying the path through the folder hierarchy from the current document to the linked document. **The basic concept behind document-relative paths is to omit the part of the absolute URL that is the same for both the current document and the linked document, providing only the portion of the path that differs.**

**Note:** When you move a group of files as a group—for example, when you move an entire folder, so that all the files inside that folder retain the same relative paths to each other—you don't need to update document-relative links between those files. When you move an individual file that contains document-relative links, however, or an individual file that's linked to by a document-relative link, you do need to update those links. (If you move or rename files using the Site window, Dreamweaver updates all relevant links automatically.)

**(c) Root-relative paths** (e.g. `/support/tips.html` is a root-relative path to a file (`tips.html`) in the support subfolder of the site's root folder: A root-relative path begins with a leading forward slash, which stands for the site root folder. You might want to use these types of paths if you are working on a large Web site that uses several servers, or one server that

hosts several different sites. However, if you are not familiar with this type of path, you may want to stick to document-relative paths.

**So long, farewell.....**

At the close of this little primer, you should feel comfortable enough setting up and using DW's site management features on your own. The information found here is mostly culled from Macromedia's DW4 help book (highly recommended) and for the more electronically inclined, there's also the help index in the software itself, which is more or less a word-for-word replication of the manual. (Go to Help > Using Dreamweaver).

Enjoy!

(This tutorial was created by Audrey Ho on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June, 2001)