CSS Tutorial

All you need to know about CSS for DeviantART Journals

*** PART ONE ***

The Basics

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*** PART ONE ***

The Basics

Long have you waited for it and finally here it is: the tutorial. In the following I will try to show you all you need to know to be able to create your very own Journal CSS and even more. So let us start from scratch now!

1. THE GRAPHIC DESIGN

Before you can start to code anything you must create your graphical layout. You can use any prevalent graphic software for it like the popular PHOTOSHOP or PAINT SHOP PRO or THE GIMP. Any kind will do.

I. Preset the Size of your Document

For optimal web display you should select a minimum width of 1000 pixels. It depends on the size of your browser window and your screen how much of the layout will be visible. The predominant element in your design will be your header unless you decide to keep this area very small and without graphics. I tend to give the header quite a bit room to make the whole design eye-catching.

II. Create new Layers for any new Element

Create a new layer every time you want to add a new element. My tip: combine all elements belonging in the same layout section to groups to keep your document clearly arranged. I mostly have groups for:

» header
» footer
» comment box
» text box
» menu

First of all you need an idea for the style. There are many different ways to shape a layout - you can use any kind of art work, photos, brushes and graphic designs and

whatever elements. I prefer fractals, stock pictures, paintings, textures, patterns, 3D designs and logos.

I demonstrate by means of my **Blue Fantasy CSS Template** how I create my graphical layouts in Adobe Photoshop:

THE HEADER AND OTHER DETAILS

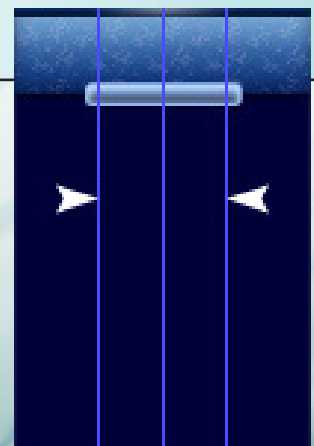◄ This is what I got when I was finished.

The most extensive section in my designs is always the header and this is also the area I pay attention to first. So let's do that now!

1. After you created a new document in appropriate size and a background color of your choice make a new group "header" and add a new layer to it.

2. Select an area of 200 -300 pixels height and full width and fill it with color. This will be the background for your header and will be useful for layer styles. I applied drop shadow, inner shadow, gradient and pattern overlay. For the pattern I used a stock pic from *bihen* and made a pattern under Edit → Define Pattern.

3. New layer: Add a small bar at the top for the date. Apply an inner shadow and a gradient overlay to it.

4. New layer: Use the rounded rectangle tool and make a bar for the journal title. But if you want the title bar always fully visible make it not wider than 450 pixels. Apply some layer styles like shadow, glow, gradient and stroke to it.

> **!TIP:** Add a new guide to the center and make sure to have "Snap to Guides" under menu "View" checked to have all middle elements always perfectly centered. Add two more guides left and right from it with a space of **450 pixels** between them. The graphics <u>within</u> these guides marks the visible parts on a DA front page on a 17' screen.

