Creating a Simple Web Site

This simple site comprises 3 pages that link to each other with buttons that have rollover effects. The graphics will be created in Photoshop 5.5 and the page will be created in Dreamweaver 3.

1. Create a background image that provides a border for our navigation buttons.

a. In Photoshop, choose **File > New.** Give it a name of "background." Set the dimensions to pixels in Width and Height and set them to **1024 pixels wide** and **1 pixel high**. Resolution should be **72 dpi** and color mode should be **RGB**. Contents to **White**. Click **OK**.
We only need a graphic 1 pixel high because it will tile in the browser window. We make it 1024 wide since it will not tile to the right unless the viewer opens their browser *really wide.*
See figure 2.

b. Choose a color for your foreground color by clicking on the color chip of the **foreground color**. The color picker will open. Make sure you have the **Only Web Colors** box checked. Choose a color and Click **OK**.
See figure 3.

c. Next Choose **Window > Show Info** from the menu bar to display the info palette. We'll use this to determine the size of our selection in the next step.

d. Using the Marquee tool, select an area roughly 100 pixels wide (watch the info palette) starting at left and selecting right. See figure 4.

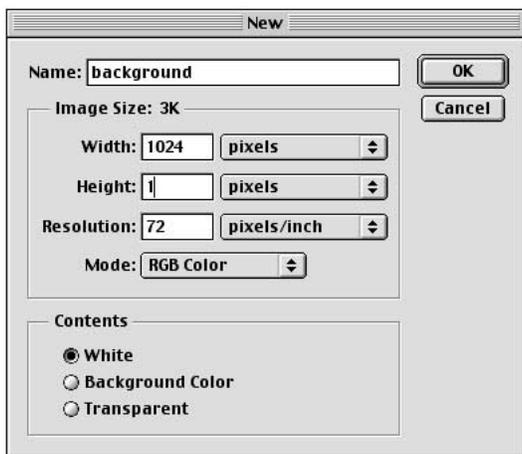e. Next we'll color the pixels in the selection to create our border. Choose **Edit > Fill** with the settings at **Foreground color, 100% and Normal**. Click **OK.**
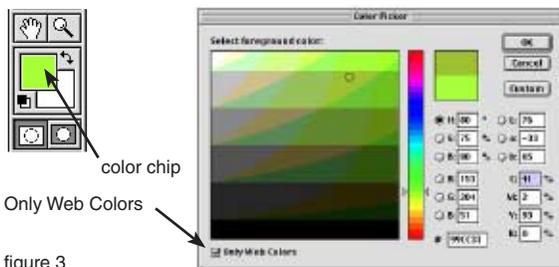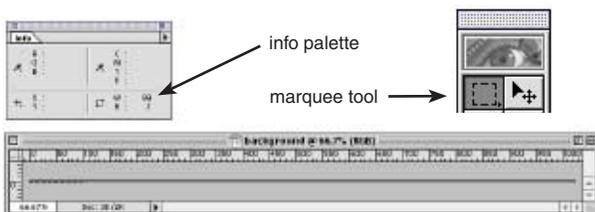
figure 2

figure 3

figure 4

figure 5

RGB palette (millions of colors)   Index palette (256 or less colors)
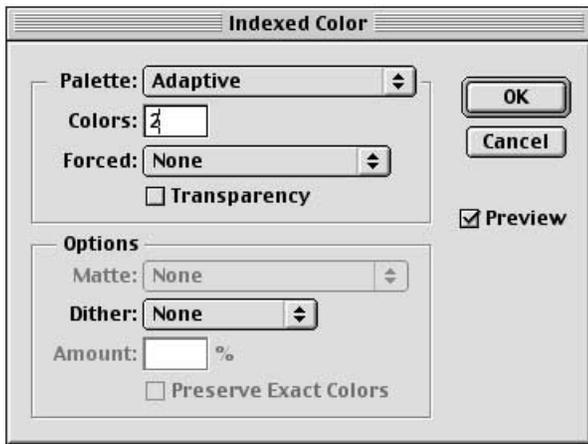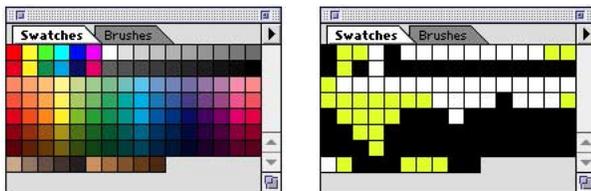
figure 6

f. Then save the graphic as a GIF, just as you would with Photoshop 5.0 or earlier, since it will make you aware of what the format is all about.

