Cascading Style Sheets: part 1

Defining Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)

STYLES

- CSS defines the style or appearance of text, paragraphs, graphics, images, tables, etc.
- most often used to control the appearance of text

SHEETS

- all of the styles are lines of code sitting in another file on your web server
- they can be embedded within your HTML file, but it is more common for them to be in their own files
- they are also more useful being in external files because then they can use accessed by all files in your site
- you can have more than one stylesheet in your site (or even for an HTML file)

CASCADING

- multiple stylesheets can be called upon by one HTML file; or you can have both internal & external styles
- internal stylesheets take precedence over external stylesheets (in the case of conflicts)
- stylesheets can be refined by additional stylesheets

Why use CSS?

- they allow you to control many aspects of your site very quickly:
  one change to a stylesheet changes every place its used within your website
- they extend the text display capabilities beyond those of just XHTML (i.e. defining leading on bodies of text)
- tends to take less code than XHTML which helps your pages load faster
- it is now *the standard* for formatting websites

Primary Reason to use CSS

it separates the Content from the Presentation (style and layout) in a webpage

- best example is CSSZenGarden ***http://www.csszengarden.com/***
  - take a look at the HTML FILE they provide on their site; this is what the site looks like without any CSS formatting; this content is exactly the same for all of these designs
  - see all of the examples that have only modified the CSS file and uploaded the appropriate image files
  - this demonstrates how easy it can be to do a website redesign if everything is built using CSS
- we're going to cover an overview of CSS and try to go over some very practical uses

With CSS:
HTML code for a 5-word paragraph with the style (class) of *normal*.

```
<p class="normal">This is some small text.</p>
```

Without CSS:
The same paragraph with in-line formatting in the HTML code.

```
<font color="#474F49" size="9px" face="Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif">This is some
small text.</font>
```

If you have a second paragraph you're required to have all of the formatting listed again.

```
<font color="#474F49" size="9px" face="Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif">Here is another
paragraph, slightly longer, of small text.</font>
```

Anatomy of a Style Sheet

- the rules set up in the style sheets are the very core of CSS
- each rule has two parts, the **Selector** and the **Declaration Block**
- in this case **h1** (a heading 1 tag) is the Selector which selects the h1 element on the page and modifies it to appear like the definition in the Declaration Block
- in this example it says that all heading 1 elements should be displayed in green
- the declaration block always falls between the two brackets and can have multiple declarations, each declaration is made up of two parts, the **Property** and the **Value**
- a colon and a space separates the Property from the Value
- each declaration ends with a semicolon
- the Property specifies what to change & the Value specifies what to change it to
- this last example shows multiple Declarations, each on its own line, making it easier to read
- Dreamweaver generates all of this code for you, so you don't have to know how to write it, you just need to know what properties there are to work with
- I've found that it really helps to understand how this code works because sometimes you have to go tweak it by hand
- So, a style sheet is just a collection of CSS rules (see the sample style sheet)

CSS in Dreamweaver CS3

- by default Dreamweaver will put your styles in an internal, or embedded stylesheet
  - this is different than the external stylesheet (.css file) that we just saw
  - the code is placed in the HEAD section of the HTML file
  - it is limited to just the HTML file that it is embedded in; because of this it is usually better to use external stylesheets

Page Properties

- start by **defining a New Site**: use *Sample-Site-Root* from the server (copy to your desktop first)
- once it is defined, open ***index.htm***, you see that we have some basic elements, but not much styling
  - note the Paragraph, Heading 1 and Heading 2 formatted type
- lets see what style we can add through the Page Properties
- Open the Page Properties window by clicking on the Page Properties button in the Properties Inspector, or hit Command-J
- All changes made in this dialog box are called out in an embedded stylesheet for this HTML file (and applied to all of this page, but just this page)
  - change **Page font** to *Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif*
  - change **Size** to *11 pixels*
  - change **Text color** to *#474F49* —note that you can type in a value, select from the color picker, or sample from the page (make sure to include the # sign with your color; you might get away with leaving it off, but it may cause you trouble!)
  - change **Background color** to *#BEC2C2*
  - change all **Margins** to *0* (zero)
  - click on the ***Apply button*** and you can see your changes

