

## Best practices to let your clients edit their websites

### *How do I make it easy for my clients?*

As a web designer, in your daily workflow, you often face the never-ending content revisions requests from your clients. Usually those changes are limited to some point but wouldn't it be easier if they can just do it themselves? It will save you and them precious time and also will keep you focused on current projects. In this article we will review some of the best practices used in Web design for content editing, even for people that have no idea of HTML but yet very powerful and simple to use.

This is where the utility of WYSIWYG editors comes in, which will give your clients the ability to edit parts of their website in just few clicks without ruining the whole layout. There are many "smart" editors but we will just take a closer look on a few of them and see what's good and what's not good about them.

### **Available Content Editing Solutions**

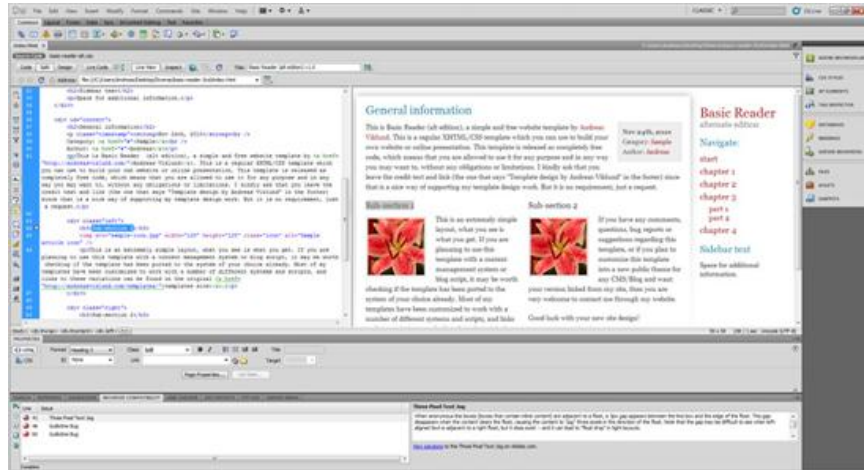
So what is the best way to let your clients edit static website content without the use of technical expertise? You have to make sure it is a **WYSIWYG** authoring environment, so content authors and contributors can edit or update any website or blog without having to learn HTML. WYSIWYG stands for "What You See Is What You Get". In these editors you don't have to edit the source code of your web pages. So instead of writing blocks of code manually, you manipulate with design components using an editor window. This means that you view something very similar to the end result while the document or image is being created.

There are a number of **WYSIWYG** editors and here you can explore the things you can do with them. Our list consists of 4 [Adobe](#) products, a CMS and the latest [DMXzone's Online Page Editor Add-on](#) with the [Advanced HTML Editor 3](#), all great but yet effective enough?

- [Adobe Dreamweaver](#)
- [Adobe Contribute](#)
- [Adobe Business Catalyst](#)
- [Adobe InContext Editing](#)
- CMS
- [Online Page Editor Add-on](#)
- [Advanced HTML Editor 3](#)

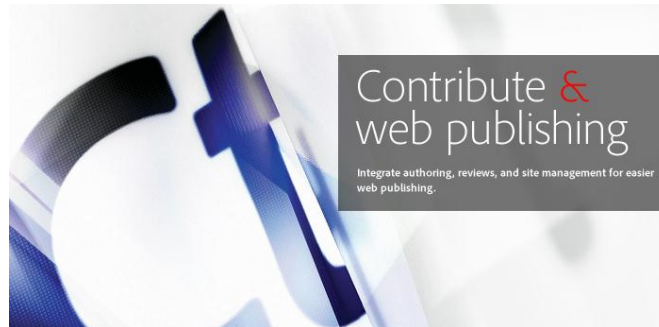
## Adobe Dreamweaver

Actually [Adobe Dreamweaver CS5](#) is the last to think of, because this is the tool for you as a web designer. Adobe Dreamweaver CS5 lets you create professional websites by code or the designer's view. The program is very versatile and has extensive tools to implement any needed component to the website. The adaptability is huge, but Adobe Dreamweaver CS5 is not quite cheap and it is a complex program wherefore professional expertise is needed.

