

Dreamweaver Tutorials


Working with Tables

This tutorial will explain how to use tables to organize your Web page content.

By default, text and other content in a Web page flow continuously from top to bottom in one large column. In order to arrange your content into multiple columns or display data in a table format, you need to use a container to hold the information in place. One type of container is a table, which is made up of columns and rows of cells. Tables in Dreamweaver are similar to tables in Microsoft Word.

Before you begin, plan the layout of your page. In this example, we will use a table to hold two columns of text, and another table to arrange a small chart. A table that is inside of another table is called a nested table. There is no limit to how many levels of tables can be nested, but after two or three it can be confusing for the designer, and some web browsers may not always render multiple nested tables as you expect.

Here is what our finished page will look like:



Chicago-Kent
College of Law
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

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About the Record

What is the Record?
The Record is Chicago-Kent's weekly, online newsletter for posting notices, communicating news and announcing events within the law school community. Chicago-Kent's Office of Public Affairs produces the main Record headline page, which contains links to individual announcement pages that are posted online and maintained by the sponsoring administrative department, academic unit or student organization.

All Chicago-Kent departments, academic units, institutes, centers and organizations are responsible for maintaining their own Record announcement pages. The Office of Public Affairs posts announcements for faculty members as well as for other IIT units or affiliates from time to time. Outside organizations or groups that wish to post announcements in the Record must do so through a sponsoring law school department, unit, institute, center or organization. The Record does not sell or provide advertising space.

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Publication schedule

The Record is produced weekly during the academic year and biweekly during the summer term, except during extended holiday break periods. Check this page for the specifics of a given term's schedule. Headline and announcement pages are available online late Friday afternoon for the following Monday's issue. In addition, the Record headline page is sent by e-mail in HTML format to all Chicago-Kent students, faculty and staff each Monday morning during publication periods.

Summer 2005 publication schedule	
Issue Date	Deadline
May 23	May 19 (noon)
June 6	June 2 (noon)
June 20	June 16 (noon)
July 4	June 29 (student orgs) June 30 (staff)
July 18	July 14 (noon)
August 1	July 28 (noon)

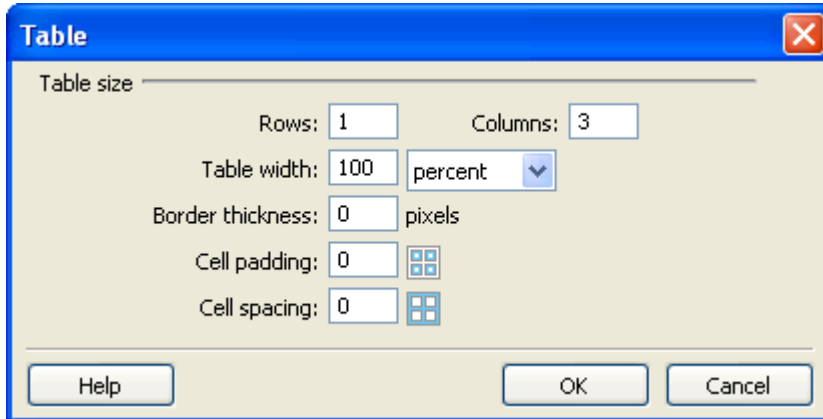
Insert the table

Place the cursor at the insertion point in your document.

Choose Insert > Table from the menu OR click the Table icon from the Insert panel.



In the dialog box, set the following properties for this example.



Rows: The number of rows in the table.

Columns: The number of columns in the table.

Cell Padding: The margin size (top, bottom, sides) inside each cell measured in pixels (px).

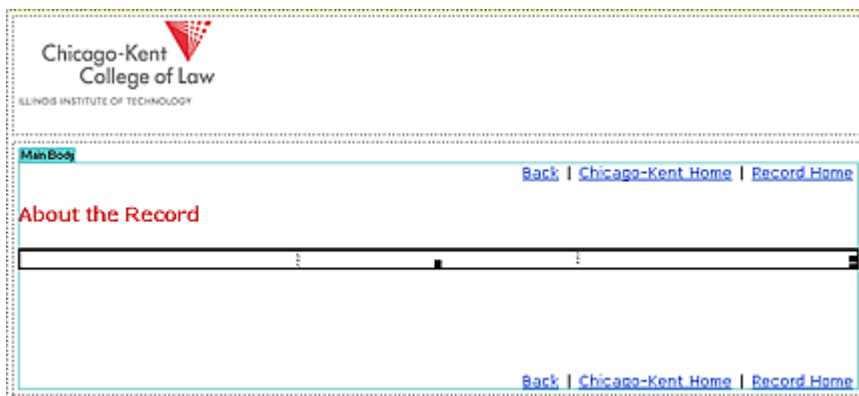
Cell Spacing: The space between cells measured in pixels.

Border: The thickness of the table's border in pixels. Set this to zero for no border.

Width: The width of the table, either as a percentage of the available area or an absolute value in pixels. If this is left blank, the table will stretch to fit its contents.

