

## Chapter 10: Enhancing Web Sites with Frames

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### Understanding Frames

The evolution of frames was helped along when Netscape started using frames, and Web developers have helped in the evolution of frames as sophisticated features of Web pages. Simply put, *framing* is a method of placing two or more windows on the screen and giving the viewer individual control of none, some, or all of them. Frames can even contain other frames, and the page within a frame can reference other pages independently of the rest of the display. This gives a web designer great flexibility in choosing how to organize and present information, whether it's text, graphics, or other varieties of content.

To see what this means, look at the example in [Figure 10.1](#). The fixed frame at the bottom of the screen (it's labeled "Index") contains links that will change the pages appearing in the narrow left frame. In the left frame, in turn, are more links; each of these opens a new page in the large main frame.

#### **Figure 10.1**

Frames enable various pages to appear and behave independently in a browser.

## Why Use Frames?

You should use frames if you want your user's browser window to display both static and dynamic elements. A *static* element remains visible no matter what your user does; the *dynamic* element changes according to the user's input. The index frame at the bottom of [Figure 10.1](#) is static (the user cannot change its content), whereas the other two frames are dynamic (their content changes according to which links are clicked).

One advantage of the frame environment is the way it can keep your visitors oriented. For example, the static part can keep a map of the site (or part of it) in front of the user, while the dynamic elements show various parts of the site on demand. The user doesn't have to scroll to find the link that returns him to the home page or to another major section of the site. The links are always there, right in front of him.

You also can present an image within one frame and give your visitor several screens' worth of information about it in an adjacent frame. While the information scrolls within its frame, the image remains visible at all times.

A few years ago, when many people used nonframe browsers, it was important to provide nonframed pages to meet their needs. The use of frame-supporting browsers is now so widespread that this is not much of an issue. However, many people do not like frames—especially if their viewing area is limited to a 14-inch display. In fact, a lot of professional Web designers prefer not to use frames at all. That might be going too far, but you should be aware of the negative opinion many people hold about frames. See the Design Corner at the end of the chapter for more information on this debate.

## Designing for the Framed Environment

As with tables, handmade frame creation with HTML coding is a picky business. Fortunately, FrontPage's WYSIWYG frame creation environment makes setting up and managing frames fairly straightforward.

This environment is based on the generation of *framesets* which is what FrontPage calls several frames that appear together in a browser display. You don't actually insert framesets into a page; a frameset acts like a scaffolding in that it relates pages to each other.

Before you start creating a frameset, though, you need to think about how—or even if—you're going to use the frame environment. Keep the following in mind:

- **Use frames only if you need them**—Don't use them just because they're decorative.
- **Don't crowd a page with frames; the practical maximum is three**—The more you have, obviously, the smaller they will be. In particular, a viewer shouldn't have to scroll to see all of an image.
- **Use static frames sparingly**—Use them for navigational tools, table of contents information, or for site identification (such as a logo). Static frames are similar to the instrument panel of a car, which drivers do indeed need to refer to. But even so, drivers spend most of their time looking through windshields.
- **Commit most of the screen area to dynamic frames where information can be retrieved and**

**displayed.**

- **Don't develop your frame layout for monitors with screens bigger than 15 inches**— Many people (and many businesses) haven't switched to 17-inch or larger displays. At the best, assume a 15" monitor running at 800x600 resolution in 256 colors. If you're displaying high-quality photography or artwork, of course, you will have to use 16-bit color, but be aware that some people won't see what you see.

## Using the WYSIWYG Frame Environment

In the next sections you create a frameset with two frames and populate it. To best illustrate WYSIWYG frameset behavior with this frameset, you need two or more pages, so create any you require, give them titles and filenames, and save them.

After the pages are created (you can close them after you've done so), continue by selecting File, New, Page or Web and selecting Page Templates. In the Page Templates dialog box, select the Frames Pages tab to display the available types of frames (see [Figure 10.2](#)).

### **Figure 10.2**

FrontPage 2002 gives you a selection of predefined frames.

Now follow these steps:

1. Select the Header frameset. This layout produces an upper frame whose links change the page displayed in the lower frame; you can see a schematic of it in the Preview section of the dialog box. After selecting it, click OK. The WYSIWYG frame environment appears (see [Figure 10.3](#)) If you look at the page tab at the top of the workspace, you see a new page filename (it's new\_page\_1.htm in the example). This new filename is the name of the frameset file itself.