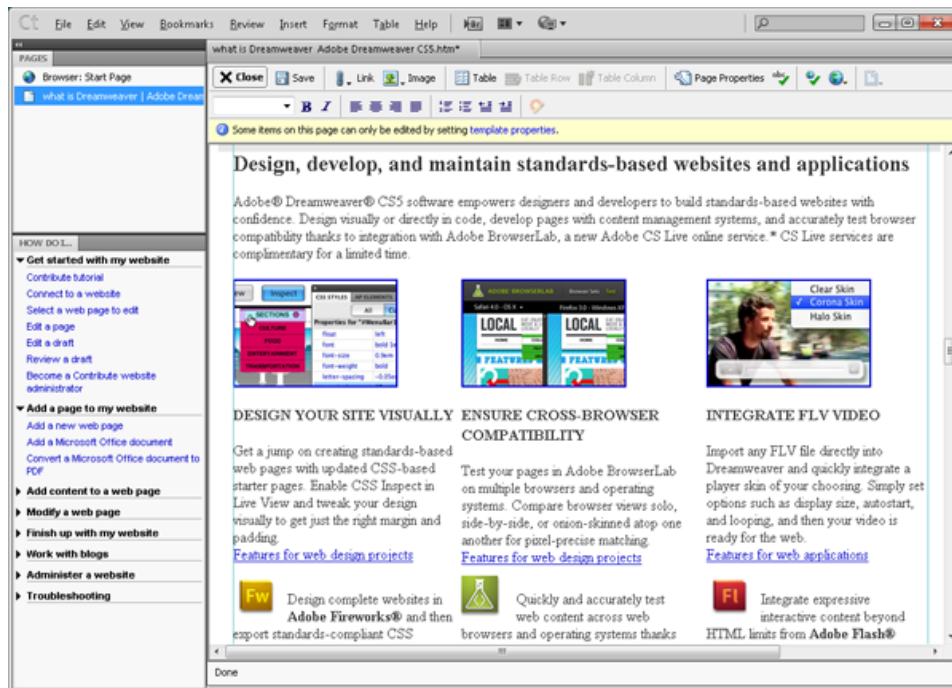


## Adobe Contribute

Another powerful web publishing and site management program is [Adobe Contribute CS5](#). As mentioned before, [Adobe Dreamweaver CS5](#) is used for creating websites, but Adobe Contribute CS5 is especially built for the clients who want to edit their webpages as easy as possible.



Adobe Contribute CS5 enables instant preview of the edited content with enhanced CSS rendering, and without the need of author's HTML knowledge. Adobe Contribute CS5 consists of two components, a client for editing, and a "publishing server". It also includes an in-browser editing component, that works as a plug-in but also very pricy.



