CSS Menu Writer Getting Started Guide

With CSS Menu Writer you can easily creates Web-standards compliant CSS-based menus – both horizontal and vertical, completely customized to your specifications.

The Menu Writer wizard allows for easy reentry, making for easy modifications after you have initially created your menu.

CSS Menu Writer is comprised of two key interfaces: one for creating new navigation menus and the other for managing preset menus.

- Creating a Layout

- Managing Layouts

Each interface can be accessed in a couple of ways. You can begin to create new menus by any of these methods:

- Choose **Insert > WebAssist > CSS Menu Writer > New Menu**.

- Select the **New CSS Menu Writer Menu** option from the WebAssist category of the Insert bar.

Likewise, the CSS Menu Writer Manager can be invoked by the following technique:

- Choose **Insert > WebAssist > CSS Menu Writer > Style Manager**.

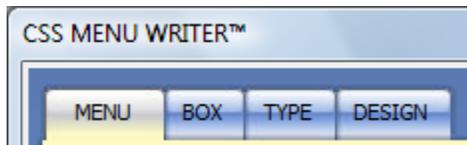- Select the **New CSS Menu Writer Menu** option from the WebAssist category of the Insert bar.

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Creating a Navigation Menu

CSS Menu Writer allows you to easily create CSS-based navigation menus. The Menu Writer wizard provides you with a wide range of options for customizing your navigation items.

The CSS Menu Writer interface is divided into 4 tabs.

- **Menu** – Determines the initial style and design of the navigation menu, specifies menu items and preset settings. When specifying menu items you can choose to Get from file system to automatically import all website files in a directory.

- **Box –** Sets the width and height of any menu component, as well as individual margin or padding values.

- **Type** – Use the Type tab to determine a wide range of properties for the text of each menu item level. This also covers text in the link, visited, hover, focus and active states. Properties available include font-family, font-size, color, decoration, and weight.

- **Design** – The Design tab makes it possible to define the full set of background and border properties for any menu level. This allows you to add a background image, left or right cap images, specify background color and image repeat settings.

In the next section, you'll begin to use CSS Menu Writer to create a navigation menu.
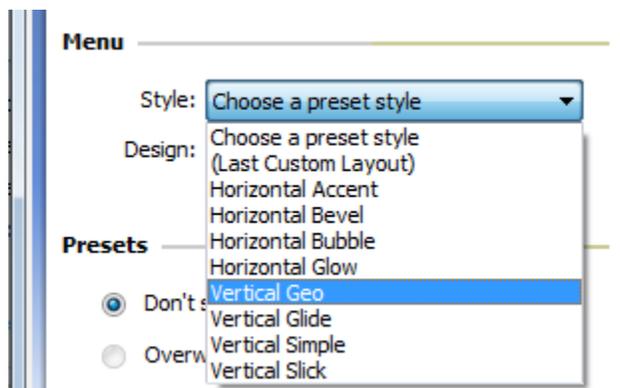
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Choosing and modifying a preset style

The first tab of CSS Menu Writer, Menu, establishes the basic appearance of the menu. CSS Menu Writer includes a collection of 8 different preset styles along with 11 designs, or color schemes to easily select an attractive menu. You can easily modify any of these preset styles to create your own, unique navigation menu.

Note: Throughout this Getting Started Guide, I'll choose a particular option or enter a set value. You're free to experiment on your own and try different options; however, the screen shots in the Guide may not match your choices.

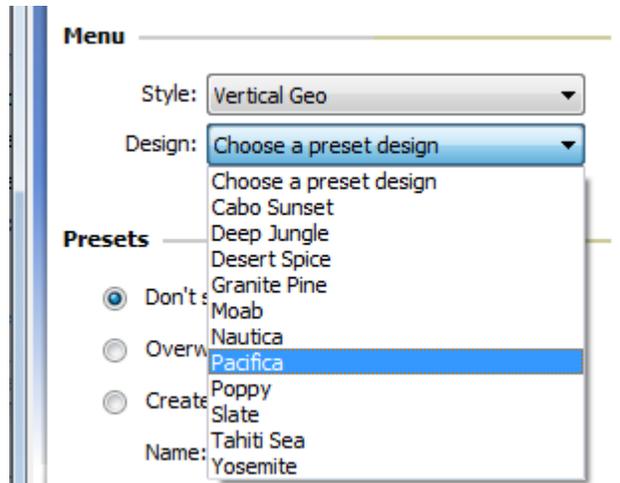### To choose and modify a preset style:

1. Open CSS Menu Writer by one of the following methods:

    *   Choose **Insert** > **WebAssist** > **CSS Menu Writer** > **New Menu**.

