

What's New in Expression Web 3

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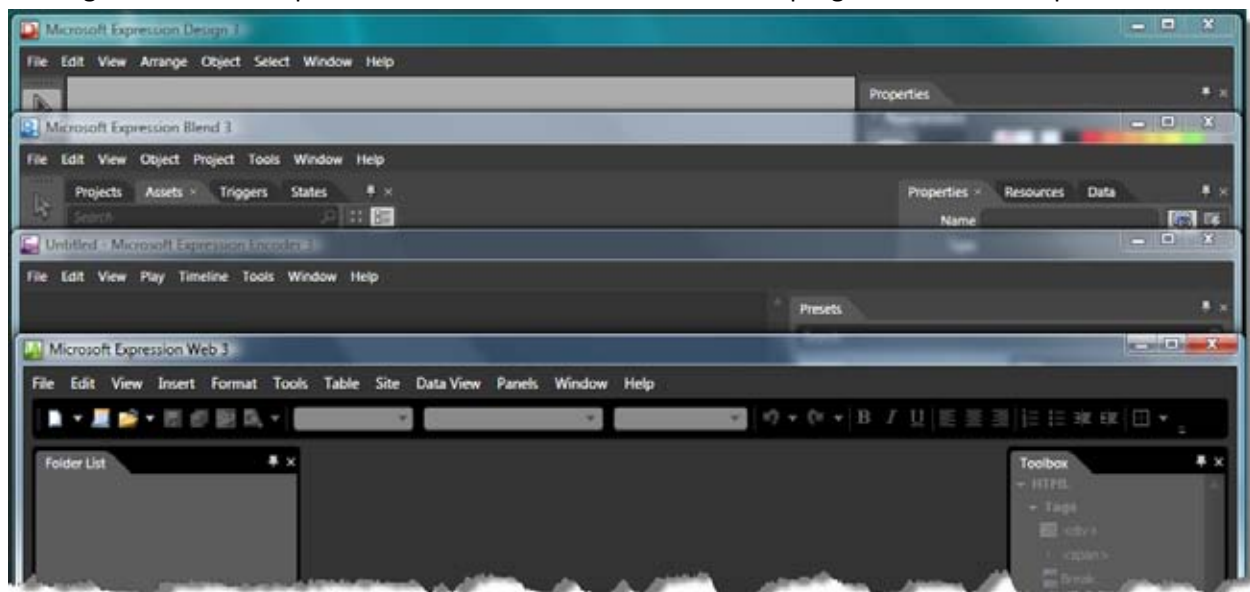
With version 3 there are more new features than there were in Expression Web version 2. In this presentation I'll talk about some of the major changes and the incremental improvements. Some of the changes to version 3 include workflow options such as versioning. Another is that you now get Expression Design and Expression Encoder bundled with Expression Web so you have the tools you need for designing a website and adding media. One of the most useful of the new additions is SuperPreview but the primary difference in Expression Web 3 from the earlier versions is under the hood.

When Expression Studio was first released there was no unifying look or codebase between Expression Web, Expression Media, Expression Design and Expression Blend. While Blend and Design both used the same underlying code base neither Media nor Web did so.

With version 3 Microsoft started the transition from a mix of new and legacy code in Expression Web to the same code base used in Blend and Design. One result is a new, more unified look between the programs in the Expression Studio. Another is the removal of your ability to use VBA but more on that later.

New UI

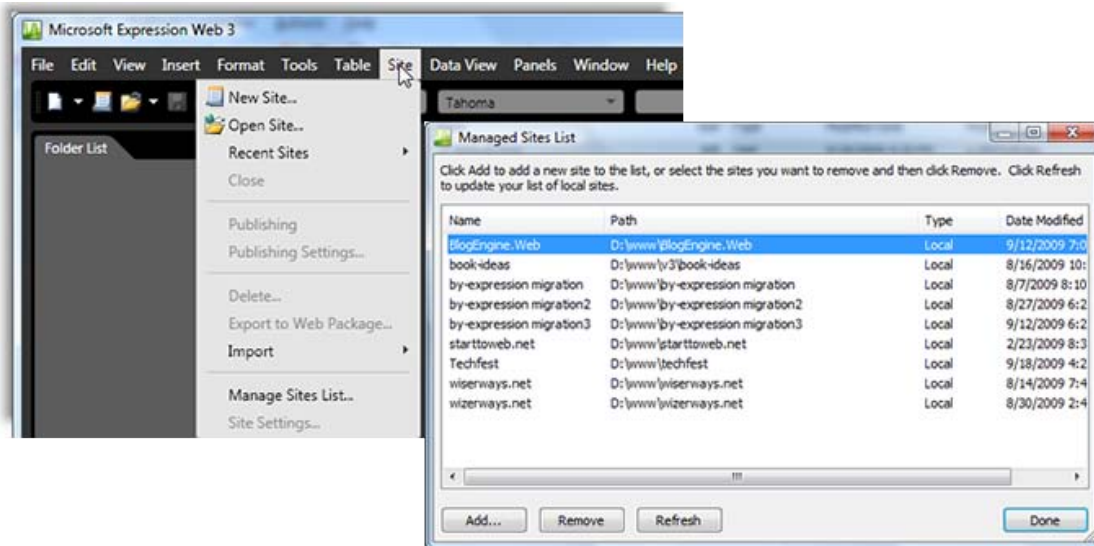
Redesigned Interface to present a more unified look between the programs that make up the studio