You should now have something like this: ►

Well, it already looks like a journal layout. Now add the dragons or any other objects you like, some stars and sparkle brushes and your header should be finished. I normally also add the text for the date and the journal title to get a better impression how it will look in the end.
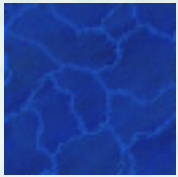
Now create your footer. I don't do much work on this to keep the design clean and moderate. For the Blue Fantasy CSS I only added a fractal, added a pattern over it and a gradient to the bottom. I didn't create a comment box for the comment links here but if you like create a box for it, too.
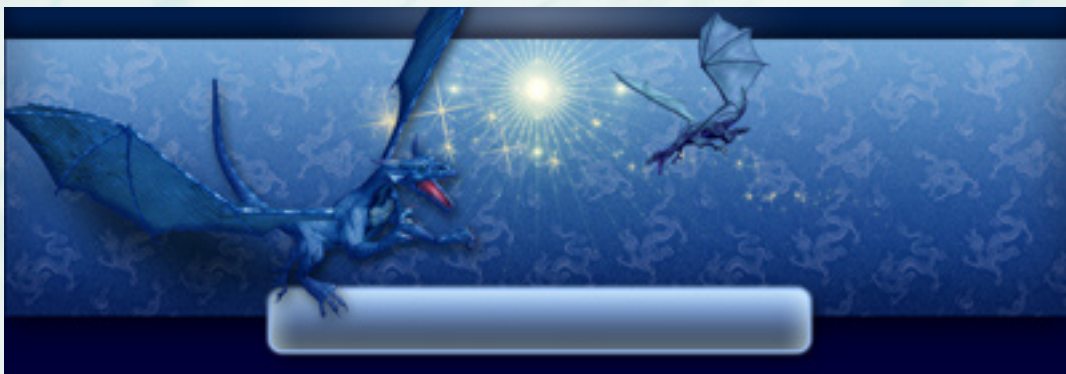
For the moods can be created a background, too. Depending on were you will set the mood box - top or bottom - and how much design is already in the footer and the main background it can be useful or not. For my Fantasy design I didn't make one.

Now you only need to make a nice text box for your journal content. The one I made for the Fantasy CSS is very easy. And I mean that also referring to the CSS code for it. (The tricky text boxes and their coding will be included in the second part of the tutorial.) Actually you don't even need to prepare any graphics for this text box. You can make everything with CSS code, you only have to save a pattern tile for the text box background. The blue tile on the left here is the one I used as my background picture. If you want to use it look at the attachments of this tutorial, I compiled a collection with some useful materials. Now we have all things together for a basic CSS design and can start to save all single graphic parts.

IMAGE HOSTING

For your basic layout you save graphics only for the header, the footer and the text box background. To do that merge all necessary layers down to one and cut out the parts from your layout. The header includes all these elements:

Original size of this header is 1000 x 344 pixels. Applied in journals the graphic will partly be invisible on the left and right side. Same cut out procedure for the footer. To use your graphics as web content they must be hosted anywhere. Whether you have your own web space or you become a member of one of those image hosting web sites like http://photobucket.com/, http://imageshack.us/ or http://www.imagehosting.com/. If you have uploaded all pictures keep in mind the URLs, you will need them for the CSS code. So now finally the coding itself!!!

2. THE CSS CODE

What is CSS? Cascading Style Sheets are a stylesheet language to describe the display of a HTML document. All aspects of a web layout like colors, background images, fonts, borders and object positioning can be defined with it.

CSS uses a simple syntax. A CSS rule consists a selector [1] and a declaration block marked with curly braces [2]. Each declaration consists of a property [3] , a colon (:), a value [4] and a semi-colon (;)

```
.journalbox [1] {
        color [3]: #000038 [4];
        font-size: 12px;
}[2].
```

2.1 The Standards given by DeviantART

There are some parts in the CSS code that will be applied automatically by DeviantART but you can alter them. I will describe them first.

.journalbox - The rule that affects the complete journal

The predefinitions by DA control journal border, background color and font styles. You have to preset your own definitions here to get rid of the normal DA journal style. It is also the place where the graphic for the footer belongs to or a background image for the complete journal background.

Common declarations for .journalbox:

♦ text color (set in hex code, specified in the code only as "color")
♦ text alignment (left, center, right or justified)
♦ font family (select carefully because the more uncommon the font is the lesser the chance that people have it installed on their computer.)
♦ font size (most useful to set it in pixels [px])
♦ font weight (normal, bolder, bold)
♦ border styles (width, color, type)
♦ background styles (colors, images, image repeat, position)
♦ general margins and paddings (affects spaces outside and inside of a text box)

Not too many values should be set here because for some layout parts you maybe need different styles. That could lead to rule conflicts.

