

# *Introduction to Dreamweaver 4*



*Steven Lewis, Web Manager, SUNY Brockport*

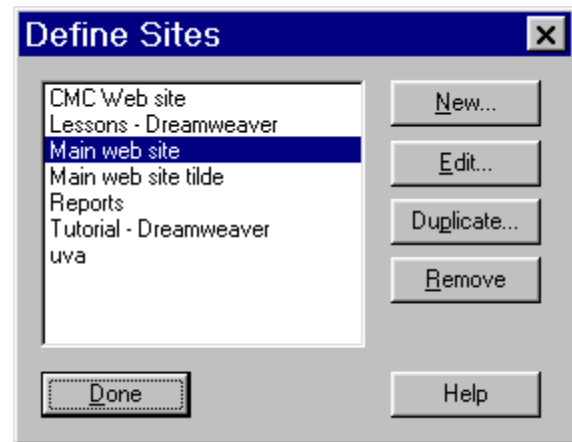
For help with official College Web pages, dial ext. 2-WEB (2932).

## Defining a Site

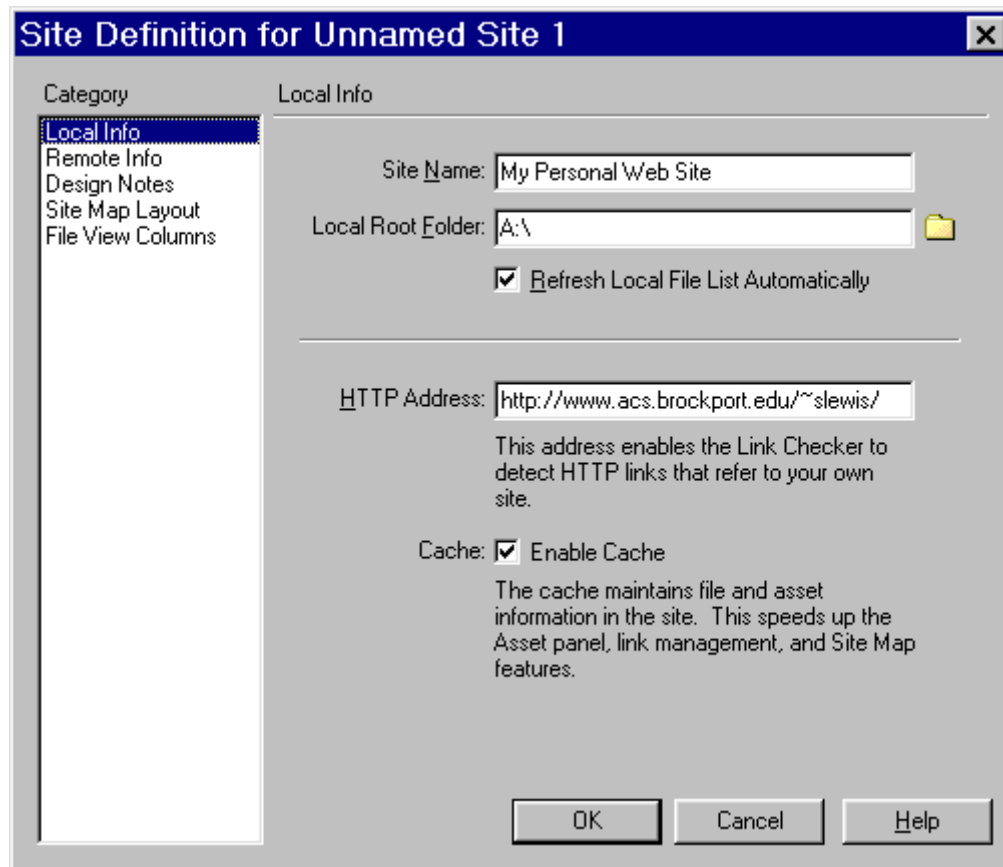
When first using Dreamweaver, whether configuring it to edit an existing site or to develop a new site, it is very helpful to use Dreamweaver's built-in site manager.

