Project Seven Development

PVII Column Composer Magic User Guide

MAKING CSS COLUMNS AND PAGES HAS NEVER BEEN THIS EASY
We hope you enjoy using this tool as much as we enjoyed making it!

Al Sparber & Gerry Jacobsen
PVII

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PVII Column Composer Magic (CCM)

This user guide is intended to introduce you to the way Column Composer works and how to use the interface. In addition to this user guide, there is an online repository of highly focused Column Composer Magic deployment and customization tutorials, in both text and video formats.

Online CCM Tutorials and Videos

Install the extension

Look for the extension installer file **p7_CCM_251.mxp** (or higher) in the root of the zip archive you downloaded. Double-click the file to install the extension. Dreamweaver's Extension Manager will open and you will be prompted to complete the installation. Once your installation is completed, restart Dreamweaver.

OS X users: If, upon double-clicking the installer, Extension Manager does not properly launch, you have a file association issue. To remedy the problem locate the installer file from inside a Finder window and double-click it.

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Work in a defined Dreamweaver site

Before you begin, make sure you are working inside a defined Dreamweaver web site. This is necessary so that Dreamweaver knows how to link required assets. If you are new to Dreamweaver or need to learn how to define a web site, follow these simple steps:

Choose Site > New Site

Specify local site location

The Site category of the Site Setup dialog box is the only one you need to fill out to begin working on your Dreamweaver site. This category lets you specify the local folder where you'll store all of your site files. When you're ready, you can fill out the other categories in the **Site Setup dialog box**, including the Servers category, where you can specify a remote folder on your remote server.

Site Name

The name that appears in the Files panel and in the Manage Sites dialog box; it does not appear in the browser.

Local Site Folder

This is the name of the folder on your local disk where you store site files, templates, and library items. Create a folder on your hard disk or click the folder icon to browse to the folder. When Dreamweaver resolves site root-relative links, it does so relative to this folder.

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Compose CSS Columns or Entire CSS Pages

MAKING CSS COLUMNS AND PAGES HAS NEVER BEEN THIS EASY

Column Composer Magic is a revolutionary Dreamweaver plug-in that enables you to compose CSS column structures, **as well as entire CSS pages,** from the comfort of a graphical user interface inside Dreamweaver. You can use CCM to add multi-column structures anywhere on your existing page or inside widgets, such as accordion or tab panels. You can also use CCM to create an entire CSS page layout. *With CCM, you are in total control*.

CCM is based on rows. Each row you create can be set to various configurations of between 1 and 5 columns. Rows can be added, deleted, or re-ordered. You can insert any type of content into your rows and columns, which are fully editable within Dreamweaver's design view. Nesting of structures is fully supported.

The Column Composer Magic Interface

Column Composer Magic has its own intuitive user interface—fully integrated inside Dreamweaver. The UI has a Create and a Modify mode that give you complete control over the creation and modification processes.

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The Create and Modify UI Modes

Based on your current insertion point in the page, the interface will open in **Create** mode or **Modify** mode. You can then create a new CCM structure or modify an existing one. If your cursor is inside of an existing CCM structure, you will get a special dialog box asking you if you'd like to modify the existing structure or create a nested one.

A Column Composer Structure is comprised of the rows and columns you define in the CCM interface.

Create mode

If your insertion point is not within an existing Column Composer Magic structure, the user interface will open in *Create* mode.

Modify mode

If your insertion point is inside an existing Column Composer Magic structure, a dialog box will open allowing you to choose whether to **Modify** the existing structure or **Create a Nested One.** This allows you to easily add new Column Composer Magic structures into the columns of existing Column Composer Magic structures—a process called nesting.

CCM Features

CCM comes with many useful options and features that can be used to customize the look and feel of your rows and columns.

Creating a New CCM structure

Column Composer Magic structures can be inserted anywhere on your page. They can even be nested inside an existing Column Composer Magic column or the content panel of a PVII widget. You can insert as many individual Column Composer Magic structures as you like on your page. Each one can be configured independently to set different options and features. Different structures on a single page can share the same style theme or be set to separate style themes. Each structure can contain any type of content. Column content is directly editable in Dreamweaver Design View using normal Dreamweaver editing techniques.

