

We hold these truths to be self-evident...

1. Fireworks is a DESIGN program.
2. While Fireworks can design a website or interface, it should not be used for live websites only prototypes and presentations.
3. Fireworks can create CSS. However, see article 2 for clarification.
4. Any code should be run through Dreamweaver for general clean-up by someone experienced in HTML/CSS.
5. Fireworks can be used to optimize images for the web. And furthermore, it does this better than Photoshop. (Really!)
6. Developers can also use Fireworks to create a functional wire frame for Designers.

Fireworks[fahyuhr-wurkz] –noun

1. Adobe® Fireworks® is a versatile program for creating, editing, and optimizing web graphics. You can create and edit both bitmap and vector images, design web effects such as rollovers and pop-up menus, crop and optimize graphics to reduce their file size, and save time by automating repetitive tasks. You can export or save a document as a JPEG file, GIF file, or file of another format. These files can be saved along with HTML files containing HTML tables and JavaScript code so you can use them on the web.
2. Fireworks was originally intended to be an application allowing designers to create websites without using HTML code. However, due to complex and inconsistent code variations, it has transformed into a very solid prototyping tool. This new purpose allows Designers to still design a website with HTML functions without code, but is not intended to become a live site or app directly from Fireworks.

Adobe Fireworks

The Missing Link

Fireworks now allows Designers to push their project further down the workflow pipeline to a Developer thereby maintaining the overall look and User Experience rather than having a Developer recreate a layered Photoshop or Illustrator file.

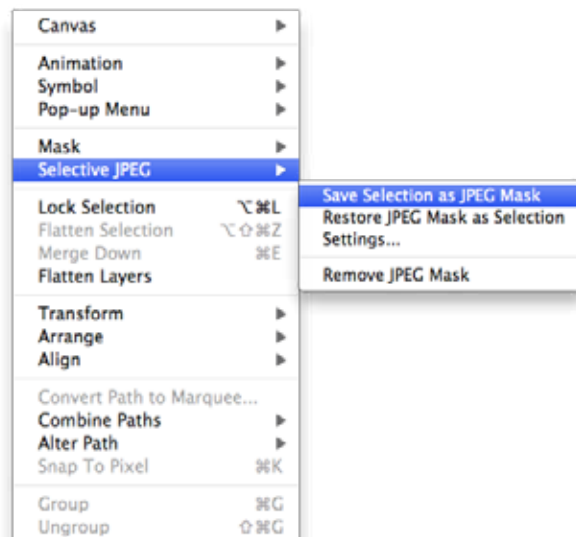


Image Editing in Adobe Fireworks

While you can edit images in Adobe Fireworks, it is best to use Adobe Photoshop for editing. However, Fireworks does handle Image Optimization much more effectively than Photoshop.

To optimize an image for the web, open your image in Fireworks, and open the Optimize Panel. Turn on the 4-Up view mode. You can now choose the formats you wish to compare with the Optimize Panel. Be sure to check the file size, located in the lower left corner of the window.

Another unique feature of Fireworks is that you can create a Selective JPEG mask. That will allow you to select parts of an image to protect from JPEG compression and artifacting. To do this, select the area you wish to protect, then go to **Modify>Selective JPEG>Save Selection as JPEG Mask**.

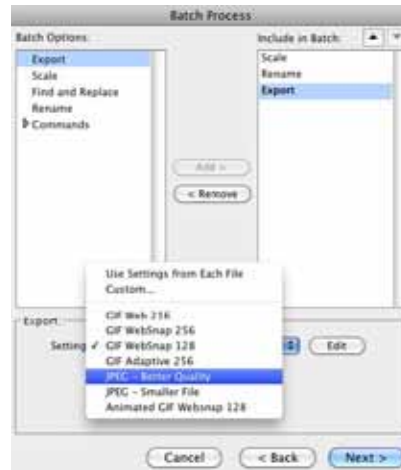


Adobe Fireworks

The Missing Link

Image Editing in Adobe Fireworks (cont.)

You can also batch optimize images in Fireworks and use several common actions as you do so, including scale, rename, file formats, etc. This is very similar to the Batch Process command in Bridge or the new Image Processor script in Photoshop.