To define a new site, from any Dreamweaver window, select **Site | Define Sites...** from the menu.

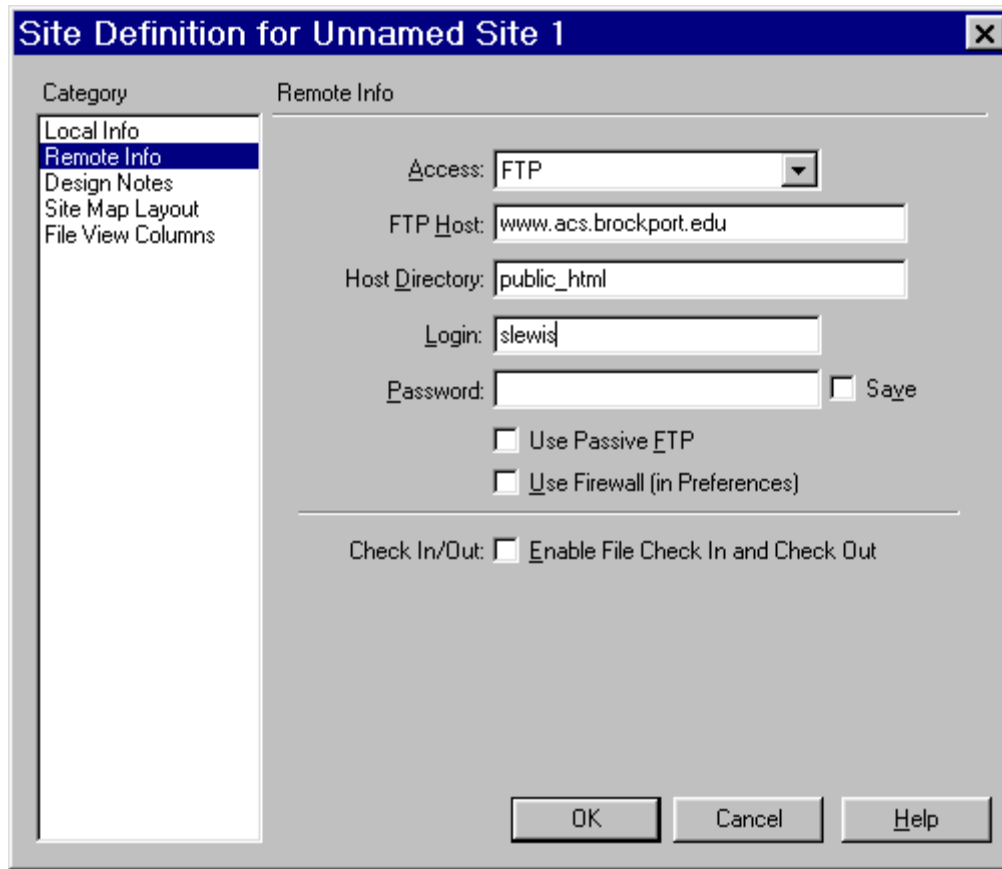
Then, click on the **New...** button.



The most important and necessary fields are located in the **Local Info** and **Remote Info** categories.



Of course, this information will differ depending on what you want the site to be called in Dreamweaver (**Site Name**), where on your computer you want to store the information (**Local Root Folder**), where the site is and will be located on the Internet (**HTTP Address**), the most important fields in this dialog box.



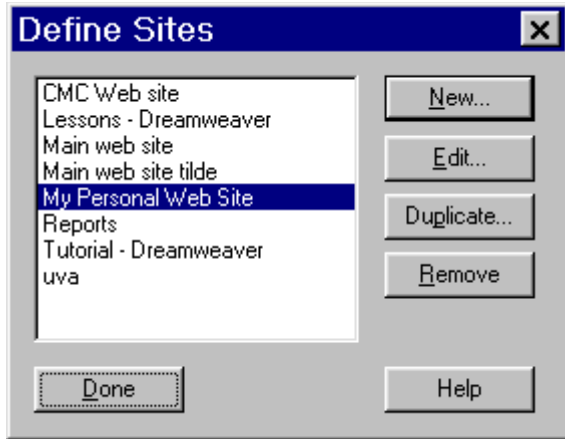
Under **Remote Info**, when you select your **Access** type, the rest of the dialog appears. For almost every case, Access will be FTP. Once you have the dialog box filled out, click **OK** to create the site.