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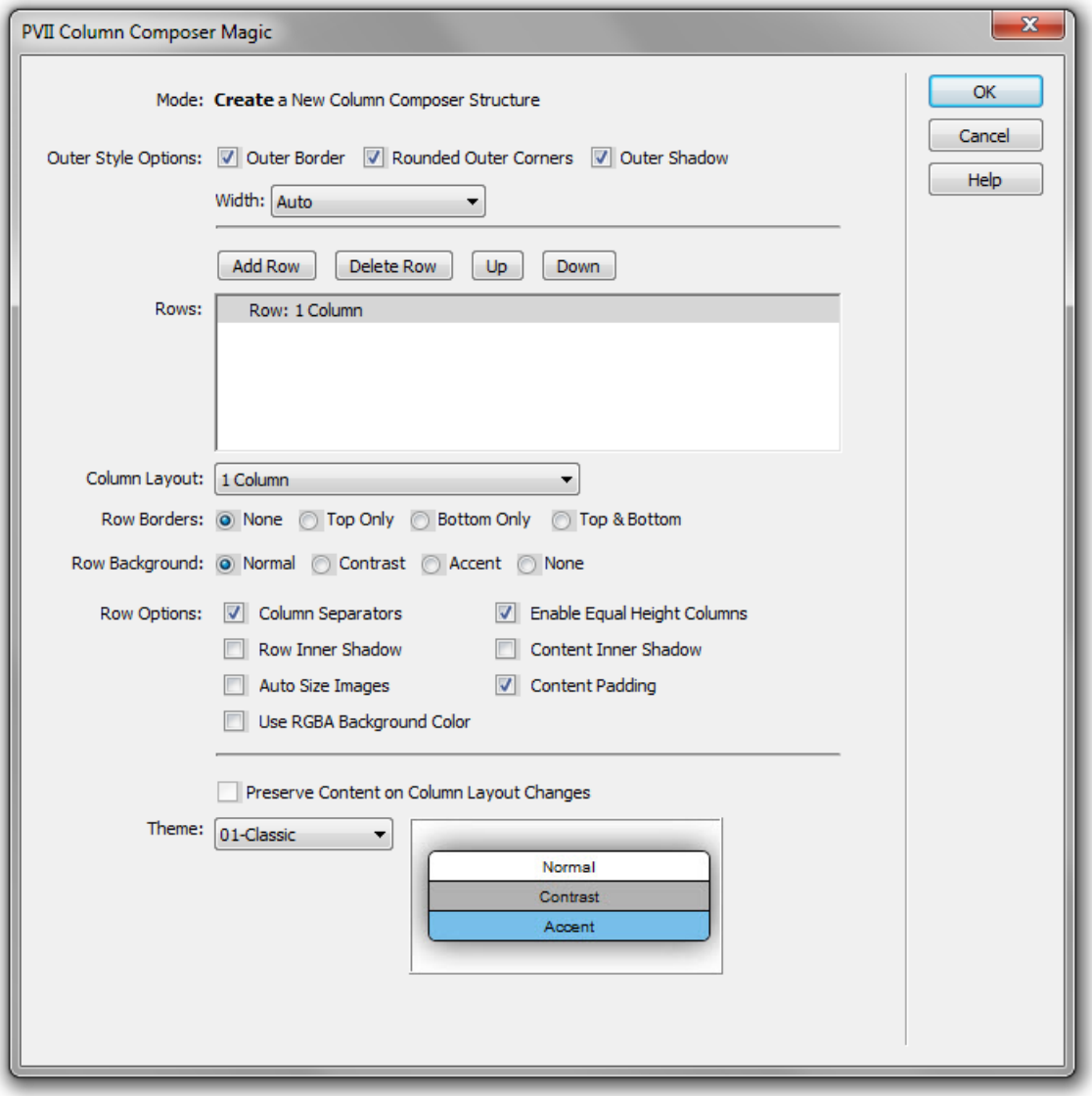
The Creation process

- Establish the insertion point for your new Column Composer Magic structure by clicking in the area of the page where you would like the structure to be created.
- Click the Column Composer Magic icon in the *PVII* Section of Dreamweaver's *Insert Bar/Panel* or choose
  Insert > **Studio VII** > **Column Composer Magic by PVII**.
  The Column Composer Magic user interface will open in the **Create New Column Composer Magic Structure** mode.



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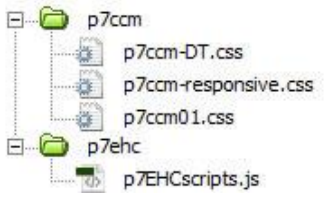
Add as many rows as you like, set your column layouts and options, and then click **OK** to build the structure at your insertion point. We'll discuss each of the interface options, in detail, in the **Modifying an Existing Structure** section below.

You can create as many Column Composer Magic structures as you like on a given page.

Tip: When you insert a Column Composer Magic structure, some of the more advanced CSS styles, such as shadows, rounded corners, and equal height columns will not be reflected in Dreamweaver Design View. Dreamweaver simply does not support some modern CSS standards. Column Composer Magic styling and functionality can be accurately tested by previewing in your browser.

Asset Folders

When you create a structure, the system creates an assets folder named **p7CCM** at the same level as the page that contains your structure. This folder will contain the relevant CSS files. To work around Dreamweaver's inability to render some of the modern CSS techniques used, the system will automatically create a Design Time (DT) style sheet that will allow Dreamweaver to render the structure as accurately as possible.



If you have enabled the Equal Height Column option the system will also create an asset folder named **p7ehc** at the same level as the page that contains your structure. This folder will contain the Equal Height Column JavaScript file.

The system will also create a **p7ie_fixes** folder at the root-level of your site so that we can safely link to an external CSS file within a conditional comment and not have to worry that Dreamweaver will not be able to adjust its path.

When you publish your site, make sure you upload the entire **p7CCM, p7ehc,** and **p7ie_fixes** folders.

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Modifying an Existing structure

You can modify any of the existing CCM structures on your page at any time.

The Modify process

- Click inside the Column Composer Magic structure that you wish to modify.
- Click the *Column Composer Magic* **icon** in the *PVII* Section of Dreamweaver's Insert Bar or Insert Panel—or choose
  Modify > Studio VII > Modify Column Composer Magic by PVII

Note: If you use a Macintosh computer, Apple bugs will sometimes cause the Modify menu to be inactive (grayed out). If this happens to you, use the icon to launch the interface. You can also launch the interface from the Insert menu. The system will open the interface in the appropriate mode. If you would like to fix this Apple bug, download and install this Command and then restart Dreamweaver.

Select Action Dialog

This dialog box will allow you to make a choice to either modify the existing CCM structure or nest a new CCM structure inside the existing one.

Note: This dialog only appears when your insertion point is inside an existing CCM structure. If your insertion point is not inside a CCM structure, the main interface will open directly in Create mode.

