

Adobe Contribute Tutorial

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Adobe Contribute is a content publishing system that allows individuals with little to no coding experience edit a website within the guidelines and restrictions placed by the site. Working in combination with Adobe Dreamweaver templates, this allows the site to be edited without removing the inner lying pieces that create styles, text fonts, colors, sizes, etc. that make a website look streamline and smooth. By following this tutorial, you will learn how to use this program to edit your own websites and will soon be off running. This tutorial is broken down into 5 main pieces:

1. Connecting to your site
2. Understanding how Adobe Contribute Works
3. Editing existing content
4. Creating new content
5. Permissions/Access/Accounts

Part 1: Connecting to your site

Adobe Contribute works through FTP, SFTP, and network connections to access the site. Most web servers allow either a direct network access through the mapping of a drive or FTP access. To figure out which your server has, contact your network administrator; for general purposes, I will show you the two main methods to connecting, local network and FTP.

Local Network Access

Local network access connections work the same way as anything accessed on your hard drive. This connection is for websites that are hosted via network mapped drives that look similar to your C drive.

The first step is to map your drive. Using Windows XP, double click on the My Computer Icon and then click on “tools” from the menu bar. One of the options should be “map network drive”. When this window opens, you will have to assign a drive letter (this is arbitrary) and the path name; the path address should be given to you by your network administrator. Once this is done, either use your windows credentials or click on “connect with different user name” to assign different credentials to your connection. Vista users can follow a similar procedure for mapping a drive by clicking on “map network drive” in their window, just below the address bar.

Once this is done, you should have a new icon appear in your “My Computer” window with the new address of the drive. Congratulations, you have a drive mapped!

Now, open up Adobe Contribute. If this is your first time using the program, a window will appear with a link that says “new website connection”; click on this. If it doesn’t appear, click on the icon on the far right of the top and choose “new site” from the menu that appears.

Once in this menu, click next. Then, make sure website is chosen from the menu, then type in the address of your website, the same URL you use to navigate to it. Then click next.

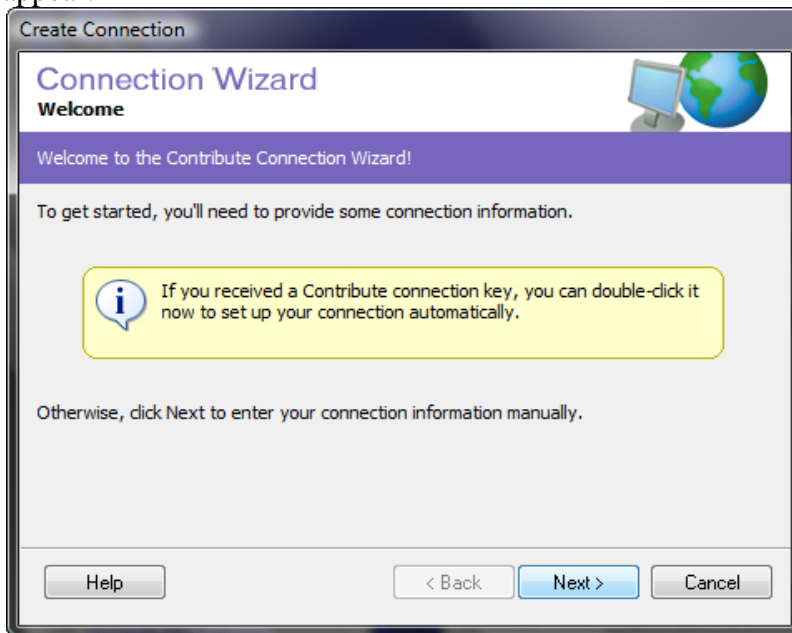
In the next window, you will choose “local/network” and then type in the address of your mapped network drive, which should be the same address when you found it. You can also browse for it by clicking “choose” and selecting the drive in your “My Computer” window. After you have set the destination, choose next. Add in the credentials it asks for; this is to tell the server who is connecting. Click next twice and you should be connected!

To make sure, type in the URL of your site in the box and it should bring up your homepage.

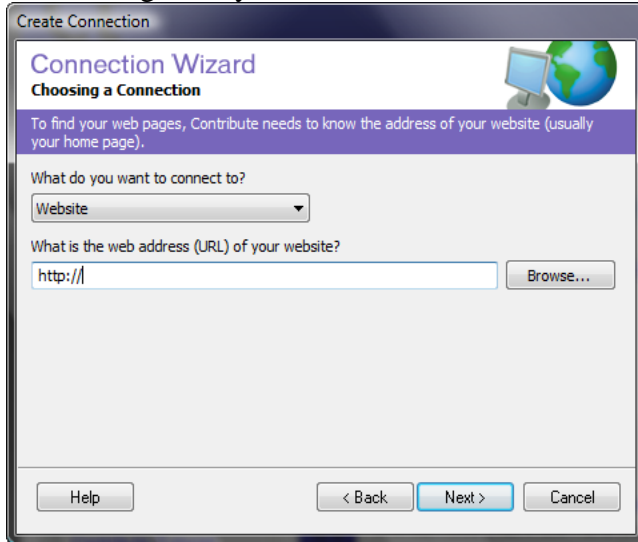
Connecting via FTP server

This method is similar to the above except for a few points. First, make sure you know the FTP server address and whatever credentials are necessary to connect to it. Also, be sure your network allows external FTP connections.