Web Design in Fireworks

Designing for the web in Fireworks can be as simple as a splash page or HTML email with sliced images, or as complex as CSS with div tags and navigation.


To start with, you have to DESIGN your web page/site. This is the biggest difference between Photoshop and Fireworks. With Photoshop you can design and slice apart images, creating basically a large image file to load as a page with tables. Fireworks allows you to create multiple pages including navigation, roll overs, image swaps, CSS tags, LIVE html text and more.

Home Portfolio Links

Adobe Kevin Stohlmeyer

Teacher. Designer. Speaker.

Kevin Stohlmeyer is a designer specializing in digital illustration with over 15 years experience in the field. Kevin has been teaching professionally since 2000 both as a faculty member at Madison Area Technical College, Adobe Authorized Training Centers and most recently Milwaukee Area Technical College.



Who is he?

His experience with publication design, production workflows and illustration enhances his credibility as an Adobe Certified Instructor in Photoshop, Illustrator, InDesign and Fireworks. He is also the co-manager of the Milwaukee Adobe Users Group and the Milwaukee Graphic Design Meetup Group.

What has he done?

Besides being an instructor/designer Kevin also serves as the Higher Education Coordinator for C2, Wisconsin's only Adobe Authorized Training Center and sits on the advisory board for Milwaukee Area Technical College, ITT Technical Institute, and Waukesha County Technical College developing curriculums and software training using the Adobe Creative Suite.

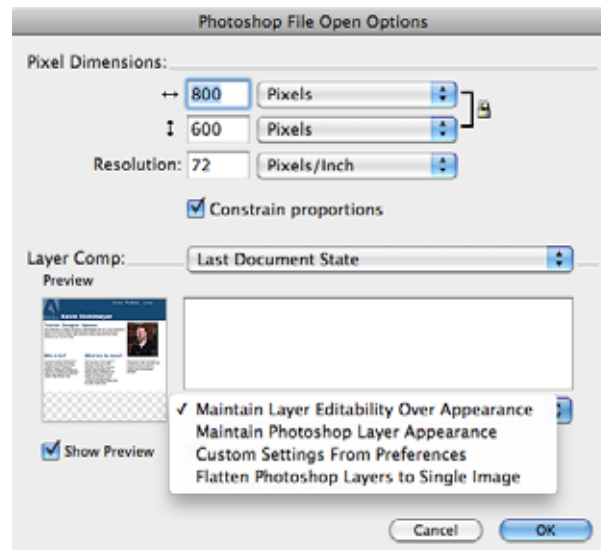
Kevin is also an Adobe Community Professional for Adobe Photoshop, and an Adobe Influencer speaking at conferences and user groups on Creative Suite 5 and Photoshop nationwide.

Adobe Fireworks

The Missing Link

Web Design in Fireworks (cont.)

When importing from Photoshop, there are several options for Layer Editability. But really there is only one choice. Always use Maintain Layer Editability over Appearance. This will keep everything from your PS file as an asset in Fireworks- including text.



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The next step is important. You have to decide how you want to set up your prototype. Do you want to use HTML and allow the user to navigate the site and see some functionality? Do you want to create CSS and give your developer a starting point and have them finish the work for you?

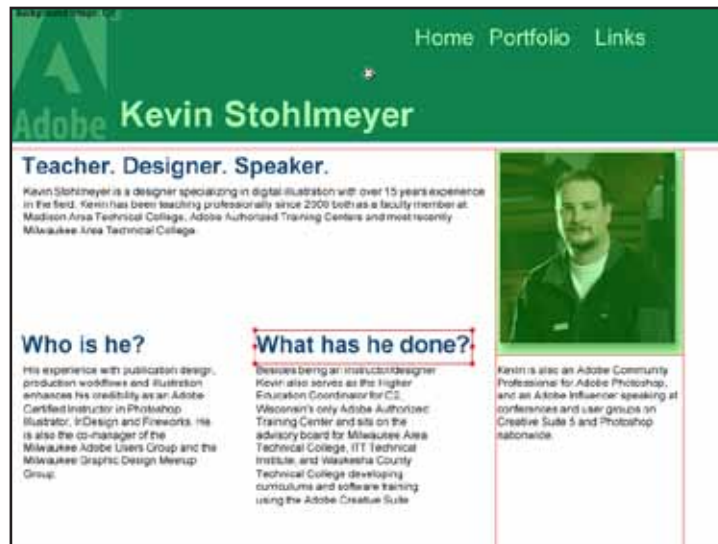
First, we are going to go with CSS. It is the easiest thing to set up in Fireworks, but that is also because it is very limited.