### **Figure 10.3**

The WYSIWYG frame environment lets you lay out your framed pages visually, so you can see how their design and proportions look.

2. You can insert an existing page into any frame, but for purposes of illustration, you'll create a new one for the upper frame. In the upper frame, click the New Page button; a new, blank page appears there. You'll use this page for the hyperlinks that control the display in the lower frame.
3. In the lower frame, click the Set Initial Page button. This opens the Insert Hyperlink dialog box. Select an existing page and click OK. The page opens in the lower window.
4. Click in the upper frame. Insert a hyperlink to the page that currently appears in the lower window. Then, while you are still in the upper frame, insert a second hyperlink to a different page.
5. Use File, Save (or Save As) to save the frameset file and the new page you created for the upper frame. In the dialog box, you should supply meaningful page titles and filenames for these new files—don't use the defaults. For more information about figuring out which page you're actually saving, so you can name it properly, see the following Tip.

**Tip** - You can tell which file of the frameset you're saving by looking in the preview box of the Save As dialog box. If the schematic has blue all around it, but all the page representations are gray, you're saving the frameset file itself. If a page representation is blue, you're saving the page that appears in that particular frame.

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Test the frameset by using Preview mode or the Preview In Browser command. The display should resemble the one in [Figure 10.4](#). Clicking the links in the upper frame should change the pages in the lower frame.

#### **Figure 10.4**

The results of creating a two-frame frameset with a navigation pane in the upper frame.

In step 2 of the previous example, you created a new blank page by clicking the New Page button. If instead you want a page from a template, first click in the frame where you want the page to appear. Next, open the Page Templates dialog box and select the one you want. Then, select the Open In Current Frame check box and click OK. The template is inserted in the selected frame.

## **Editing a Frameset**

You can adjust the appearance of the frameset either during the previous procedure or in a later editing session. To edit the frameset later, open the frameset file in Page view. It appears with its initial pages displayed.

Here is a listing of the other frame-handling tools available directly from the WYSIWYG frame environment:

- To work on a page that appears in a frame, click that page. The active page is indicated by the thick, dark line around its frame.
- To adjust the proportions of the frames, drag their boundaries.
- To view the HTML of the frameset file itself, click the Frames Page HTML tab at the bottom of the editor workspace while you're working on the frameset.
- To view a page's HTML within a frame, click it and then click the HTML tab.
- To edit the message that appears in a non-frame-supporting browser, click the No Frames tab. Edit the default warning message as you would any other text. This message gets saved with the frameset file, so you don't have to take any further action.
- To add frames to an existing frameset, you can split a frame into further rows or columns. First, click in the frame you want to split. Then select Frames, Split Frame, and use the resulting Split Frame dialog box to specify the number of rows or columns you want the frame split into.
- To delete a frame, select it and select Frames, Delete Frame. Note that deleting the frame does not delete the pages, if any, contained in it.

- To establish your Web as a framed Web as soon as people access it, rename the frameset page with the filename `default.htm`.

## Modifying a Frameset's Frame

Two sets of frameset properties exist that you might need to modify from time to time: those for the individual frames within a frameset and those for the frameset itself.

To modify an individual frame's properties, first click in the frame to select it; then select Frames, Frame Properties to open the Frame Properties dialog box (see [Figure 10.5](#)).

### **Figure 10.5**

You set specifications for features such as scrolling, frame size, and margins with the Frame Properties dialog box.

You can do the following in this dialog box:

- **Specify the frame name**—This is not the name of the page contained in the frame; it is used to identify an individual frame of the frameset. You use this name in various FrontPage dialog boxes (such as Insert Hyperlink) to specify the *target frame*, which is simply the frame in which a page should appear when the user clicks a link to that page. Specifying target frames can be a confusing process, and it is discussed later in this chapter in the section that begins "Creating Custom Frameset Layouts."
- **Specify the initial page appearing in the frame**—To do this, type the page URL or pathname into the Initial Page text box (or use the Browse button to locate and select the page).
- **Specify frame width or height (if the selected frame belongs to a column or row of frames), as relative to that of other frames**—This value can be either a percentage of the size of the window or as a set number of pixels. Click the drop-down list boxes in the Frame Size section to select among Relative, Percent, or Pixels. Given that you won't know which screen resolution your visitors are using, Relative or Percent might be the safest choices.
- **Specify the frame size as *fixed***—This means the user can't resize it by dragging the frame border. You do this by clearing the Resizable in Browser check box.
- **Adjust the margin width and margin height**—These control the separation of the frames in a browser.
- **Specify scrollbar behavior**—Do this by selecting Never, If Needed, or Always from the Show Scrollbars drop-down list.

