

Library Items

Use of Library Items is a way to reuse a block of code that you want to appear in multiple places within your site. Sound familiar? It should! Library Items are basically Dreamweaver's way of using SSIs.

Library Items, however, do not require any action by the server. The "including" is done by Dreamweaver. Every time you make a change to a Library Item, Dreamweaver will ask whether you would like it to update all of the pages that use that Library Item. If you tell it to update the files, it will attempt to open and edit each of those pages automatically.

Drawbacks to using Library Items

There are some drawbacks to using Library Items.

Every time you want to make a change to the included file, Dreamweaver must open and update each file that uses it. If the Library Item is used on hundreds of pages, this could take a significant amount of time as each of these new files must also be uploaded to the server. (As you will see later, Dreamweaver's synchronize function can make the uploading easier.)

In order to continue updating the Library Item in the future, you must use Dreamweaver. If some members of your web team do not use Dreamweaver, they will not be able to automatically update Library Items. If you are considering a move away from Dreamweaver, you will not be able to update your Library Items automatically.

When to use a Library Item

Here are some great reasons to use Library Items.

If your information does not change regularly (like your main navigation links). This technique allows the server to avoid performing an include on each page.

If your server cannot process SSIs (or you do not know how to!)

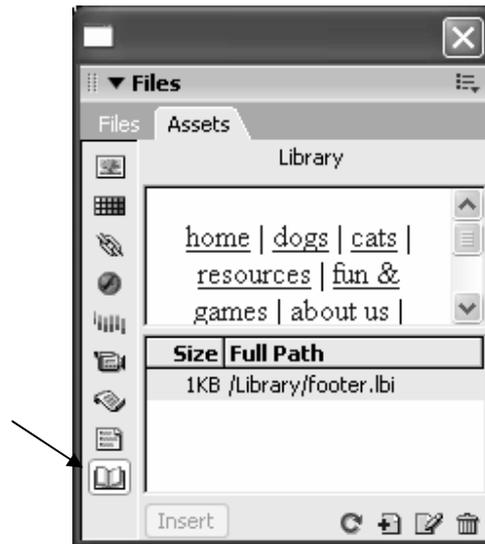
Creating a Library Item

The first step in creating a Library Item is to open one of the pages on which you want it to appear. Once you have created the block of code as you want it to appear on all of the pages, highlight the whole block. (Be sure you have the whole thing! You might want to have both design view and code view visible during this part.)

Now, select **Modify → Library → Add Object to Library**. The Library panel will appear. Give the item a logical name.

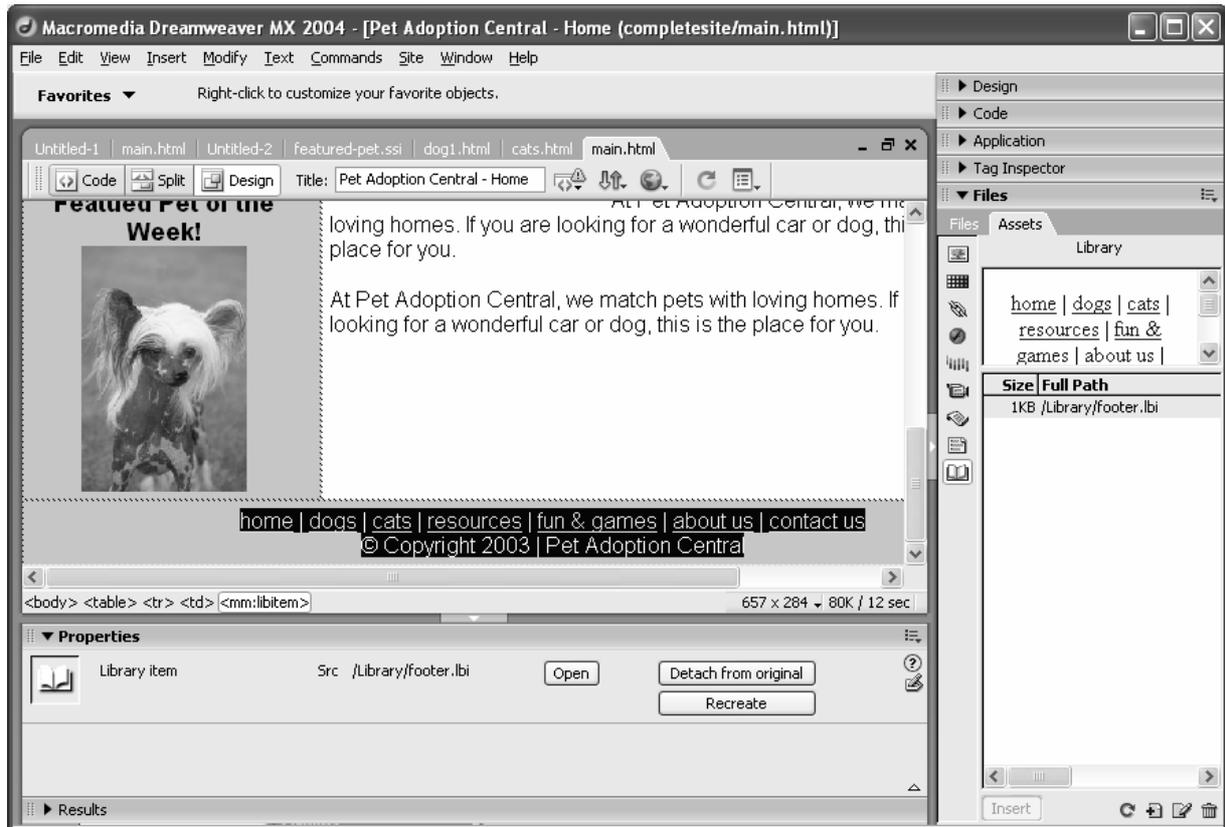
It will appear in the page with a faint yellow background and will no longer be editable. In order to edit it, follow the instructions in the next section.