    *   Select the **New CSS Menu Writer Menu** option from the WebAssist category of the Insert bar.

2. When CSS Menu Writer opens, choose a preset from the **Style** list. For this demonstration, I'll choose **Vertical Geo** to create a vertical navigation menu.

    Once you choose a preset, the Preview window will update to show you the appearance of this menu, with the base color scheme.

3. If you want to work with an overall color scheme, choose an entry from the Design list. I'll select **Pacifica**.

    The 11 color schemes in CSS Menu Writer are also available in other WebAssist products like Eric Meyer's CSS Sculptor, SiteAssist, DataAssist and SecurityAssist for a consistent look-and-feel.

Next, you will want to add which menu items you want included in your menu.

You can configure your menu items by selecting **Get from file system**, or manually adding the menu items yourself.

4. Select **Item 1**, and in the Name field enter **Products**.

Note: After entering information in each field of the menu component window, hitting the Enter key ensures that each change is confirmed.

5. In the link field, replace the **#** with **products.html**.

In this example, we are going to create a multi-level side navigation that allows site visitors to easily navigation our product catalog.

6. Next, select the **Products** item, and click once on the **Add (+)** button. This will create a sub-menu item beneath products.

7. In the Name field enter **Gear**.
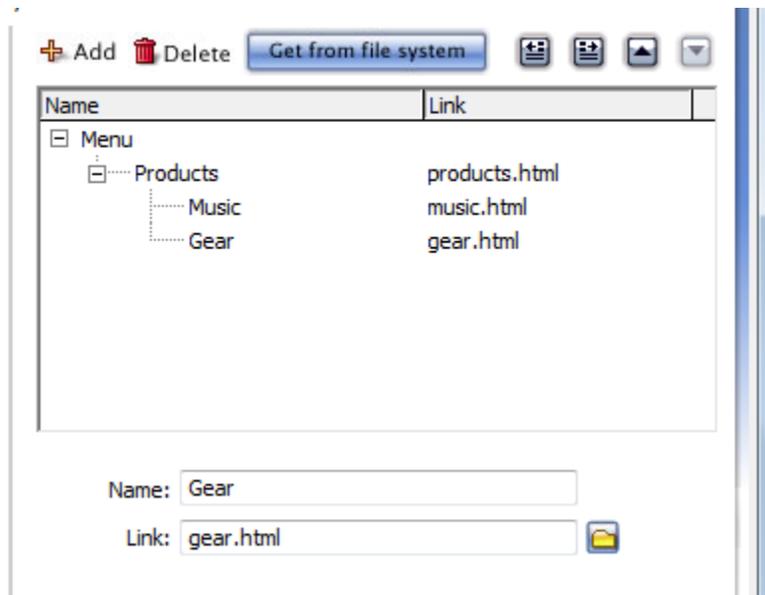
8. Enter **gear.html** in the link field.

9. Select the **Products** item again and click the **Add (+)** button.

10. In the name field for this item, enter **Music**.

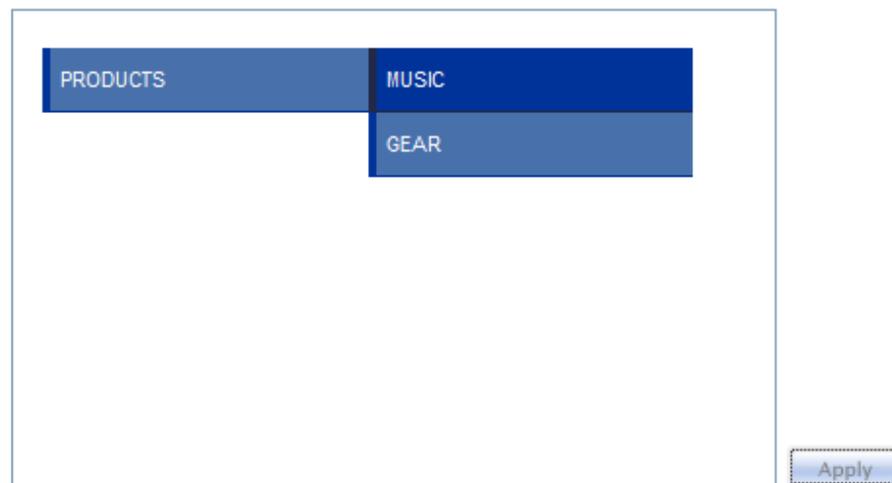11. In the link field enter **music.html**.

