

# Adobe Press

## Creating an External Style Sheet in Dreamweaver CS4

Date: Sep 23, 2008 By [David Karlins](#). Article is provided courtesy of [Peachpit Press](#).

External style sheets have many powerful advantages that make them ubiquitous in professional Web sites. In this excerpt, adapted from *Adobe Dreamweaver CS4 How-Tos: 100 Essential Techniques* (Peachpit Press, ISBN 0-321-56289-5), David Karlins shows the easiest way to generate style sheets in Dreamweaver.

External style sheets are separate files with .css filename extensions that are linked to HTML Web pages. Those CSS files define page attributes for every page to which they are linked.

External style sheets have many powerful advantages that make them ubiquitous in professional Web sites:

- They can be applied to any number of pages.
- They can be used to instantly update the look and format of every page to which they are attached.

They ensure a uniform, global look and feel to a Web site by applying uniform formatting to every page in the site.

### NOTE

This article is adapted from the upcoming *Adobe Dreamweaver CS4 How-Tos: 100 Essential Techniques* (Peachpit Press, ISBN 0-321-56289-5).

The easiest way to generate a CSS (style sheet) file in Dreamweaver is to create a new style. As you do, you'll have the option of including that style in a new CSS file. In the following steps, you'll define a style and save it in a new style sheet. These steps can be adapted to generate a CSS file using any tag as the initiating style.

1. In the Document window, click the New CSS Rule icon at the bottom of the CSS Styles panel ([see Figure 1](#)). The New CSS Rule dialog appears.



[Figure 1](#)

2. In the Selector Type area of the dialog, choose the type of style you want to define.
  - o Choose Class to apply formatting rules, which are independent of tags, to any selected text. If you are creating a Class style, enter a name for your style in the Name box.
  - o Choose ID to define a style that will apply to just one HTML tag.
  - o Choose Tag to define formatting for HTML elements, such as headings, paragraphs, images, tables, or pages. When the Tag radio button is selected, every HTML tag appears in a pull-down menu next



### *Should You Apply CSS to Table and Image Tags?*

Maybe. Keep in mind that if you apply a style to the Table tag—for example, a yellow background color—that style applies to *all* tables on your site (assuming you are using an external style sheet). I find this a bit heavy handed. I like to apply different background colors to tables within my site, so I usually don't define a table style. When I manage very large sites, I usually define a CSS style for the Table tag because I don't want or need to custom define background colors for every table.

On the other hand, I normally define a style for images. I'll use a style to define the border thickness and color that appears around the images. I like to keep this style standard throughout my site.

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