

# What's New in Adobe Fireworks CS4

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UITS - IT Training and Education

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# What's New in Adobe Fireworks CS4

With the Fireworks CS4, Adobe has done two major things:

- Further separated Fireworks from Photoshop by adding and improving features to support rapid prototyping and collaboration for web design elements
- Achieved a streamlined interface similar to other Adobe products like Photoshop and Dreamweaver

## What Is Fireworks, and How Does It Compare to Photoshop?

When Adobe purchased Macromedia, the developer of web-oriented applications like Fireworks, there was much speculation that Adobe would discontinue Fireworks – after all, Adobe already had a very popular professional image editing program in Photoshop. Instead of discontinuing Fireworks, however, Adobe made the wise move to reposition Fireworks not as a direct competitor to Photoshop, but as a sibling application with a different set of core features and capabilities.

For most people, Photoshop's strength is in its toolset and ability to manipulate bitmap-based images, like those from digital cameras, pulled from web pages, or scanned in using desktop scanners; Photoshop is an amazingly powerful program that allows one to correct color problems in images, remove red eye and do other airbrushing improvements to

a photo, and create complicated and rich composite images out of component images, like seamlessly putting Bill Clinton's head on a weightlifter's body.

Fireworks, on the other hand, was built from the ground up as an application to help web designers build web-oriented graphics that are easily editable and small in file size. Its drawing tools are mostly vector-based, which means that the graphic objects created in Fireworks have many attributes that can quickly be changed by the designer, such as color, size, shape, and effects like drop shadows. And, with CS4, Fireworks has added features to help web designers work faster and smarter when building graphical interfaces for web sites and communicating with clients or other stakeholders in the web project.

## How Fireworks CS4 Will Save You Time

Given that Fireworks is a program built for people designing graphics and layouts for the web, let's look at a hypothetical situation to see how Fireworks' features and capabilities could save Pat Web Designer time and energy when creating a new web site design.

## The Background

Let's assume Pat Web Designer is a brand new hire in the Department of Underwater Basket Weaving. The chairperson of the department wants Pat to redesign the department website – the one that's

currently up was built ten years ago and by now is looking really outdated. The department chair and some faculty have formed a Website Redesign Committee and have decided that they want a graphically-sophisticated website with a different color treatment for each of the site sections.

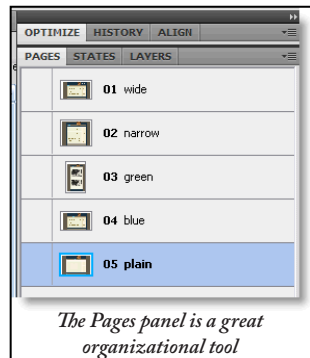
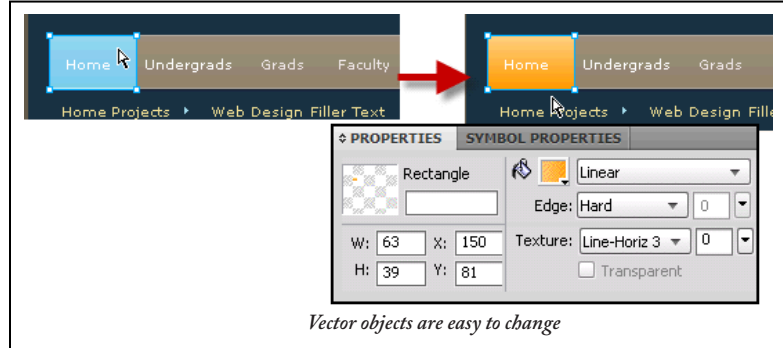
Let's see how Pat can use Fireworks CS4 to design the look and feel of the web site, communicate and collaborate with the Redesign Committee, and finally export the graphics so that building the HTML pages will be easy.

**Step One: Use Fireworks to Compose Several Drafts of Web Page Designs and Keep Them Organized**



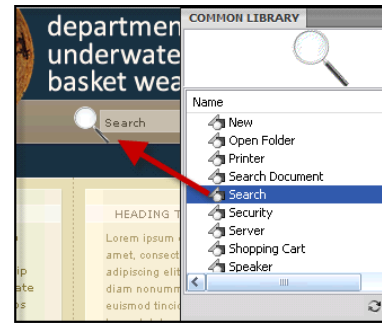
After gathering some initial input from the Redesign Committee, Pat works diligently to create several drafts of possible layouts in Fireworks, using the vector drawing tools.