Switch from RGB (millions of colors) to Index mode (256 colors). Choose **Image > Mode > Index**. You may be asked to flatten, if so choose Flatten.

Watch the graphic as we change the settings in the Index Color dialog box. See figure 5. We can crunch the palette as far as 2 colors by setting the settings to **Adaptive palette, 2 colors, None forced, and No dithering** without losing any colors or reducing the quality of the image.

Click **OK** and save as "**background.gif**" in your **web site folder** in the **graphics** folder [1].

Choose **Window > Show Swatches** to see the reduced palette. You will notice that it looks like a row of broken teeth and is made up of only 2 colors. If you choose **Edit > Undo** (Command - Z), the palette will revert to the RGB palette. You can see the difference between the two palettes. By reducing the palette and mapping areas of pixels, the GIF format reduces the file size and download time. See the **Saving for the Web** handout for more info.

In this example we may only shave off 40 bytes from the file size, but if you do this on another graphic you may save a significant amount. In the world of modems, every byte or K counts. The faster your page loads, the happier your visitors will be. I also encourage you to check the file size in the Finder by selecting the icon of the graphic and choosing **File > Get Info** (remember to look at the number in parentheses since this is the real size of the file, the other figure merely refers to how much space it takes up on the disk).
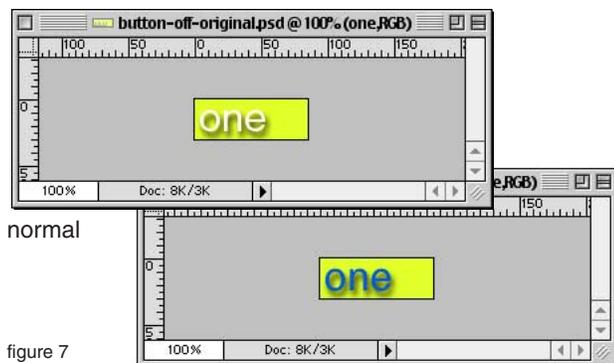

normal

figure 7

rollover - cursor is over button

2. Next, we will create two graphics for each button. One for the normal state and one for rollover state. See figure 7.

a. In Photoshop, choose **File > New.** Give it the name "button." Set the dimensions to **85 pixels wide** and **30 pixels high**. Resolution is **72 dpi**, color mode **RGB**, contents **White**. Click **OK**.
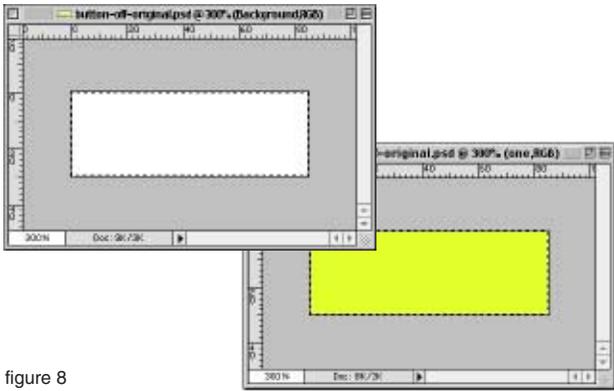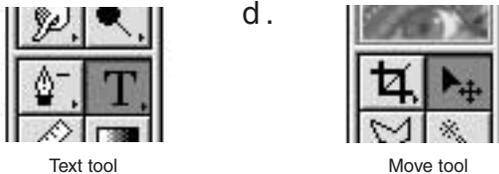
figure 8

We will make the buttons 85 pixels wide so that they fit on the 100 pixel wide border that we created in step 1.

b. Choose **Select > All** to select the background of the image. The marching ants should be surrounding the background of the graphic.

c. We want to create a button with a background of the same color as the border we created in step 1. Your foreground color in the toolbox should be the same as you chose in step 1.
If you have quit Photoshop or have inadvertently changed the color, then open up the background graphic and sample the border color using the eyedropper tool in the toolbox.

