The Vivatexte HTML Frame Designer

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Learning about HTML Frames

HTML Frames are a special kind of HTML document. Frame documents are simply **containers** that tell your browser to divide its main Window into a number of sub-Windows. A different HTML document can be displayed in each of the sub-Windows. These sub-Windows are called **FRAMES**.

Generally, frame documents do not contain any "content". Instead they contain instructions that tell the browser to load an HTML document into each frame. It is up to that document to provide the appropriate links to other documents.

Frames are useful when you want to display more than one document to a reader at once.

Not all browsers support frame documents. In cases where a frame document is read by a non-frame browser, you can provide a message to the reader and an alternate link to a non-frame document.

At present frames are supported by **Netscape® 2.0 +** as well as most other browsers that support the HTML 2.0+ extensions.

Each frame in a frame document can be customized to include;

- The size and position of the frame.

- The HTML document to be shown in each frame (when the frame document is launched).

- The addition of scroll bars to each frame.

- Frame resizability.

- Border style.

The VivaTexte Frame Designer allows you to set these functions with "point and click" ease and to rapidly prototype and create frames in a wide range of styles.

Setting up the Frame Designer

The frame designer contains a number of default values which you can change by selecting the menu option called SETTINGS. These settings are :

- **The frame title**.
  This is the title that will show in the title bar of the reader's browser.

- **Path names**.
  You can choose to include path names with the file names selected to appear in each frame. If you choose to use path names, VivaTexte will automatically convert them to the format used in HTML documents. If you choose to not use file names, VivaTexte will strip all paths from the file names when the document is created.

☞ If you choose not to use path names, please remember that the HTML files must all be located in the same directory as the frame document, otherwise the browser will not know where to look for the files called by each frame.

- **Calculation Method - Percent or Pixel**
  If you select the percentage option, then all frames will be sized according the the percentage proportion of space that they occupy regardless of the window size of the browser, or the screen resolution of the viewers system. Percentages offer the best method to ensure that your documents appear in a consistent fashion from one browser to another.

  The pixel option calculates the size of each frame based on a specific pixel size for each frame window. This option requires that you also select a screen resolution from the list box which becomes active when you select this option. Using pixel (or absolute) values can result in different frame sizes in different browsers.

- **Non Frame Message**
  If your frame document is viewed in a browser which cannot recognize frames, you can create a message which will appear as shown in the text area in the setup dialogue box. You can customize this message for your frames. VivaTexte automatically writes the correct HTML tags to display this message in any non-frame browsers.

- **Non Frame File**
  In addition to the message described above, VivaTexte automatically creates a hypertext link to a non-frame HTML file for browsers which cannot read frames. The link will be made to whatever HTML file name that you specify in this dialogue. Thus a non-frame viewer can click on the link and get another "version" of your document that you may have designed for non-frame display.

Creating Frame Documents

Creating a frame document using the VivaTexte Frame Designer is a snap. Just follow these few, simple steps. If you look at the Frame Designer Window you will see several command buttons on the right. Simply press each of these as per the following steps:

Step 1   **Select a frame template.**
A dialogue will appear showing you eight basic frame layouts. Click on the layout that you want. When you do, you'll see guidelines appear in the simulated frame area of the designer window, in the same pattern as the template that you selected.

Step 2   **Drag and position the frame guidelines**
Place the mouse cursor close to any guideline and press and hold the left mouse button. The cursor will change shape, indicating the direction you can move the line. Holding the left mouse button down, drag the guidelines to size the frames as you want them in your frame document. You can correct and adjust these as many times as you want, so don't worry too much about exact proportions. You can adjust those later once the frame document has been created.

Step 3   **Setup frame parameters**
When you selected the template, you'll notice that two or three of the **Frame Setup** buttons became active. Click on each of these buttons and a dialogue will appear prompting you for information about each of the frames. The frame area that you are setting will also be highlighted in the simulated layout for easy reference.

