


Slicing Your Comps in Fireworks

The easiest way to create a table layout from a design comp you've built in Photoshop is to open your PSD file in Fireworks and slice it. Fireworks will then create the appropriate table cells for you and export and place all of your images.

To get started we need a Photoshop file to slice; I've supplied a RiskPro layout for you. Go ahead and open that in Fireworks. The first thing we need to do is determine if GIF files or JPEG files are going to be the most appropriate for our images. Remember that GIF files work best for flat color (solid colors) and JPEG files work best for gradients and photos. The RiskPro site has a lot of flat color (with the exception of the homepage photo) so GIF makes the most sense. We want to determine this so that we can set a default export file type.

- Open the **Optimize Panel** (Window menu > Optimize) and make sure that it is set to your appropriate file type (either **GIF** [*Adaptive, 256 Colors, 0 Loss, 0 Dither*] and **JPEG** [*80% Quality, 90 Selective, 0 Smoothing*])

When we export this file Fireworks will assume that the entire image area is our table size. So now we need to tell it where we want the table cells. We initially only need to draw in table cells in the areas where we have images or live text.

- Click on the Slice Tool in the Web section of the Toolbar 
- Now draw a slice over each area that you want to be a table cell. You can click on the Pointer Tool (arrow) and move or adjust the size of a slice if necessary. You can also copy a slice and paste the new one if you want another of the same size.


All of these slices will default to the file type that you set in the Optimize Panel. If you need to change any slices, just click on them and change the setting in the Optimize Panel (I'm changing my photo to a JPEG).

You also need to adjust the **Type** of any slice that is live text (not an image). First click on the slice you need to change, then click on the **Type popup menu** in the **Properties Inspector** and select **HTML**. If you would like you can then click on the **Edit...** button and add a bit of placeholder text.

There are a couple of additional steps that we need to include to ensure easy round-trip editing between Fireworks and Dreamweaver:

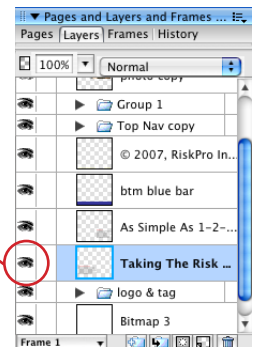
- First we need to name all of our slices in the Layers Panel. By doing this we can have Fireworks export each slice with a logical name, helping us find images when we need them and assisting in future edits.
 - Simply double-click on a slice name in the Layers Panel, look to see which slice highlighted on your page, and give it an appropriate name (add a page-specific prefix to the name, i.e. "hp-" for homepage). Do not use spaces in these names.
- Secondly we can add ALT tags and links to our slices in Fireworks
 - Click on an image slice in the Layers Panel and note the Link and Alt fields in the Properties Inspector
Any information you add at this point will export into Dreamweaver and be in the XHTML code

Now that we're done with our slices (and before we export) it is a good idea to turn off any layers that contain elements (i.e. placeholder 'live' text) that we don't want exported as images.

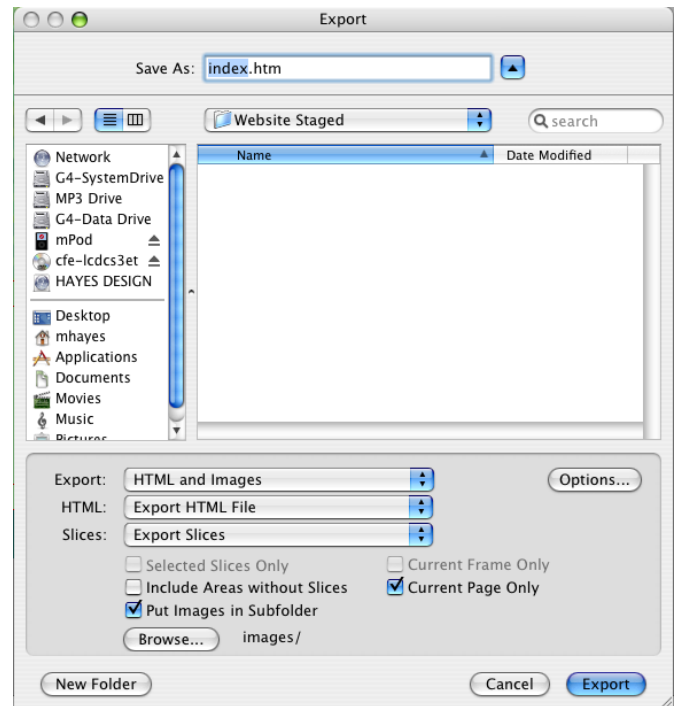
- First you should hide the slices by clicking on the Hide Slices button in the Toolbar 
- Now select each element you want to hide and one-by-one turn off the display for each appropriate layer (by clicking on the eye icon for that layer)

Now that those elements are out of the way we can export our table and images

- Go to **File menu > Export...**
- In the Export dialog box give your file an appropriate name (*index.htm* is appropriate for a homepage; *contact.htm* for a contact page, etc.) and select your site root folder to export into