This configuration is pretty standard for personal Web pages at SUNY Brockport. Official Web pages have a greater variety of options:

Item	Official Web Pages	Unofficial Web Pages
<b>FTP Host</b>	<a href="ftp.web.brockport.edu">ftp.web.brockport.edu</a>	<a href="http://www.acs.brockport.edu">www.acs.brockport.edu</a>
<b>Host Directory</b>	/usr/web/users/foo... if http://www.brockport.edu/~foo... or /usr/web/wwwroot/foo... for http://www.brockport.edu/foo...	public_html
<b>Login</b>	Varies, usually same as e-mail account	Same as e-mail account
<b>Password</b>	They should know (different from e-mail)	They should know (same as e-mail)

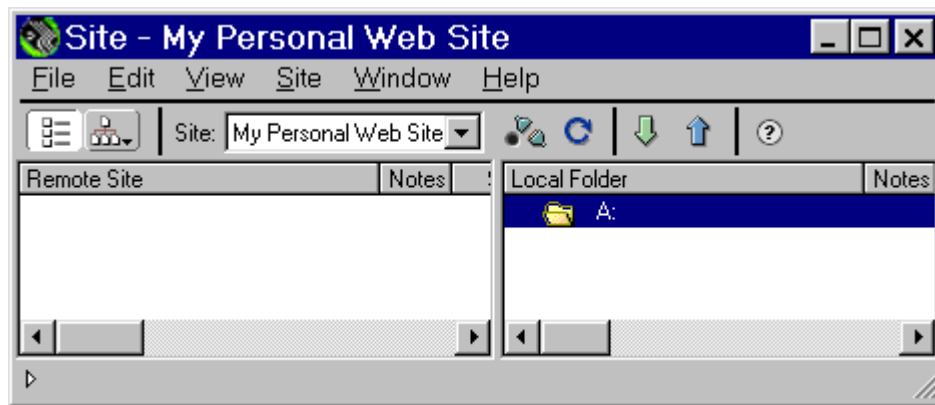
***IMPORTANT!***

For security reasons, passwords should not be saved, especially for lab machines. *Make sure you never encourage users to do so.* On personal machines, it should be a personal choice, but make sure the user understands that, if the password is saved, *anyone* who sits down and uses that computer then has access to their Web site.










As you can see, the site (in this case, **My Personal Web Site**) is now defined. Dreamweaver will attempt to create a cache of local files (assuming **Cache** is enabled). If you didn't have any files listed in the **Local Root Folder**, Dreamweaver won't take very long.

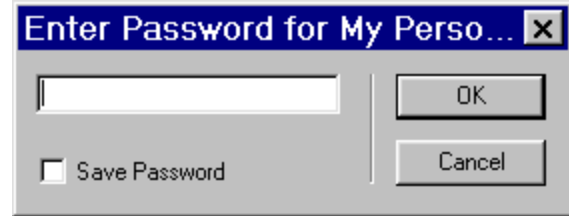
The new site should already be highlighted. Clicking on **Done** will bring up Dreamweaver's Site window, already displaying the site you have defined.



Here's a description of the major menu items:

	View the remote site in the left pane
	View a site map in the left pane (this won't work until you have some Web pages in your Local folder)
Site: <input type="text" value="My Personal Web Site"/>	This allows you to select the current site from those you have defined in Dreamweaver.
	With no green light, clicking will connect to the server. When connected, light is green, and clicking disconnects from server.
	Refresh the view. This updates the window in case any files change since the window was first displayed.
	<b>Download</b> files from the server to your local machine. If you are not connected to the server, it will connect you.
	<b>Upload</b> files from your machine to the server. If you are not connected, it will connect you.
	Help!