Open Adobe Contribute and click on “new website connection”. The following window will appear:



Once in this window, click next. Then, make sure website is chosen and type in the URL you use to navigate to your website. After that, click on next.



Within the next window, choose “FTP” for your connection and put in the necessary credentials including the FTP server address, user name, and password. Then click next.



Add in the necessary credentials to let the server know who is connecting and click next twice.

Congratulations! You should be connected to your site.

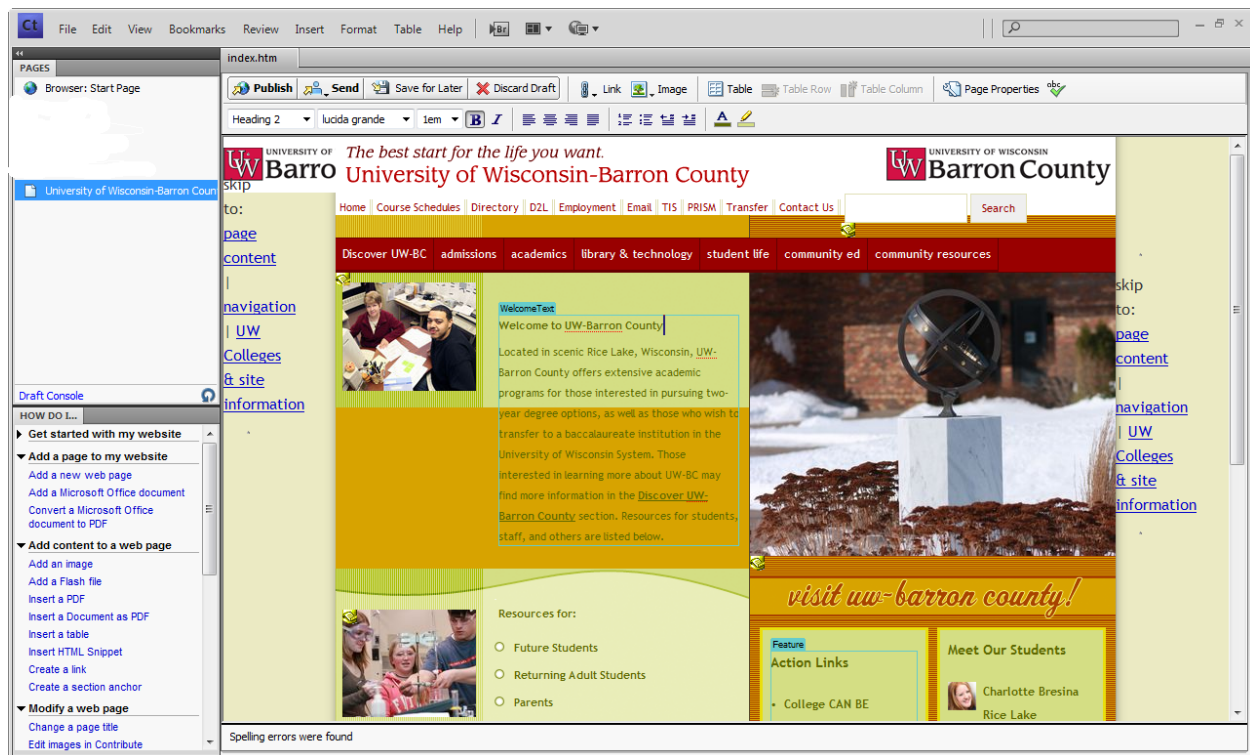
Step 2: Understanding how Adobe Contribute Works

In the world of web design, the key is making a site that is appealing to the eye, versatile, and able to be updated by those who don't know HTML! Contribute was designed to solve this issue, and does so in quite a novel way.

There are numerous features built into Contribute to take the backend out of content management; this means less complicated work for the user and better results. This section of the tutorial is going to dive into some of the features that are necessary to use and understand Adobe Contribute.

