

Building a Blog with Dreamweaver 8 and InterAKT Extensions

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Introduction

In the previous part of the blog article you completed the Administration Section with user accounts and comments management. It is now time to improve your blog even more using an online HTML editor - **KTML** - to replace plain text areas and be able to edit rich content.

HTML textareas are a common part of web page design and administration. They are also rather plain. You cannot easily format text inside a text area; to format content, a user must learn HTML.

This article shows you a handy software solution you can use to transform simple, obsolete-looking text areas into rich text editors that feature formatting and file-uploading capabilities. You will learn how to set up the text area replacement, configure it, and use it for editing rich HTML content—all without having to write HTML tags yourself. Although you will use this HTML editor to create formatted articles for your weblog, this article does not limit you to blogging applications.

In this article, you will learn how to do the following:

- Install **KTML**, an online visual HTML editor that is a Dreamweaver extension.
- Replace a text area with a KTML editor field.
- Configure the KTML interface.
- Use the KTML editor to create a rich text article with tables and formatting.
- Upload images and create links from KTML.

Requirements

- Prior completion of the first sections of this article.
- Familiarity with the Dreamweaver workspace and interface.
- Basic concepts of web application development.

KTML, the Dreamweaver extension developed by InterAKT Online, is distributed in several licensing options:

- [KTML Lite](#), a free version you can download separately from InterAKT Online.
- [KTML Standard and Professional](#), versions you can purchase from InterAKT Online.

Getting familiar with KTML

An HTML text area gives you limited text formatting capabilities, if any at all. The only way to produce formatted content is to write the HTML code yourself. Accomplishing this requires you to know that the `<h1>` tag defines a header, `<p>` marks the beginning of

a paragraph, and `` makes the text bold.

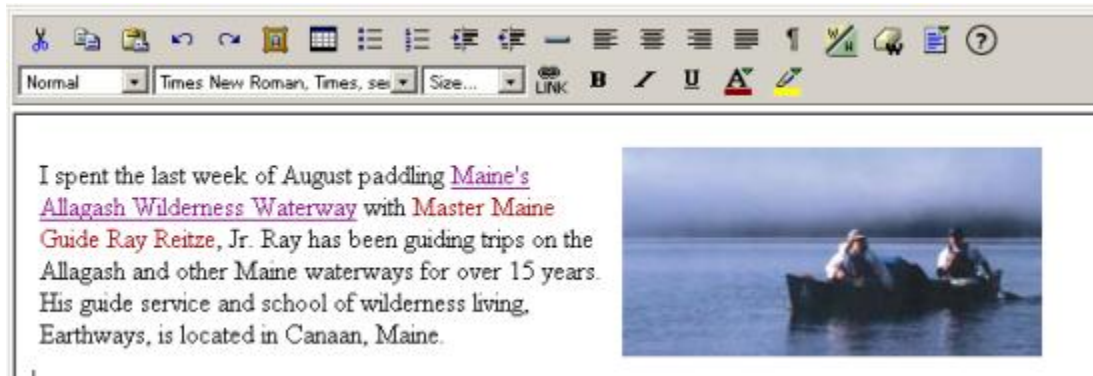
```
Article description: <h1>Adventures in the wilderness</h1>
<p>The breath-taking story of a vacation I spent
paddling on <b>Allagash River</b>.</p>
```

After submitting the form, the application stores the text area content in the database "as is" (including the HTML tags). When the the application extracts the article and displays it in the browser, the formatted text appears.

Adventures in the wilderness

The breath-taking story of a vacation I spent paddling on **Allagash River**.

However, there are hundreds of HTML tags you can use to format text and define an article's layout. Entering them all in a text area—not to mention knowing them all—is a tedious and often unnecessary task. Fortunately, the Dreamweaver extension, KHTML, is a text area replacement with visual HTML editing capabilities. If that sounds like a bunch of confusing buzz words, see the image below to see what I mean.



To anyone who uses a word processor, this interface should look familiar. KHTML generates an "enhanced" text area, completed with a text formatting toolbar, to help you create or edit HTML content visually. After saving your page (submitting the form), the article appears on the web page exactly as it did in the KHTML editor:

Vacations > [Allagash River Canoe Trip Journal](#)

Adventures in the wilderness

I spent the last week of August paddling [Maine's Allagash Wilderness Waterway](#) with [Master Maine Guide Ray Reitze, Jr.](#) Ray has been guiding trips on the Allagash and other Maine waterways for over 15 years. His guide service and school of wilderness living, Earthways, is located in Canaan, Maine.

