

File Naming and Structure

Overview

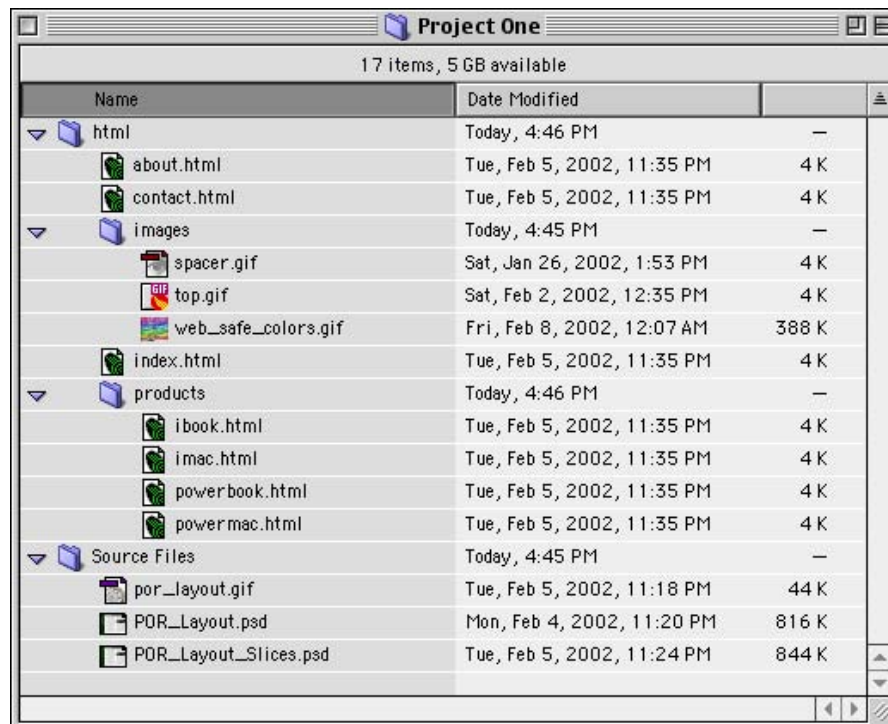
- File naming conventions for web site publishing are much more restrictive than in other types of media.
- It's critical that HTML files be able to locate other HTML files in a predictable and clear manner.
- File linking relies on the assumption that HTML, graphic and other files remain in the same location they were in when the link was created.
- While incorrectly named or located files may work on your local computer, you will run into problems when they are moved to a different machine or uploaded to a web server.

File Naming Rules and Conventions

- Do not use spaces; use an underscore (`_`) instead
 - Good: `about_ai_portland.html`
 - Bad: `about ai portland.html`
- Do not use special characters
 - Characters to avoid: `"!~:&() []{} , . <> \ /`
 - The `/` character is reserved for separating folder names in links
 - Good: `winter_spring.html`
 - Bad: `winter&spring!.html`
 - Bad: `winter/spring.html`
- Always use the correct suffix
 - Good: `home_page.html`
 - Good: `management_team.jpg`
 - Bad: `home_page`
- Always use lowercase letters
 - Good: `aboutourservices.html`
 - Bad: `AboutOurServices.html`
- Name the first page of your site `index.html`
 - This name has a special meaning when posted to a web server.
 - It tells a web server to display that page if no page is specified.
 - Also works for individual directories, not just for the home page.
 - Good: `index.html`
 - Bad: `home_page.html`
- Give your files meaningful names
 - Giving your files meaningful names will drastically ease creating links between files.
 - Meaningful names also help in reminding you of the content of a file, which is important if it has been a while since you last worked on the project.
 - Don't simply call your pages `page1.html`, `page2.html`, etc...
 - Good: `our_services.html`
 - Bad: `page1.html`
- When you have a numbered list of files, zero-pad the file names
 - By adding a zero before the 1st through 9th files, you ensure that the list will always alphabetize correctly.
 - Good: `01.gif 02.gif 03.gif`
 - Bad: `1.gif 2.gif 3.gif`

Project File Structure

- Creating a proper file structure for your site is as important as correctly naming them.
- It's **strongly** recommended that you establish your site structure before you begin working on your site.
- To ensure that your site will work correctly when uploaded to a web server, you must store all of your publishable files within the same folder.
- This folder is called the **Local Root Folder**
 - Within this folder is where you place the files you intend to publish on your web site.
 - You can create sub-folders within the local root folder to help organize your files.
- You cannot use files that are outside of the Local Root Folder.
 - Although Dreamweaver will allow you to do this, it's not a good thing.
 - The files may work locally, but they will most definitely break when you move to a different computer or post them to a web server.
- It can be troublesome to move your files around after you have begun your site. Graphic links and hyperlinks can break if you attempt to organize your files later in the process.
- Sample Project File Structure:



- Sample Structure Explanation
 - For a project titled Project One (in the example above) there are two primary directories:
 - html Contains the final html and images (.html, .gif & .jpg files)
This is the Local Root Folder for this project.
 - Source files Contains all of the working files (Photoshop, raw scans, logos)
 - Note that it's OK to have sub-folders (in this case images and products) within this folder. These sub-folders help keep the files in your site organized and easy to locate.
- Note: Folders are often called directories (primarily in Windows and UNIX/Linux), and the two terms are interchangeable.