To create two columns of text, we will use one row and three columns. The center column will be used as a spacer between the two columns of text. Set the table border to zero so that it is not visible and the width to 100% to use as much horizontal space as the working area will allow. Note that when you are adding a table inside of another table, the percentage is in relation to the size of the cell that the table is in, not the percentage of the whole page. Keep the cell padding and cell spacing at zero so that the left and right margins will be flush with the rest of the content on the page.

The empty table will look like this:



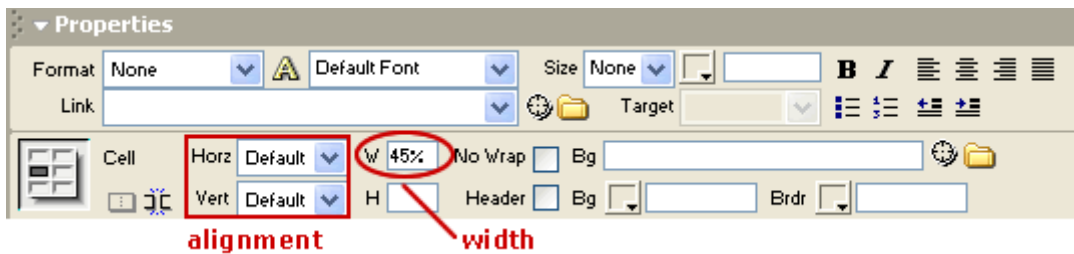
Although the border is set to zero, Dreamweaver shows a dotted line for layout purposes. When viewed in the browser, the border will not be visible.

Set the width of each column

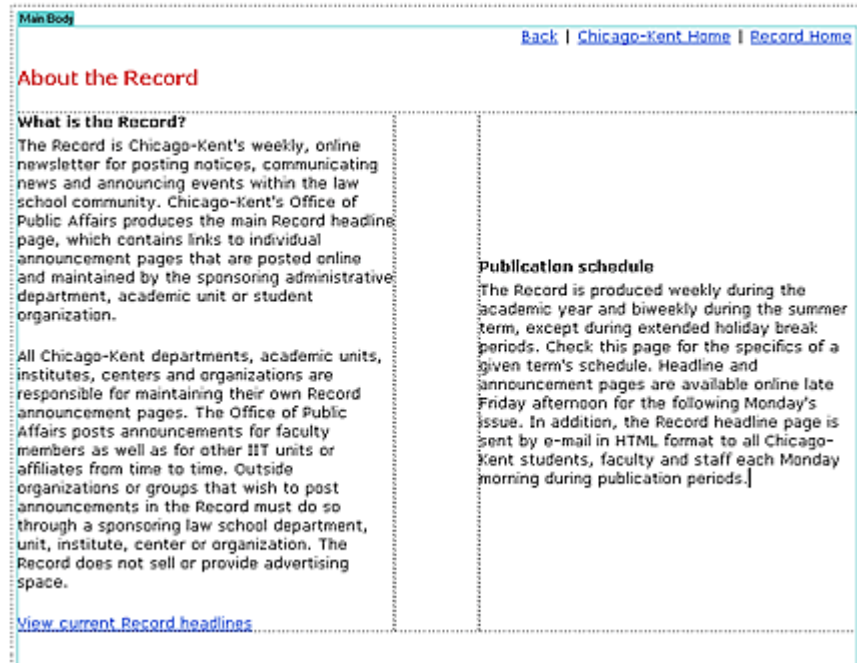
Set the width of a column by selecting the top cell in the column and entering a width in the Properties panel. You can enter a fixed size by entering the width in pixels, or you can specify a percentage of the table. If you do not enter a width for any of the columns, the size of the table will be distributed based on the content inside each column. If you enter widths for all columns except one, the unspecified column will take up the amount of space that is remaining in the table. For example, if your table width is 100% and you have two columns that are each 100px, the third will stretch to fill up the rest of the size of the table. This is useful when you don't know the size of the space, but wish to use all available area. If you do not specify a width for the table or for the columns, the table will only stretch to fit the amount of content within the cells.

In our example, we want the two outer columns to be equal and the center column to be a small width to provide a separating space between the two columns of text. If the width of the table is not known, we might set the columns to 45% | 10% | 45%. If we know that the available area is 735px (the size of the CK Simple template), we might set the columns to 355px | 25px | 355px. It is also possible to adjust the widths after inserting the content.

Before proceeding with our example, make sure your column widths are 45% | 10% | 45%.



After the table is at the desired size, enter the text or other content.



Notice that the default vertical alignment is "middle." To change this to a more common alignment for text, select one of the cells in the Properties panel, and then select Top from the Vert dropdown box. Do the same for the other cell. You may wish to experiment with changing the horizontal and vertical alignment options using the Properties panel to get a feel for the corresponding effects.

If you would like to visually resize the columns, place the cursor over one of the borders and drag it to the desired size.