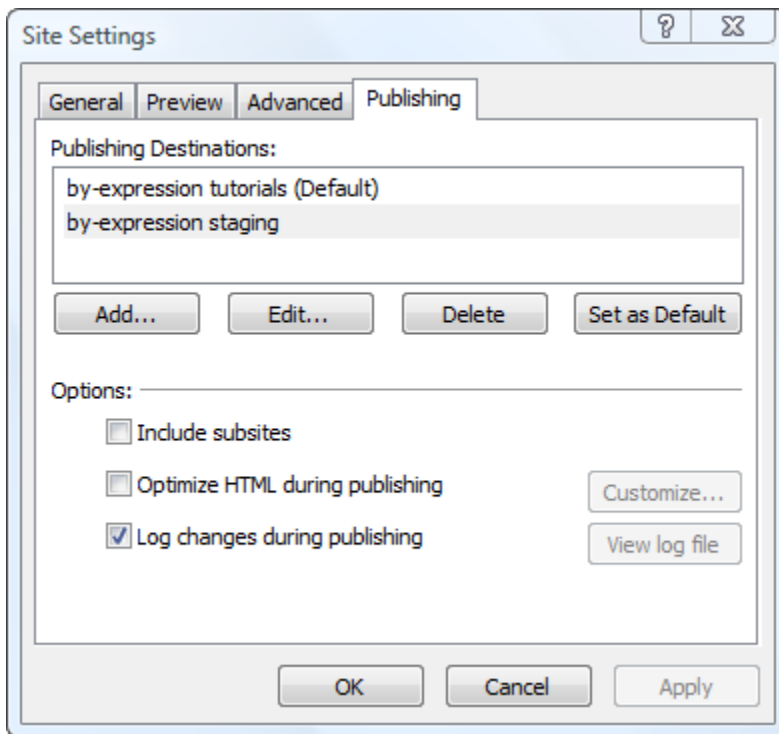
Site Management Tools

The entire method for working with local websites and setting up publishing in Expression Web 3 has been redesigned. All of the site functions have been moved from the File menu to the Site menu. While this may take a little getting used to the benefits are significant.

First, you can now see all your defined websites in one location and assign friendly names to each one. This makes it easier to keep track of the sites you work on.



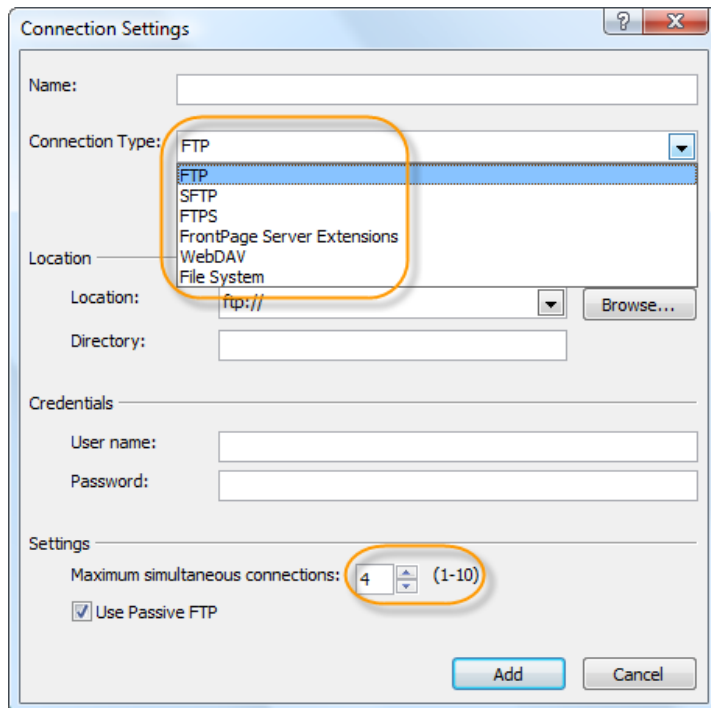
Second is a workflow improvement; you can now have more than one publishing location for each site. For larger sites where you have staging servers and approval requirements before publishing to the live site this is a significant improvement.