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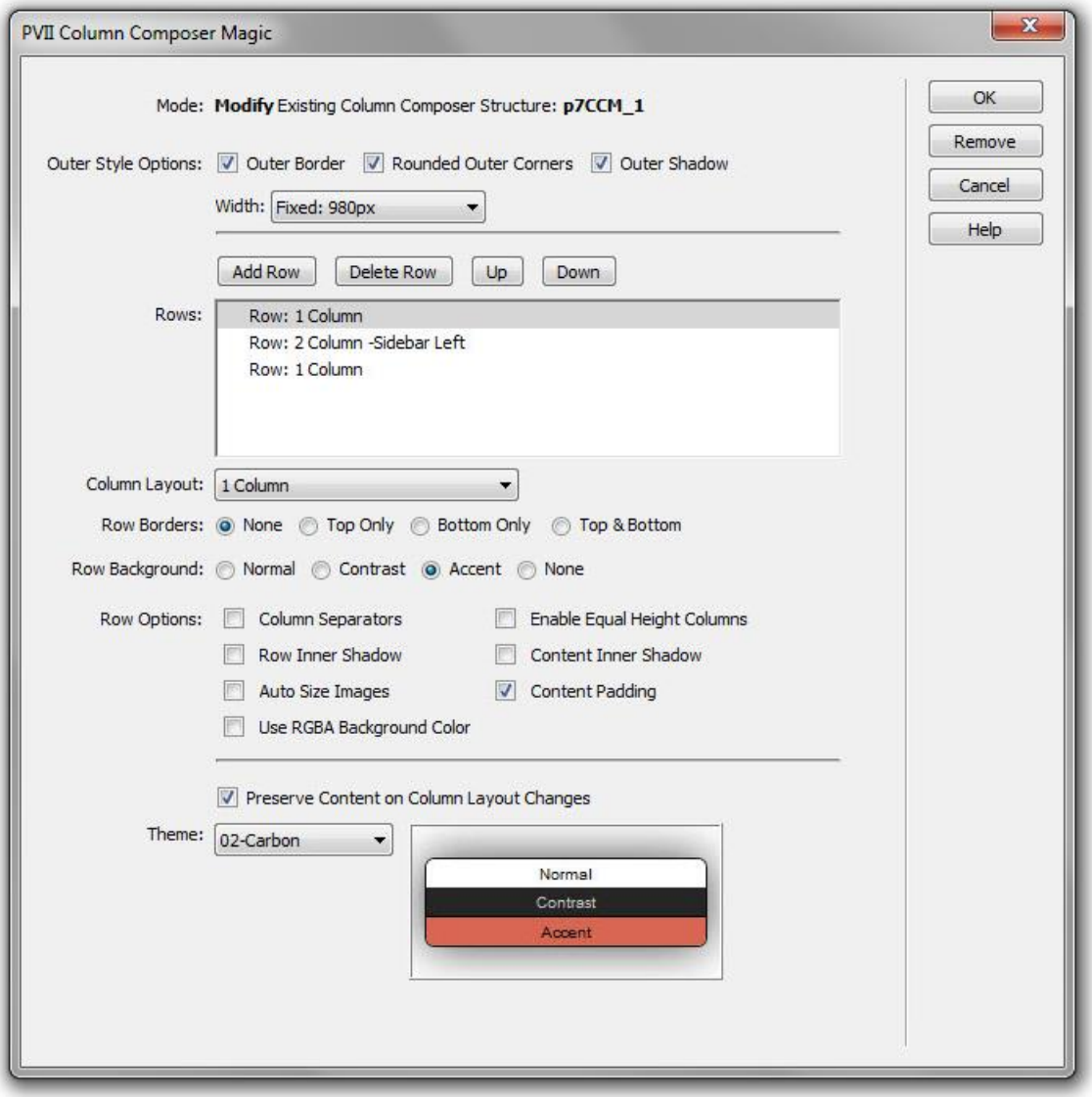
The CCM User Interface will open in the **Modify Existing Column Composer Structure mode**.



Note: The selected CCM structure will also be highlighted in Dreamweaver Design View and in Code View. The highlighting will help serve as a visual clue to the actual CCM structure you are Modifying, which could be especially helpful when working with nested structures.

Configure your rows and options and click **OK**.

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Managing the User Interface Items

Mode

Displays the current operational Mode for the user interface—either **Create** or **Modify**. When in Modify mode, the **id** of the Column Composer Magic structure being modified will also be displayed.

Outer Style Options

These options are applied to the outer container of the CCM structure. The styling of these options will be based on the **Style Theme** you have chosen.

Note: If you have chosen *The Un-Style* theme, none of the outer styling options will apply.

Outer Border

This applies a border around the outside of the CCM structure.

Rounded Outer Corners

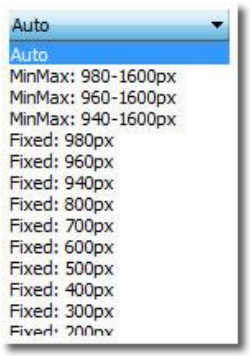
This will apply rounded corners to the outside of the CCM structure.

Outer Shadow

This will apply a shadow to the outside of the CCM structure.

Width

The CCM system allows you to choose from a variety of width options for your structure:



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Auto –The CCM structure will have no width assigned and will adapt to the entire available width of the browser window or that of any containing element to which a width has been assigned. In most cases, when nesting a CCM structure inside another CCM structure, you should choose Auto.

MinMax – Choose this option when using the CCM system to create a page framework. The structure will be flexible with minimum and maximum width settings. This allows the structure from getting too wide on large monitors and prevents it from getting too narrow in smaller browser windows. In most cases, you should not use MinMax widths when nesting CCM structures.

Fixed – Choose one of the fixed widths.

Rows

This box displays a line for each row in the CCM structure. The text represents the *Column Layout* option chosen for that row. You can add, delete or move rows at any time. Select the line you wish to act on and use the *row management buttons* above the Row listing.

Row Management Buttons

Add: Use this button to add a row. A new line will be created with the default "**1 Column**" layout option. The new line will be created immediately after the currently selected line.

Delete: Use this button to remove the currently selected row. The row and its contents will be removed.

Up: This button will move the selected line in the Rows list up one line. Successive clicks will keep moving the row up, one line per click, until it reaches the top of the list.

Down: This button will move the selected line in the Rows list down one line. Successive clicks will keep moving it down, one line per click, until it reaches the bottom.