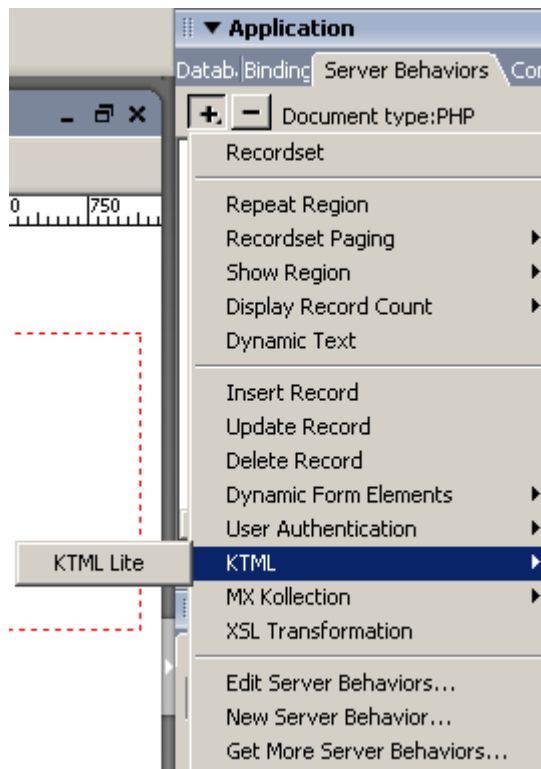


Posted on: 2004-07-21 [Comments\(0\)](#) [Add comment](#)

If you would like to add this functionality to your text areas—allowing you and your users to produce neatly formatted articles straight from the browser without the hassle of writing HTML code—take a look at the concepts behind the KHTML editor.

KTML is a Dreamweaver extension. The installation procedure is simple. Run the corresponding MXP file from the KHTML distribution package. Macromedia Extension Manager will open and handle the installation of the extension.

After the installation finishes, KHTML adds a menu entry to the Server Behaviors panel. Make sure you close and then reopen Dreamweaver after installing KHTML so that the changes take effect.



You can apply this new server behavior to a standard text area, to replace it with the KTML editor. The next section explains how.

Replace the article text area

Open the page for posting new articles to your blog (`post_article.php` from the `admin` folder), which you created in Part 1 of this series. Alternatively, open any page containing a text area that you want to replace with the KTML editor.

Select the text area used to enter the article content, go to the Server Behaviors tab in the Application tab, click the Plus (+) button, and apply the KTML Lite command from the KTML menu.

The interface opens. Don't worry if it appears complicated. I will explain how to configure it.

KTML Properties Test:

Bind to Field: "text_art" in form "fc" ▼

KTML Editable State: Readonly:
 Editable:
 Custom:

Style File (Text CSS Definitions):

Upload Images Folder: ktmlite/images/uploads/
 Upload Files Folder: ktmlite/files/uploads/

You will have to configure these settings in the KTML server behavior interface:

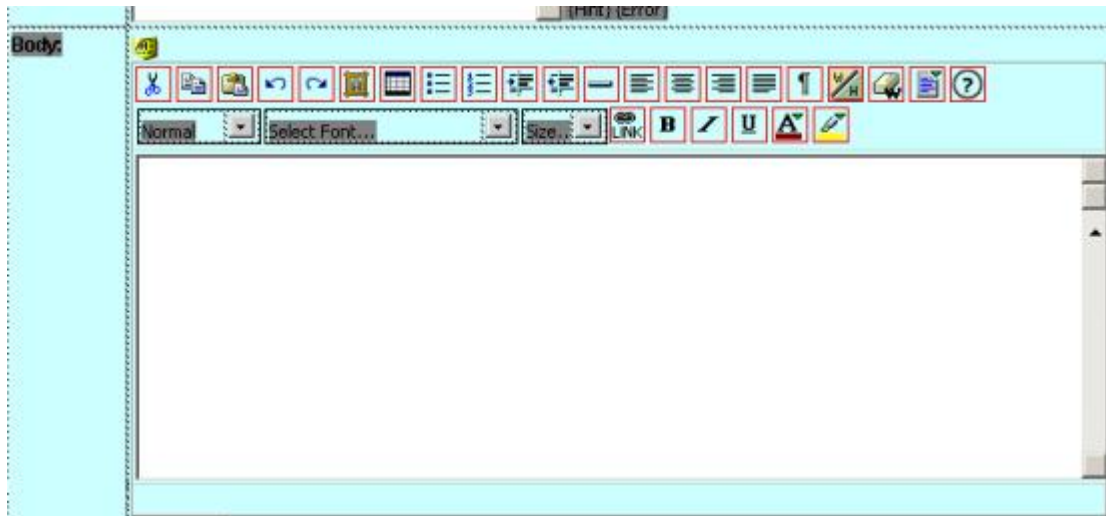
- Size of the editor area (width and height).
- State of the KTML area and other properties (read-only, editable, or custom).
- Location of uploaded files, images, and CSS style definitions.
- Buttons to display in the toolbar.