Whenever Dreamweaver tries to connect you to the server, it will prompt you for your password — unless, of course, you have it saved, but we didn't save it, did we? It also gives you an option to save the password. Don't.



Personal e-mail accounts at SUNY Brockport do not come configured for Web pages. There are several steps needed to prepare the account to accept the Web pages. Instructions are available online here:

<http://www.acs.brockport.edu/sunlab/webpage.htm>

Follow these steps **before** you connect. Otherwise, you're going to get errors and you won't be able to connect and upload your pages.

## Creating & Editing Web Pages

If you already have a Web site defined, you can connect and download your files to your local computer using the **Site** window and **Get** button. From the site menu, you can also create new files from the **File|New File** menu. It lets you name the file immediately. If you are starting a new Web site, it is a good idea to name this file **index.html**. This is the default file name for most servers on the Internet, including the server for personal Web pages and official Web pages at SUNY Brockport.

My e-mail address is [slewis@brockport.edu](mailto:slewis@brockport.edu). If I put index.html as my main Web page in my public\_html folder, as we've just set up Dreamweaver, then I can access my personal Web site via:

<http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~slewis/>

If I named my main page something else, like main\_page.html, then I would have to type this in, instead:

[http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~slewis/main\\_page.html](http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~slewis/main_page.html)

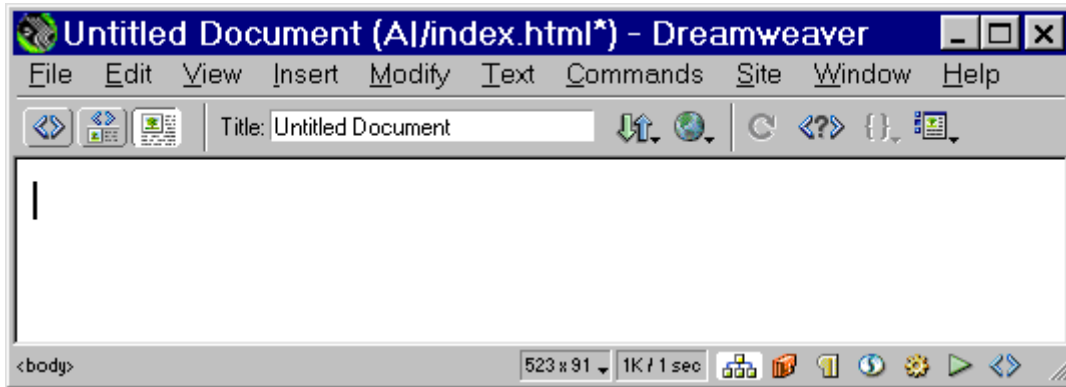
That's a pain to type in and remember, so I *really* advise you to use index.html.

Before we go on to actually editing I file, I'd like to say a couple more things about file names. It's generally good to use descriptive names for your files. Rather than file1.html, file2.html, file3.html, call them resume.html, photos.html, and links.html, as appropriate to content, of course. It's not a good idea to use spaces, as my gallery.html would show up with a nasty %23 instead of the space in the URL:

<http://www.acs.brockport.edu/~slewis/my%23gallery.html>

Also, file naming can get out of hand, so you generally want to keep your filenames shorter rather than longer. There can be too much of a good thing, in this case, descriptiveness.






If you haven't figured it out already, double-click on a file in the Local folder to open up Dreamweaver's editor window.




Very simply speaking, Dreamweaver's editor is a powerful Web page creation tool, which is very much like Word in its combined ease-of-use and complexity. However, Dreamweaver is more tailored to HTML, and some knowledge of the underlying HTML code is helpful to understanding how Dreamweaver works.

Just like Word, however, you can ignore all the complexity and just type.

