Fireworks Basics: From Navigation Graphic to Stretchy Table

This article was originally published as a set of three on Joyce's [personal web site](#), where Joyce has tutorials, reviews and resources to help the new Web developer develop their skills.

In this tutorial we'll be getting to grips with Fireworks to firstly create a curved graphic suitable for use as a navigation background. This will encompass not only creation of the graphic but also appropriate manipulation. We'll then extend the work by looking at how to use our graphic inside a stretchy table that we build using Dreamweaver.

Curved Navigation Graphic

The first part of this tutorial is to show you how to make a top and side navigation graphic with a curve on the inside.

1. Choose **File|New** and use a size of 700X400 and a white canvas color.

2. Select the **Rectangle** tool and drag on the canvas to draw a rectangle.

3. In the **Property inspector** change the width to 700 and the height to 120. I'm using a shade of blue.

4. Draw another rectangle and make its width 120 and height 400. I'm using green so you can see better what I'm doing.

5. Place the rectangles together to form an upside down L shape.
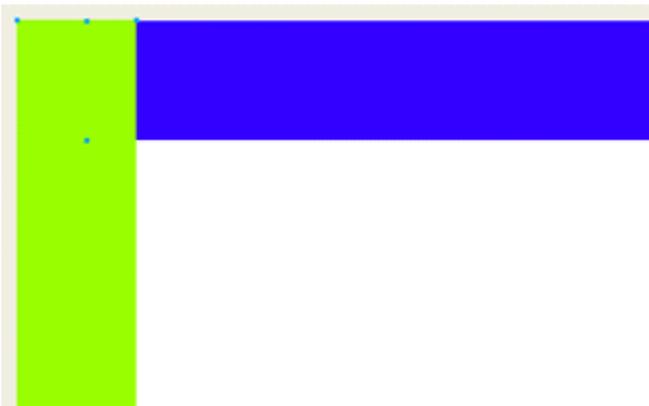
6. **Shift+select** both rectangles.

7. Choose **Modify|Combine Paths|Union**.

The shape is now one shape instead of two.

8. Select the **Rounded Rectangle** tool (press and hold the little arrow next to the **Rectangle** tool to access).

9. In the **Property inspector** change the **Edge setting** to 50, the width to 650 and the height to 400.
I made mine gold so you could see it easier, any color will work.

10. Position the rounded rectangle into the corner of the L shape.
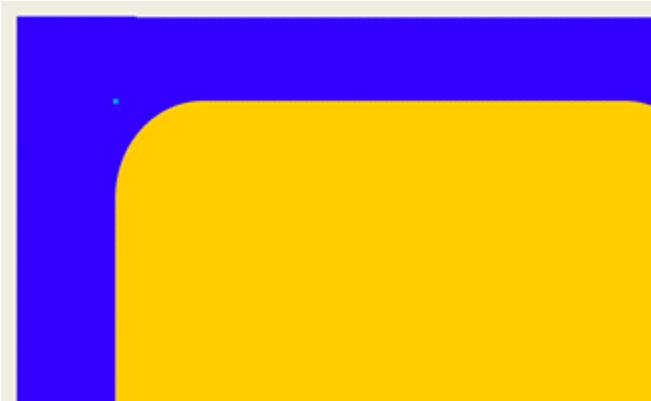
Note: Be sure that the curve of the rounded rectangle clears the end of top of the shape and the bottom of the side shape. Otherwise you won't get a nice straight edge. If it doesn't, make your rounded rectangle larger.

11. **Shift+select** the L shape and the rounded rectangle.

12. Choose **Modify|Combine Paths|Punch**.

You now have an L shape with a curved inside corner.

13. In the **Property inspector**, click the plus sign next to the word **Effects** and select **Shadow** and **Glow|Drop Shadow**. Change the Distance to 10 and the Opacity to 50%.

14. Press **Enter (Return)** to activate the change.

15. Save your file.

Our next step is to consider slicing, optimizing and exporting this image,

Slice, Optimize and Export

1. If you've taken a break before moving onto this part of the tutorial, open your navigation graphic file.
Note: Be sure your canvas color is set to the same as the one it will be used on for the Web.