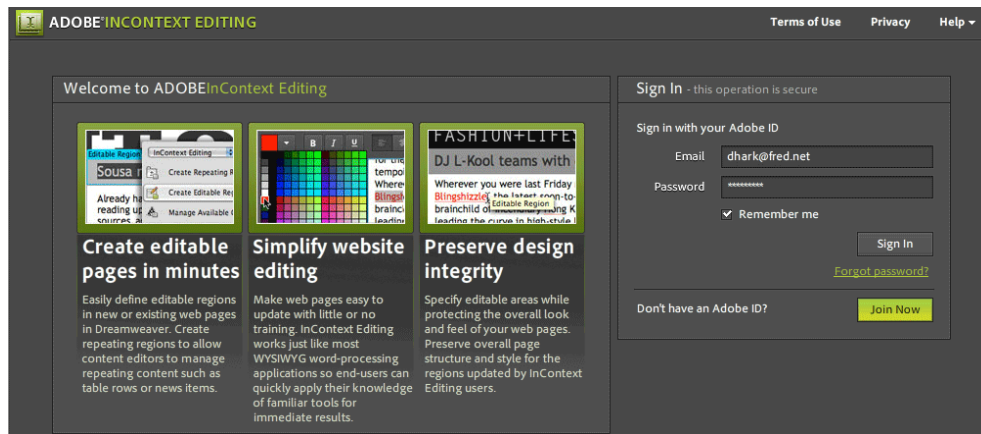
## Adobe Business Catalyst

[Adobe Business Catalyst](#) is a hosted online business building application. Since it's hosted, you can access it and edit it from any browser anywhere. So it is perfect for your clients to edit the content without breaking the design. Because of the adobe licensing it brings many disadvantages wherefore you'll never provide a full independent platform to let your clients work on. It won't even allow you to create a beautiful website with seamless merging.

## InContext Editing

[Adobe InContext Editing](#) is an editing component delivered with CS4 and CS5, but will be [discontinued](#) as a standalone service in 2011. When users want to modify a Web page, they can skim the page, activate it into Adobe InContext Editing and are ready to edit. The editing options are simple and elegant and again no HTML knowledge is required.

Before you let your clients edit their website you still need Adobe Dreamweaver to finalize the process and its future is uncertain at this moment of time.



## Content Management System

Another tool is the **Content Management System (CMS)**, because a **CMS** gives your clients complete control over their websites. They will have the ability to update content, add pictures, links, articles and even change or add more categories to the navigation bar. Seems like the perfect solution for websites that contains hundreds of pages but not so much.

Free dominating CMSs are [Drupal](#), [Joomla](#), and [WordPress](#). Many web develop companies sell their own CMS but these are very expensive because of all the hard work they put into it.

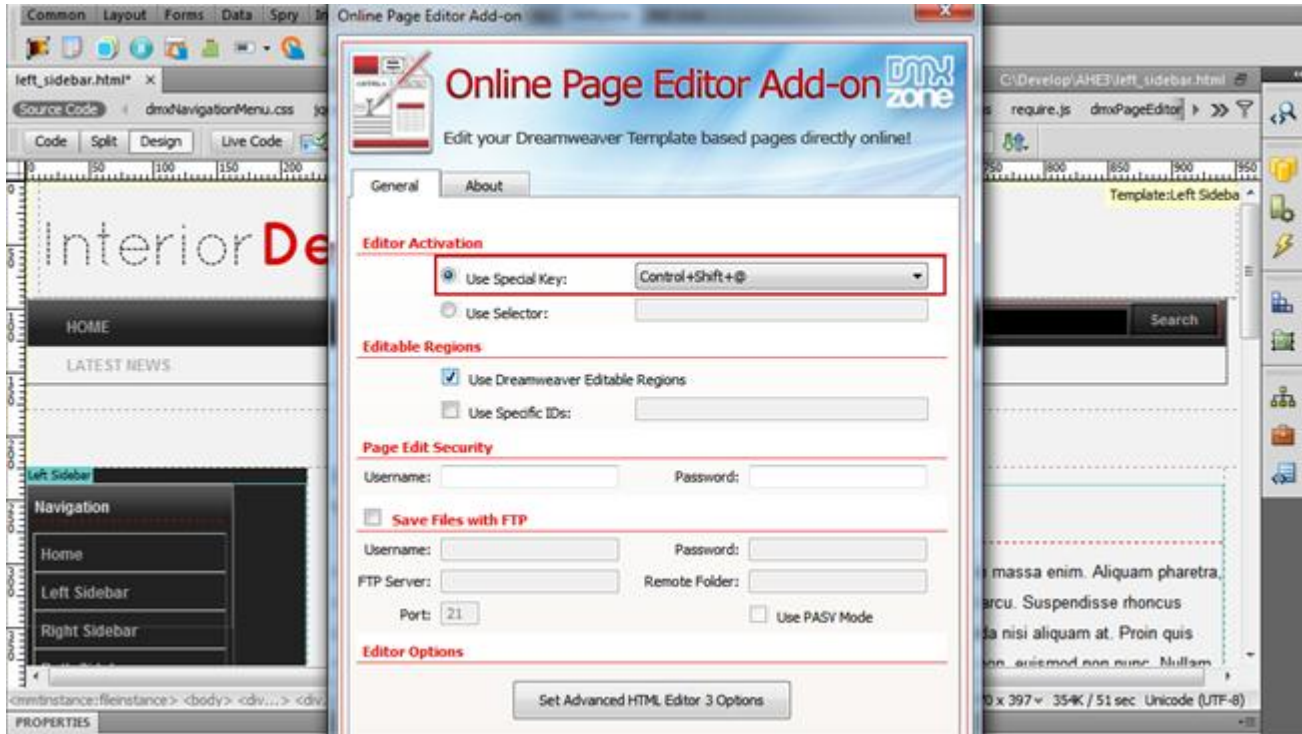
The problem is that once you give your clients full control you also open up for errors, which you will probably have to fix later on. Not only you will spend additional time on digging the source code but also it will frustrate the site owner. It is a major disadvantage that it is too complex for a non-expert just editing website content.