12. You can then select **Item 2**, and click the **Delete** button.

13. Again, select **Item 3**, and click the **Delete** button.

14. To view your changes in the Preview window, click **Apply**.

Saving Presets

The Layout tab also provides the option to easily save a new preset that can be revisited at any time.
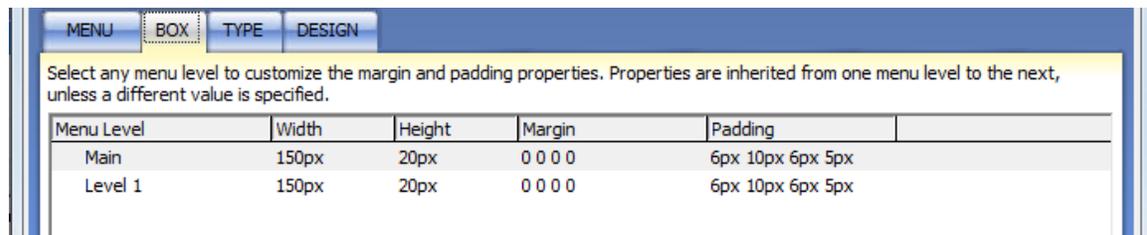
To save a new preset

1. In the Presets section, select the **Create new preset** option.

2. Enter the name of your new preset in the **Name** field.

CSS Menu Writer is designed to be flexible and quick, allowing you to quickly create a functional navigation menu that contains all the features you would need. You could, for example, click Finish here to create the navigation menu and accompanying CSS without making any additional changes. However, there is so much more possible with CSS Menu Writer; in the next section, you'll modify the basic properties for the Box, Type, and Design tabs.

Adjusting the Box properties

The Box tab provides the options for specifying the Dimensions, Margin and Padding for each menu item level.

The Box tab introduces a user interface element common to a number of the other tabs in CSS Menu Writer, the menu level component window. The menu level component window shows each level of menu item, allowing you to select the level to apply changes to.
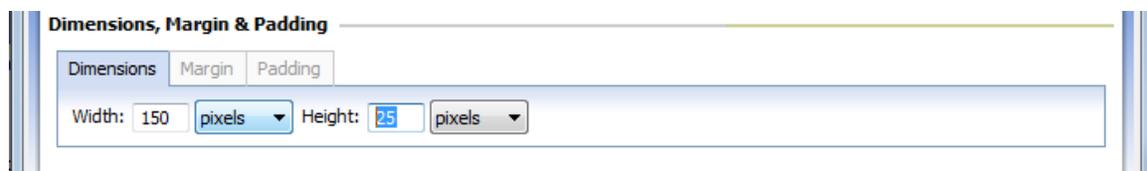

- The menu level component window will display all menu levels. The Main menu level is always the first level menu item, where Level 1 is the first sub-menu level.

To modify the Box properties:

1. From the menu level component window, choose **Main**.

    First, let's add increase the height of the Main level item to be a little larger than its two sub-level items.

2. In the **Dimensions** tab, enter 25 in the Height field, and hit the Enter key.

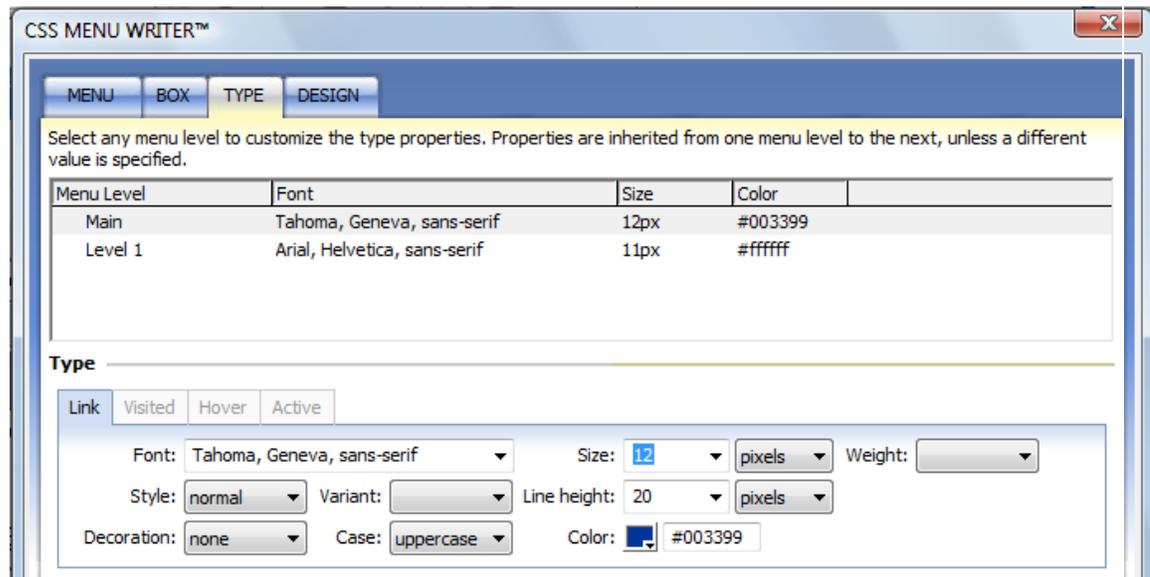3. Then, click **Apply** to see your changes.

