Chapter 2: Getting Your Tools Together

Getting Your Tools Together

In this chapter, we'll review some key techniques and terminology from *Creating Web Pages*, and I'll help you get geared up for creating some Web pages. Much of this lesson will be review for those of you who have successfully completed the *Creating Web Pages* course. But not everyone will remember everything from that course. So let's take the time to do it right and make sure everyone is starting off on the right foot. And the information we'll discuss in this lesson is fundamental and critical to succeeding in this learning venture.

Whether you create using paints, cameras, textures, or modern languages like HTML5 and CSS, you need tools. In the digital world, that typically involves using an editor for creating your files, and a folder to store them in.

Creating a Folder for Your Site

Every website you create should have its own folder where you'll store all of the files that make up the site. This folder is often referred to as the site's *root folder*, or the *site folder*. In this course, I'd like you to start with a new folder. I realize some of you may already have sites you want to work on, and that's fine. But I think you'd be better off keeping this new material separate while learning these new skills, if for no other reason than to have a place to try out new things.

So let's get right into it by creating a new folder named *Intro HTML5* for this course. Feel free to put this folder on your desktop, in your Documents folders, or wherever is most convenient for you to get to when you need it. Just in case you've forgotten how to create a folder, I'll go through the steps below, one set of steps for Mac users, another for Windows users.
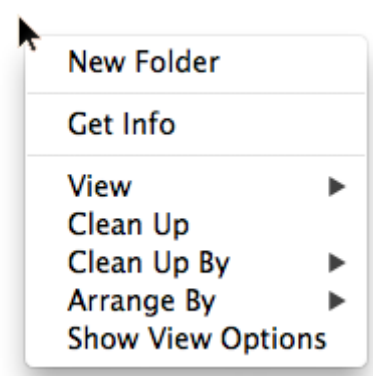
> **Note**
>
> The term *directory* is synonymous with the term *folder*. There's no difference between a folder and a directory.

If You're Using a Mac

If you're using a Mac and want to put the new folder on your desktop, then get the mouse pointer to a neutral place on the desktop. If you want to put the new folder in your Documents folder, use **Finder** to open your Documents folder. Then get the mouse pointer to a neutral spot inside that folder. Press CTRL + Click to reveal a context menu (also called a shortcut menu) like the one below, and choose **New Folder**.
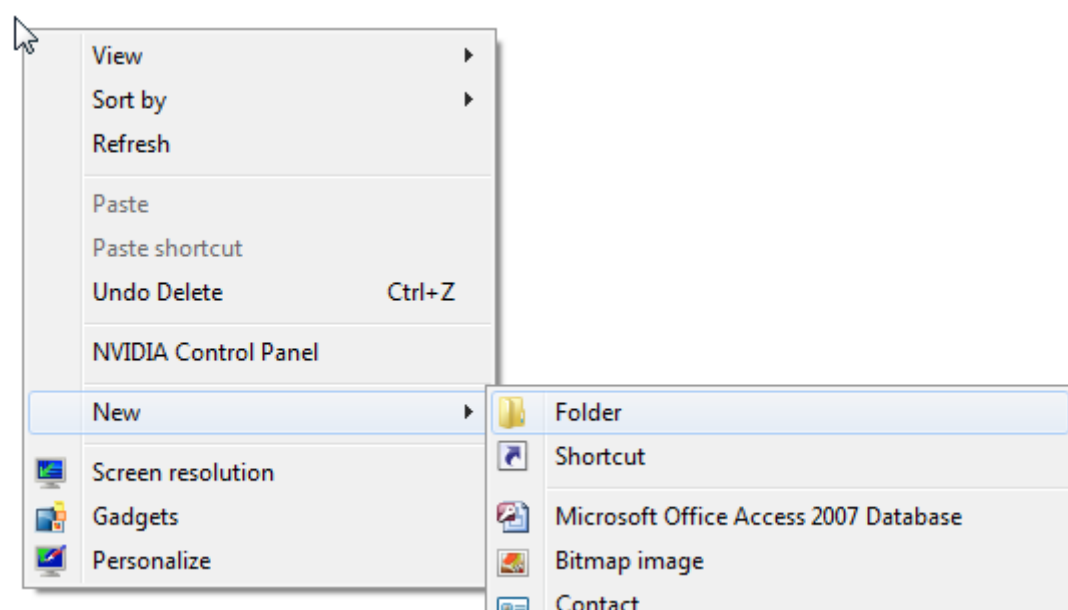
Mac OS context menu