Row Options

Row options are set independently for each row that you add to the structure.

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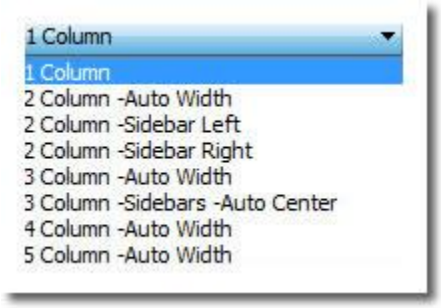
Column Layout

Each row can have a different column configuration. Choose from the list of preset configurations:



Row Borders

Each new row is initially set to display with neither top nor bottom borders. To provide a separation line between rows enable **top**, **bottom** or **top and bottom** borders.

Row Background

Each row can be assigned a background color:

- **Normal** – The default row background color for the selected Style Theme.
- **Contrast** –This is the contrasting color for the selected Style Theme, this is normally used for header and footer rows.
- **Accent** –This is the background color intended for data or information boxes within a layout.
- **None** –Choose this option if you do not want a background color, the row will be transparent.

Tip: The actual colors for these choices depend on the style theme being used and are illustrated in the Style Theme preview image.

Column Separators

Enable this option to show borders between the columns in the selected row.

Enable Equal Height Columns

Check this option to have the system use the Equal Height Columns script to assure that all columns in the row will be of equal height, regardless of the amount of content in each column.

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Row Inner Shadows
Enable this option to show a shadow around the interior of the entire row.

Content Inner Shadows
Enable this option to show a shadow around the interior of each column in the row.

Auto Size Images
This option sets any image placed inside a column in the selected row to dynamically resize based on the width of the column, assuring that your images will always fit—even when your layout is set to a flexible width.

Content Padding
By default, each column's interior is assigned padding, which creates a visually pleasing sense of space around normal content. If you would prefer that a particular row's columns should be free of any white-space you can Uncheck (disable) this option.

Use RGBA Background Color
Each Style Theme includes an RGBA background color option. The RGBA color syntax allows for opacity as part of the style rule and provides a pleasing semi-transparent look for the background color.

Note: Dreamweaver Design View cannot render the RGBA colors and will show the normal background color. The RGBA background color will render perfectly in all modern browsers. IE8 and under will show the normal background color.

Preserve Content on Column Layout Changes
When changing an existing row's Column Layout to a smaller number of columns, the content that was in a deleted column will be orphaned. With this option turned on the system will automatically move any orphaned content into the last remaining column to assure that no custom page content is ever lost.

This option is automatically turned on whenever the system is in Modify mode and automatically turned off when in Create mode.

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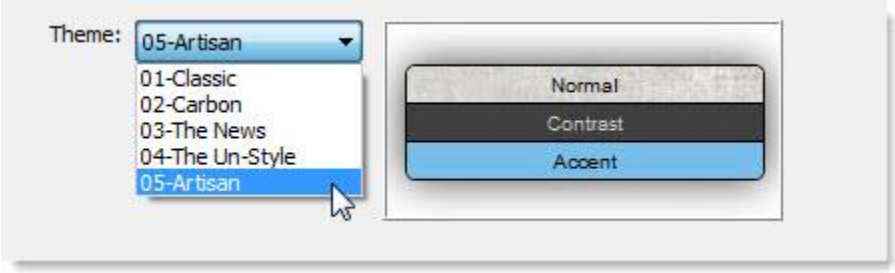
Style Theme

Column Composer Magic comes with a variety of pre-defined CSS style themes. Choose a theme that best approximates the look you desire. You can later make edits to the style sheet to fully customize the look. You can change to a different style theme at any time without affecting your content or settings.



A preview of the selected Style Theme is displayed to the right of the Style Theme select list. This Preview will change whenever you select a different Style Theme.

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Command Buttons

The following command buttons are available.

In Create Mode

In Modify Mode

OK: When you are done, click the **OK** button to build the structure.

Remove: Available in **Modify mode only**. Click to remove the current **CCM** structure from your page, along with any assets that are no longer needed.

Note: All actions and changes to the page made by the CCM system are also available in the Dreamweaver Undo memory. If you accidentally remove content that you did not intend, you can restore the actions by choosing Edit-Undo from the main Dreamweaver menu.

Cancel

Click the *Cancel* button to completely abort the current operation. This will close the interface and no changes will be made to your page.

Help

Click the *Help* button to open the associated Help File in your browser. This page can remain open for easy reference while you continue working with the Column Composer Magic interface.

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Using Column Composer Magic

If you're like us, you've already jumped in and created some structures and are ready to learn how to use all of the features to their utmost capabilities. But before you do, there are a couple of points that bear covering:

Make sure your structure will fit

If you choose a fixed width, make sure that it will fit. If your layout is flexible, you should make sure you have set a **min-width** in the CSS rule for your body. Min-width allows a layout to contract to a specified width, at which point the browser will spawn horizontal scrollbars. The value you set should be based on the point at which your layout contracts sufficiently to make reading the content difficult or impossible. Look for the body rule in the CSS file that is used for your general page layout, not in the CCM style sheet. If one does not exist, create one using this syntax:

body { min-width: 800px; }

Insertion points

Click where you want the structure to go. If you click in the middle of a paragraph, for example, the structure will split the paragraph—ending the original paragraph before the structure and creating a new paragraph below. If the structure does not go precisely where you wanted it to go, simply choose **Edit** > **Undo** and try again.

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Creating adjacent structures

There will be times when, instead of nesting one structure inside another, you might need to insert a new CCM structure below an existing one. To do this, place your cursor inside the existing structure and open the CCM interface. The Select Action dialog will open:

Choose the third option:

Create Adjacent Column Composer Magic

The main interface will open and the structure you create will be inserted below the selected one.