Publishing Options

The entire publishing experience has changed in Expression Web 3. One of the biggest complaints with earlier versions of Expression Web has been how slow Expression Web is to publish sites, especially large files and those with a significant number of files. In version 3 this has changed dramatically now that the FTP client in Expression Web no longer relies on the built-in FTP capabilities of the operating system but instead has its own multi-threaded client. Since not all web hosts support multi-threading you can choose the number of threads you want to use from 1 to 10. Even if you use just one thread the improvement in speed is noticeable.

Support was added for FTPs & SFTP.



SuperPreview- Debugging Display issues

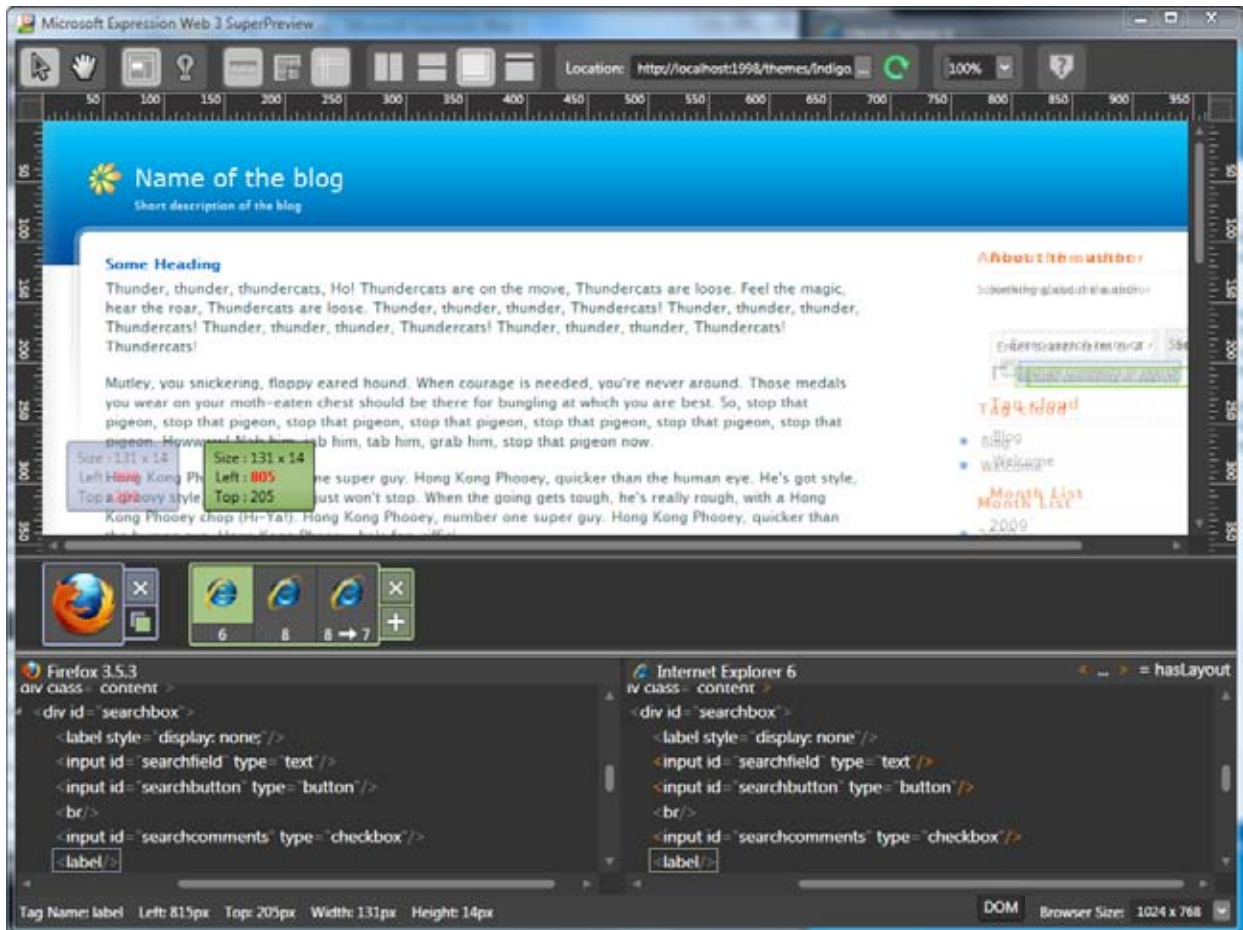
One of the more frustrating experiences web designers and front-end web developers have arises from the variety of different browsers in use. There are four different rendering engines in widespread use:

- Trident, used by Internet Explorer and many Windows applications
- Gecko, used by Firefox, Mozilla and associated programs such as Thunderbird.
- Webkit, based on KHTML is used by Safari, Chrome and a variety of browsers designed to run on Linux.
- Presto, used by Opera and licensed for use to other software vendors (Opera provides the browser for Nintendo game consoles and many cell phone manufacturers.)

With the exception of Internet Explorer you can run the primary browser used by each of these rendering engines on any operating system platform. Which means you can preview your website in all of these browsers locally or on a staging server before you publish it to your live site only if you use a

Windows operating system. Another Internet Explorer issue is that there are three versions of Internet Explorer (6, 7 & 8) currently in use with a significant market share. Each of these versions uses a different version of the Trident rendering engine currently in widespread use on the web. Since Internet Explorer is so integrated into the operating system you cannot run multiple versions of IE on the same computer. This creates a problem for those who develop websites given the significant rendering differences between IE 6, IE 7 and IE 8.

Prior to SuperPreview becoming available the only way to reliably see how your page renders in the different versions was to install Virtual PC and virtual machines with different operating systems and browser combination. Fortunately, the IE team has made virtual machines available for download for that purpose but does require you to obtain a new set approximately every 3 months when they expire.

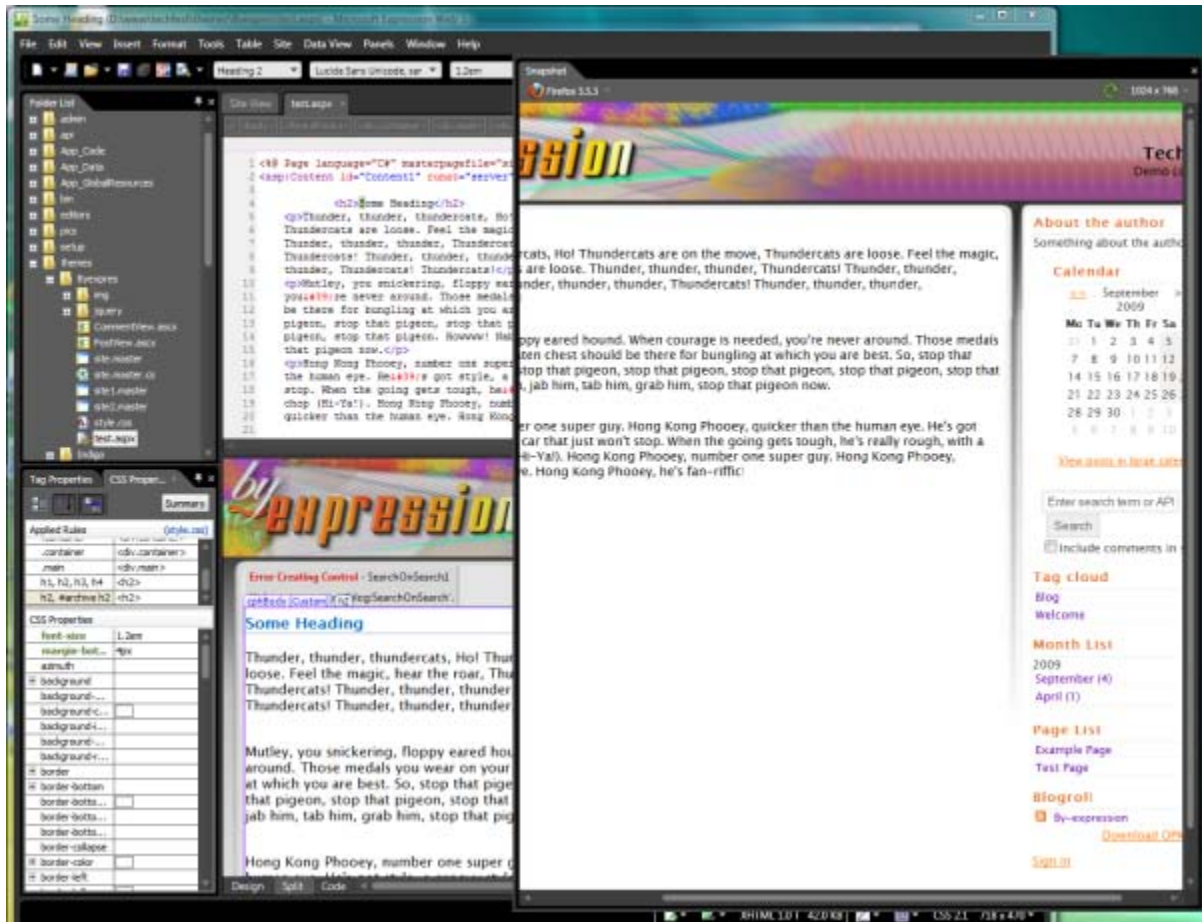


The screenshot above is using the version of SuperPreview that ships with Expression Web 3. There is a standalone version you can also download for use without Expression Web 3. The difference between the two versions is that the standalone version is limited to Internet Explorer only.

Snapshot Panel

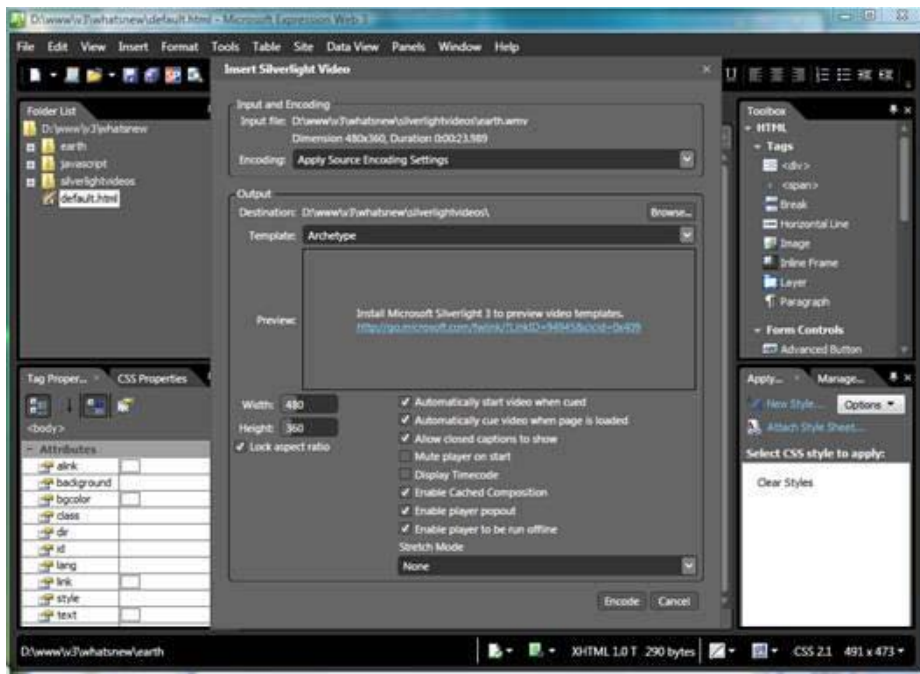
I'm becoming quite a fan of Snapshot and the ability to see immediately how a page displays in any browser supported by SuperPreview. I wish that it would give me the option to preview using any

browser installed on my computer so I could view Opera as well but for that I need to use Preview in Browser to launch the testing server.