2. Select the **Slice** tool and draw a slice over the top left corner. Be sure you get the entire curve.
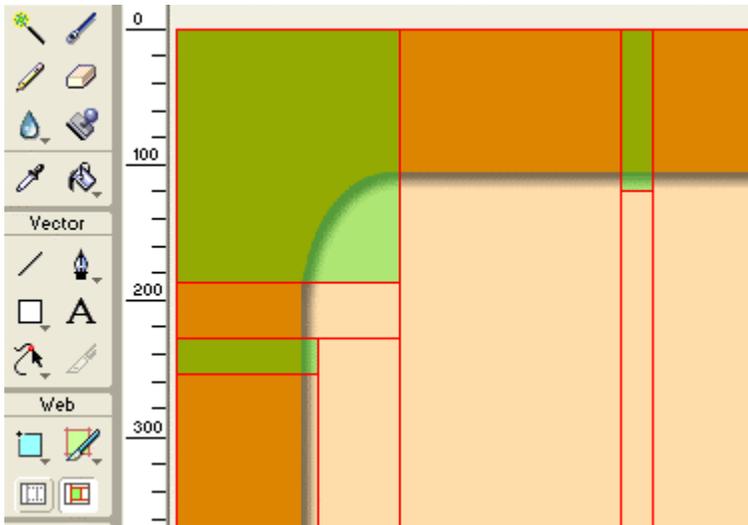
3. Draw another thin slice for the top bar and the side bar. Make sure you get all of the shadow.

4. Select the large corner slice and click the **Preview** tab.
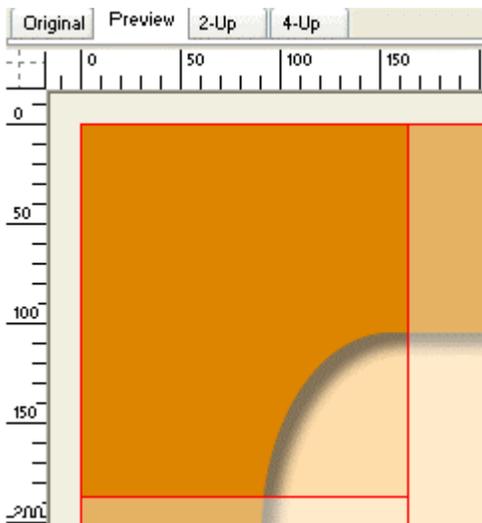
5. Open the **Optimize** panel and use these settings.
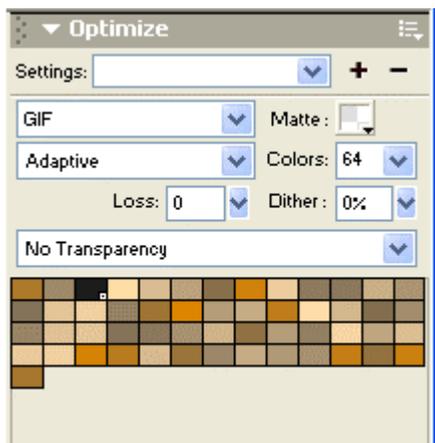
You are using the GIF format because the image has a lot of flat color. JPEG is best for photos, GIF is best for flat colors. You don't need any transparency for this image. If you did need transparency then GIF wouldn't be the best option because of the drop shadow.

6. In the **Property inspector**, highlight the default slice name and rename it something useful.

7. Select the top slice and change the **optimization** to 16 colors and give the slice a name.
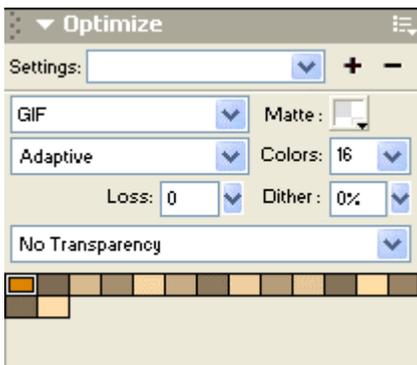
8. Repeat for the last slice.

9. **Shift+select** all three slices.
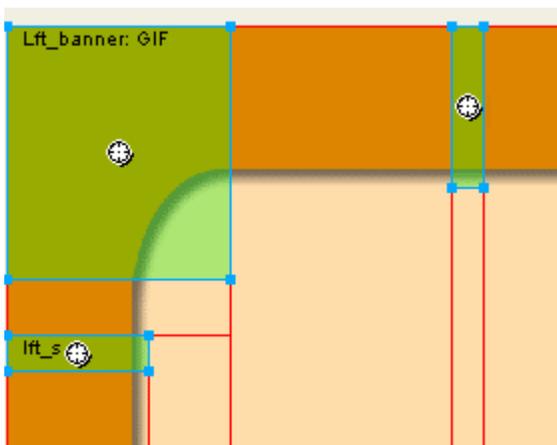
10. **Right-click (Control-click)** on the slice and select "**Export Selected Slice**".
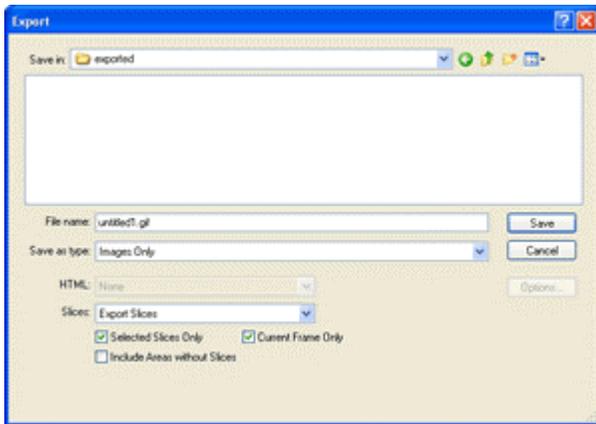
Navigate to the folder you want to export your images into. It should be a folder within your root folder for the site you are building. Don't worry about the name of the file, it won't affect the slice names you gave the slices. Notice that the **Selected Slices Only** option is checked.