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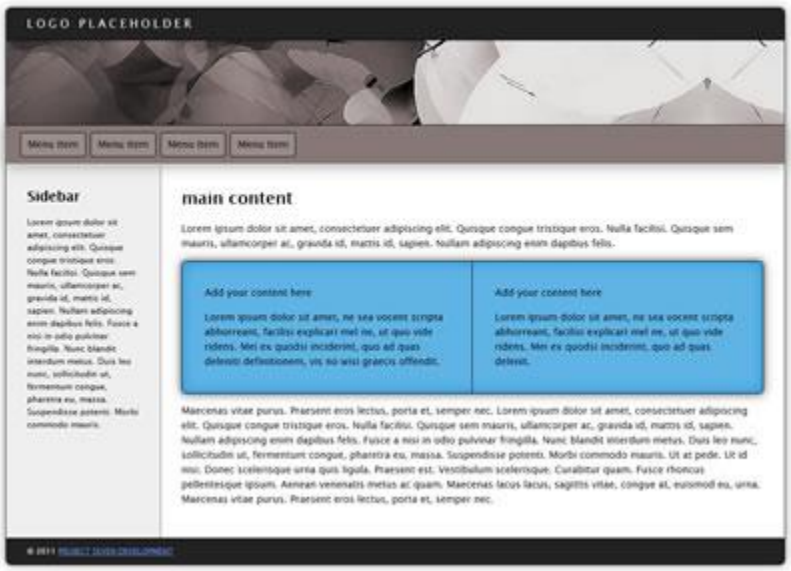
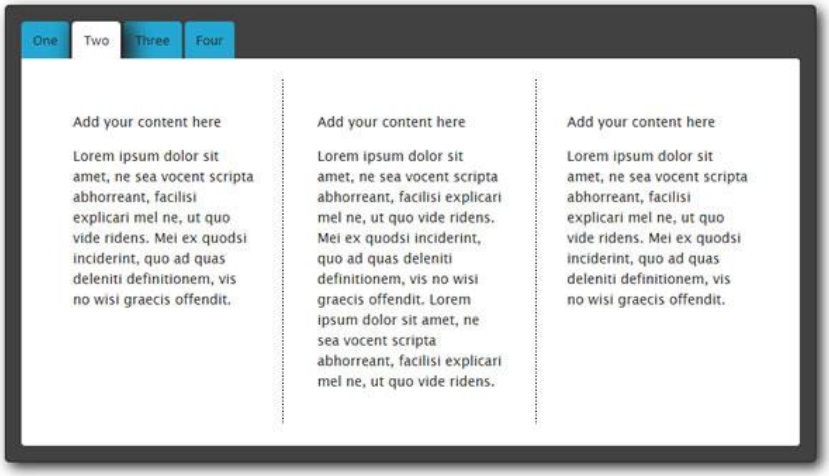
Inserting CCM in existing pages and widgets

If you need to insert a multi-column structure in your page, CCM can save you the time and hassle of coding it yourself. Simply open your page, click where you want to insert your structure, open the CCM interface, and compose your structure. When inserting into existing pages, it is recommended that you choose the **Auto** width option. That way, your structure will conform to the width of your existing page.

This is a 2-column CCM structure inserted into the main column of one of our CSS Templates (Page Builder Magic):



This is a 3-column structure inserted into a Tab Panel Magic 2 content panel:



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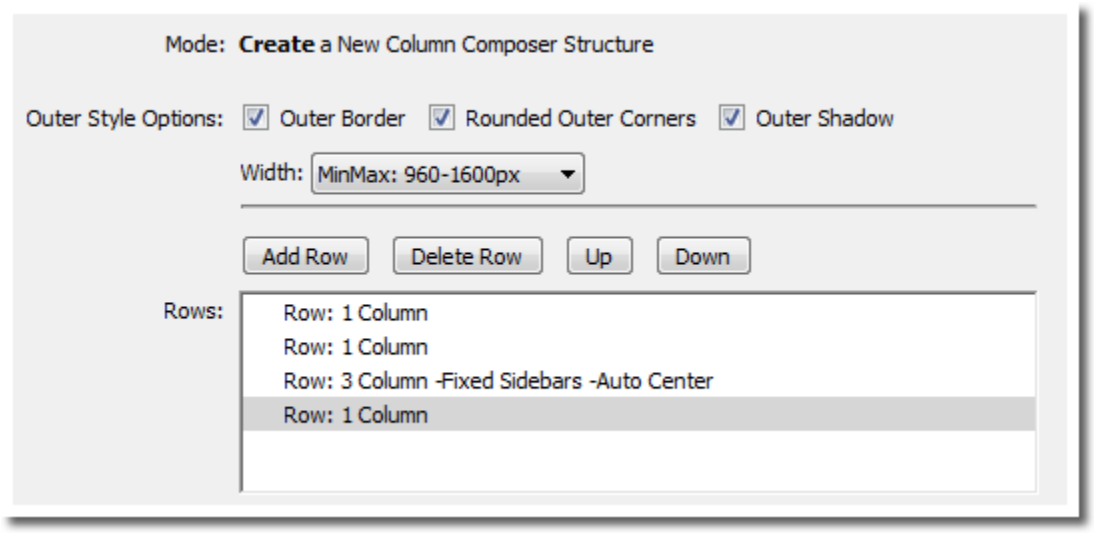
Creating entire pages with CCM

Once you use Column Composer to create a web page, *you'll wonder how you ever lived without it*. Here's what you do:

Create a blank page and save it in your defined Dreamweaver site. Now, let's say you want a page with the following characteristics:

1. Flexible width with minimum and maximum width constraints
2. A banner
3. A horizontal menu below the banner
4. A 3-column main content area with fixed-width sidebars
5. A footer

Open the CCM interface and create your structure with 4 rows:



The first row is your single-column banner. The second row is where your menu goes, the third row is for your main content and sidebars, and the last column is your footer. Set any additional options you desire and a style theme, and click **OK**.