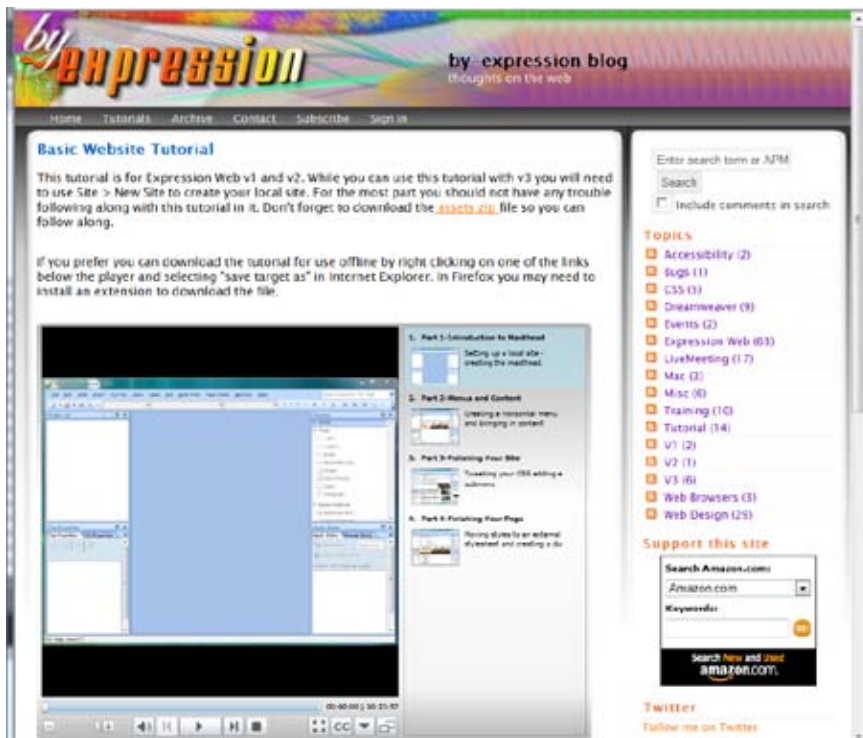


Using Silverlight in Your Website

Expression Web 3 has a new option to insert Silverlight videos that was not in earlier versions. This allows you to point to launch Expression Encoder and select any supported video format. Choose one of the predesigned players or one you have imported into Expression Encoder to start the encoding process.



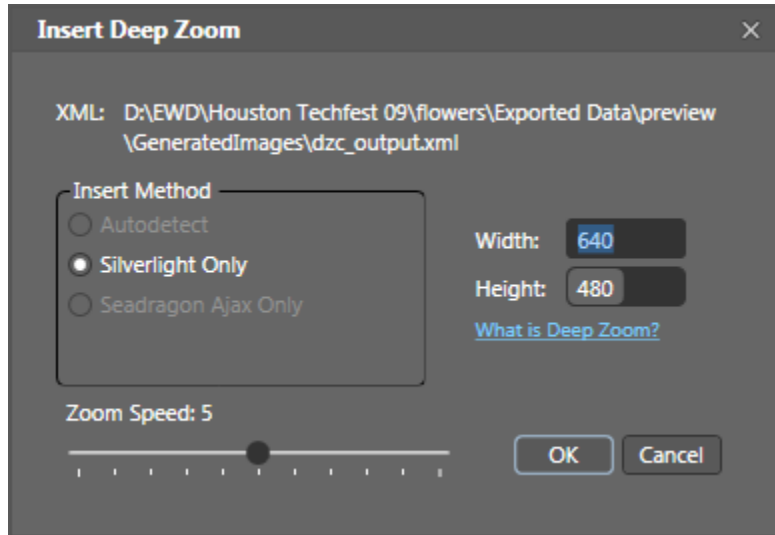
Once the encoding is completed Expression Encoder puts the video and all associated files into your Expression Web local site and inserts the appropriate code and references into your open web page.