Characteristics:

As mentioned your image for the footer will be added to .journalbox. No sizes have to be specified for it but values for background repeat and position. It's set at the bottom in any case - left, center or right - and preferably with no-repeat. (other values are repeat-x, repeat-y and repeat.)
But it's possible that you get a problem if you have extra to the footer an image for the background. Then it is necessary that you add the background image to .journalbox instead of the footer image. For the footer you must create a new rule but this will be a subject in the second part of the tutorial: Advanced CSS.

The .journalbox rule for the Fantasy CSS looks like this:

```
.journalbox {
        color:#C8C8C8;
        text-decoration:none;
        background-color:#000038;
        background-image:url(http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v494/lilyas/CSS/
Fantasy/footer_db.jpg);
        background-repeat:no-repeat;
        background-position:center bottom;
        text-align:left;
        border-width:0px;
        border-color:#C8C8C8;
}
```

.journaltop - The rule that affects the journal header, the journal title and subtitle

The predefinitions by DA are very basic. You set your header graphic as background here and make definitions for the fonts and their positions. The sub-categories for this rule are:

♦ .journaltop img (controls the icon before the journal title, omit it or use another one)
♦ .journaltop h2 (controls the font styles in the journal title and its position)
♦ .journaltop itself controls the subtitle (the date) and the header background

Besides defining the font styles you can position your titles with padding and alignment. Your header graphic will be added to .journaltop together with some background definitions - very important is its positioning, it matters if you place the header top left, top center or top right - and a value for height. The value for the header width must be set to auto or can be omitted.

Characteristics:

It's generally not possible to bring the subtitle ABOVE the main title and positioning of the main title in h2 will always affect the position of the subtitle, too. So if you want to

control both parts seperately you have to use an extra rule: **.journaltop span**

You can make the normal subtitle disappear (at least in Firefox browser) by setting the font size to 0 pixels in .journaltop and defining all font styles again in .journaltop span. Additionally you have to position the alternative date absolute which allows you to set it everywhere in the header area and beneath it and independend from the journal title. This is a little extra in the basic tutorial. Absolute positioning of objects and text will be dealt with in the third tutorial part for smart tricks.

The .journaltop rules for the Fantasy CSS looks like this:

```
.journaltop {
        font-size:0px;
        background-color:transparent;
        background-image:url(http://img.photobucket.com/albums/v494/lilyas/CSS/
Fantasy/header_db.jpg);
        background-repeat:no-repeat;
        background-position:top center;
        width:auto;
        height:344px;
}
.journaltop img {
        display:none;
}
.journaltop h2 {
        color:#000038;
        font-size:18px;
        font-family:Tahoma, Helvetica, Geneva, Arial, SunSans-Regular, sans-serif;
        line-height:1em;
        letter-spacing:0.01em!important;
        background-color:transparent;
        text-align:center;
        padding-top:275px;
}
.journaltop span {
        background-color:transparent;
        text-align:center;
        color:#6CB6FE;
        font-size:10px;
        position:absolute;
        top:10px;
        left:20px;
        letter-spacing:0.0em !important;

}
```

Some words to minor properties

The property "padding". There are 4 kinds of padding: padding-top, padding-right, padding-bottom and padding-left. The values can be set individual or in one property. Then it's only called "padding" and you set 4 values for it. Like this for example: padding:10px 0 20px 15px;

From the first to the last the four values stand for padding top, right, bottom and left. The same principles apply for the property "margin".

The property "line-height". Setting this to 1.0em means if the browser must do a line break because the title is too long the text in the second line will have a space of "one line" to the first line. If it is set to 0.0em the two lines will overlay one another.

The property "letter-spacing". Setting a value higher than 0 will disperse the letters of the affected words.

.journaltext - The rule that affects the journal content

Many text parameters may be already set in .journalbox - the main rule. But now you can add some more details and the color definitions for the links in your text. The journal text is placed in an invisible text box already but with some more parameters you can make them visible.

