Using AP Divs

About AP Divs

Dreamweaver provides a web page layout facility called *AP Divs* (absolute positioned). Absolute positioned divs are not a Dreamweaver invention; they are part of the HTML/CSS standard. Dreamweaver makes it easy to draw and position them.

Div is an HTML tag meaning division *<div>*. It is a box that can be placed on the page on order to contain content e.g. text, images and so-on. A div tag can be targeted with CSS to align or position it on the page, assign width and/or height dimensions, apply colour, borders etc., and alter the appearance of contents.

Common web page layouts do not make great use of *AP divs*. Often, page layout typically uses divs that are not *absolutely* positioned. Absolutely positioned divs are generally used in circumstances where there is a need to display content on the page differently from the order of content in the HTML or to position content in relation to other divs.
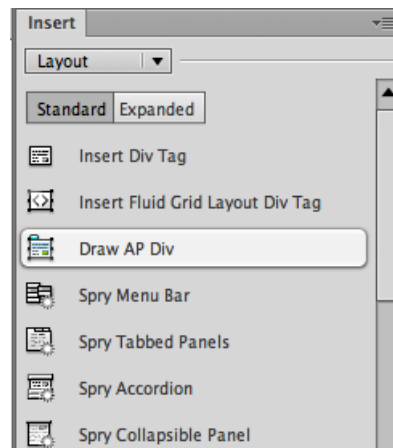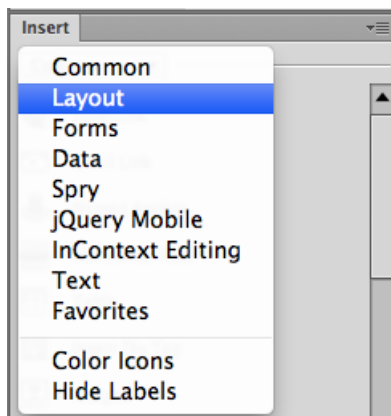
Having said that, the use of AP Divs for layout can be useful as part of the learning process when using Dreamweaver and understanding web design. They enable the student to:
- Literally place an element anywhere on the page simply by dragging it into position
- Be creative with page layout
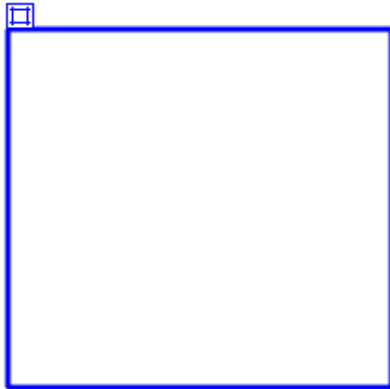- Develop a greater understanding of CSS

So, apart from being able to apply current learning of web design in a more meaningful way, they also help towards the development of a fuller understanding of CSS properties in regard to page layout and presentation.

Inserting an AP Div

In the Insert panel, select the *Layout* section and click on *Draw AP Div*

In Design view, click and drag to draw the AP Div. A box appears like this:

In the code, the entry for the AP Div is written like this:
<div id="apDiv1"></div>.

In the <head> of the document, a style is established using the id name entered for the <div> tag. It is this style that is determining the size and position of the AP Div.

Draw and position as many AP divs on the page as required by your content.
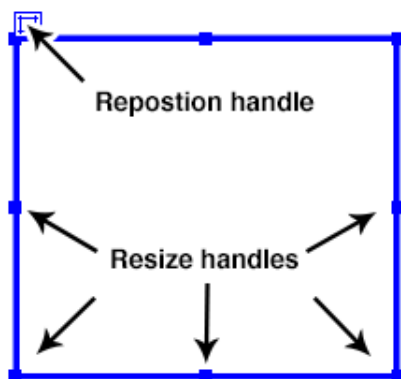
Reposition and resize
To reposition:
- Drag the resize handle
- Drag from the edge of the box (not the resize handles)

To reize:
- Drag the resize handles

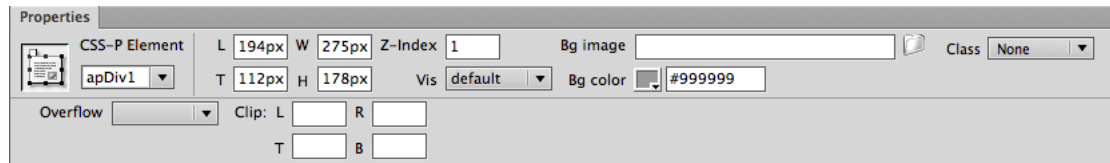Doing any of the above will update the CSS properties for the box.

What is *absolute* positioning?
Absolute positioning is determined by X and Y co-ordinates in relation to a *parent* element or container. In this case the parent container is the HTML document. The X and Y co-ordinates are expressed in the CSS as *left* and *top*. An absolute positioned element will scroll with the page.

Adding content and changing appearance with CSS
Click inside the AP Div to type, paste text, insert images or any other form of content.

To add background colour or background image, add a border and change the appearance of content you will need to edit the CSS for the div. Some editing options are provided in the Properties panel.

From the Properties it is possible to specify the positioning, size, background image and background colour. Making changes from the Properties updates the CSS.

Other Items in the Properties:
- Vis – Visibility of the element on the page.
- Overflow – This will determine how the content is displayed if the content is greater than the size of the box. *Scroll* and *auto* adds scrollbars to the box
- Clip – acts like a mask hiding content.

To adjust the height of the box to expand or contract depending the amount of content, specify *auto* for the height

For other CSS attributes, edit the style for the div from the CSS Styles panel.