Create a chart

Insert a new table within the right column of the table you created above (place your cursor after the text). In the dialog box, set the following properties:

Rows: 7
 Columns: 2
 Cell Padding: 2
 Cell Spacing: 0
 Border: 1
 Width: (Leave this blank.)



The new table will look like the image to the right:

You may want to experiment by inserting some of the data from the chart below to see how it stretches out the table.

In the Properties panel, enter 120px for the left column and 150px for the right column. Enter any remaining data in your sample chart.

Issue Date	Deadline
May 23	May 19 (noon)
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July 4	
July 18	July 14 (noon)
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Add a row or column


To add a row at the top of the table, place the cursor inside the top row.

From the main menu, select **Modify > Table > Insert Rows or Columns** *OR* right-click the table and select **Table > Insert Rows or Columns**.

In the dialog box, select the following properties:

Insert: Rows
 Number of Rows: 1
 Where: Above the Selection

Merge two or more cells

Select the cells that you want to merge. We are going to select the two cells in the top row to create a heading for the table. In the Properties panel, click on the Merge Cells icon. 

Enter the heading for the table (Summer 2005 publication schedule) and center and format it using the Properties panel.

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Split a cell

Place the cursor in the cell that you would like to split.

Click on the Split Cell icon. 

A dialog will appear with options for the number of rows or columns. We are going to split the empty cell in the right column into two rows to allow two deadline entries for the July 4 issue. Enter the two deadline dates in the two new

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empty cells to the right of "July 4" so that your chart looks like the one at right.

Change the background color of a table cell

To make the heading stand out, we are going to change the background color of the top cell. Place the cursor inside the cell. In the Properties panel, click on the color box next to Bg Color. A color picker will appear, displaying the palette of Web-safe colors. Use the eye dropper to choose a color that will provide enough contrast to make the text easy to read (such as the light gray used here).

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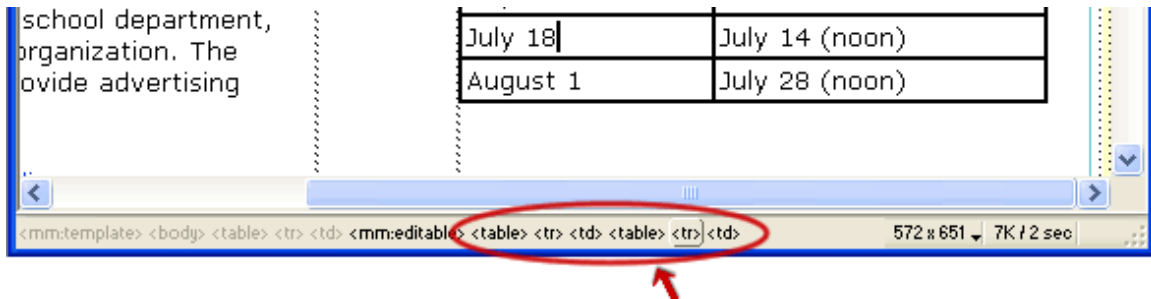
Your page should now look like the finished example shown at the beginning of this tutorial.

More information about working with tables:

Selecting a table

Selecting a table or one of its elements (row, column, cell) will give you the option to format the element, format the text inside of it, or copy/paste/delete it. To select table elements, do one of the following:

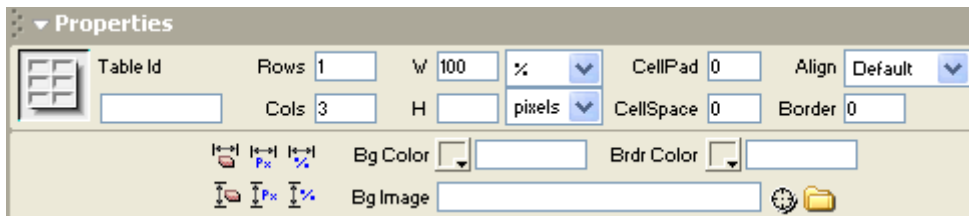
- Place the cursor inside the table and choose Table > Select Table from the main menu (this selects the entire table).
- Drag your cursor around the table, row, or cell, just like you would do to select text.
- Place the cursor inside a cell that resides in the area you are trying to select, and click on the appropriate tag from the tag selector in the lower left corner of the Document window. (Shown in the example below.)



In the tag selector, `<td>` is the cell, `<tr>` is the row, and `<table>` is the whole table.

Making adjustments to existing tables

Once a table or table element is selected, its properties can be adjusted by using the Properties panel. If the Properties panel is not visible, select Window > Properties from the main menu.



Sorting data within a table

If you have ordered information in a table, such as an alphabetical listing of faculty names or a numeric listing of courses, Dreamweaver can sort the rows for you. To sort the data, select the table or place the cursor inside one of the cells. From the main menu, choose Commands > Sort Table. A new dialog box will appear with options for how to sort the information. Note that tables with merged or split cells cannot be sorted.