## Modifying Frameset Properties

To do this, select Frames, Frame Properties, and click the Frames Page button in the Frame Properties dialog box. Because this is a frameset page, you get the Page Properties dialog box with one extra sheet (see [Figure 10.6](#)).

### **Figure 10.6**

The Frames tab lets you change spacing and borders.

Here you can specify whether the frames have borders (deselect the Show Borders check box to remove them) and set the frame spacing in pixels. Frame spacing determines the amount of padding to place between frames when they are viewed in a browser.

## Creating Custom Frameset Layouts

The basics of this are quite simple. However, things can get confusing when you start customizing the target frames for particular pages (the target frame is the frame in which the page appears when viewed in a browser). Because of this, a concrete example will be used to illustrate the approach.

This example has one frameset—which you'll eventually name `frameset.htm`—and five pages. One of these pages is a navigation page containing links and resides in the static frame; the other four are content pages. The example assumes that you have created the required pages before constructing the frameset. In the example, the page filenames and their titles are as follows:

**Table 10.1 Page Filenames and Corresponding Titles**

Filename	Title
<code>navig.htm</code>	Navigation
<code>chap01.htm</code>	Chapter One
<code>chap02.htm</code>	Chapter Two
<code>notes.htm</code>	Notes
<code>biblio.htm</code>	Bibliography

Begin by choosing File, New, Page or Web. Open the Page Template dialog as before and switch to the Frames tab. Select the Contents template and click OK. You now have a page that looks similar to the one in [Figure 10.7](#).

### **Figure 10.7**

The best way to create a custom frameset is to start with a template similar to the one you want.

This frameset will be modified so that the links in the content frame (on the left) will change the page in an upper-right frame, and the links in the upper-right frame will change the page in a lower-right frame (in [Figure 10.7](#), the right frame has not yet been split in two).

Now, right-click in the left frame and select Frame Properties from the shortcut menu. You see in the Frame Properties dialog box that this frame's name is `contents`. Close the dialog box and do the same in the right frame. Observe that its frame name is `main`. You didn't assign these names, so where did they come from? The template supplied them. To continue, close the Frame Properties dialog box. To split the right frame in two, click inside it and then select Frames, Split Frame. The Split Frame dialog box appears (see [Figure 10.8](#)).

### **Figure 10.8**

You can change the frameset layout with the Split Frame dialog box.

You want a horizontal split, so select the Split into Rows option button and click OK. You now have two right frames that are stacked one above the other. If you check the frame names of your new right

frames (right-click and select Frame Properties, as you did earlier), you see that the upper is still `main`, but the lower is now `main1`. You can, of course, change these names, but for convenience, leave them at their default values.

Complete the basic frameset with the following procedure:

1. In the left frame, click Set Initial Page. The Insert Hyperlink dialog box appears. Select `navig.htm` and click OK.
2. In the upper-right frame, click Set Initial Page and name the initial page `chap01.htm`. Use the same method in the lower-right frame to name the initial page `notes.htm`.
3. In the left frame, create two links: one to `chap01.htm` and the other to `chap02.htm`.
4. Click in the upper-right frame. Create some text there to be a hyperlink to `biblio.htm`. Select the text and create the hyperlink.

This sets up the frameset. However, the `biblio.htm` link, as created, has some unwanted behavior. Its destination page will appear in the upper frame, replacing the `chap01.htm` page that has the link.

Assume that you don't want this to happen; in other words, you want to be able to see both `chap01.htm` and `biblio.htm` at the same time. You want the upper-right frame to be a static frame with respect to the lower-right frame, so that the pages opened by links in the upper-right frame don't overwrite its link page.

To set this up, right-click the link and select Hyperlink Properties from the shortcut menu. When the Edit Hyperlink dialog box opens, click the Target Frame button. The Target Frame dialog box appears (see [Figure 10.9](#)). The left panel of this dialog box shows a schematic representation of the frameset; the right panel gives a list of Common Targets.