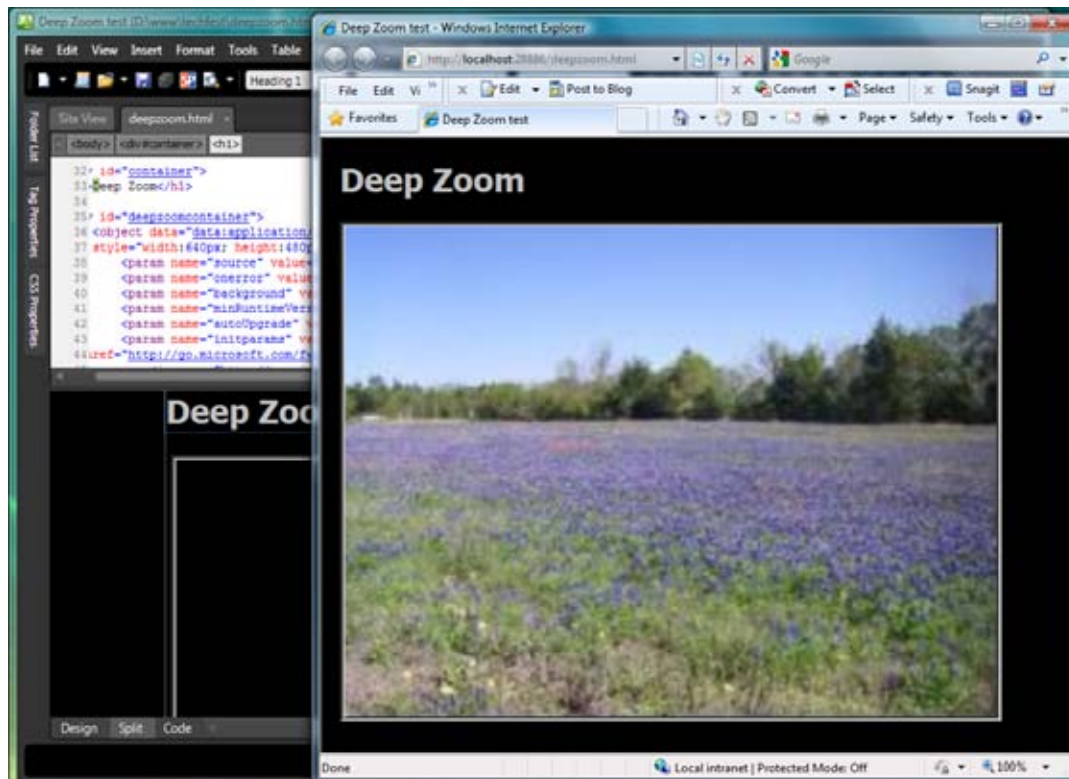
Note: there will be some parameters you may want to add values for in code view, such as title, thumbnail and description.

Deep Zoom

You can now easily add Deep Zoom images created with [Deep Zoom Composer](#) to your websites using Expression Web 3. Simply use Insert > Media > Deep Zoom and select the dzc_output.xml file and set your options.



Unfortunately you will need to use Preview in Browser to actually see your Deep Zoom since the Silverlight won't load properly in Snapshot or in the design surface.



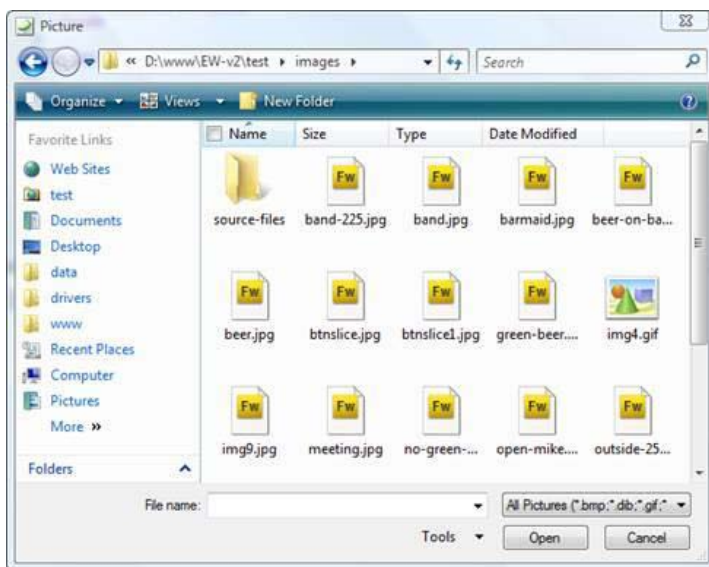
Incremental Improvements

These are mostly workflow improvements and bug fixes.

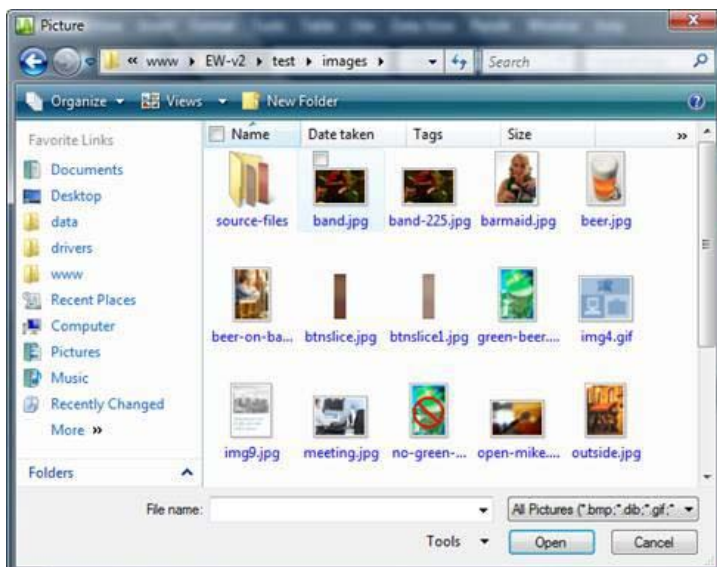
First, something many people have asked for – the ability to auto hide Panels (formerly called Task Panes). Those who have worked in Visual Studio or Dreamweaver have long had the ability to minimize task panes/panels so that they would “pop” out when you moused over them,

and then hide again when you were back in the workspace.