    Notice that the Main Height column is updated in the menu level component control to read 25px.

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Setting the Type

CSS Menu Writer makes it easy for you to specify exactly what text you want used in each level of your navigation menu. This sort of flexibility is valuable since it ensures that you can perfectly match the text with what is used throughout your site.

To set the type properties:

1. In the menu level component window, select the **Main** level.

2. From the **Link** tab, choose **Tahoma, Geneva, sans-serif** from the **Font** list.

3. In the **Size** field, enter **12**. Then, press Enter to confirm your choice. Click **Apply** to view your changes in the Preview window.
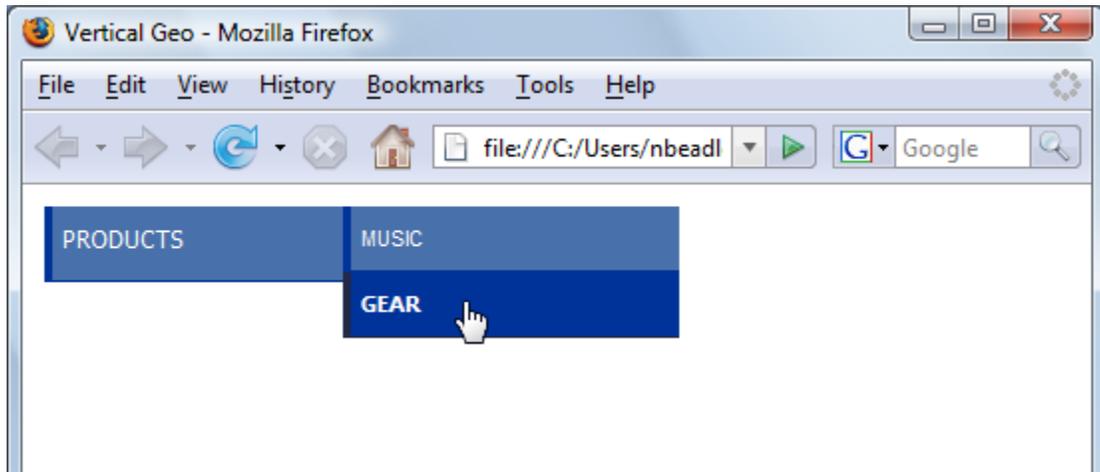

Let's also change the Level 1 menu items when the mouse is hovering over the item.

4. From the menu level component window, select **Level 1**.

5. Click the **Hover** tab and, from the **Font** list, choose **Tahoma, Geneva, sans-serif**.

6. Set the Style to **Bold**.

7. Click Apply to preview your changes in the Preview window.

You also have the ability to preview your menu in a browser.

8.   To see the new hover state in action, click once on your menu in the Preview window and test it out.

This particular design calls for an underline decoration on the hover state (set on the body tag). You could easily change that here if you liked.
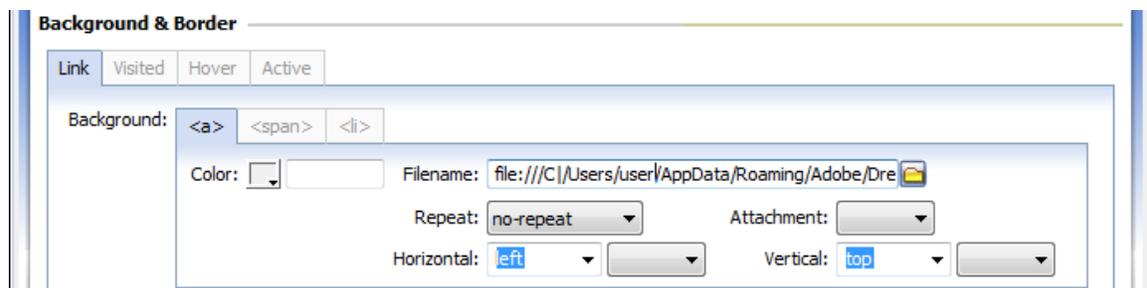
In the next section, you'll learn how to add background images and borders to any layout component.