These are possible declarations:

♦ font styles (if you don't already defined them)
♦ text box backgrounds (colors, images, image repeat, position)
♦ text box borders (width, color, type)
♦ padding and margin (spaces inside and outside of the box)
♦ link colors for normal, active, visited and hover

For the Fantasy CSS I didn't use the normal .journaltext rule because I created nested text boxes which requires an individual group of rules (I will talk about that later in this basic tutorial) but the definitions for the links are these:

```
.journaltext a:link {                    .journaltext a:visited {
    color:#3A81FE!important;                 color:#3A81FE!important;
    font-weight:bold!important;              font-weight:bold!important;
    text-decoration:none!important;          text-decoration:none!important;
}                                        }


.journaltext a:active {                  .journaltext a:hover {
    color:#C8C8C8!important;                  color:#90C7FE!important;
    font-weight:bold!important;              font-weight:bold!important;
    text-decoration:none!important;          text-decoration:none!important;
}                                        }
```

.list - The rule that affects the mood box

The predefined DA standard are two in their color alternating lines in the mood list. In **".list"** is defined the background color for the complete list and in **".list .a"** there is the definition for every second line overlaying the color from the ".list" values. Try to avoid setting declarations in ".list a" because this will always only affect every second line!

You can change or remove the colors, add a background image, adjust the width (you can set a fixed size or a size in % which keeps the box flexible, standard is spanning the whole journal width), add a border and padding around the moods and around the single lines. If you want to add one background or one color to the mood box you have to add the color or the image to the ".list" code and set the background in ".list .a" to transparent. It can be useful to add "!important" to your declarations if it doesn't work fine. For the Fantasy CSS I didn't use any backgrounds at all to have the footer image completely shining through. Moods can be set at the top or at the bottom of the journal.

This is the code for the mood box similar like in the Fantasy CSS:

```
.list {
        background-color:transparent;
        color:#C5E7FC!important;
        font:9px Tahoma!important;
        text-align:left!important;
        margin-top:10px;
        padding:10px 10px 15px 20px;
}

.list .a {
        background:transparent;
}

.list li {
        padding:5px;
        border:1px white solid;
}
```

The margin and padding is for the spaces around the mood box. The background is here transparent but you can also add color or a background image.

Any values are disabled here, explicitly the background values.

If you need more padding between the single lines use this code. There is a standard padding about 4 pixels predefined. So if you want it being bigger set more than 4 pixels (for smaller space less than 4 pixels). The 1 pixel border will be applied to every single line of the box.

This is all you need to know about mood boxes!

The rules that affects the comment links

These are the selectors:

♦   .commentslink
♦   .prevlink
♦   journalbottom
♦   journalbottom a:link
♦   journalbottom a:active
♦   journalbottom a:visited
♦   journalbottom a:hover

.commentslink and .prevlink control the two links leading to the current journal and to previous journals separately. You can set all common properties for fonts, backgrounds, borders and margins (margins only work for the left and the right side). With .journal-bottom you can use all these properties as well, also padding. It controls both links, you can add a background image (a comment box) here and you also can define color values for the links.

This is the code for the comment links in the Fantasy CSS:

```
.journalbox .commentslink {
        color:#77A2EE!important;
        font-weight:bold!important;
        text-decoration:none;
        margin:0px 12px 0px 26px;
}

.journalbox .prevlink {
        color:#77A2EE!important;
        font-weight:bold!important;
        text-decoration:none;
        margin:0px -30px 0px 10px;
}

.journalbox .journalbottom a:hover {
        color:#C5E7FC!important;
}
```

In fact I kept it very simple. In the second tutorial part: Advanced CSS I will demonstrate also an example with a more complex journal bottom.