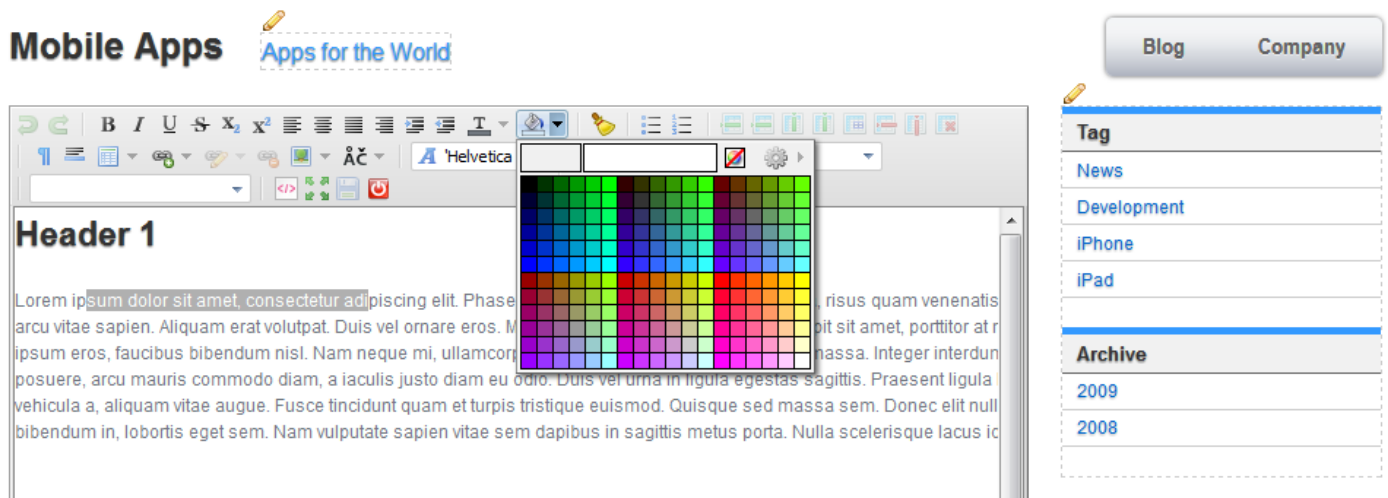
## Online Page Editor Add-on

The [Online Page Editor Add-on](#) is designed for the very busy web designer who wants his/her clients to do the little things by themselves. Together with the [Advanced HTML Editor 3](#) it is a powerful web publishing and website management tool that integrates authoring, reviewing, and publishing in an easy-to-use WYSIWYG HTML editor. Increase web publishing productivity while simplifying oversight and approval tasks.