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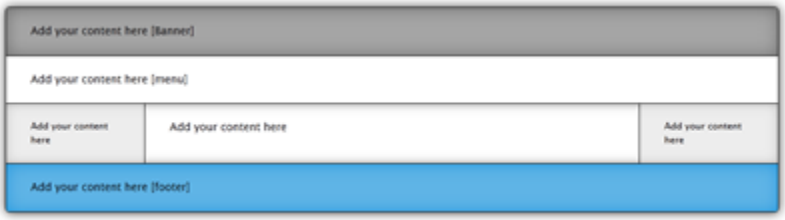
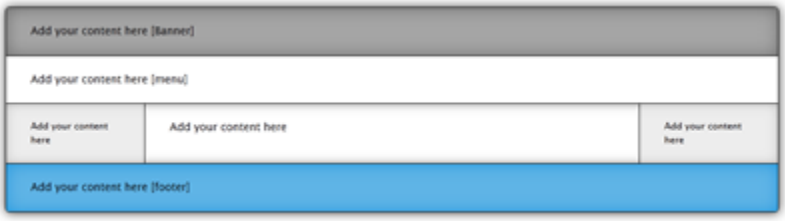
If you selected *Style Theme 1* and set the top row to have a contrasting color, the bottom row to have an accent color, and assigned top and bottom borders, you would wind up with a page that looked something like this:



Your investment in time would be perhaps half a minute.

Nesting CCM Structures

Column Composer Magic has full support for nesting. Nesting makes sense when your design calls for more than simply adding another row to your base structure. For instance, you would nest if you wanted a structure inside of the center column of the third row in this layout:



To do that, place your cursor inside the center column where you want the new structure to be. Open the CCM interface, which would detect that your insertion point is inside an existing structure and present you with the following dialog:

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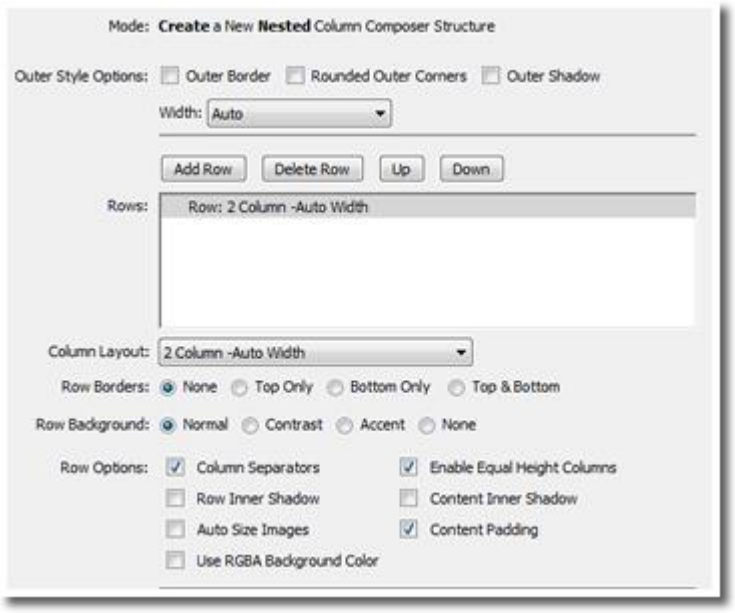
Click the **Create Nested Column Composer Magic** button and the main interface will open:



Set your options and click **OK** to build and insert your nested structure. Notice in the UI capture above, we've turned off all of the **Outer Style Options** to give us a clean structure that will blend into the main content column of our layout. You would wind up with a structure that looked like this:

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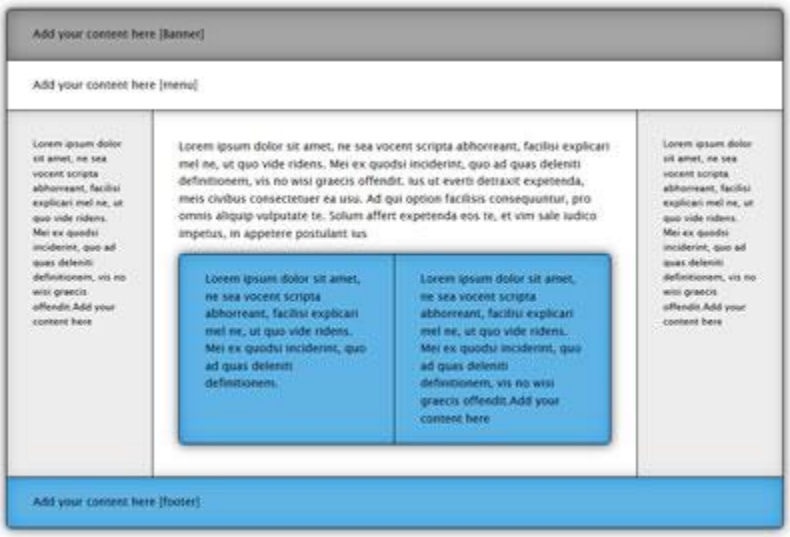
If you want a highly stylized box for your nested structure, you can set some or all of the *Outer Style Options* and even an **accent color**:



Online Tutorials and Videos

Please visit the online repository of Column Composer Magic text-based and video-based tutorials that focus on specific tasks and processes:

[Online CCM Tutorials and Videos]