Type the new folder name *Intro HTML5*, and press ENTER. You'll see a folder icon representing the folder. The exact appearance may vary depending on the version of Mac OS you're using and how you're viewing icons at the moment.
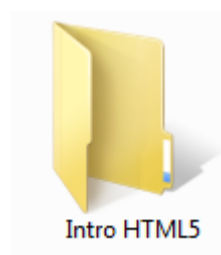

New Mac OS folder for course content

If You're Using Windows

If you're using Windows and want to put the folder on the desktop, move your mouse pointer to an empty spot on the desktop. If you want to put the folder in your Documents or My Documents folder, open that folder and move your mouse pointer to a neutral area inside the folder. Right-click to reveal a shortcut menu, and choose **New Folder**.

Windows context menu

Type *Intro HTML5*, and press ENTER. You'll see a new folder icon named Intro HTML5. Its exact appearance depends on the version of Windows you're using and how you're viewing icons at the moment. But here's an example.
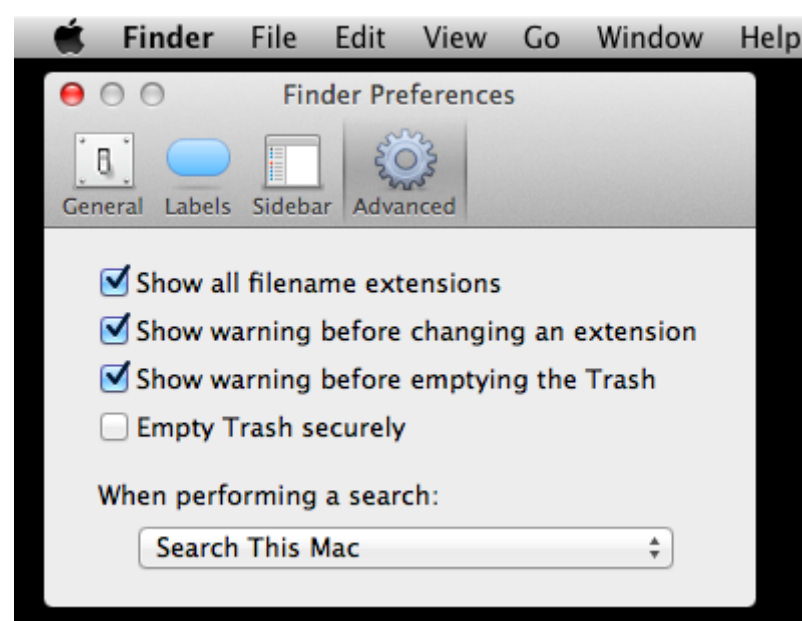
New Windows folder for course content

Make Sure Filename Extensions Are Visible

Casual computer users can generally get by without knowing anything about filenames and filename extensions. But for any kind of website or software development, it's important that you can see the filename extensions. As you (hopefully) know, a filename extension is a set of letters at the end of a filename (preceded by a dot) that tells the operating system the file type. For example, in the filename *index.htm*, the *htm* is the filename extension that identifies the file as a Web page.