So that's all I have to tell about the DA standard CSS rules and their adjustment. Until now we didn't had to use a single bit of HTML to apply this CSS code completely. That will change now when it comes to individual CSS rules. I switch over now to the second CSS part.
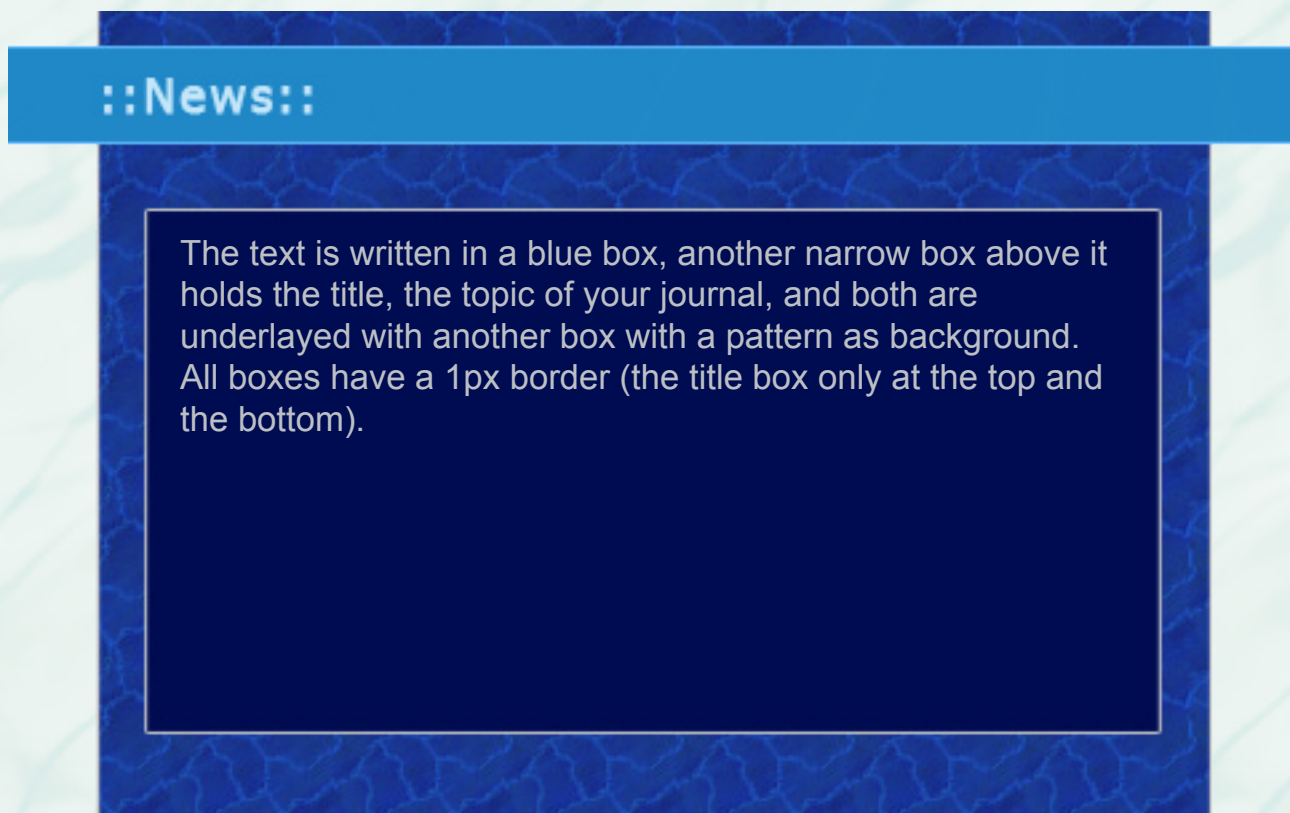
(2.2) Individual CSS Rules

This is the part that makes journal CSS exciting. You can create sophisticated and very individual layouts with clever coding. There are a couple of restrictions within DeviantArt but most of it can be compensated with alternatives. In the basic tutorial I will show you how to create a simple nested text box without much graphics and complex code. You will get an idea how CSS works and with logic you can handle most of the CSS principles.

Again the Blue Fantasy CSS Template will serve as example. I created a text box with background and shifted title. If applied it looks like this:

The coding of the blue text box alone could be done with the standard .textbox rule. But in fact we have three different boxes for journal text here and so we need to declare explicitly how we want the boxes to display.

We need three rules (divisions): title, textbox and textboxbg. And we need a bit of HTML coding to places the divisions correctly in the journal. The order of all divisions is MOST IMPORTANT!!! If only one tag is imcomplete or is at the wrong place the CSS layout will NOT work!!!

In the following I will explain all details of every single one of them.