Hit the **Option + Delete** keys at the same time to fill the selection with the foreground color.

d.

Text tool   Move tool

figure 9

Click on the Text tool in the toolbox and click on the canvas of the graphic. Type **home** and set the font to around **30 points**. Be sure to set **antialiasing** to crisp. See figures 9 &10.

Click **OK.**   Move the text into position on the canvas using the Move tool.

e. Save as a Photoshop file, named **button.psd** in the **web site working folder[1]**. This is a back up copy with layers that we can use in case we want to go back and make some edits at a later point.

figure 10

f. Now choose **Image > Duplicate** to make a copy of the button for the second state (rollover).

Choose **Window > Show Layers**. Double click on the **T** in the Layers palette to edit the text. See figure 11. In the dialog box that appears after you double click, **select the text** and then **choose another color** in the color well. This second button will be the rollover state for when the mouse passes over the button. Click **OK**. Save the second button in the **web site working folder** with the name **button-over.psd**
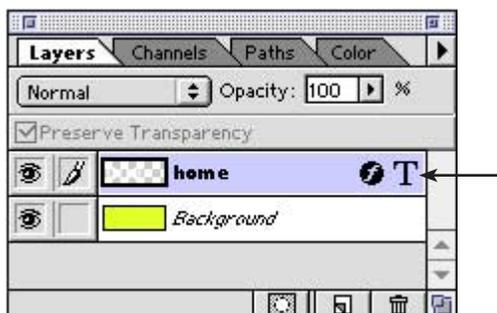
figure 11

figure 12

g. Next we will save a copy of this file as a GIF using the new Photoshop 5.5 command, File Save For Web. See figure 12.

With button.psd's window active, choose **File > Save for Web**. In the dialog box that comes up, change the settings to **GIF, 12-24 colors** (depending on what looks best), **lossy 12%** (depending on what looks best) and **diffusion**. Use your eye as a guide to what settings are best.

Click **OK** and save the file as **home.gif** in the **graphics** folder in the **web site folder**[1].

Do the same for button-over.psd and save it as **home-over.gif** in the **graphics** folder in the **web site folder**. Repeat this step for all the other buttons in your web site.
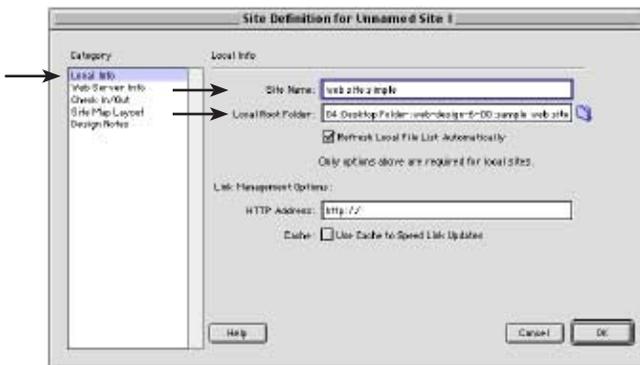
figure 14