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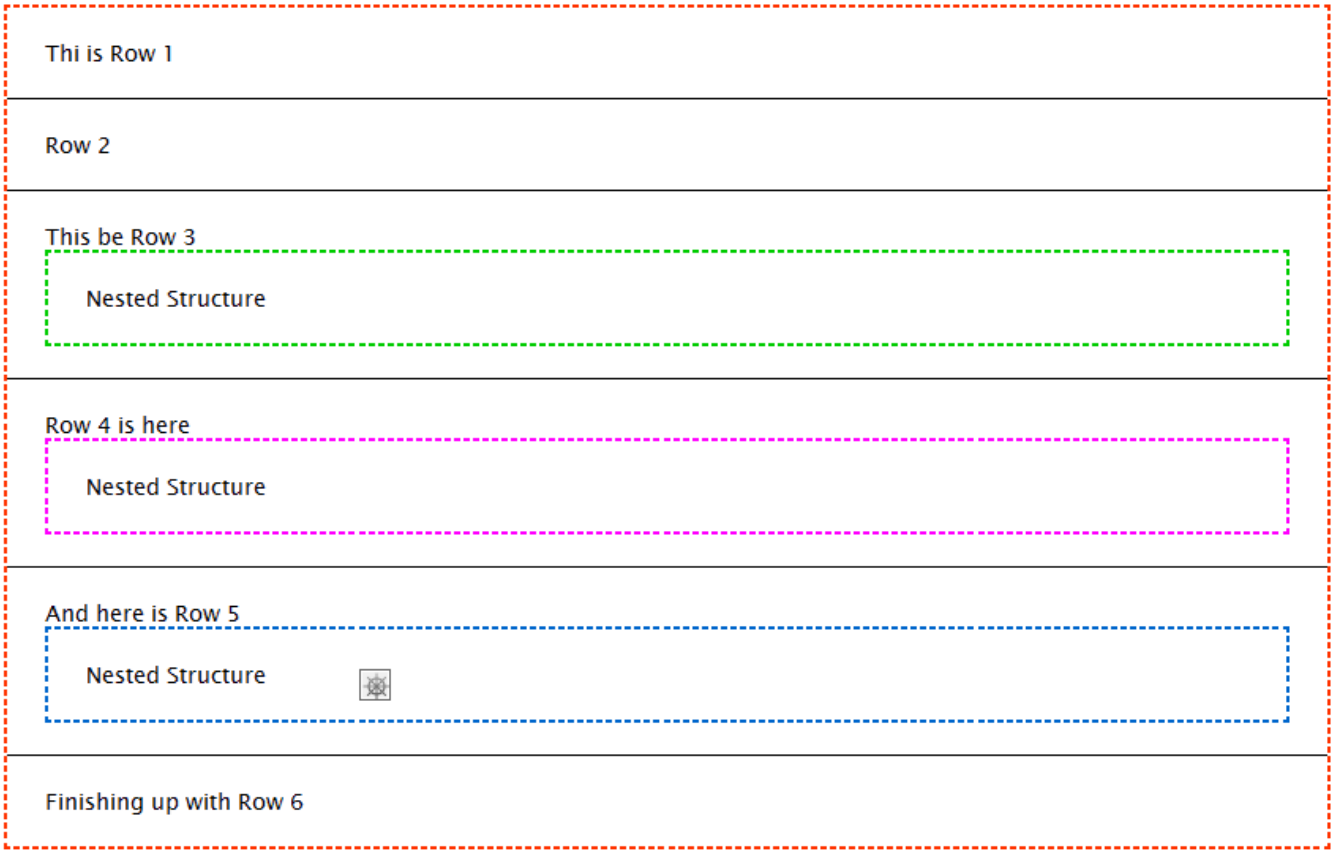
Design Aids

When you create a CCM structure, you will see it outlined with a colored dashed outline in Dreamweaver Design View. Each structure will receive a separate outline. This will help you identify root and nested structures when you want to edit them.



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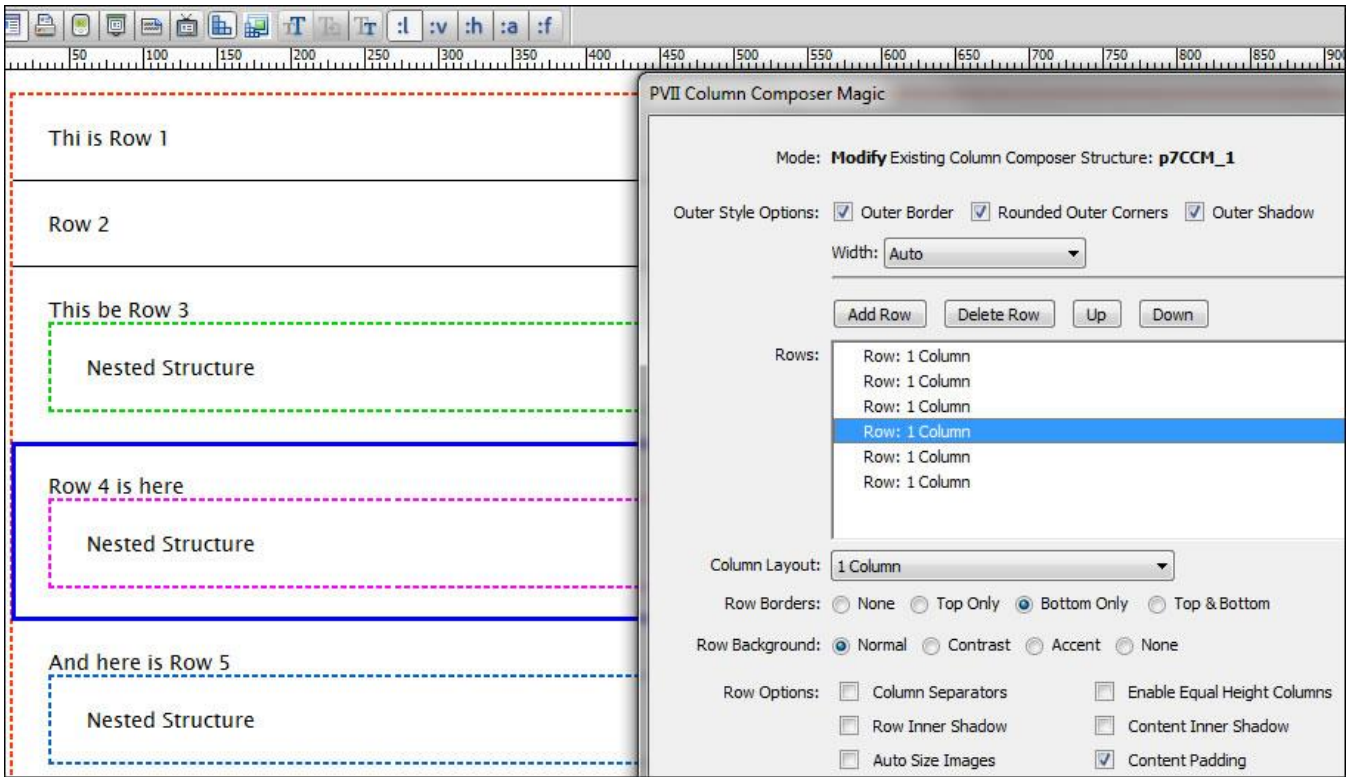
When you open the interface to edit a particular structure, it will be highlighted in dark blue. If your structure has multiple rows, as you highlight a row in the CCM interface the actual row on your page will also highlight.