Adobe Fireworks

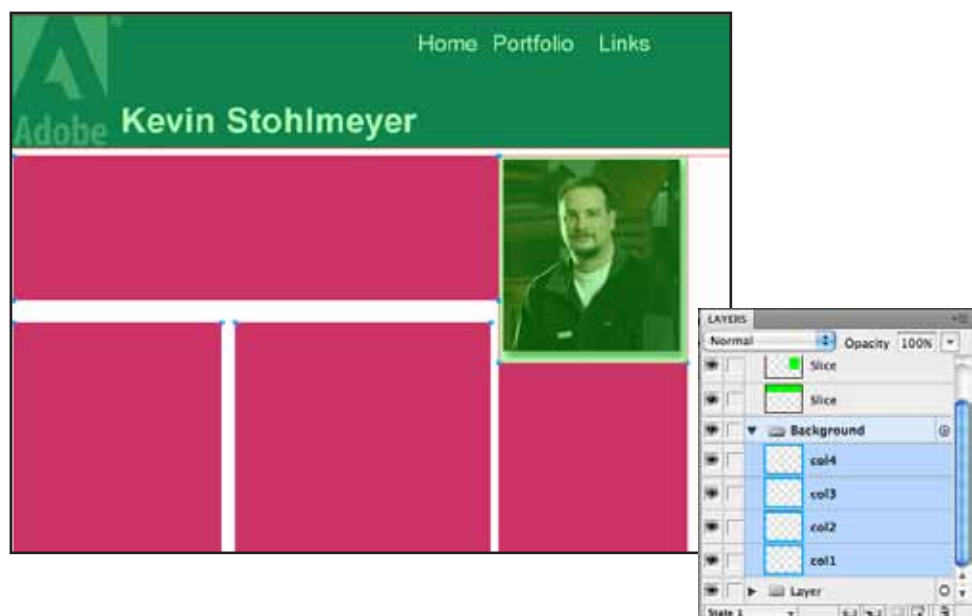
The Missing Link

CSS in Fireworks

To create CSS tags from Fireworks, first slice around images using the web tools. Be aware that the default for sliced images is "Foreground Image" which means it will be inline. This can be the first problem with CSS. Multiple images or text may disappear when using inline images. Switch your image to a "Background Image" using the Properties panel.



Next, create a folder called "Background" and create your Div tags for CSS. This is done by surrounding the remaining areas with a transparent rectangle vector shape and naming the shape the Div tag you wish to use. Slices are already their own divs. Be careful not to overlap rectangles, this will cause an error when exporting.



Adobe Fireworks

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CSS in Fireworks (cont.)

Finally, go to File>Export and choose "CSS and Images" as your format and also check to have an automatic subfolder added for your images.

Your CSS will appear in any browser just as you designed it. However, upon opening in Dreamweaver, you will notice all the coding issues that are really happening. It looks good - but it functions poorly. But for prototyping, this is great.

There are a lot more functions you can add into a Fireworks CSS layout such as repeating background images or even CSS Sprites. However, these have been known to be quite flawed and require more work for a developer to fix than to just create from scratch.

HTML in Fireworks

The other option for Fireworks is to create an HTML site using slices, buttons, hot spots and other assets to allow the user to navigate the site and see how it will function without utilizing massive amounts of coding.

To convert your design into a functional website in Fireworks you have to map out your site BEFORE you start. This is critical or you will end up doing a lot of back work.