11. Click on **Save**. I opened the folder again so you could see the exported images. Notice they are all there with the specific names I gave them.
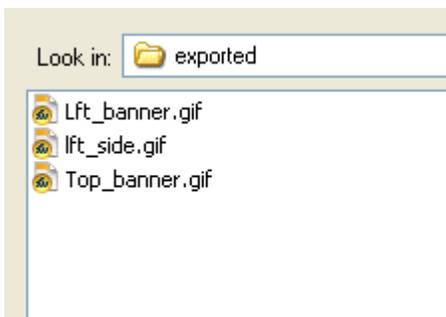
12. Save your file.

You are now ready to use these three image to make a stretchy or fluid table in Dreamweaver.

Making a Stretchy Table

In this final part of the tutorial you will make a stretch table using the navigation graphic you made in Fireworks and optimized and exported as well.

1. Open Dreamweaver

2. Click the **Insert Table** Icon and enter 2 Rows, 2 Columns and 100%. Be sure to type zeros into the Cell Padding and Cell Spacing fields. Blank does not mean zero.

3. Click inside the first cell on the left of the top row.

4. Click the **Insert Image** icon and navigate to where you have the images you downloaded or saved.

5. Select the **Lft_banner.gif** and click **Open**. Notice the width of the image, it's 164 pixels wide.

6. Press the right arrow key to place the cursor in the cell and off the image.

7. In the **Property inspector** change the Width (W) to 164 and press **Enter (Return)**.
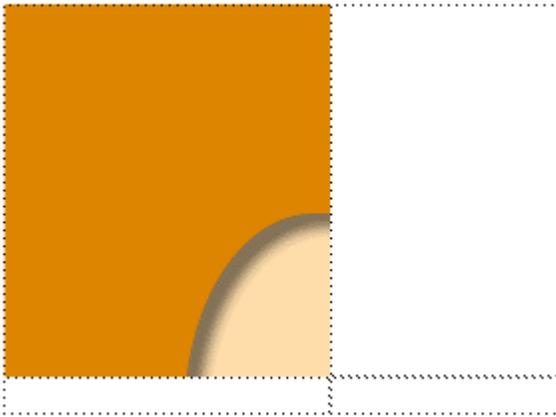
Notice how the column (dotted lines) has collapsed against the image. This cell is now a fixed width, it won't get any larger. But if you add an image in the cell below it that is larger than 164 the column will stretch to fit the content no matter what size you set it to be.

8. Click inside the right top cell and in the **Property inspector**, in the width field (W) type in 100% (use the percent sign). This cell will stretch to fill up 100% of the available space. As the browser window expands or contracts, so will this column.
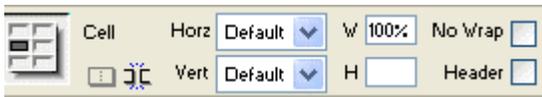
Note: If you had a third column you could set it to a fixed width as well, the center would still expand to fill the browser window.