- Click on the **Links Category** and lets make some changes there
    - by default **Links** are usually Blue and Underlined; often **Visited Links** change to Purple
    - the **Active Link** color shows when you click on a link
    - the **Rollover Link** color shows when you move your mouse over a link
    - change the values to the following:
      Link color: *#C89D5A* **Rollover links:** *#9F7535*
      Visited links: *#CFA970* **Active links:** *#474F49*
    - change **Underline style** to *Hide underline on rollover*
- Click on the **Headings Category**
  Here we can adjust the size and font for all headings
    - change the **Heading font** to *Georgia, Times New Roman, Times, serif*
    - change **Heading 1** to *24 pixels* and *#B85338*
    - change **Headline 2** to *11 pixels* and *#4B403C*
    - click the ***OK button*** to accept our changes
- Save your file and Preview in Firefox or Safari
  you can see how the link colors change (DW can't preview that)
- Dreamweaver has been building an **embedded stylesheet** while we made all of these changes
  (go take a look at it in the Code View)
    - look for everything after the **Style Tag** (some styles were already there to give the page structure)
- we've now created a CSS styled page without even using the CSS Panel (where we'll do most of the CSS changes)
- however, using the Page Properties dialog has forced us to create an embedded stylesheet,
  but we can turn it into an external stylesheet quite easily
    - if we do that then we can apply the styles to multiple pages

Creating an External Stylesheet from an Embedded Stylesheet

- we don't want to waste time by setting up the Page Properties in each individual HTML file
  and external stylesheet will work for us much better
- go to the **CSS Styles Panel** and make sure ALL is selected
    - click on the triangle to display all styles (if they're not showing
    - click on the very 1st style, scroll down, hold the Shift key down and click on the last style (selecting all of them)
- Right-Click on those selected styles and select **Move CSS Rules...** from the popup menu
- in the **Move To External Style Sheet** dialog box we can select an existing stylesheet file to add these styles to,
  or, in our case, we're going to select **A new style sheet...** and click on ***OK***
- this brings up a **Save As** dialog box.
    - lets save this at the Site Root level and name it ***styles.css***
- we can see the file ***styles.css*** in our Files Panel and notice that Dreamweaver has opened the file

- nothing appears to have changed in our HTML file; take a look at Code View
    - all of the code from the Styles block is now gone
    - there is a new line, a link to the external stylesheet
- also, in the CSS Panel you can see the ***styles.css*** file that we're linked to, which has all of our same styles
    - we can select the <style> tag in the CSS Panel and click on the Trash icon, removing it from the code *(there's nothing in it)* (this isn't necessary, but does clean up the code a bit)
    - open the file ***barns.htm*** and lets apply our new stylesheet to it
        - in the **CSS Panel** click on the **Attach Style Sheet button** (looks like a chain link icon)
        - in the **Attach External Style Sheet** dialog, click on the **Browse button** and find ***styles.css*** and click ***Choose***
        - make sure the **Link button** is selected in this dialog and then click ***OK*** (we don't want to import the styles)
    - the file now displays the styling properties we've been working on (make sure to ***Save***)
- now we could make changes to the stylesheet and they be reflected across all linked HTML files
    - go to the **CSS Panel**, select the **body tag** and change the **background-color**
      see how it changes in both files and how ***styles.css*** is the only unsaved file

The CSS Styles Panel

- there are **two main modes** of the panel: All and Current
- the **Current View** shows just the rules that apply to the element you currently have selected (click on a heading or link to see)
- the **All View** shows you all rules embedded or linked to the HTML file
    - clicking on a rule shows you all of its Properties in the pane below; you can edit or add properties there
    - if you have **Show Only Set Properties** selected (right-most icon) you only see the applied properties
    - if you change to **Show List View** you see all possible properties, listed alphabetically
    - there is also a **Show Category View** that groups the properties into categories;
      this can be a convenient way to change properties by browsing (better than alphabetical!)
- staying in the Show Only Set Properties view, we can use the **Edit Style...** icon (pencil) to bring up the **definitions window**
    - you'll spend a lot of time using this dialog box (at least until you become more familiar with CSS)
- we've already used two of the other icons, only leaving the **New CSS Rule** button which we'll get to later