Notice the top item in this list (it will be automatically selected). It reads Page Default (main). This "main" means the link's destination page (`biblio.htm`) will appear in the same frame as the page that owns the link. In other words, as matters now stand, `biblio.htm` will replace `chap01.htm` in the upper-right frame when the link to `biblio.htm` is clicked.

### **Figure 10.9**

The Target Frame dialog box makes selecting a target frame as easy as clicking in it.

To change this behavior, all you have to do is use the schematic of the frameset that appears in the dialog box's left panel. Simply click the frame where you want the page to appear; this selects the desired target frame.

You can verify that this has happened by looking in the dialog box's Target Setting text box. This box shows the name of the target frame, the frame in which the page will appear. In the example, with the lower-right frame selected, it is `main1`.

Note the check box labeled Set As Page Default. If this is checked, the destination page for each link appears in that target frame, unless you change it. This is a convenience so you don't have to manually assign target frames for each link you put on the page. If you leave it unchecked, the default target frame of each link will be the frame where the link is appearing.

When you've established the new target frame, click OK twice to close the dialog boxes. `biblio.htm` will now appear in the lower-right frame when the link is clicked.

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**Note** - It's necessary to distinguish between a *target frame* and the *default target frame*. The former is an attribute of a link and is specified in the Target Frame dialog box. The latter is a page property and specifies the frame where the links in that page will display their destinations, unless otherwise specified. In effect, setting the default target frame of a page also sets the target frame of any hyperlink created on that page. You can set this up through the Page Properties dialog box; in the General Tab, click the pencil icon at the right of the Default Target Frame text box. This opens the Target Frame dialog box, where you select which frame is to be the default.

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Next, on the `chap01.htm` page in the upper-right frame, place a link to the `notes.htm` page and change the target frame of `notes.htm` to `main1` as well. To complete the example, open `chap02.htm` and insert links to both `biblio.htm` and `notes.htm`.

Select Save or Save As; you'll be asked for a filename and page title for the frameset file. In the example, it was christened (not very originally) `frames.htm` and `Frameset`, respectively. Again, you can tell when you're saving a frameset page because a schematic representation of it appears in the right side of the Save As dialog box.

The completed frame layout resembles that shown in [Figure 10.10](#). The Contents frame's hyperlinks will change the page in the upper-right frame, and the links in the upper-right frame will change the page in the lower-right frame.

### **Figure 10.10**

A three-frame display with navigation links in two of the frames.

Note that the upper-right frame is not a static frame with respect to the Contents (left) frame because the Contents frame's links do change the pages that appear in the upper-right frame. The Contents frame, however, is a true static frame—nothing alters it. To make a fully static frame, just be sure that it is not the target frame of any hyperlink in the current Web.

## **More About Target Frames**

Target frames can appear in contexts other than those just described. The next four sections examine the use of target frames with WWW sites, bookmarks, and images, as well as the functions of special types of target frames.

### **Using Target Frames and Text Links with World Wide Web URLs**

This task is the same as setting up a target frame for the current Web, except that you use the techniques from Chapter 4, "Developing Text, Lists, and Hyperlinks," to set up the link to the remote site. The Web site's page shows up in the frame you specify. Remember, however, that it has less room for display and it might look cramped.

→ For more information about creating links, see "Developing Text, Lists, and Hyperlinks," p. 63

## Using Target Frames and Bookmarks

Bookmarks and frames don't really have much to do with each other, although you can specify both when creating or editing a link. The destination page simply scrolls to the bookmark when it displays in the named frame.

## Using Target Frames with Images and Imagemaps

Setting up image-based links to use target frames is very similar to the procedure for establishing text links. Select Insert, Hyperlink and use the Hyperlink dialog box and Target Frame dialog box to select the target.

→ For more information about linking, see Chapter 4.


→ For more information about image-based links and imagemaps, see Chapter 5, "Enhancing Pages with Graphics and Multimedia."

Likewise, drawing a *hotspot* (the portion of an image that acts as the link) on an image brings up the Create Hyperlink dialog box, and you use the dialog box to specify the target frame.