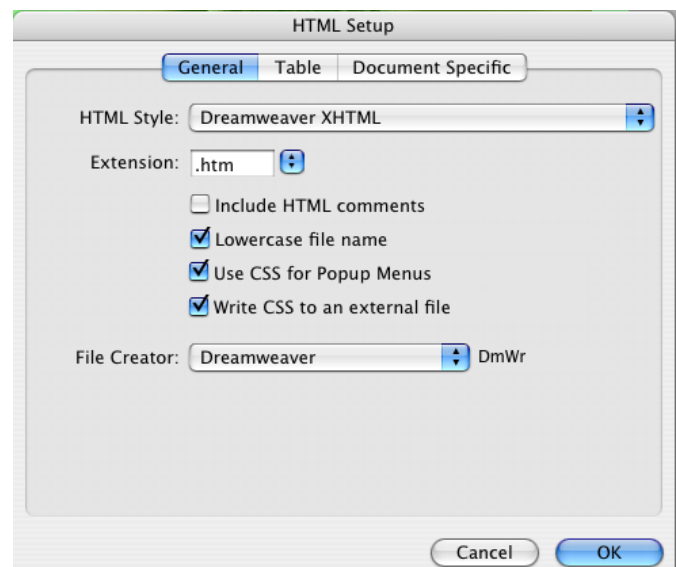
- Make sure your settings match this **Export** dialog box to the right
- You should also check the **Options** settings to ensure they match those pictured
 - Pay particular attention to the **Space With** setting in the **Table Options** window. Setting this correctly will eliminate cell size and spacing problems in your HTML files.
 - Also double-check your **Document Specific Options**: that is what determines the names of your exported images (and ensures that they keep the slice names you assigned to them)
 - Once this is all set you can click on the **Export** button and you'll have an HTML file ready to open in Dreamweaver



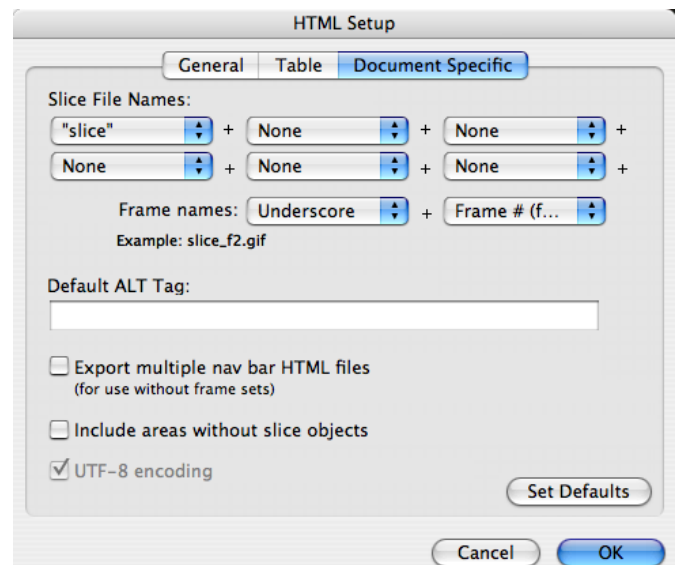
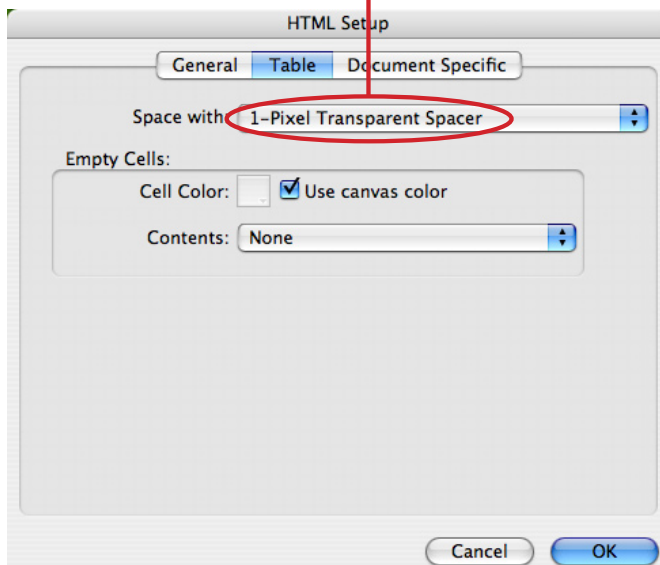
Now you can add live text, links, etc. in Dreamweaver

If you find that you need to edit the artwork created in Fireworks, just click somewhere in the table, click on the leftmost <table> tag in the lower left corner of the page window and then click on the Edit button in the lower, center of the Properties Inspector. That will open your original Fireworks PNG (and prompt you to find it, if necessary). Any HTML changes you've made will carry through (though you can no longer assign links and alt tags in Fireworks).

Once you are done making edits in Fireworks, click on the Done button near the top of the Fireworks page window and it will save your changes and display them in Dreamweaver.



This setting can make a big difference!



PNG file, sliced in Fireworks



the resulting HTML file in Dreamweaver