Many operating systems hide filename extensions by default because they have little or no meaning to beginning and casual computer users. But you'll need them to be visible for this course and any other development work you do. So let's take a moment now to make sure filename extensions are visible on your system:
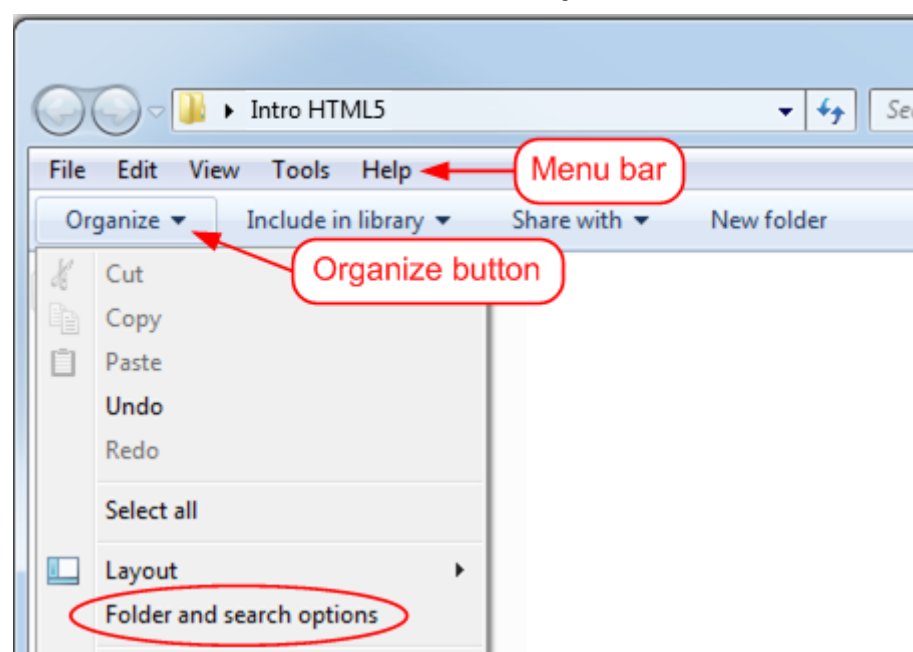
If You're Using a Mac

If you're using a Mac, click the Finder icon in the dock, and choose **Finder** > **Preferences** from the menu. In the Finder Preferences dialog box, click **Advanced**. Then make sure you have **Show all filename extensions** selected (checked).
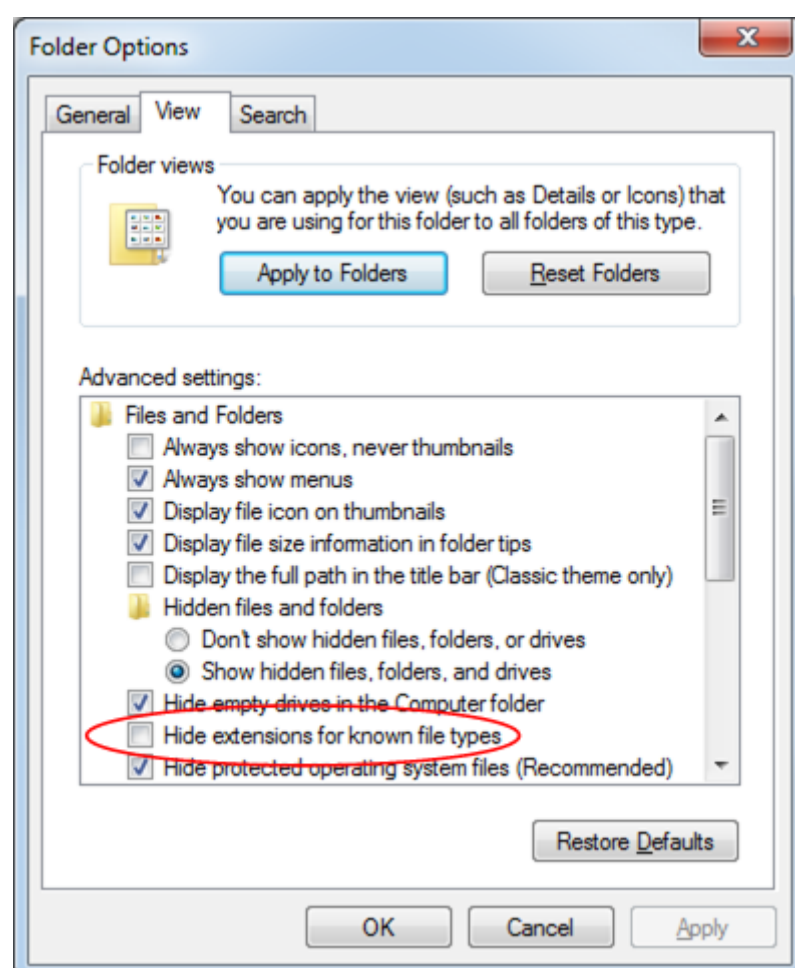