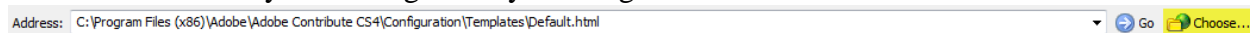
The Browser

When viewing a page, here is the “browser” window you will see:

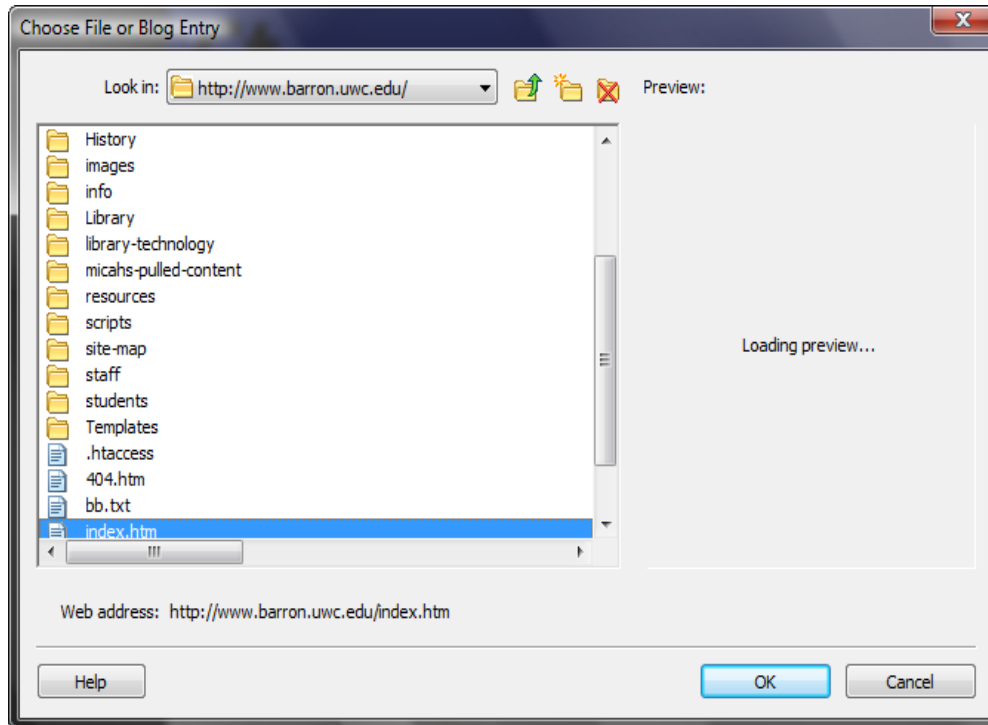


If you want to edit a page, first you have to find it. With old means, this would mean searching for the actual file with name.html or something, opening it, making your changes, being careful not to edit your code, and so on and so forth. With contribute, you start editing a page the same way you view it, by browsing to it! Notice in the top there is a bar that looks much like your web address bar in your web browser. To get to the page you wish to edit, you enter in the URL of the page you wish to edit, and click “edit page”.

You can also use a system navigation by clicking on “choose” next to the URL bar.



This opens up a window similar to windows explorer in which you can locate the file you wish to edit.



Draft vs. Publish...vs Review!

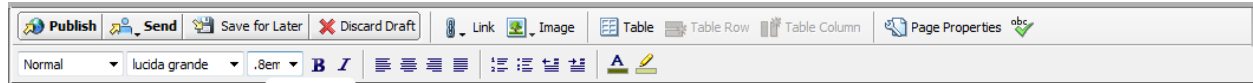
When you click “edit page”, Contribute automatically copies the page and creates a draft for you to work on. This prevents live changes, thus allowing you to make your change, see how it looks, and make more if you want without actually modifying the content until you are ready. In essence, it works much like a word processor does, in that you do the work to get a final product, and not until your final product is ready do you print it. Thus, the way you work on a site might be a bit different than usual.

As you work on the draft, Contribute utilizes its own testing server to show you what it will look like on the server. When you are sure everything is good, you have two options: Review or Publish.

Review allows you to flag this draft for somebody to review, designated by the Contribute administrative panel. By doing this, you are telling the person to look at it and approve the page before publishing.

Publish does exactly what it sounds; publishes it to the site. This is similar to pressing print in Microsoft Word, it creates a final copy in which no changes can be made. For the web, this means it posts it to the site and once everything is complete, your page is live, meaning others can view it on the site. To facilitate this, Contribute automatically posts you back to the URL of the page you edited or created, showing you what the live version looks like.

User-Friendly Control Panel



Contribute is specifically designed for those with little to no coding experience, thus it attempts to make everything as simple and easy to use as possible. Some of these features are built in, like tying into Adobe Dreamweaver Templates and style definitions, while others are more upfront, like making the “link” and “image” features vibrant and easily available. Furthermore, when you assign a photo and publish the page, Contribute automatically posts the photo to the site for you in the required directory set by your administrator. This also works with links or files you wish to post, including PDF.