Here are the most important toolbar buttons:

	<p>These three buttons allow you to change what you see in the window. The far right selection lets you see the Web page how it would appear to the Web browser, plus a few extra hints to let you see and control some invisible items.</p>
	<p>The far right option makes the window show only the HTML code.</p>
	<p>The middle option splits the window, with the upper portion showing HTML, and the lower showing the WYSIWYG view.</p>
<p>Title: Untitled Document</p>	<p>The <b>Title</b> of a Web page allows you to give information to the user via the Window bar across the top of the screen. Note how changing this also affects Dreamweaver's window.</p>
	<p>This little button gives you access to most of the functions in the <b>Site</b> window. You can upload the file to the server (and more) right from the editor!</p>
	<p>Not all browsers are created equal, and this button lets you preview your Web page in the different browsers on your system.</p>

	<p>Dreamweaver has lots of built-in reference material. This button will take you to different information based on where the cursor is on your screen</p>
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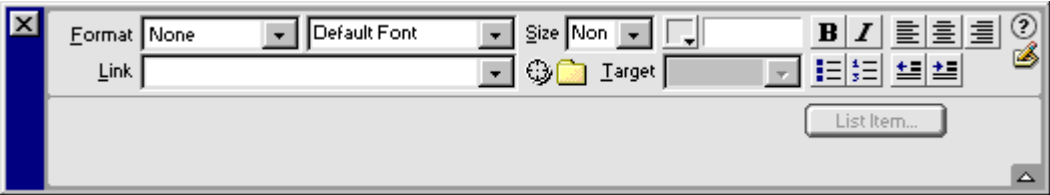
The Dreamweaver editor also has a host of buttons along the bottom of the window. These pop up some of the more advanced features of Dreamweaver. Perhaps the most helpful is the far right, which pops up (or hides) a separate window with the HTML. This allows for more versatile access to the HTML than the split-screen option allows. The far left button pops up (or hides) the **Site** window. The white background on the button means the window is open. The rest of the buttons relate to features too advanced for an introductory course.

If not already open, the most important floating toolbar to have open is the **Properties** window. If not open already, you can get it by selecting **Window|Properties** from the menu.

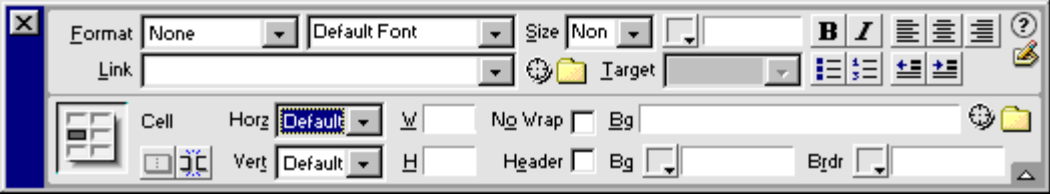


This little window packs quite a few features in a tiny space. In fact, if you hit the little down arrow button on the lower right corner, it expands to its larger size. The size you use will probably depend on the resolution of your monitor, but as you see, it's worth every inch you give it.

The contents of the **Properties** window change depending on the context of the cursor in the editor window. For example, compare the full window when entering text alone:





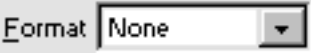
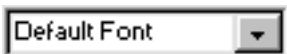



to entering text within a table:



As you can see, Dreamweaver puts a lot of power in a little space. We'll return to tables in a moment.

Now, let's examine the features that are available to text. Most of the text features (with the exception of **Link**) work how they do in word. You can highlight a section of text and change the attribute (e.g. make text italic), or you can set the attribute and type away, and the text you

type will use that attribute. For **Link**, however, you must first highlight the text you want to link for it to work.