Show all filename extensions in Mac OS

If You're Using Windows

If you're using Windows, open any folder on your system. If you're using Windows 7, click **Organize** and choose **Folder and search options**. In XP, choose **Tools** > **Folder Options** from the menu bar near the top of the folder window. (If the menu bar is hidden, tap the ALT key on your keyboard.)
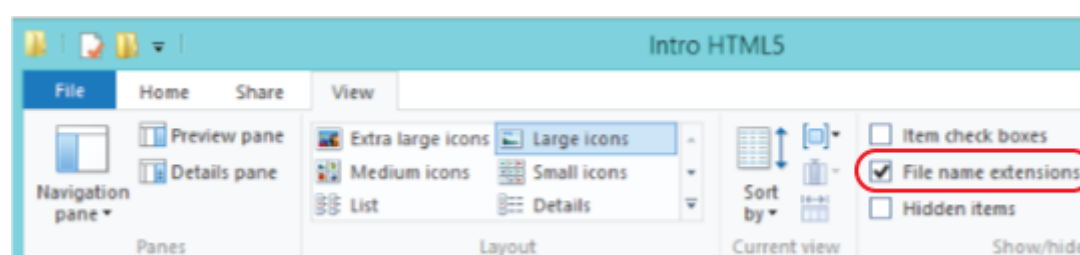
Windows folder window components

In the Folder Options dialog box, click the **View** tab and make sure that *Hide extensions for known file types* isn't checked (because you don't want to hide filename extensions).

Prevent hiding of filename extensions

Click **OK** to save the current setting and close the dialog box.

If you're using Windows 8, open your Intro HTML5 folder and click the **View** tab. Then just select (check) the **File name extensions** option in the Show/hide section of the Ribbon.

Showing file name extensions in Windows 8

Choose Your Editor

In this course, I won't require that you use a specific program or editor to create your pages. You can use whatever you've used in the past, assuming you know what you're doing in that program. For example, if you have and use Dreamweaver, Expression Web, or some other fancy editor, and you're used to writing HTML in its Code View or Source View, then you're welcome to continue doing so. Just be aware that this course won't teach you how to use those programs.

If you want to use a simple text editor like Notepad in Windows or TextEdit in Mac OS, that's fine too. Notepad comes free with every version of Windows, and it doesn't require any special configuration. But if you plan to use TextEdit on a Mac, you need to make sure your settings are configured to text files and HTML. To do that, open TextEdit and choose **TextEdit** > **Preferences** from the menu.

Under New Document, make sure you choose **Plain Text** under Format. Under Open and Save choose either **Display HTML files as HTML code instead of formatted text** or **Ignore rich text commands in HTML files**, whichever option is available in your TextEdit version. You might also want to set other preferences as shown in the example below.

Text equivalent start.

New Document Preferences dialog box

- Set Format to Plain text

- Set Window Size Width to 90 characters and Height to 30 lines.

- Set Plain text font to Menlo Regular 11and Rich text font to Helvetica 12.

- Check the following options boxes: Check spelling as you type, Correct spelling automatically, Show ruler, and Text replacement.

Open and Save Preferences dialog box

- Under When Opening a File, check the box next to Display HTML file as HTML code instead of formatted text

- Under Plain Text File Encoding, set the options for Opening Files and for Saving files to Automatic

- Under HTML Saving Options, set Document type to HTML 4.01 Strict. Set Styling to Embedded CSS, and set Encoding to Unicode (UTF-8)

- Check the Preserve white space box

Text equivalent stop.

That's all you need to do to get your system ready to start creating HTML documents. You'll get to do some more hands-on activities later in the assignment for this lesson. For now, let's head over to Chapter 3 and make sure we're all speaking the same language in terms of understanding what HTML is all about.