## Special Target Frames

Four special target types can be used with frames. Selecting one of these in the Target Frame dialog box has the following effects:

- **New Window**—The page to which the link points loads into a new browser window. The HTML for this target is `_blank`.
- **Same Frame**—The page to which the link points overwrites the page where the calling link resides, but the frame layout in the browser window is not disturbed. The HTML for this target is `_self`. This is the default.
- **Parent Frame**—The page to which the link points overwrites the page where the calling link resides. The browser window is reset. The HTML for this target is `parent`.
- **Whole Window**—The page to which the link points loads into the whole window of the browser, replacing the frameset. The HTML for this target is `_top`.

 If your pages aren't appearing where you want them, see "Pages of a Frameset Appear in the Wrong Places" in the Troubleshooting section at the end of this chapter.

## Creating a Custom Frameset Template

If the frame layout is one you use often, you might want to save the frameset file as a template. The procedure is the same for both page templates and frameset templates. Note that only the frameset file is

saved as the template, even if you have inserted initial pages into it.

→ For the procedures for creating templates, see "Creating Pages with FrontPage Templates," p. 163

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Caution - If your link loads the destination page into the same frame as the origin page, it's extremely important to avoid a dead end at the destination. If users can't find a way out of a frame, its contents will sit there until they move to another site entirely. This tells them that you designed your site carelessly. Make sure you add a link to such a page, to keep it from becoming a dead end.

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## Incorporating Existing Pages into a Frameset

Inevitably, you will need to add pages to an already created frameset. Begin by creating the desired pages. Then follow this procedure:

1. Open the frameset and insert a link to the new page in whatever frame is required. Don't close the Insert Hyperlink dialog box, however.
2. Select Target Frame to open the Target Frame dialog box.
3. Select the desired target frame from the schematic and, if appropriate, mark the Set As Page Default check box.
4. Click OK twice to close the dialog boxes. The link will now open its destination page in the specified frame.

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**Note** - You should not set up your home page as a frameset unless you're determined to force people to view frames from the moment they reach your home page. If this is what you really want, you can set up a framed home page by creating an empty Web and then creating a frameset for it. Give this frameset the filename `default.htm`, and that's your framed home page.

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## More About Static Frames

Now that you know about default target frames, we can elaborate a little further on static frames. These are important entities because you often have frames on a page (navigation areas are a good example) that must not be changed.

To set up a static frame, open the initial page of the frame (the one that appears when the frameset is first opened). Then, in the Page Properties for that page, specify a default target frame that is different from the frame the page itself appears in. This ensures that all pages opened from that page's links will

appear in the target frame and will not overwrite the page with the links. Thus, the content of the static frame is fixed; only the display in the target frame changes as the links are clicked.

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**Caution** - You can overwrite a static frame's content in two ways. If another page's default target frame specifies the static frame, that will carry out the overwrite. So will specifying the static frame as the target frame of a hyperlink. Of course, you might encounter situations in which you actually do want to overwrite the content of the static frame.

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**Tip** - All current browsers support frames, but a lot of users don't care for the presentation method. The best thing to do (apart from not using frames at all) is to supply an alternative area of your Web that works properly without frames. When your visitor goes to the framed part of your Web, he should be notified that a nonframe alternative is available and be provided with a link to it.

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## Using Picture Properties with Frames

If you open an image's Picture Properties dialog box and select the General tab, you'll see a Default Hyperlink section at the bottom. Use its Location box (with the Browse button, if appropriate) to set a default destination for the image's hyperlink. Then, click the pencil icon next to the Target Frame box and use the Target Frame dialog box to specify the frame where the destination page will appear (see [Figure 10.11](#)).

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**Note** - Are you wondering why you'd use Picture Properties to set a default destination and target frame for an image's hyperlink? After all, you can get the same result by specifying both these properties when you first create the link. The answer: You'd do this when the image has hotspots, to set a default if the user clicks an area not covered by the hotspot.

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### **Figure 10.11**

The Default Hyperlink area is where you specify the location and target frame of an image's link.

## Floating Frames

Unlike its predecessor, FrontPage 2002 supports floating frames. This design technique enables you to "cut a hole" in the page and make another page show through it, with scrolling capability if necessary. Do this:

1. Select Insert, Inline Frame. A gray box appears with two buttons: Set Initial Page and New Page.

2. Use either button as you did with regular frames. The page appears in the floating frame window.
3. To modify the inline frame properties, click the top border of the frame to select it. Then right-click the border and select Inline Frame Properties from the shortcut menu (see [Figure 10.12](#)).
4. Set the desired properties of the frame and click OK.