The text box background

This is a box holding the background image and enclosing the title and the text box. I will explain all properties by means of the coding.

```
.journalbox .textboxbg {........................

        background-image:url(http://img.
photobucket.com/albums/v494/lilyas/
CSS/Fantasy/tbtiledb.jpg);...................

        margin:20px 10px 10px 10px;.....

        border-style:solid;........................

        border-width:1px 1px 1px 1px;....

        border-color:#C8C8C8;...............

        padding:10px;............................

}
```

► individual name of the rule

► The image to fill the background. Normally you need to give values for repeat and position but DA sets it repeating x and y and at top left automatically.

► DA predefined margins of 10px around any box and values you set will be added to it.

► The border definitions. They make a border of 1px at all sides in the color grey and solid type. A simplier notation woud be: border:1px #c8c8c8 solid;

► Padding makes a space between the box content (here another box) and the box border.

If you want to apply the text box background you type this in the HTML (journal) body:

`<div class="textboxbg"></div>`

Now we add the title overlaying the background box. This is the code:

```
.journalbox .title {................................
        color: #C5E7FC;.........................
        font-size: 20px;
        letter-spacing: 3px;

        border-style:solid;........................
        border-width:1px 0px 1px 0px;
        border-color:#60BAFF;

        background-color: #2188C7;.......

        padding: 1px 0px 4px 25px;.........

        margin: 15px -29px 0 -29px;........
}
```

► individual title of the rule

► several font styles, self-explanatory

► border styles, as usual, but only at top and bottom

► the color for the title box

► The padding will align the title text.

► margins to push it downwards over the background box.The negative margins on the left and right push the title box to the borders of the journal. If I'd make them 0, the box would be inside the background box with 10px margin (standard by DA). It must be -29px to be exactly at the border of the journal.

If you want to apply the title together text box background you type this in the HTML (journal) body:

```
<div class="textboxbg"><div class="title">::News::</div></div>
```

As you can see the title div is embed in the textboxbg div. As I said before the notation of the code is most important for the correct display of your journal. So please pay attention to it.

Now we have a look at the last detail of our textbox group - the text field itself. This is the code:

```
.journalbox .textbox {...........................    ► individual title of the rule

        color:#C8C8C8;.........................    ► font styles, as usual
        font-size:13px;
        text-align:left;
        font-family:Tahoma, Verdana, Arial;

        background-color:#000C52;........    ► color of the textbox

        border:1px #C8C8C8 solid;.........    ► a grey 1px border around the box

        margin:35px 5px 10px 5px;.........    ► margin and padding, I want to mention
        padding:5px 6px 5px 6px;                that it doesn't matter if I use a margin-top
}                                               in the textbox to get a space to the title or if
                                                I use a margin-bottom in the title to get the
                                                same effect. These values are just NOT
                                                added if set both. Only the higher margin
                                                value will be applied.
```

Now we can add the last bit to the HTML code. The textbox div is embed after the title div. This is the complete code for the box:

```
<div class="textboxbg">
<div class="title">::News::</div>
<div class="textbox">Journal Content</div>
</div>
```

If you add this to your HTML body and the machting CSS to the CSS field you will get a nice text box with title and background. It's important to say that you must type the code without space characters within the HTML tags and without ANY line breaks!!! A line break will be interpreted as <br /> by DA which means there will be a break in your code.

This is the correct notation:

```
<div class="textboxbg"><div class="title">::News::</div><div class="textbox">Journal Content.</div></div>
```

Now the Basics are complete. I hope this tutorial was helpful for you. If you still have questions note me on Deviantart or wait for the Advanced CSS Tutorial.

Subjects for the second part will be:

♦ advanced text and feature boxes
♦ different styles for menus
♦ boxes with scrollbars
♦ extra divs for more graphics

If you have any suggestions for more subjects feel free to tell me. And if you have any progress in making your own CSS tell me, too!

Other CSS Tutorials and Resources:

CSS Property Index
Journal Structure by ^thespook
Creative Journal CSS
HTML Dog

Have fun!

Lilyas