Furthermore, if you post an image and want to edit it, right-mouse click and choose “image properties” and the window opens with simple commands like size, orientation, etc. You can assign alt tag names, etc. This same idea applies to files, paragraphs, etc. More details on how this works are provided later in the “updating content” section of the tutorial.

Now say you want to style your page a bit more, but aren’t sure how to do it. Since web and print differ greatly when it comes to style, this can be difficult to allow for the average programmer. Contribute ties into the defined CSS files and Template files created in Dreamweaver to present divs and styles. This means you can assign headers, divs, and even different styles of paragraphs, all created and managed by your administrator. In truth, Contribute works to take the back-end out of content management, which is exactly what it is meant to do.

Now you have an idea of how Contribute works, lets move on to actually doing some work.

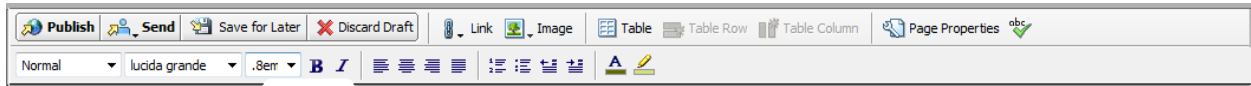
Step 3: Updating Content

Updating content within Adobe Contribute is created to be simple, straightforward, and easy to understand. Even so, it helps to have a bit of direction in how to handle certain things within it.

To break it down, the features of Contribute allow users to create and edit web page content including images, links, pdf files, flash videos, streaming content, and other types of content without knowing how to code. While some of these are a bit more complicated, the general technique of how to use the program is simple.

First, navigate to the page you wish to edit using the browser and click “edit page”. Contribute automatically creates a draft version of this page, allowing you to edit it without making live changes. Once in this draft, the features work much like a word processing program. You can type paragraphs, add line breaks, headers, etc. Furthermore, Contribute allows insertion of images, files, streaming video, and links in the same manner as other pieces.

Using the main menu toolbar



The main menu toolbar is the image-based toolbar just above the URL bar. This contains the most common items that you will need including style declarations, inserting images and links, publishing, reviewing, and certain items to use within.

This toolbar looks much like your general toolbar in Microsoft Word just watered down a bit at times. You can still insert lists, bullets, align text, and change definable pieces. Remember: A good website is consistent and organized; when you use the manual change of styles, you risk losing this structure that develops.



The menus also break down depending on the restrictions and settings set for your website. If you can't edit something and think you should, talk to your network administrator.

Here is what the drop down menus tend to look like:

Class Styles:

Normal

address

blockQuote

citation

simpleTable

Heading 1

Heading 2

Heading 3

Heading 4

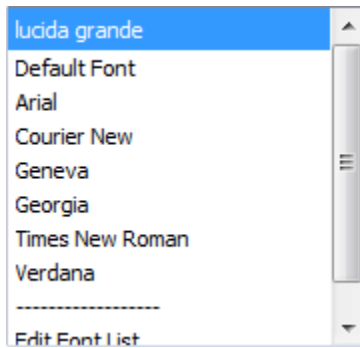
Heading 5

Heading 6

Rename Style...

Delete Style...

Font Styles



Using the class selection tool

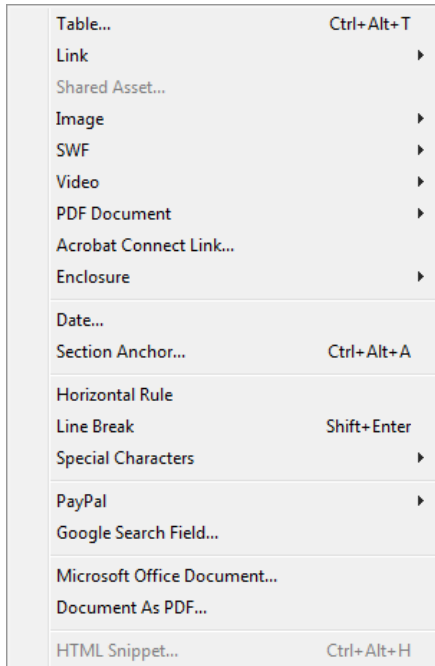
Up in the top left is a drop down menu that holds the classes and divs that can be applied to the current object. For example, if you have just the page selected, the different types of tags come up, like headers, paragraphs, and divs. Any ones that don't have styled text are divs and are also explicitly defined in the other paperwork you should have received.

Therefore, if you want to create a title to the page, you would use "header 1", and then type! Once you finish the header, hit enter, and notice that it brings you back to the default style, which is a paragraph, allowing you to type like normal. Most sites come with multiple headers which can be used to define later pieces. The important piece to remember is that headers are used instead of modifying the text to make it bigger, change color, etc. Depending on the settings, you may not be able to change those features, thus making you stick with the headers anyways.