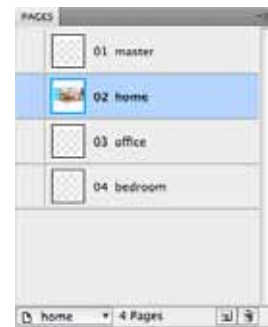
1. Create Pages for each site landing page you wish to show. Name them using traditional web naming standards (lowercase, no punctuation, etc.).
2. Find common elements on each page, such as navigation, footers, etc. and move them to one page. This will become your Master Page.
3. Add navigation to the Master Page elements using hot spots.
4. Link site pages to the Master Page.
5. Add functional elements such as roll overs, buttons, etc. to each page.
6. Add HTML elements using the Common Library.
7. Test after each step by previewing all pages in browser.

Adobe Fireworks

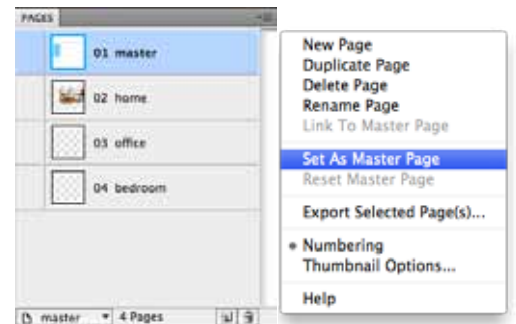
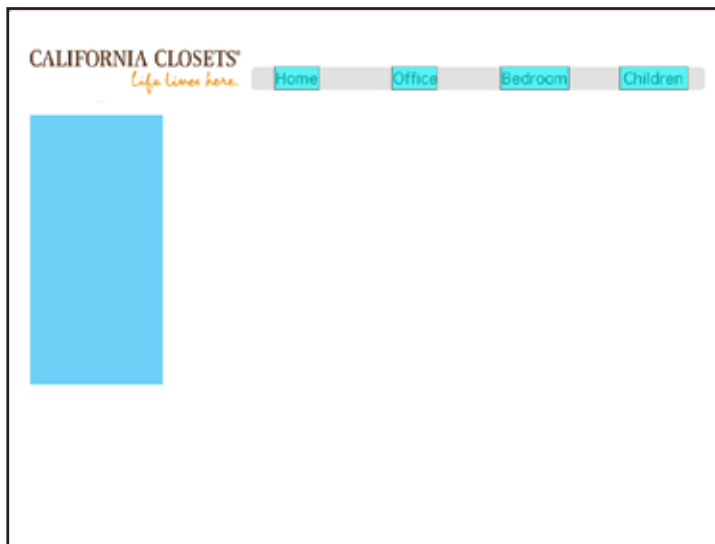
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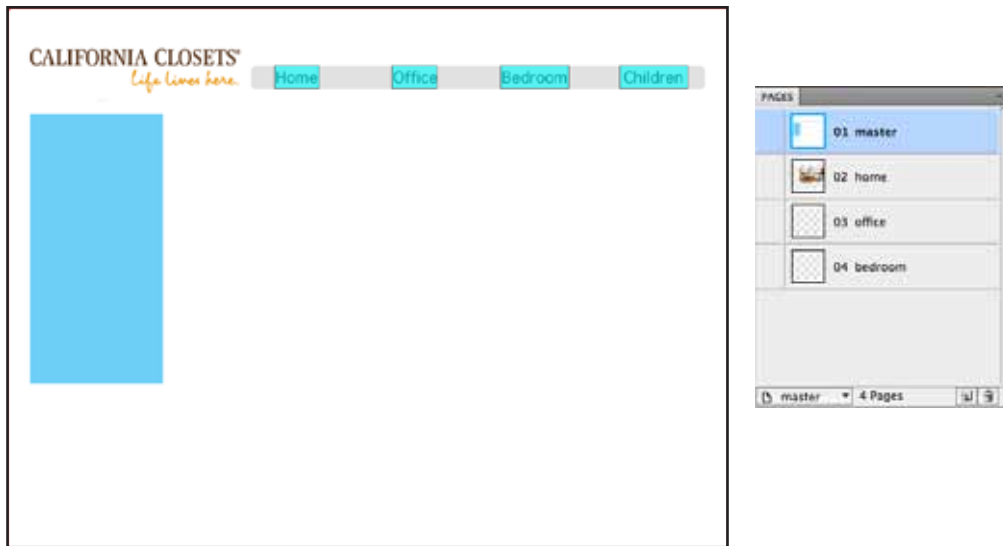
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