You can set up the frames in any order. Vivatexte won't let you create the frame document until all the frames have been set up.

The parameters you are prompted for are as follows:

◆   Browse to **assign the name of the HTML document** that will be displayed in the frame selected. The HTML browser will automatically load and show the document you choose in the selected frame. You can place another frame document into a new frame. Combining frames this way extends allows you to extend the templates to produce almost any frame layout desired. Click here for an example of combined frame layouts.

◆   Assign a **name for the frame**. A default name is supplied (FRAME_?). You can use this name as a "target" for HTML links in other files so that they can be directed to appear in the frame. The name is a mandatory field.

◆   If you want the reader to be able to **resize the frame** then select that option. Remember that resizable frames must be adjacent. For example if you select two vertical frames and make one resizable and the other non resizable then neither will be resizable...think about it. In this case BOTH frames must be marked as resizable, since they are side by side and you can't size one without affecting the other.

◆   Select a **border width**. As yet we've not had much success in making this work, although the HTML specification for frames indicates that border sizing is possible. You can safely ignore this for now, until we find out how this really works.

◆   Select **scroll bar** option. The dialogue options are fairly self evident. If you select "As required" the browser will make the scroll bar decisions for you based on the frame size and the document width.

◆ Press **ACCEPT** and repeat for the other frames in the set. When all frames in a set have been "set up" the button labelled **CREATE AND SAVE** will become active.

Step 4 **Create the document.**

Press the **CREATE AND SAVE** button. You will be prompted to supply a file name for the frame document you are about to create. You will be warned if you are going to overwrite an existing document. Once you've selected a frame name, the frame will be created and you can then open it for local viewing in your browser.

☞ You can resize and re-create the frame document as often as you want. We suggest keeping your browser minimized and handy, so after you have created a frame you can quickly open it and see how the frame appears. You can also EDIT or DELETE a frame document.

Editing Frame Documents

You can edit or delete a frame document by selecting either of these choices from the **FILE** menu. Select the desired frame document from the file dialogue box and the previous settings will be assigned to each frame for editing.

You can only edit frame documents that have created using the VivaTexte Frame Designer.

Browser Note

Using the "reload" button in some browsers causes the file to be reloaded from the browser's cache as opposed to the file originally loaded from a disk directory. To be sure that you are viewing the latest changes to your document be sure to open the file for LOCAL viewing. In Netscape® this means selecting the option **Open File** on the **FILE** menu.

Mouse Button Functions

In fact you can choose **either** the **left or the right** mouse buttons to drag the frame guidelines. However each mouse button performs slightly differently.

- If you use the **left** mouse button, you will notice that the guideline percentage indicators (displayed next to the frame option buttons) are updated **only** when you release the left mouse button.

- If you use the **right** mouse button, these indicators are updated **continuously** as the mouse is moved.

These two methods are provided to address the problem of "jerky" dragging that may appear on some older slower computers when they have to do computations at the same time as updating the mouse position.

Combining Templates

You can show a frame document "inside" another frame document. In this fashion you can extend the available templates to create almost any desired layout for your frame documents.

This graphic shows an example of how this can easily be done. First, create three frame documents using the double vertical frame template. In this representation the letters A-F represent different HTML documents showing in each frame. Then create another document using the vertical split template. Assign the previous three **frame documents** to each frame of this template. The result is shown, showing which original document (A-F) will appear in each frame.

More About Vivatexte

The VivaTexte Frame Designer is a stand alone component of the complete **VivaTexte Authoring System for Windows**. The frame designer is sold separately but also comes as part of the complete VivaTexte system.

The VivaTexte Authoring system is a powerful and easy to use authoring tool which provides **BOTH** Windows hypertext (HLP) authoring and HTML from the same source. This help file was written using the VivaTexte Author...in a matter of minutes!

The full VivaTexte Authoring system is rich with features and was designed to bring **hypertext and HTML** authoring to non technical users. The complete package retails for $99.00.

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