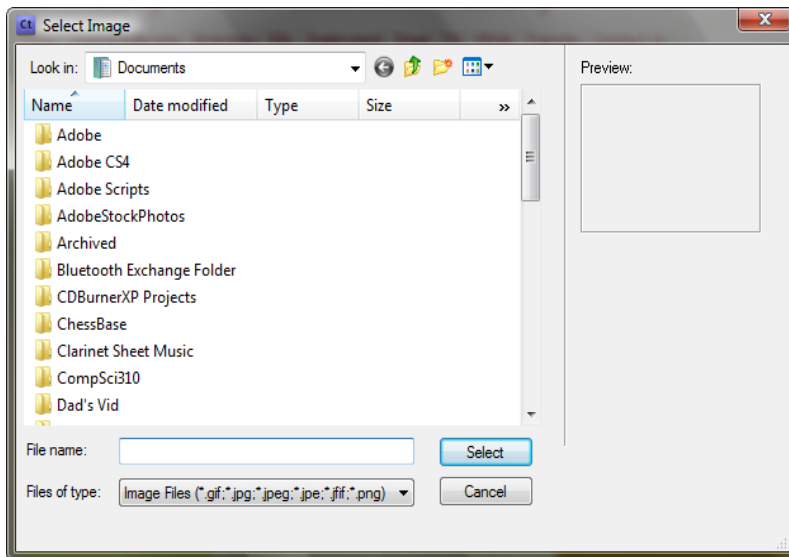
Since Contribute works within the defined template of Dreamweaver, certain items known as Divs are automatically defined and cannot be changed. However, if you select something within them, you can often make them work correctly. Stick with templates and how they are and remember things like columns can be created and defined through certain templates. Furthermore, many templates will contain these divs programmed into them but has you delete them if you do not need them. Remember to always take advantage of them when necessary.

Using the Insert Toolbar

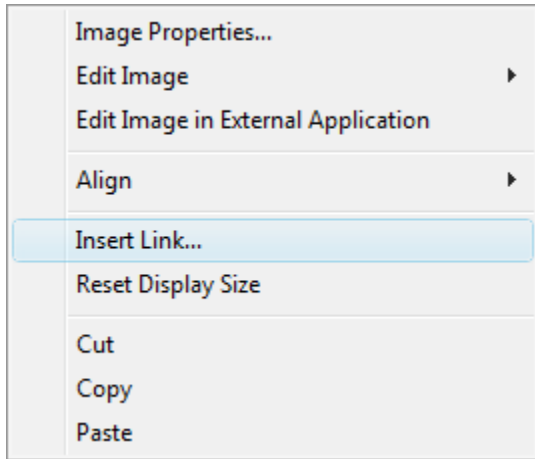
Contribute allows insertion of many items without having to code. Furthermore, it will automatically upload them to the correct location when you publish the page, saving you any backend work. Here is what the insert menu gives you:



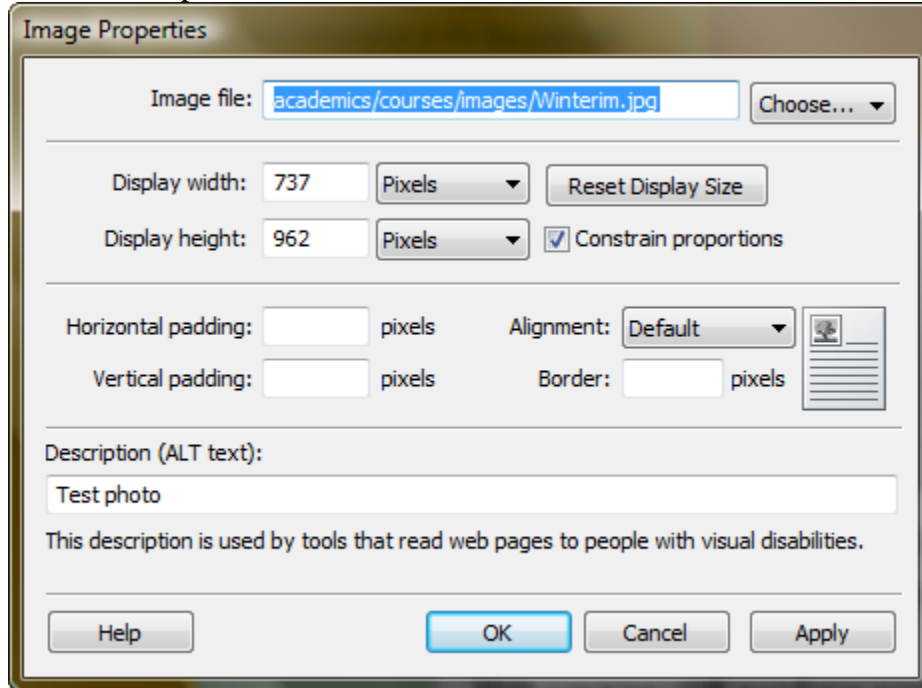
To insert an image, you can click on the insert image tool on the main bar, or use the “insert” menu option and choose image. It will ask you to choose an image, either from the computer, website, or alternative location.



