

Creating a frame

When web developers start creating websites, they need a way to create a simple layout which doesn't create constant maintenance issues and flexible enough to create, delete or modify existing pages. When starting, web developers tend to either use a table or frame for this purpose. Using a table or frame provides a basic layout which is capable of the following:

- Left pane
 - Consistent navigation
- Right pane
 - Content, such as text, tables, lists, links, pictures

Frames can provide these basic layout options with a few caveats:

- If you don't have a solid understanding of HTML, you might find them difficult to grasp at first
- No support for version 4 browsers
- Search engines have difficulty indexing your pages

In this article, we'll create a simple two column frameset. If you would like to follow creating a frameset's step-by-step development or try your hand at creating you will find the project file link helpful.

Finished Page

http://midwestwebdesign.net/tutorials/frames/frame_index.html

Project Zip

<http://midwestwebdesign.net/tutorials/frames/frames.zip>

Working with framesets

It's recommended not to work with the frameset in Dreamweaver. The reason is because when you load a frameset into Dreamweaver it will render the frameset the same way as a browser. This makes editing a frameset in Dreamweaver difficult and confusing. It's recommended to work with a frameset in a text editor such as Notepad or PS Pad.

How framesets work

For this article's purpose, our frameset will need two files. One will be our left panel, which is used for navigation. The other panel, right panel, will be used for content. We will need one additional file which will pull our two panels into a frameset. In the project files download, you will find a file named **frame.html** with the following code:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Frameset//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/frameset.dtd">
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-
1">
</head>
<frameset>

</frameset>

</html>
```

First, our DOCTYPE has changed to accommodate for a frameset. Next, when the browser reads this file, it sees we have a frameset tag. Inside the frameset tag, we place a reference to our files, in our case, left and right panel which will be pulled inside our frameset. Thus, when this file loads, it will render both left and right panel as one frameset, page or layout.

Create left and right panel

In the same directory that you stored **frame.html**, create two new HTML files and name them:

- Left panel
 - left_side.html
- Right panel
 - main_content.html

Nesting frames inside our frameset

Remember, inside our frameset tag, we nest our two panels which will be pulled and rendered as one page. Add the following code to the frameset page (frame.html):

```
<frameset cols="180, *">
<frame src="left_frame.html" name="left">
<frame src="right_frame.html" name="right">
</frameset>
```

Let's examine the code in greater detail:

- First, inside the opening frameset tag, we specify how our panels are rendered, possible values are:
 - Columns
 - Rows
- Next, we specify how many pixels each panel will have in the browser
 - Since our left panel is referenced first, it's assigned 180 pixels

- Since our right panel is referenced second, it's assigned the remaining space in the browser
 - The asterisk (*) is shorthand syntax with frames which allocates the remaining space
- Inside the frameset, we reference the left panel first:
 - Src
 - Informs the browser where our file is located
 - Name
 - Assigns our left panel a name of left, which is used to navigation purposes

We reference our right panel using the same techniques.

Adding content to left & right panel

Open both **left_frame.html** and **right_frame.html** in a text editor.

Inside **left_frame.html** add the following code:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-
1">
</head>

<body>

<h3>Left Side Navigation</h3>

<p><a href="http://www.yahoo.com" target="right">Yahoo!</p>

<p><a href="right_frame.html" target="right">Main Content</p>

</body>

</html>
```

Anchor tags— target attribute

Remember, we gave our right panel a name of right, which is used above. When we load our frameset, click the Yahoo link and Yahoo's home page will load into the right panel. It doesn't matter whether you link to another website or to a web page in your website, you must use a target attribute with the appropriate value.

Next, copy the following into **right_frame.html**:

```
<!DOCTYPE HTML PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD HTML 4.01 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/loose.dtd">
<html>
<head>
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-
1">
</head>

<body>

<h3>Ryan's Page</h3>

<p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Donec
molestie. Sed aliquam sem ut arcu. Phasellus sollicitudin. Vestibulum
condimentum facilisis nulla. In hac habitasse platea dictumst. Nulla
nonummy. Cras quis libero. Cras venenatis. Aliquam posuere lobortis
pede. Nullam fringilla urna id leo. Praesent aliquet pretium erat.
Praesent non odio. Pellentesque a magna a mauris vulputate lacinia.
Aenean viverra. Class aptent taciti sociosqu ad litora torquent per
conubia nostra, per inceptos hymenaeos. Aliquam lacus. Mauris magna
eros, semper a, tempor et, rutrum et, tortor.</p>

<p>IMAGE HERE PROBABLY</p>

</body>

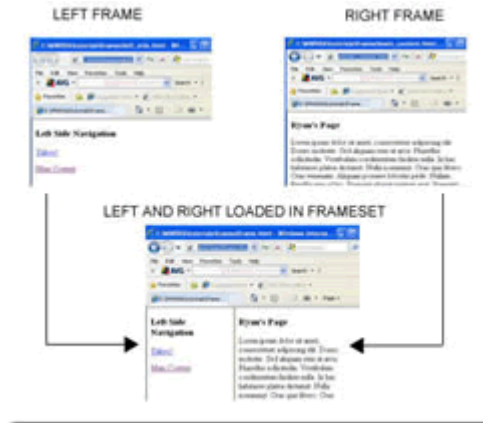
</html>
```

Save your file and preview the results.

<http://midwestwebdesign.net/tutorials/frames/frame.html>

Here's how it works

Let's summarize how this works: when you load **frame.html** in your browser, it reads your frameset tag. The frameset tag determines whether to display the frameset in columns or rows. Then, it looks for the HTML files which make up the frame, in our case, **left_frame.html** and **right_frame.html** and requests these from your server. The frameset then loads these files into one frame. The following illustration depicts this concept:



We can see the final result below:

<http://midwestwebdesign.net/tutorials/frames/frame.html>

Difference between frameset and frames

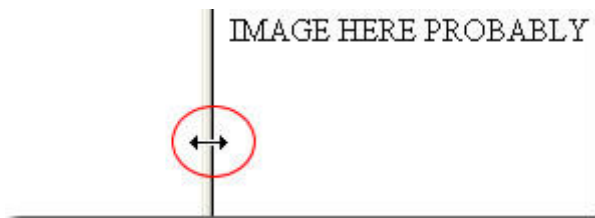
Framesets are considered a container or parent file which contains one or more frames. Frames are the individual HTML files that are loaded into the browser.

Site Maintenance

This can become a very time consuming and tedious process. Each new file you create, you must make sure you link properly in **left_side.html** so that the file loads into **right_content.html**. Also, understand you can add any HTML element you want to left or right frame. The only difference is how you create the frameset page and how we link to the right frame.

Resizing Issue

If we position our mouse in the middle sidebar:



If we drag the sidebar to the left or right it would move. There is a simple fix, modify your frameset tag:

```
<frameset cols="180, *">
    <frame src="left_side.html" name="left" noresize>
    <frame src="main_content.html" name="main">
```

```
</frameset>
```

Save your changes and preview the results.

http://midwestwebdesign.net/tutorials/frames/frame_index.html

Summary

In this article you created a frame layout. You also learned a bit about:

- Using a text editor to create the frameset
- How framesets work
- Targeting links to a specific frame
- A resizing issue regarding frames and a solution

Take the knowledge gained here and create any frame of your imagination!

If you have questions, please follow the link below.

<http://midwestwebdesign.net/tutorials/contact.aspx>