### **Figure 10.12**

The Inline Frame Properties dialog box lets you specify the initial page, the frame name, and other key values.

The Properties dialog box lets you set the following values:

- The name assigned to the frame
- The initial page
- The frame size, in pixels or percentages
- The frame margins, in pixels
- The alignment of the frame on the page
- The appearance or nonappearance of scrollbars
- The text that appears if the user's browser does not support floating frames. (IE 4 and up do so, as does Navigator 6, but Navigator 3 and 4 do not.)
- The borders around the frame, if desired

## **Deleting a Frameset**

Deleting a frameset is easy. The frameset file, with its normal HTM extension, appears in the Folder List or in Folders view just as a page would. You simply select it and then press the Delete key. However, if you delete a frameset, you also must remove all frame target entries in any page properties or links that referenced the deleted frameset. If you don't, browsers become confused about where they're supposed to be looking and give unpredictable results.

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**Tip** - You can instruct a form to send its results to a frame. You do this with the Form Properties dialog box. Use the pencil icon next to the Target Frame text box to open the Target Frame dialog box, and go from there.

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## **Using FrontPage's Frame Templates**

FrontPage supplies 10 templates to help you create various framesets:

- **Bannered, two-column document**—In this document, the links in the banner change the left (contents) frame.
- **Table of Contents**—This has a left frame that changes the frame on the right.
- **Footer document**—The links on the footer change the main frame.
- **Document with footnotes**—The links in the main frame change the footnotes.
- **Header document**—The links in the header change the main frame.
- **Header, Footer, and Contents document**—The header and footer links change the main frame content.
- **Horizontal split**—This has independent top and bottom frames.
- **Nested, three-level hierarchy**
- **Top-down, three-level hierarchy**
- **Vertical split**—This has independent left and right frames.

Creating your own custom framesets is so easy you might prefer that approach if you use frames to any extent. However, do take a look at the templates because they can be very useful.

## Using the Banner and Contents Template

As you did earlier with the Header frame template, create this one and populate it. Assuming you create and save a page for each frame, you end up with four new files: the frameset file itself and three ordinary pages. Of the ordinary pages, one populates the banner frame, one is for the contents frame, and one will appear in the main (lower-right) frame. This last page will change according to the links in the contents frame.

A real site would have many different pages appearing in the main frame. To put the frameset into service, use the editor to add page elements to the banner page and the contents page, and create as many main pages as you need. [Figure 10.13](#) shows an example of how the results might look in a browser.

### **Figure 10.13**

Your visitors can use the left Table of Contents frame to see other pages, without losing the Table of Contents itself.

## Using the Contents Template

This is actually a simpler version of the template discussed earlier. The banner frame has been removed, but the links in the left frame still change the pages that appear in the right frame.

## Using the Footer Template

The display produced by this template looks similar to the one in [Figure 10.14](#). The links in the footer frame change the content of the large main frame.

### **Figure 10.14**

Use the Footer template to put navigational controls at the bottom of the browser display.

## **Using the Footnotes Template**

This is the same as the Footer template, but the links go in the opposite direction. Clicking the footnoted text in the upper frame makes the footnote appear in the scrolling lower frame. The virtue of this for your visitor is that it's much more convenient than flipping back and forth through a single page—or linking to another full-screen page—every time she wants to read a footnote. The viewer just clicks a footnote entry in the main document and the note appears at the bottom of the screen. To implement this application, put all the footnotes on one page, bookmark each one, and link to the bookmarks from the appropriate places in the main document.

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**Note** - As you know, the traditional footnote indicator is a superscript number. You can get these by going to the Font dialog box and marking them in the Effects section. However, a footnote superscript in a printed document is really just a link to the bottom of the page. Because the reader can already see a Web link, do you really need superscripts in a Web page to indicate a footnote? Probably not. Moreover, using superscripts in FrontPage makes line spacing slightly uneven.

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## **Using the Header, Footer, and Table of Contents Template**

This is the most elaborate in appearance of the templates, but it is merely built on the simpler ones. It gives you static frames at the top and bottom of the page and is a good starting point for a complex, framed environment that requires extensive navigational tools. For example, one static frame could be a site identification area, and the other could be the navigation control panel. Two more frames lie between these two static areas: the left might be a Table of Contents, and the right usually is the main data display area. You can use your imagination to work out other uses for the arrangement.