It remembers the location and links items appropriately to allow you to use it. If you wish to edit the image, right-mouse click and choose “image properties” and change what you need to. You can also add a link to the image, change it there, along with other commands.



These are the properties you can choose from. Notice how they are similar to what you would see in a word processor.



These features apply to most objects you insert. The one piece that you must keep in mind is that inserting images or other items does not work like a word document; you cannot position them absolutely. Therefore, be careful how you insert them and where, because they are often in line with text, aligned to one side, or something similar. You can also assign certain styles to images using the class declaration drop down menu.

Items that can be inserted this way include: Flash Videos, streaming video, downloadable files, images, pdf files, among others. The windows and features attached to these items are similar, but specific to their own kind.

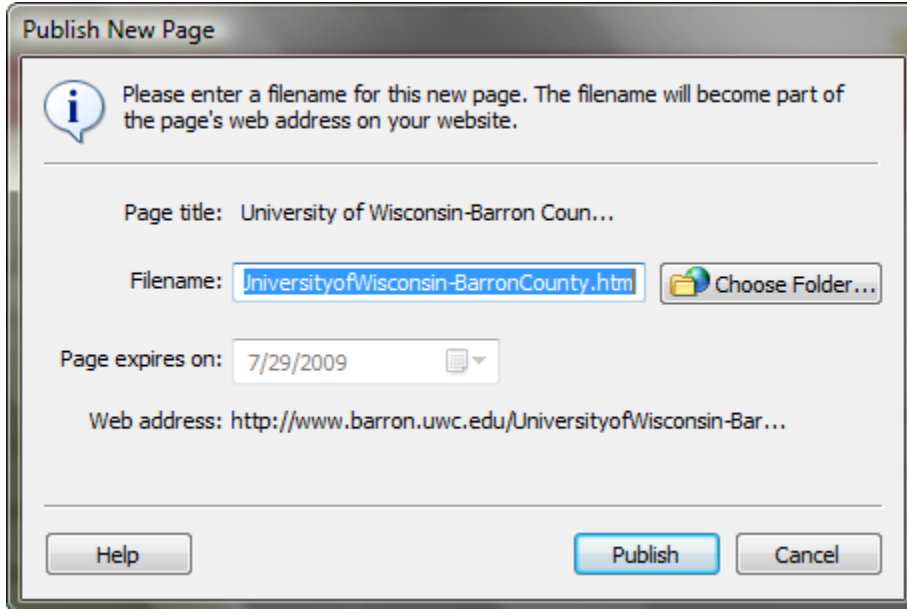
Anything else you wish to do in Contribute is pretty self-explanatory. It works much like a word-processing program does. The important pieces to remember are:

1. You browse to the page you want to edit just like you would view it in a web browser
2. Defining styles are how you modifying how items look
 - a. Stick with using headers when useful.
3. Inserting objects is similar to processing system
 - a. You can define certain properties using the right-mouse click

When you are satisfied with your content changes, you have to publish the page or send it for review. When publishing, all you have to do is click “publish page” and you are good to go!



It brings up the following prompt in which you can decide where to have your file sit.



Publish New Page

Please enter a filename for this new page. The filename will become part of the page's web address on your website.

Page title: University of Wisconsin-Barron Coun...

Filename:

Page expires on:

Web address: <http://www.barron.uwc.edu/UniversityofWisconsin-Bar...>

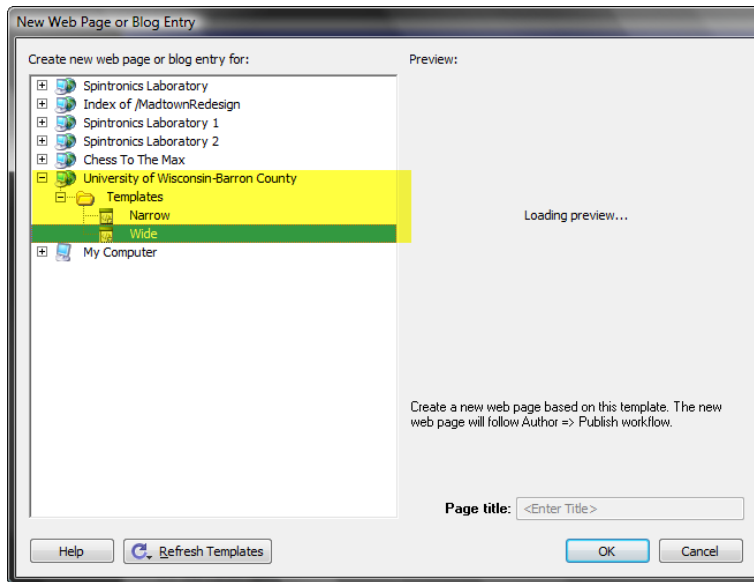
If you want someone else to review your page first, you can set that option, and send an email for someone else to view it. Furthermore, you can save the draft for later to allow someone to personally look at it or make changes yourself.