9. Open the **CSS Styles** panel in the **Design panel** group. Select **Edit Styles**, then click the plus sign to open the **New CSS Style** dialog box.
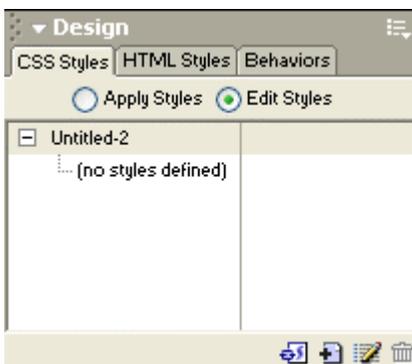
10. Type **.topbanner** for the name, click on **Make Custom Style** for the **Type** and click on "**This Document Only**". Click **OK**.
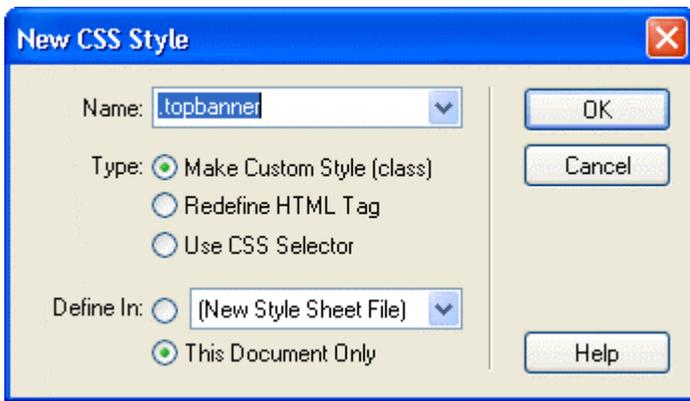
11. Select the **Background** category to open it's options. Click in the **Background Color** well. Click the little right pointing arrow and be sure that **Snap to Web Save** is not checked, then sample the peach color from the document.
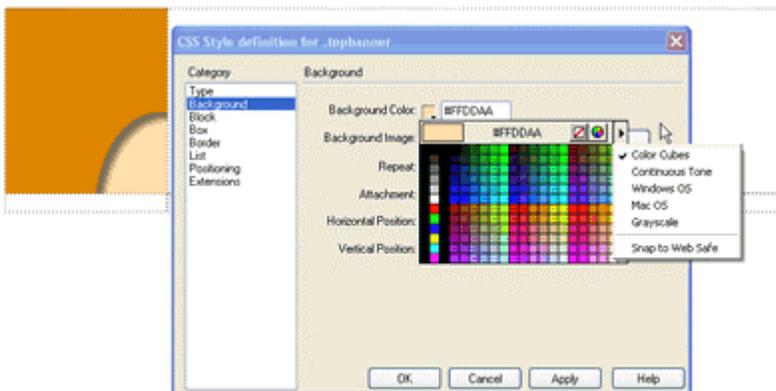
12. Click the **Browse** button and navigate to the folder you have your images in and select **Top_banner.gif**
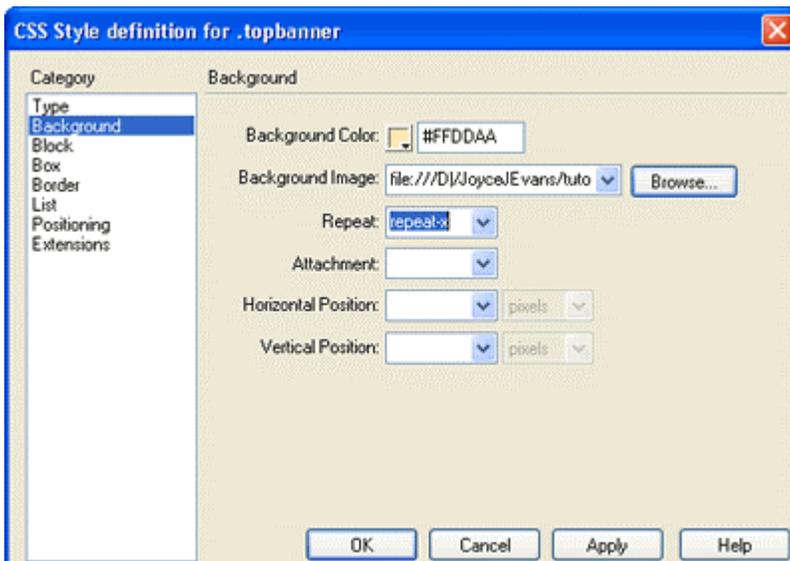
13. Choose **repeat-x** for the **Repeat** field and click on **OK**.

14. Place your cursor in the 100% cell and in the **CSS Styles** panel click on the **Apply Styles** tab. Click on the **topbanner** name to apply the style.

14. Place your cursor in the left cell of the second row.

15. Add another new style except this time name it **.sideback**, use the **Lft_side.gif** and set the repeat to **repeat-y**.

16. Apply the style like you did in step 14.

17. Click the **Insert Image** icon and insert **spacer.gif**. Before you deselect change the height to 200. This just keeps your cell open but the real reason we put in a spacer is that Netscape 4X can't see the background image without real content and the spacer is considered an image.

18. Add a spacer image to the top banner area as well but leave it at 1x1.