

Web Page Design Tip "My Links Changed and My Images Have Disappeared!"

Many people who use a Web page editing program to build their Web sites suddenly find that their links change and the images on their pages disappear. This is not the work of gremlins! Usually it is an unintended consequence of an important feature in Web editors such as Dreamweaver, FrontPage, and Netscape Composer.

What Is Happening

The Web editing program keeps track of the relative positions of your Web pages within the file structure of your site. This means that if you link to another page, the editing program keeps track of the links and how they work. As an example, let's say you have a home page called `index.htm`.

Now let's imagine that there is a link from your page `index.htm` to another page called `favorites.htm`. That page is located in your site's root folder along with `index.htm`. The code for the link should be written as ``.

If you use your Web editor to save your page to a new location, say on another disk or drive, which is outside of the site's root folder, the editor will re-write the link code to match the new location. The new link may appear as something similar to ``. The link may appear very complicated, extremely unusual, and not at all as you intended. Because the editing program doesn't know where the file is to be permanently located, the same type of confused link can be created if you do not first save a Web page file

If you upload your `index.htm` page to a server, the link `` will refer not to the `favorites.htm` page on the server, but to the `favorites.htm` page back on *YOUR COMPUTER*, which is obviously not what you had in mind. Image source tags, such as `` will get corrupted, too, and the images will not appear on the page.

What happened is that your Web editor thought you meant to *move* your file from the original location to the new location and that you also wanted to change the links to *match the move*. So the editor re-wrote the code so to reflect the new relative positions of the various files and images to each other.

What to Do

There are a few very simple things to do to keep your links and image source tags from becoming confused.

1- When you start a new Web page the *very first thing* you should do is **save the file**. This establishes the location of the file for the Web editing program. The program will now understand how all files are related to each other.

2- **Do not** use the File Save function in a Web editor program to move a file from one location to another. Instead, use standard Windows (or Mac OS) file handling techniques to move files. By using either Windows Explorer or My Computer in Windows you can select and copy or move files either singly or in groups, and the links will not be affected.

3- If you work on more than one computer, **consider** keeping the site on a Zip disk. The Zip disk is usually large enough for all but the biggest Web projects. As you move between computers you will not have to worry about having links rewritten because all files will stay on the disk.