Each object on the canvas is fully editable through the Property inspector, which makes quick modifications easy as Pat progresses:

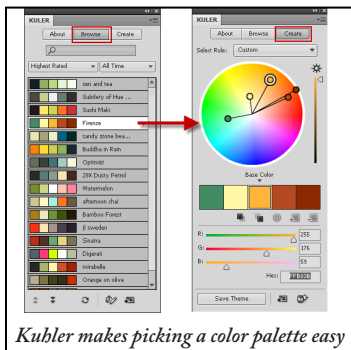


Pat can keep all drafts organized and in a single file via the Pages panel – no more having to keep track of several individual files that contain the different designs. Each Page can have its own canvas size and its own set of graphical objects (and layers). In addition, objects can be reused and shared across multiple Pages; for elements like the navigation bar and header, which will appear on all pages in the site, sharing these items saves time and duplication of effort.

In addition, Fireworks CS4 now comes with an improved Common Library, which provides easy drag-and-drop access to graphics commonly used when designing a web site; the library is extensible, which means you can add your own items to it for rapid re-use. The library also includes web interface items like submit buttons or text fields to make designing a web form easy as well.



*Simply drag and drop items from the Library onto the canvas*



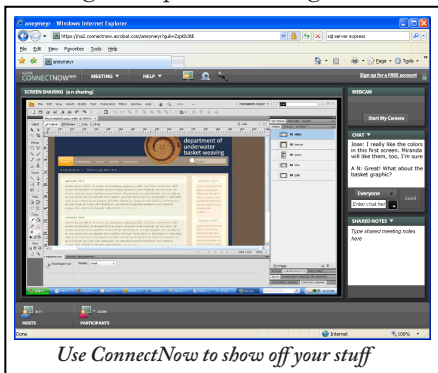
*Kubler makes picking a color palette easy*

Another welcome addition to Fireworks CS4 is the Kuler color palette panel. If you don't have a background in graphic design, art, or color theory, it can be difficult and time-consuming to settle on colors that will work well together on a web page. With CS4, Adobe has integrated its standalone color management tool called Kuler into Fireworks. With Kuler (found under the Window menu and the Extensions submenu), you can view color palettes submitted by people on the web, and then make changes to the component colors. Best of all, using Kuler, its easy to share the color palettes you make with other applications (Photoshop, for example) and with other people.

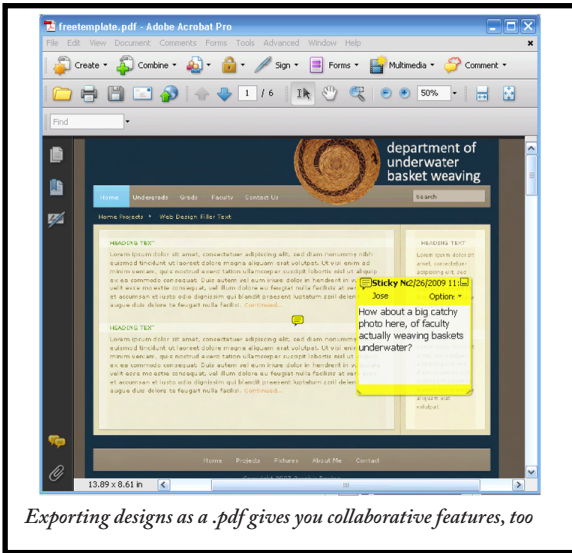
## Step Two: Share Drafts with Others

Once Pat has designed several layouts, its time to show them to the department chair and the rest of the committee for feedback and further direction. Fireworks CS4 makes it quite easy to working collaboratively with people, either during the design process or when discussing finished designs with stakeholders or clients.