The Library section of the Assets Panel shows any saved Library Items. An example appears below.



Inserting a Library Item

In order to use this Library Item on additional pages, open the Library Panel (which is within the Assets Panel). Be sure that you are not attempting to drag the Library Item from the Library Items folder in the Files window. It is tempting to do this, but it will open the file for editing – not insert an instance of it in this page.

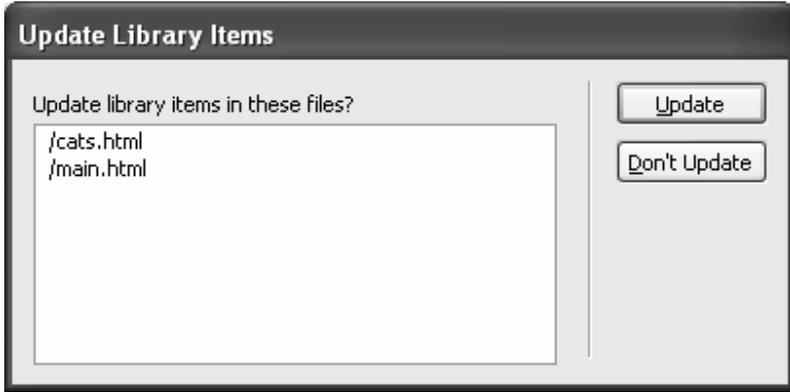


Editing and Updating a Library Item

In order to edit a Library Item you may:

1. Open the Library Item from a page that uses it by clicking on it. You will see an “Open” button in the Properties window.
2. Open the Library Item directly by looking in the “Library” folder which was automatically created for you.

Either way, once you save your changes, Dreamweaver will ask whether you would like it to update any pages that are already using the Library Item. If you click “Update” it will open and update all of the pages listed. Once they are updated, these pages will have to be uploaded to the server.



Exercise 3: Add an Updatable Footer Using a Library Item

In this exercise we will create a footer that will be used across the site. The footer will include links to the main pages and will include copyright information. It may look something this version (from the “completedsite” folder).



1. Open main.html. At the bottom of the page, type the text any way that you would like it to appear. It should include our copyright information and the following links:
 - Home → home.html
 - Dogs → dogs.html
 - Cats → cats.html
 - Resources → resources.html
 - Fun & Games → fungames.html
 - About us → aboutus.html
 - Contact us → contactus.html
2. Highlight the entire section that you just added. To create the Library Item, select **Modify → Library → Add Object to Library** and name this Library Item footer.

3. Once you have inserted the Library Item to main.html, insert it on the following three additional pages by dragging it from the Assets Panel: **dogs.html**, **cats.html**, **resources.html**.

Try this!

Make a change to the Library Item and update all of the instances of it throughout the site

Possible Solution to Exercise 3

Saved as **completesite/main.html**