Happy editing!

Step 4: Creating New Content

Creating new content in Contribute is just as easy as updating it. To create a new page, first make sure you are connected to your site. Then, click on “new” next to the edit page button. A window will open. Make sure to stick with the correct website templates!



Here, choose your site and then the proper template you wish to work from. Then, click ok (or put in a page title if enabled).

Once the page loads, you follow the same features you would for editing the pages, applying styles, inserting objects, etc.

When publishing this page, you should make sure of two things first:

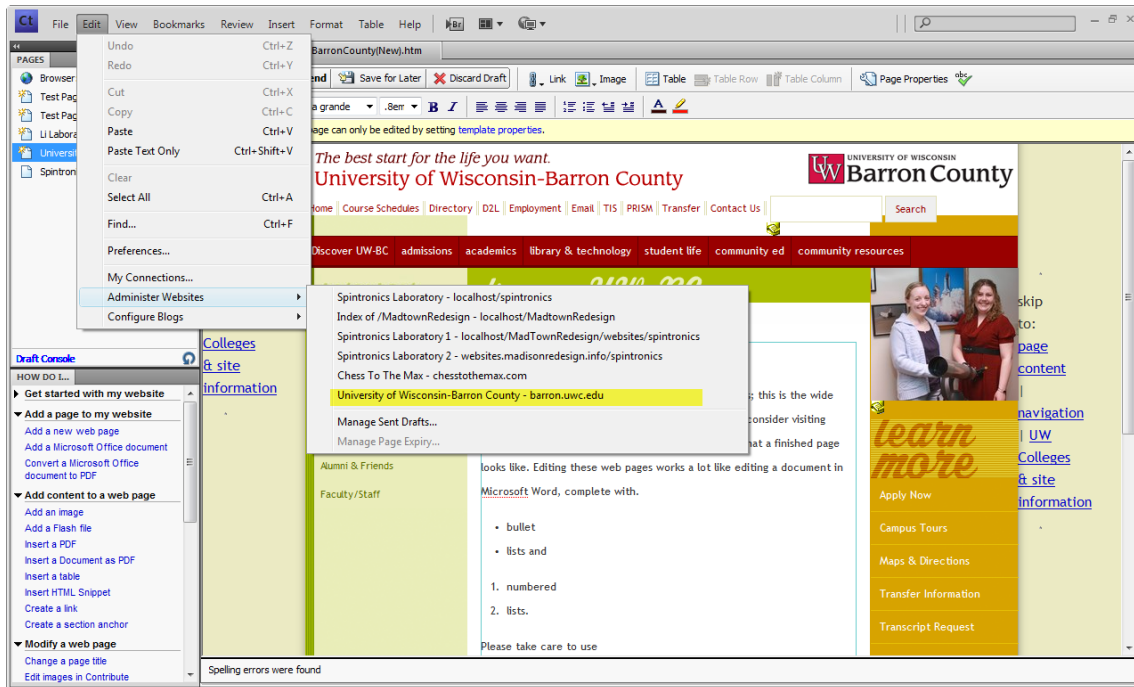
1. This page is linked to by another page, since it won't work otherwise.
2. You know where you want to put this page on the site.

When you are ready for publishing, click "publish me" in the top left, choose where you want the page to go, and click ok. Congratulations! The page is published! Contribute should load it's browser to show you what the live view looks like.

Step 5: Permissions/Accounts/Access

Once you have the basics down on how to use Contribute, the administration pieces come into play. Contribute has some built in features for administering who can do what within the system, including defining roles for just creating content and not publishing, only reviewing content, and being able to do everything. If you are working with a larger group of people, sometimes defining these roles can come in handy.

To access this information, make sure you are connected and click on edit, then administer websites, then clicking on your own website.