Inserting Design elements

Background images and borders are integral to modern CSS design. CSS Menu Writer makes it possible to add a background color or image, along with complete background properties to the body tag or any individual layout component. In addition, borders can be applied to surround menu items.

To apply background images:

Menu Writer makes it easy to incorporate any design you would like for your menu items. Two of the preset design that Menu Writer comes packaged with, Horizontal Glow and Horizontal Bubble, use images to create a button effect. You create this same effect using your own custom images.

1. From the menu level component window, choose **Main**.

2. In the Background & Border area, select the **Link** tab.

3. Make sure the **<a>** sub tab is selected.

Note: Menu Writer uses three sub tabs for the different parts of a menu item. The left cap <a>, the right cap <span> and the center <li>.

4. Click the Filename **browse** icon.

5. Select the left image that you wish to use.

6. Select the Repeat value for this image.

Note: Typically, the left and right cap images will not be repeated, and you would select no-repeat.

7. Select the Horizontal and Vertical properties for this image.

8. Repeat this process for the <span> and <li> sub tabs.

Note: For the <li>, or center image, you will most likely want to choose a repeat value in order for the image slice to repeat across the button.

The type of repeat necessary depends on the type of image you want to repeat. Repeat-x will repeat an image horizontally, repeat-y will repeat an image vertically.

9. When you are finished, choose **Apply** to update your preview.

You will want to repeat this process for the other states of the image, Visited, Hover and Active.

To apply a border:

1. From the menu level component window, choose **Main**.

2. In the Border area, make sure that the **All** checkbox is selected.

3. From the **Style** list select **solid** and set the **Width** field to **1 pixel**.

4. From the color swatch field, select a dark gray color.

5. Click the preview image to preview in your browser.

Notice that you cannot see your border applied in the Preview window. This is because the preview window is displaying the Main menu level in its hover state.

Let's add the same border properties to the hover state.

6. Select Hover tab, and in the Border area, make sure that the **All** checkbox is selected.

7. Select **solid** from the **Style** menu, and set the **Width** field to **1 pixel**.

8. From the color swatch field, select the same dark gray color.

9. Click the preview image to preview in your browser.

Now that you have finished designing your menu item navigation, you are ready to have your menu inserted onto your page.

10. Click **Finish** to create your menu.
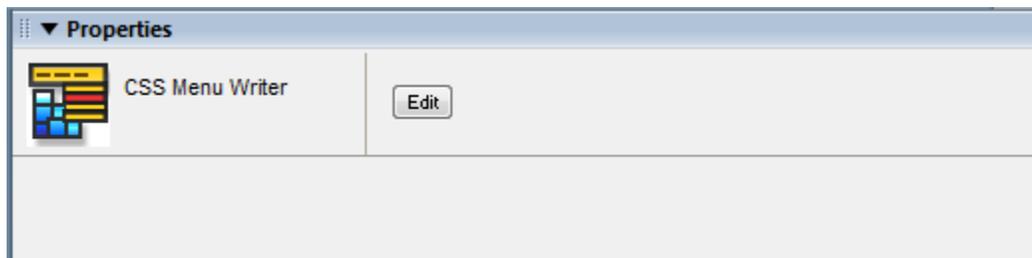
Reentering the Menu Writer Wizard

After using Menu Writer to create your menu, you may want to reenter the wizard to make additional changes.

1. With your menu already inserted to your page, click once to select your menu.

   Note: HTML users will need to select the scripts icon next to the menu.

   When your menu is selected, the Dreamweaver Properties Inspector changes to provide an Edit button.

2. Select **Edit** from the Property Inspector to reenter the Menu Writer wizard and make changes to your menu.

HTML users: If the scripts icon is not displaying next to your menu, you will need to make a simple change to your Dreamweaver preferences.

1. From the **Edit** menu, select **Preferences**.

   *Mac users: Choose **Dreamweaver**, and select **Preferences**.*

2. From the **Category** list choose **Invisible Elements**.

3. Make sure the **Scripts** option is selected.

4. Click **OK**.

Invisible Elements
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Show: ☑ Named anchors
       ☑ Scripts
       ☐ Comments
       ☐ Line breaks