	<p>Basically, these items do exactly what you would expect them to do from your experience with Microsoft Word. So I'll not bore you with individual descriptions here. The only difference is that you can "unselect" the active justification to return to the default.</p>
	<p>When in an ordered list, you can set the number at which a given list starts or the type of delimiters used (digits, Roman numerals, letters, <i>etc.</i>). In an unordered list, you can set the bullet type.</p>
	<p>This relates to the HTML encoding. For ordinary text, this will be paragraph. You should use Heading 1-6 as you would in a textbook (e.g. "Defining a Site" on the first page of this document would be a heading), and preformatted text for items such as computer commands.</p>
	<p>Selecting a font isn't quite as specific as it is with Word. In HTML, you typically select a group of fonts, and the browser will try to pick one from among the fonts available on the end-user's machine.</p>
	<p>Generally, it's considered bad form these days to specify a font size. However, you can do so. These are not pixel sizes, but relative sizes. -1 to -7 choose font sizes 1 to 7 sizes smaller than what the browser would do otherwise. +1 to +7 choose font sizes 1 to 7 sizes bigger than what the browser default. 1 to 7 are available as general sizes. It's up to the browser to assign a specific font size in terms of pixels.</p>
	<p>This lets you enter a color for the font in hexadecimal, from #000000 to #ffffff, over 16 million colors. Or, you can choose a "web-safe" color from the dropdown palate on the left.</p>
	
<p>Basically, all these items have to do with hyperlinks. You can type in (or copy and paste from a Web browser) a URI into the dropdown list, or select among the options. If linking to a file in your site, you can select the folder to search for the file, or click and drag the little target icon over the file in your Site window. (Try it. It's really cool!) When you use frames (not recommended any more), you can select which frame the link opens in by selecting the <b>Target</b>. (There are also options available for the link to open in a new window, or outside of any frames.)</p>	

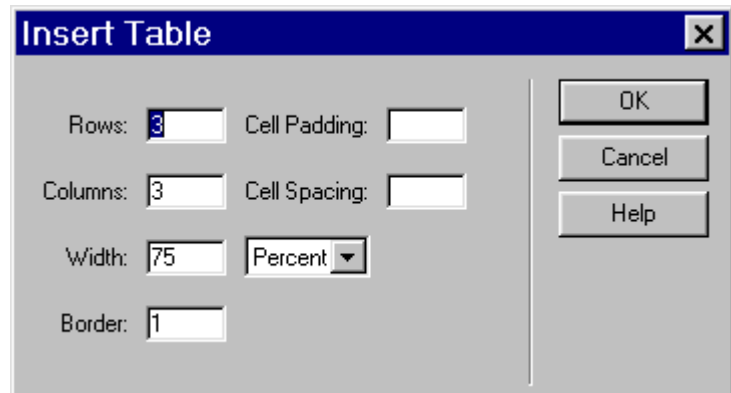
Phew! You should take time to try out all these options on your own.

**Tables.** Tables are a very common element on the Web, but they are approaching their last hurrah. For years, people have gotten their Web sites to do this and that with a creative table job. The SUNY Brockport Web site currently uses tables for layout, and Dreamweaver literally cut hours off the design time off of laying out the new templates.

That said, with an increasing call to leave HTML a structural language and use Cascading Style Sheets for layout and stylistic functionality, tables will eventually return to their original form, as

tables for data. The caveat of the caveat is that it will be another 10 years before it will be practical.

You can insert a table in your Web page in Dreamweaver by selecting **Insert|Table** from the menu. A dialog pops up with a whole bunch of interesting options, most of which make sense.



The number of **Rows** and **Columns** is to allow Dreamweaver to assist you by laying things out in advance. You can always add or delete rows and columns later. These don't equate to any HTML markup features other than repetitions of tags, which Dreamweaver will do automatically.

The **Width** can be specified in terms of percent of the current window or absolute pixels. Even if you specify an absolute width, sometimes browsers will ignore the setting.

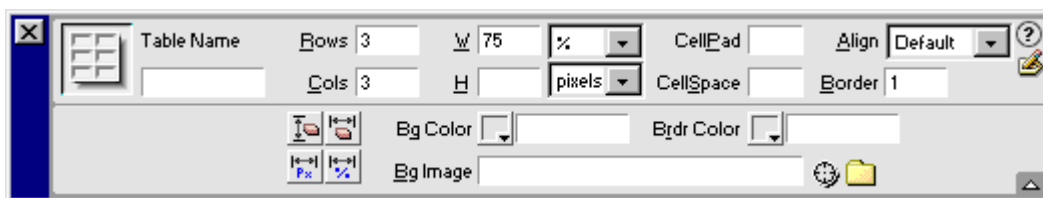
The **Border** goes around the entire outside of the table, and is set to a certain number of pixels. Setting it to 0 makes the entire table disappear, which is how tables are used for layout. Actually, 0 is the default used by most browsers.