3. Layout your pages in Dreamweaver 3.

a. First let's define the site to take advantage of Dreamweaver's site management capabilities. Choose **Site > Define Sites...**, you'll see a dialog box, just click **New.** Under **Local Info**, enter the name of this site in the **Site Name** field. Then click on the folder next to the **Local Root Folder** and locate the web site folder. Then click **OK** and then click **Done.**
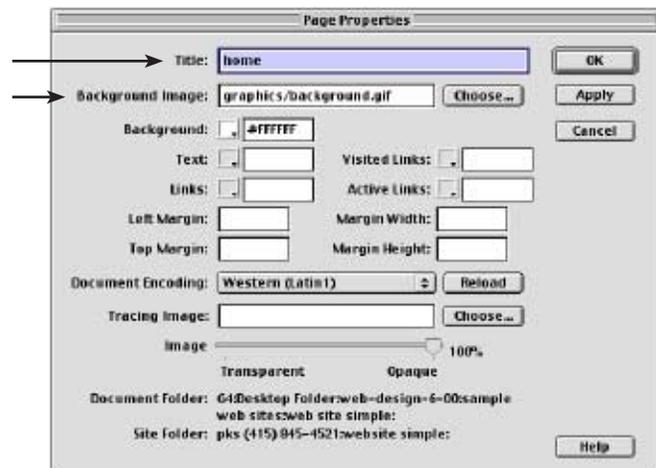See figure 14.

This will allow Dreamweaver to keep track of your links and help you avoid broken links or error messages.

b. Create a new document to start laying out our pages, choose **File > New**. Save it as **index.html** in the web site folder. Next let's add the background image. Choose **Modify > Page Properties**. Enter in a name for the document in the **Title** field and then click on the **Choose** button to locate the background image that we created in step 1 and saved in the graphics folder.
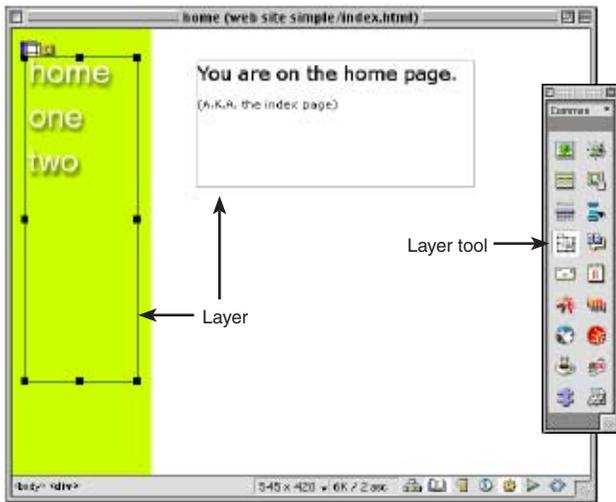
figure 15

figure 16

figure 17

c. To add the buttons to the new web page, we will use a layer box to position all the buttons. First select the **Layer tool** in the tool box. Next click and drag in the document to create a layer on the left hand side over the colored border. See figure 16.

d. To add the buttons, click inside the layer box you just created and then choose **Insert > Rollover image**. In the dialog box that appears, name the rollover **home** and locate the two graphics for the original image and the rollover, **home.gif** and **home-over.gif** respectively. Add a link to the rollover by clicking the **Browse** button and locating the home page **index.html**. Click **OK.** See figure 17.

With your cursor placed after the home button, **enter a return** on the keyboard to give it some room and then repeat this step (3.d) for the other buttons. Although you have yet to create the other pages, add links to them in the rollover dialog box by typing in URLS in the "When clicked Go to URL". In our example, we named the next page **one.html**, **two.html**, etc. Then when you have added all the buttons you want for the site, save this page.

e. Next add some text to the page using a layer to mark it as the index page. See figure 15.

f. Now using the index page as a template for the other pages, we will save copies of this page as **one.html**, **two.html**, etc. in the web site folder. As you go along, change the text in step e. above so that when you view the pages in a browser, you can tell which page you are viewing.

g. To preview your work in a browser, hit **F12** on your keyboard. You may have to show Dreamweaver where you're browser is located if this is the first time you have used F12. It should look like figure 1 on page one. To look at the HTML and the Javascript that creates the rollover effects, hit **F10** on your keyboard.   Once you have completed all your pages, use **Modify > Layout Mode > Convert Layers to Tables** to convert your layers to tables and therefore make your pages compatible with older browsers (version 3.0).   Well done!

footnote[1]   In all of our examples of simple web sites, we work off of the desktop using two folders (see 10 Points for Successful Web Site Construction). One is the **web site folder** and the other is **web site working** folder. All web ready graphics are saved in a folder named **graphics** inside the web site folder. Any working files such as Word documents or Photoshop format files are stored separately in the web site working folder.