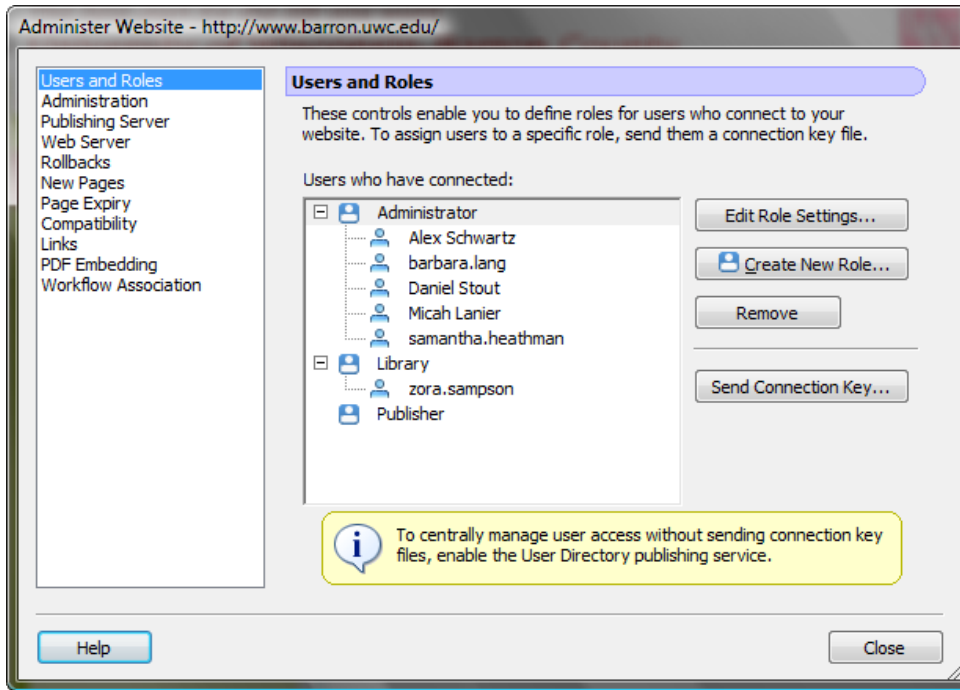


This opens up a new menu where you can edit some features including accounts and access. Furthermore, features such as having a text editor vs. design editor can be changed.

Knowing how to set up the administration features of a site are only important to those who are meant to administer it. In this section, you can define permissions, assign roles, decide where images and files go when published, etc. Remember, do not mess around in here unless you are meant to as it could cause some important features not to work anymore.

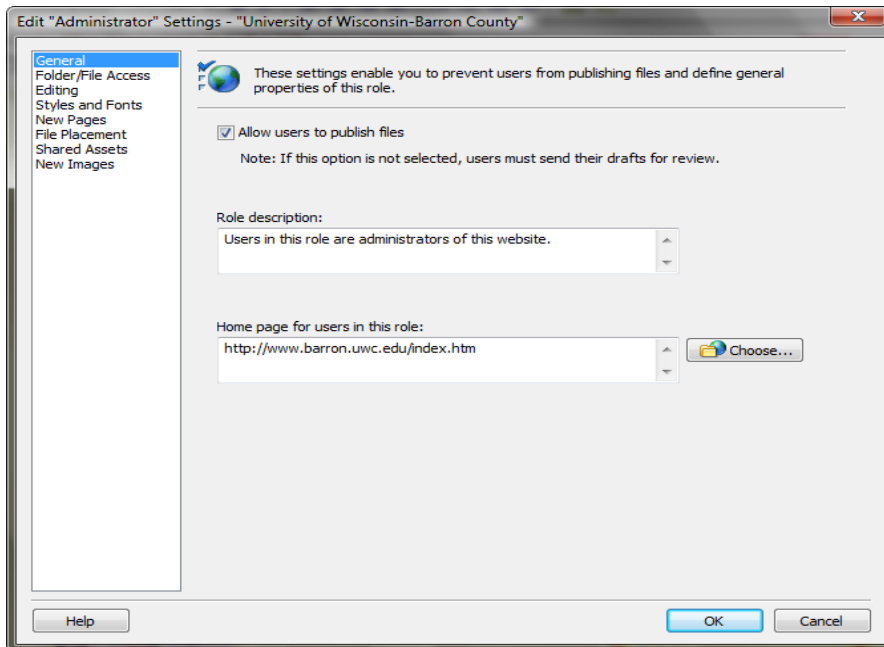
Since each website is unique and beyond the scope of this tutorial, only the basics are shown here.

Here is the administration menu:



Notice on the left all the extra menu pieces. Most of these features will be set up initially and should not be modified. If you have any questions regarding how to use those features, please contact your network administrator.

The main piece you may use has to do with assigning roles. Click on “edit user roles” on the right and you get the following window:



Through the different submenus, you can modify where files are stored, who has access to what, permissions, etc. On the previous window, you can even create and define access to user roles and permissions.

Besides that, the rest of Contribute is pretty self-explanatory and easy enough to use. If you have any further questions, you can always refer to documentation provided by Adobe or contact your IT support team.

Happy editing!