**Cell Padding** is the amount of space (in pixels) within a table cell surrounding all text and other objects. There is a default on most browsers of 3-5 pixels.

**Cell Spacing** is the amount of space between every two cells, and the outer cells and the border. Again, there is usually a browser default somewhere around 3-5 pixels.

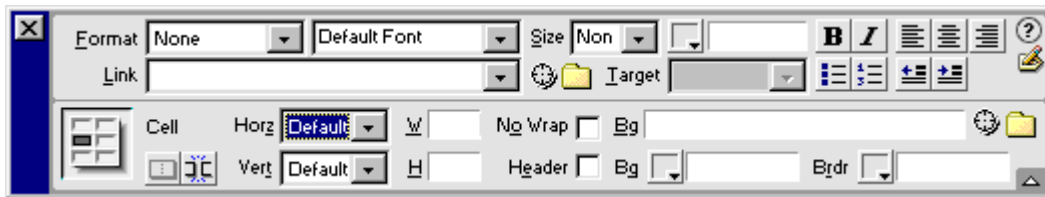
Click **OK**, and your table magically appears.

If you select an entire table, either by dragging the mouse to highlight it or by right clicking in the table and selecting **Table|Select Table**, the following Property box appears:



We've already gone over most of the values, and the box is well-labeled, so I'll not bore you by repeating all the details here. You can always try the question mark in the upper right corner to find out more. Some things you will likely use are **Align** (to determine where the table goes in the page), and **Bg Color** or **Bg Image** to set the background color or background image.

When typing along within a table, you see this box, which combines the properties for the text and the current cell:

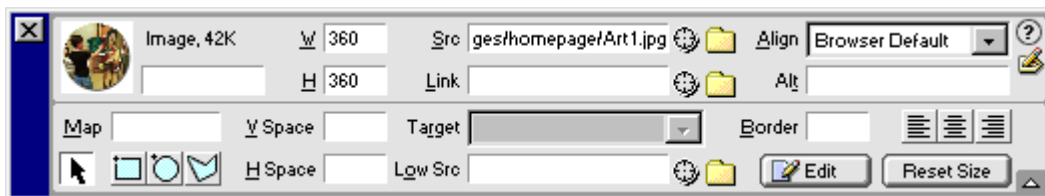


**Horz** and **Vert** set the alignment within the cell. You can also specify background images or colors specifically for the cell, but not all browsers are compliant enough with standards to support that option. **No Wrap** prevents the text from moving to the next line within the cell, or at least expresses a preference for it. **Header** indicates that the current cell is a label for the current row or column, and most browsers make the text centered and bold, but you can override the default with your own settings. (To achieve the default header effect on a non-header cell, it is preferred to use the alignment features of the cell and the bold attribute on the text.)

If you select a row or a column from the edges of the table with the mouse, the changes you affect in the dialog will usually take effect in all the cells in a given row or column. This is particularly helpful to set consistent alignment.

**Images.** Text-only Web pages have been passé for eons in Web time. By far, the most common way to spruce-up a Web page has been to add a graphic of some sort.

You can insert an image into your Web page by selecting **Insert|Image** from the menu. I bet you didn't see that one coming. A somewhat-extended file selection dialog box pops up which lets you preview the images in question. However, more interesting is the **Properties** window that appears for the image:



The most significant part of this dialog is the **Alt** element. Generally speaking, it is good design to give all your images alternative text that will display in lieu of a graphic (for someone, say, browsing on a PDA) so they can follow what's going on in the page. Many pages use textual buttons that are also links. If you can't see the graphic, the only way to know what exactly it is on which you're clicking is through the alternative text set for the graphic. Most of the rest of these items are advanced features.