It is easy to define your editable areas so your clients can edit any HTML content, directly in the browser. With only one single key press the Editor becomes visible and they can start editing their online content.



With the **Advanced HTML Editor 3** Dreamweaver extension from [DMXzone.com](http://DMXzone.com), you can enable editing of live text, images, tables and other content without any HTML knowledge. This is a very light weighted solution for editing you content visually like in Microsoft Word. Put the Advanced HTML Editor 3 into your own custom CMS with just a few clicks, directly from within Adobe Dreamweaver and make your websites dynamic and editable by your clients.



The main purpose of Online Page Editor Add-on is to allow editing web-sites and blogs for users without any technical expertise. Online Page Editor Add-on enables content authors to update existing websites and blogs while maintaining site integrity. Online Page Editor Add-on offers a Dreamweaver integration, and editing from latest web browsers, like Internet Explorer, Opera, Safari, Chrome and Firefox. The smart context menus and rich editing options will save you time throughout the content editing process.





## Conclusion

The [Online Page Editor Add-on](#) is a real competitor to dominating products like [Adobe Dreamweaver](#), [Adobe Contribute](#) or the use of a CMS. The Page Editor Add-on puts your users in control of their website empowering them to edit live pages without the use of any extended CMS database.

Adobe Contribute will cost you \$199, but that is just one license per person. Your clients need to buy a license as well and that is the big difference compared to the Online Page Editor Add-on. The Page editor costs \$35 without having to buy any licenses for your clients. With the Adobe Business Catalyst again, you'll need expensive licenses (Adobe's Dreamweaver, Business Catalyst and InContext Editing) and it won't let you create your own templates from scratch, which will never let you create the perfect website with editing independency for your clients.

## Advantages and Disadvantages

Adobe Contribute	<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User-friendly editing with preview in browser, spell-checking and drag&amp;drop from MS Word and Excel.</li> <li>• Check-in / check-out and versioning (with rollback) (albeit on file system level).</li> <li>• Basic workflow to publish content in easy steps.</li> <li>• A central administration module.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You will only be able to edit a website on a machine that has Contribute installed.</li> <li>• A web designer will still be required to build the initial website.</li> <li>• Updating website content through Contribute may be slow.</li> <li>• Coding must be done in Adobe Dreamweaver or another web design program.</li> <li>• Templates created using Adobe Dreamweaver can be used in contribute as well.</li> <li>• Adobe Contribute CS5 is only available in English, French, German and Spanish.</li> </ul>
Adobe Business Catalyst + InContext Editing	<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is a hosted online business building tool.</li> <li>• Easy to skim the page, activate and ready to edit.</li> <li>• No need to know HTML or Web editing.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expensive Adobe licenses needed for designer and client</li> <li>• The website looks is depends on the program.</li> </ul>
Content Management System (CMS)	<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A universal layout is created.</li> <li>• Simplicity in design of the admin UI.</li> <li>• CMSs provide the facility to control how content is published, when and by who.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disadvantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A CMS is too complex for a non-expert just editing website content.</li> <li>• Cost of implementation. Certain CMSs may require hardware installations.</li> <li>• Maintaining CMSs may require license updates, upgrades, and hardware.</li> <li>• Volume of files may be large in HTML-based systems.</li> <li>• Larger CMSs can experience latency.</li> </ul>
Advanced HTML Editor 3 + Online Page Editor Add-on	<p><b>Advantages</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It eliminates the need for multiple programs to change simple errors such as changing spelling on a webpage.</li> <li>• Several users can update a website simultaneously.</li> <li>• Administrators can ensure the style, code and integrity of a website is preserved while allowing users to update the site content.</li> <li>• Very well prices compared to the other WYSIWYG editors (source: <a href="#">OutSourceHouse</a>).</li> </ul>