This is also a more complex frameset—with respect to links—than the others you've looked at. The links in the upper static frame make their destination pages appear in the left frame (the TOC frame), and the links in the TOC frame and the bottom frame make their destination pages appear in the right frame (the main frame). Links in the main frame—unless you set them otherwise—make their targets replace the current page in that frame.

You can change all this, as you know. For example, you can reset the page properties of the page in the top static frame to make its target document appear in the bottom frame (but then the bottom frame wouldn't be static) and so on. With a frameset as potentially complicated as this one, you'd need to do some careful page and data organization. You also would need to do even more careful testing if you decided to modify the targets of the various frames.

## **Using the Top-Down Hierarchy Template**

Use the top-down hierarchy template for all or part of a site whose page and data organization is, as the name suggests, hierarchical in nature.

The frameset establishes the hierarchy as follows:

- The default target of the top frame is the middle frame.
- The default target of the middle frame is the bottom frame.
- The bottom frame's default target is itself.

So, you'd use this scheme to go from broad categories to more precisely distinguished ones, to fine detail. Depending on how much information you had for each entry, you would use either full pages or bookmark entries within pages. An example of a hierarchical information structure is shown in [Figure 10.15](#).

### **Figure 10.15**

A hierarchical frame structure gives a cascade effect—in this case, from general information to more specific to quite detailed.

## **Using the Nested Hierarchy Template**

The nested hierarchy template is similar in approach to the previous frameset, but the hierarchy works from left to top-right and then down.

In practice, the links in the left frame display their destination pages in the top-right frame; those in the top-right frame display their destination pages in the bottom-right frame. In [Figure 10.16](#), you can see a nested version of the pages that appeared earlier in the top-down hierarchy. The visual characteristics of your page content (such as large or small images, number of images, and quantity of text) would influence which frame layout you choose.

### **Figure 10.16**

A nested hierarchy gives a different effect from a vertically organized one.

## **Using the Horizontal and Vertical Split Templates**

These are identical except in their orientation. The two frames are independent of each other—the links in each frame simply overwrite the current contents of that frame.

# **Troubleshooting**

## **Pages of a Frameset Appear in the Wrong Places**

*The pages of a frameset show up in the wrong frame, or even open in a new browser window.*

A common source of misbehavior in FrontPage-generated frames is setting an incorrect default target frame. Remember that the *default target frame* is a page property that specifies the frame in which the links display their destination pages. If this property refers to a nonexistent target frame, the destination page of the link will show up in a new browser window. If it refers to an existing but incorrect frame,

the page will appear where you don't want it.

Similarly, setting the target frame of a hyperlink so that it references a nonexistent frame also forces the link's destination page to open in a new browser window. In general, if your frames are behaving badly, begin troubleshooting by checking for errors in the target frame name (in the Target Frame dialog box) or the default target frame name (in the Page Properties dialog box).

## **Design Corner: Advantages and Disadvantages of Frames**

You should be aware, before you decide to use frames on any part of your site, that framed pages inspire loathing in many users of the Web. This isn't new—dislike of the technique was already evident in 1996, when frames began popping up here and there on Web sites. However, it was believed then (mostly by those Web designers who liked frames) that this irritation would go away as people got used to the technique. However, the dislike is still very much with us.

The chief advantage of frames—consisting of allowing one part of the screen to change its content in response to links in another part—seems to be outweighed by their drawbacks. A major problem is that the URL of a framed page (the URL appearing in the browser's Address or Location bar) belongs to the highest level of the frameset. Consequently, the URLs of the contained pages are not readily accessible to the user, if at all. This makes bookmarking a contained page extremely awkward. Furthermore, the frames make the Back button's behavior nonintuitive, and they have a confusing effect on search engines. Even worse, saving a framed page is difficult for an unsophisticated user because simply clicking File, Save As in his browser saves the top-level frame, which is probably not the item he wants.

Smaller monitors (14-inch and 15-inch) also don't really give enough room for frames, especially when navigation bars are added. The screen ends up being elaborate in form and meager in content, which is not at all how you want your Web site to be perceived.

All this is not to say that you should never use frames. They might serve a purpose you can achieve in no other way. However, you should think of them as a specialized tool for reaching specialized goals, rather than as a general-purpose approach to Web site design. Unless you are very adept, don't base your entire site around a framed structure.

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