

# DREAMWEAVER: CONVERTING FROM HTML TO XHTML

## Background

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Transitioning from HTML to XHTML (eXtensible HyperText Markup Language) allows Web editors to design Web pages using standards that work across multiple browsers, platforms and Internet devices. Current browsers have been supporting XHTML for several years, while the latest standard, XML, is not yet fully supported. Future versions of browsers may enforce the XHTML standards. Using XHTML can reduce download times for your Web pages and aid in complying with accessibility laws.

## Convert Your HTML Files

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### Open File and Convert

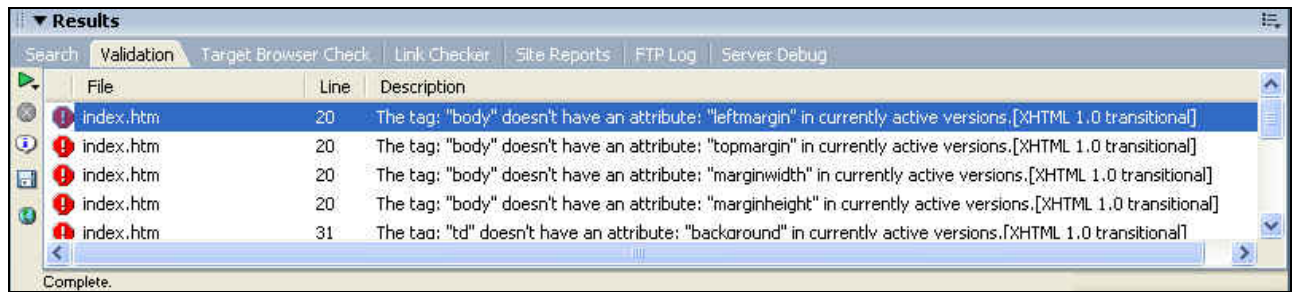
This option will convert the opened file to XHTML, but does not remove any deprecated tags like FONT.

- Step 1:** Open the HTML file in Dreamweaver by selecting **File > Open**, or selecting it from the **Site** panel.
- Step 2:** Select **File > Convert > XHTML 1.0 Transitional**.
- Step 3:** Choose **Commands > Clean up XHTML**. This option helps to remove redundant tags.
- Step 4:** Click **OK**.
- Step 5:** Check the resulting XHTML file and save your modified file.

### Validate Your Converted File

- Step 1:** Open the converted XHTML file in Dreamweaver.
- Step 2:** Select **Window > Results** to display the Results panel.
- Step 3:** From the **Results** panel click the **Validation** tab.
- Step 4:** Click the **green arrow icon** (Validate button) on the left navigation bar of the **Results** panel.
- Step 5:** Select **Validate Current Document** from the menu.

**Step 6:** The results of the validation are displayed in the **Results** panel, as shown below.



**Step 7:** Examine any errors in your document that may appear in the Results panel and correct as necessary.

Note: The errors in the above sample indicate that the XHTML file contains attributes from the `<body>` and `<td>` tags that only work with Internet Explorer and are not part of the standard XHTML. Although they currently work in Internet Explorer, future versions may not work properly. It is best to remove these attributes, or better yet, incorporate them in a separate Cascading Style Sheet (CSS) that is linked to the XHTML file.

## XHTML Rules

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### Document Type

The first line in your XHTML document must declare the document type. The following tag is added automatically when you use the **File > Convert > XHTML 1.0 Transitional** utility in Dreamweaver.

```
<!DOCTYPE html PUBLIC "-//W3C//DTD XHTML 1.0 Transitional//EN"
"http://www.w3.org/TR/xhtml1/DTD/xhtml1-transitional.dtd">
```

### Namespace and Language

The second line in your XHTML document must declare the namespace. The primary language is necessary for accessibility. The following `xmlns` attribute is added automatically when you use the **File > Convert > XHTML 1.0 Transitional** utility in Dreamweaver. However, you need to manually add the language attributes after the `xmlns` attribute.

```
<html xmlns="http://www.w3.org/1999/xhtml" xml:lang="en" lang="en">
```

Language codes can be found at the following Web address. Be sure to use the two-letter abbreviations from the second column only. <http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/IG/ert/iso639.htm>

### Character Set

You need to declare your file's character set using the `<meta>` tag so the characters display properly in the browser. The most common character set is shown below, which represents the set used in the U.S. and Western Europe. You can add this tag after the `<title>` tag in your document. The following tag is not added automatically during file conversion. However, it is added when you create a new XHTML document.

```
<meta http-equiv="Content-Type" content="text/html; charset=iso-8859-1">
```

### Rules for Manually Converting Your HTML Files

If you manually convert your HTML documents to XHTML in a text editor or the Code View within Dreamweaver, follow the rules above and these additional rules:

- Write all tag and attribute names in lower case.
- All tag attribute values must be contained within quotes.
- Close all tags. For example, `<p> </p>`
- Close empty tags – those with no required closing tag – with a space and a slash. For example, `<br />`
- Do not put more than two dashes inside a comment – this is only used for the beginning and closing tags. For example, `<!-- comment text -->` is good, while `<!------->` is bad.
- Encode all special characters in your Web page's content area with the `&` representation in the HTML code. Here are the four main special characters and their corresponding representation.

Special Character	Representation
<	<code>&amp;lt;</code>
>	<code>&amp;gt;</code>
"	<code>&amp;quot;</code>
&	<code>&amp;amp;</code>