If having an in-person meeting is difficult to do, or you're working with people who aren't located in the same place, ConnectNow is your ticket. Using the same technology as Adobe Connect, ConnectNow allows you to create an online meeting space where you can share your screen, exchange notes, and chat with up to three other people, all for free (you do need a free Adobe.com account, though). As is evident from the graphic here, it's possible to use a webcam and microphone as well, so that you can describe what's happening on screen using your voice instead of being limited to the chat window. This is a great way for Pat to talk with the Redesign Committee, make changes on the fly, and then get instant feedback on those changes. That's a much more efficient workflow than using email, where the Redesign Committee requests a change, Pat makes the change and sends back a new version, only to discover that the what the committee thought they would like, they actually don't.



*Use ConnectNow to show off your stuff*

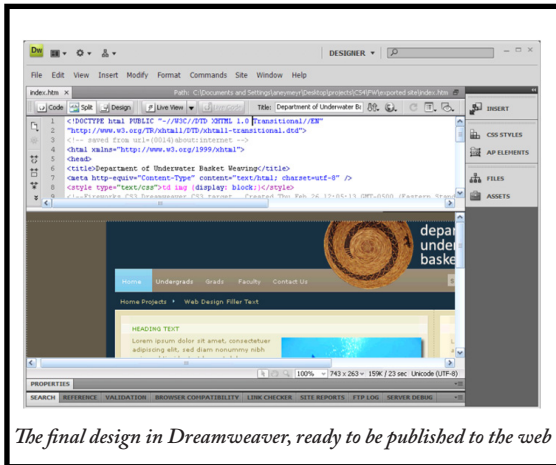


*Exporting designs as a .pdf gives you collaborative features, too*

Another option is to export your designs as a .pdf. Fireworks CS4 can export each page in your Fireworks document as a separate page in a .pdf. If Pat came up with 6 different designs for the new web site, and organized her Fireworks document so that each design belongs to a unique Page in the Pages panel, the .pdf export will contain 6 pages, each displaying one of the designs. The department chair and committee members can then flip through the .pdf and add comments or suggestions on various elements of the design. Pat can also set a password in the .pdf document to limit what people can do with the document – for example, to allow viewing and commenting but not editing or printing. .Pdf is a great format to use for collaboration because its cross-platform (a .pdf will look exactly the same on both Macs and PCs) and has lots of built-in, easy-to-use features for adding comments.

### Step Three: Use Fireworks to Export Web-ready HTML Pages

Let's fast forward. After several rounds of edits and discussion about the site design, Pat and the committee have finalized how they want the site to look.



*The final design in Dreamweaver, ready to be published to the web*

Now Pat needs to get the graphic design out of Fireworks and converted into functional HTML pages. Luckily for Pat, Adobe has built Fireworks to work hand-in-hand with a sibling product, Adobe Dreamweaver, to accomplish this task. Dreamweaver is a program that allows designers to creating and editing HTML web pages graphically, as well as by hand-coding. In Fireworks, Pat will mark up the design so that Fireworks will know how to slice up the each page's layout into smaller components. Fireworks will also create a web page to re-assemble all the smaller graphic elements back into a seamless whole, so that the finished web page is indistinguishable from Pat's graphic designs in Fireworks. Up until CS4, Fireworks was only able to write the HTML pages using

tables, which is an older method of laying out web pages. With CS4, however, Fireworks can now export fully CSS-compliant web pages; CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) is a newer method of controlling how web pages look that offer better flexibility and ease of modification.

The link between Fireworks and Dreamweaver doesn't end there. Let's say Pat finishes up the web site and gets it online. As the department chair is getting ready to sign off on the site, she realizes that nowhere on the banner does it say that the Department of Underwater Basket Weaving is a part of Indiana University. Whoops! With some other workflow, this might be time-consuming to change. With Fireworks and Dreamweaver, however, it's pretty easy: Pat simply goes back to her original Fireworks design, adds the IU logo to the header, and then re-exports. Dreamweaver automatically picks up the change, Pat uploads the new file to the server, and the problem is solved.

## In Summary

Fireworks CS4 coalesces the features and capabilities that a web designer needs in a typical workflow into a single product – from easy graphic creation, modification, and reuse, to providing streamlined ways of collaborating and communicating with others about the design, Fireworks CS4 is a great tool to use when designing entire web sites or standalone web graphics.

To find more training and information about Fireworks, go to: **<http://ittraining.iu.edu/fireworks>**.