

How to create a dynamic menu using CSS Menu Writer 2.0

CSS Menu Writer allows you to easily build dynamic navigation menus that are based on information in your database. This How To presents the steps for creating a navigation menu that includes two dynamic menu items, a category menu item, then a child item that lists all product in that category.

Example

The CD and Gear options in this menu are dynamic links created from the categories table in the database. The child items from each category are dynamic items from the items table, filtered by the Category ID.

| | | |
|----------|----------|----------------|
| ABOUT US | PRODUCTS | PRODUCT SEARCH |
| | CD | Body Double |
| | Gear | So Last Season |
| | | HotFlash |

What Do You Need to Start?

- Dreamweaver 8, CS3, or CS4
- CSS Menu Writer 2.0
- Supported database with contents to be included in menu

The Database

The database used in this example contains two tables: items, and itemcategory. These two tables are connected via the ItemCatID column, which is the unique key column for the itemcategory table.

Note: To create a dynamic menu in CSS Menu Writer, you only need one database table. These steps are detailed clearly in the *Creating the Item category menu* section below.

Nesting

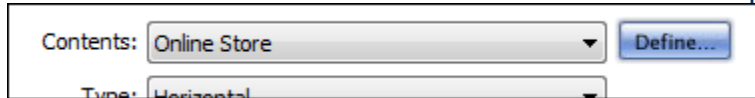
CSS Menu Writer 2.0 allows for more advanced dynamic menus that use the Nested filtering option to filter the child items of a dynamic menu, by the

parent items of a dynamic menu. This requires two database tables, and the final product is displayed in the example above.

Creating the Item category menu

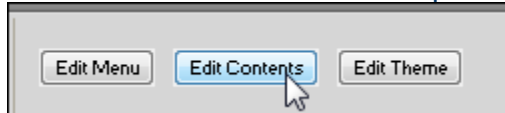
The first step of this How To, is to create a dynamic menu from a table in our database. In this example we use the itemcategory database table, but any database table with *at least* two columns will work.

1. Choose the **Contents Define** button from the Properties Inspector.

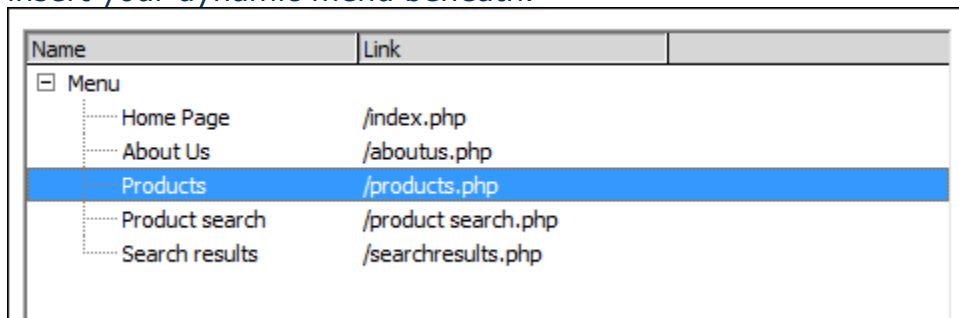


Or, if you have already inserted your menu to your page...

Choose the **Edit Contents** option from the Properties Inspector.

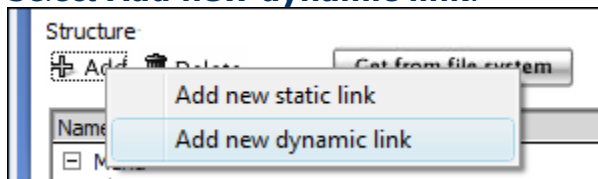


2. Within the menu tree structure, select the menu item you wish to insert your dynamic menu beneath.



| Name | Link |
|----------------|---------------------|
| Menu | |
| Home Page | /index.php |
| About Us | /aboutus.php |
| Products | /products.php |
| Product search | /product search.php |
| Search results | /searchresults.php |

3. Choose the **Add** icon.
4. Select **Add new dynamic link**.



5. In the Dynamic Menu Item interface, choose your database connection, or click **Define** to specify one now.

6. Choose the database table you wish to retrieve your dynamic items for.
In the example displayed above, we select the itemcategory table.
7. From the Label menu, choose the column from the database table that contains the names to be displayed in your menu.
8. From the Key column menu, choose the Key column for this database table.
9. In the Link field, enter the link you wish to use for each menu item.
*If the link is to be dynamic, choose the **Add to link** icon to specify a parameter to be set. Use # if no link is desired.*
If you are linking to a DataAssist detail page see the [Creating a link to a DataAssist detail page](#) section below.
10. If desired, choose filter and sorting options from the optional items below.
11. Click **OK** to have this dynamic menu created.