Second, image previews actually work inside of Expression Web 3 for everyone. The majority of computers that I’ve used or seen running Expression Web 1 or 2 only showed icons when you would browse through Expression Web to insert images.



With Expression Web v3 I see the following.



Workflow - Getting Started

Version Control – the only version control available in Expression Web is using TFS 2008. The project must be created in either Visual Studio.NET 2008 or Team Foundation Server 2008. Before you can create a project that will work with Expression Web 3 you must first install the [Visual Studio Team System 2008 Team Explorer](#) and [KB967483](#).

I suggest you start with page design, look and feel using placeholder content in the form that will be used for semantic reasons and/or the output mark-up from your back-end applications. Use heading, paragraphs, lists and tables (for data not layout) in the design. Once you have a more or less final design then turn that page into either a Master Page if you are using ASP.NET, a Dynamic Web Template for static or other server side language. If you are using php you can also create a template that uses php includes instead of a DWT since the major drawback to DWTs is that you have to publish all pages attached to the site after you make a change to a locked area of the page.

A Few Bugs & Issues to Know About

Speaking of workflow you Expression Web does not create code behind pages when you create a new asp.net page. This is another reason for adding pages to the site in Visual Studio when you are working on an ASP.NET site.

Some Telerik and Telligent controls can become corrupted when the page is opened in Expression Web. What happens is that a series of and extra empty lines are added. This may also happen with some other third party controls. Make sure that you have a back-up if you are using third party controls on pages that will be open in Expression Web in case the control is one of those that are incompatible.

At this point Expression Web 3 cannot be extended. The add-in capability using a variant of the FrontPage SDK available in version 1 and 2 of Expression Web is not available in Expression Web 3. Microsoft has said that limited extensibility will be restored to Expression Web 3 in Service Pack 1 to be released sometime before the end of the year.

While many people like the new more “studio” look interface of Expression Web 3, one of the more unfortunate consequences is that the ability to use VB and macros is now gone and unlikely to return. Until Microsoft has settled on an extensibility method and published an SDK most of the add-in/extension makers I have talked to are unwilling to spend the effort necessary to create an add-in and update for each new version of Expression Web.

Microsoft Special Offers

- For small companies that do web design/development (less than 10 people) MS is now offering the WebsiteSpark program. Scott Guthrie has an overview in his blog at <http://weblogs.asp.net/scottgu/archive/2009/09/24/announcing-the-websitespark-program.aspx>
- You can enroll in the program at <http://www.microsoft.com/web/websitespark/> and if you ask me nicely (with a link to your business site) I have some invites available.
- Expression Starter Kits <http://expression.microsoft.com/en-us/cc136529.aspx>
- Web Application Toolkits - small app you can download to go from 0 to F5 (Visual Studio) in under 60 seconds <http://channel9.msdn.com/posts/VisualStudio/Web-Application-Toolkits-Introduction/>

Resources

You can get more information on Expression Web and SuperPreview at:

- 60 day trial of Expression Web 3 <http://www.microsoft.com/Expression/try-it/default.aspx> to get the full v3 Web package trial you will also need to download Expression Design & Expression Encoder. Note you do not need to uninstall the trial if you decide to purchase EW just change the associated installation key.
- Microsoft Expression Web & SuperPreview Forum <http://social.expression.microsoft.com/forums/en-us/web/>
- SuperPreview for Internet Explorer <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=8e6ac106-525d-45d0-84db-dccff3fae677&displaylang=en>
- Internet Explorer Application Compatibility VPC Image <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=21eabb90-958f-4b64-b5f1-73d0a413c8ef&displaylang=en>
- Virtual PC 2007 for Windows XP & Vista: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/virtual-pc/support/virtual-pc-2007.aspx>
- Win7 XP Mode and Virtual PC <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/virtual-pc/default.aspx>
- Good article on when to use SuperPreview vs VPC for browser display differences <http://www.hanselman.com/blog/MultiBrowserOrCrossBrowserTestingAndDeconstructingMicrosoftExpressionWebSuperPreview.aspx>