If you delete or move a row in the CCM interface, the row highlighting will not reflect this until you click OK and then reopen the interface.

Saving Copies of Pages Causes Loss of Styling

If you save a copy of a page that contains a CCM structure, using *File > Save As*, the CCM structure on the new page will look unstyled. This is because of Dreamweaver's relatively poor native CSS support (up to version CS5.5). To enable the CCM Design Time style sheet that fixes Dreamweaver Design View, select one of your CCM structures on that page and open the interface, as if you were going to edit it. Simply click OK and Dreamweaver's Design View workarounds will kick in.

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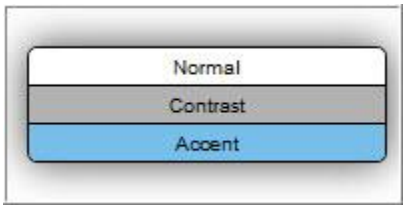
CCM Style Themes

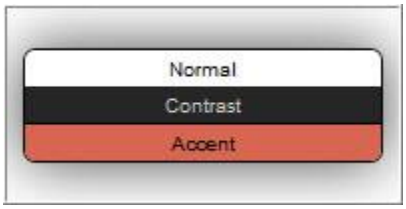
Column Composer Magic ships with 5 style themes:

01- Classic



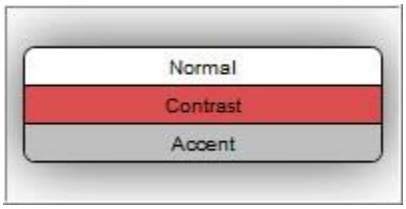
p7ccm01.css

02 - Carbon



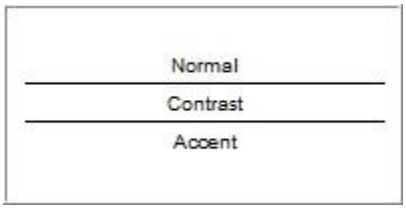
p7ccm02.css

03 - The News



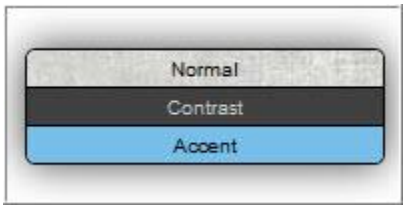
p7ccm03.css

04 - The Un-Style



p7ccm04.css

05 - Artisan



p7ccm05.css

Themes are assigned per structure. Nested structures can be set to different themes than their parent structures. Each theme comes with its own CSS file as noted in the chart above. Like most CSS frameworks, Column Composer CSS files are core CSS files—and seldom need to be edited. One of the more powerful features of Column Composer Magic is that it is programmed to support user-assigned classes and IDs

To learn more about customizing CCM please visit the online tutorials and videos page:

Online CCM Tutorials and Videos

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Getting help

PVII quality does not end with your purchase - it continues with the best customer support in the business.

PVII Knowledge Base

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PVII maintains separate and distinct Web Forum and Newsgroup communities. We do this to ensure you always have access via your preferred medium and device.

1. The PVII Web Forums

The PVII Web Forum is a modern browser-based community, accessible to both desktop and mobile devices and requires no additional software or plugins.

Visit The PVII Web Forum community now...

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2. PVII Newsgroup forums

The Project VII Newsgroup is available via private and secure NNTP servers. In order to subscribe to a newsgroup you must have a newsgroup-capable client installed such as:

1. Mozilla Thunderbird
2. Windows Live Mail
3. Windows Mail/Outlook Express
4. Opera Mail
5. Entourage

Server: **forums.projectseven.com**

Need help setting up a newsgroup?

Setting up a new newsgroup account in Windows Mail (Vista)

Setting up a new newsgroup account in Outlook Express

Setting up a new newsgroup account in Mozilla Thunderbird

Setting up a new newsgroup account in Entourage

If you have another newsgroup-capable program that you are using, please see its documentation to learn how to add a new newsgroup account.

Note: PVII newsgroups are private and have nothing to do with Usenet feeds that may be provided by your ISP. That is, you will not find our newsgroups in a list of newsgroups distributed by your internet service provider. You must set up our news server as a new account.

RSS News Feeds

Keep up with the latest news the minute it's released by subscribing to our RSS news feed. If you are not sure how to subscribe, please check this page:

PVII RSS Info

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Before you Contact us

Before making a support inquiry, please be certain to have read the documentation that came with your product. Please include your Dreamweaver version, as well as your computer operating system type in all support correspondence.

E-Mail:
support@projectseven.com

Phones:
330-650-3675
336-374-4611

Phone hours are 9:00am - 5:00pm Eastern Time U.S.

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