Note: When you return to the Edit Menu Structure interface, the dynamic option displays as a single item regardless of the database contents. You will also notice that in any preview windows, your dynamic options are not displayed.

Creating the items menu

In this example, we are creating a secondary dynamic menu that is nested below the first dynamic menu item. In this situation, all items are filtered by the category id of their parent item.

Note: This step demonstrates the use of the Nested option when creating a dynamic menu that lies beneath another dynamic menu

1. Select the first dynamic option you have created.
2. Choose the **Add** icon.
3. Select **Add new dynamic link**.
4. Choose your database connection, or click **Define** to specify one now.
Your database connection should be the same as was used for the previous dynamic menu item.

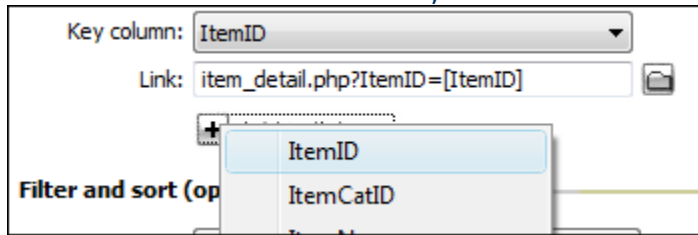
5. Choose the database table for your menu items.
In the example displayed above, we select the items table.
6. From the Label menu, choose the column from the database table that contains the names to be displayed in your menu.
7. From the Key column menu, choose the Key column for this database table.
For the example displayed above, we select the ItemID column.
8. In the Link field, enter the link you wish to use for each menu item.

Creating a link to a DataAssist detail page

If you have used DataAssist to create a product detail pages, you would likely want to link to those pages.

In this situation, follow these steps to link to each item's detail page.

- Select the browse icon and choose your **item_detail.php** page.
This name may vary based on your DataAssist options.
- Append **?ItemID=** where ItemID is the key column you selected above.
- Choose the **Add to link** icon, and choose the **ItemID** option.



Using the Nested Filter option

9. From the Filter and sort options, choose the database table you wish to filter by.
*For the example displayed above, we choose **ItemCatID**. This allows us to choose the Nested option since the parent dynamic menu options uses the ItemCatID as its key column.*
 10. From the second menu list, choose **Nested**.
- Note:** With Nested selected, the child items are filtered based on the ItemCatID of the parent items.
11. If desired, choose a sorting option.

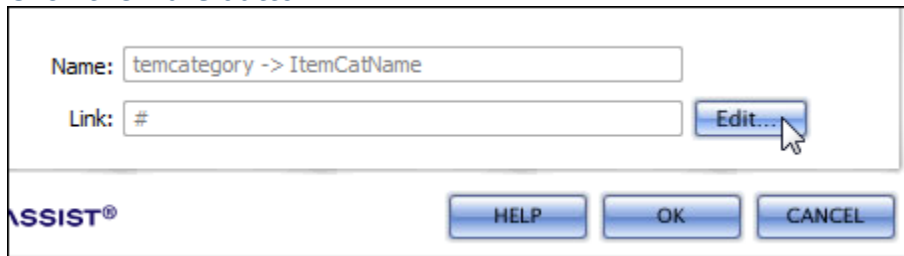
12. Click **OK**.
13. Click **OK** again to have the menu created.
14. Press **F12** to preview you in your browser.

Note: If you are using a remote web server and database for testing, you may need to upload your files to your server before previewing the dynamic links in your browser.

Modifying your dynamic menu items

Once you have created a dynamic menu item, you can easily modify the settings from within the Edit Menu Structure interface.

1. From the menu tree structure, select the dynamic menu option you wish to edit.
2. Click the **Edit** button.



The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "ASSIST®" with the following elements:

- A "Name:" field containing the text "temcategory -> ItemCatName".
- A "Link:" field containing the text "#".
- An "Edit..." button with a mouse cursor pointing to it.
- At the bottom, three buttons: "HELP", "OK", and "CANCEL".

3. Make any necessary changes, and click **OK**.