Let's do it now:

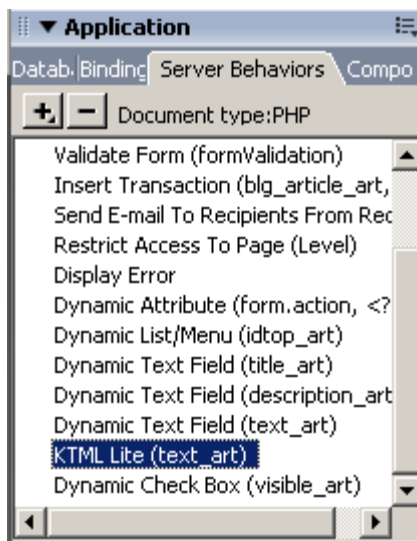
1. Set the new KTML area as 600 pixels wide by 200 pixels tall.
2. For the KTML Editable State, click the Editable option. You can also make it a read-only field or specify its status according to the value of a variable, such as a database field defining the user level or user rights.
3. Leave the path to the CSS files unchanged (KTML Lite does not support Cascading Style Sheets; only KTML Professional does).
4. Specify where you want to upload files and insert images into your pages, or leave the default locations. KTML will automatically generate the corresponding folders.
5. The Keep Alive Server Session option defines whether KTML makes automatic requests to the server to keep the session alive while you edit your articles. Set this option to 10 minutes.

Note: Sessions are a mechanism to preserve data across subsequent page requests. If the session expires, it destroys all session variables and you will not be able to save the article you are working on.

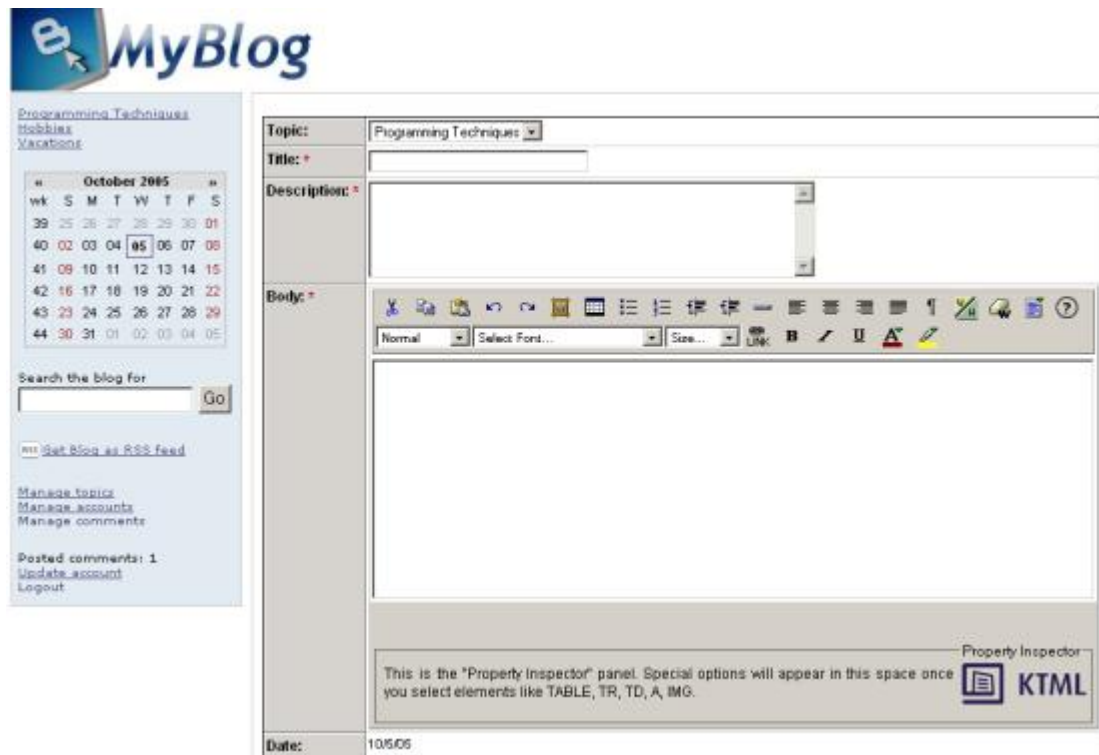
6. Click the Autofocus option to set the mouse focus automatically on the KTML area. Otherwise, the application gives focus to the form control that is set to retrieve it (the focus) -- by default, the first form control on page.
7. Make sure all the toolbar buttons are selected. The disabled ones are available only in KTML Professional. The buttons are grouped by functionality.
8. Click OK to apply the server behavior. In the Design view, the text area appears to have been replaced by an image:



9. The KTML Lite server behavior is now listed in the Server Behaviors panel, from where you can edit it at any time.



10. Save the page. Before previewing it in the browser, make sure you also upload the ktmlite folder to your server.



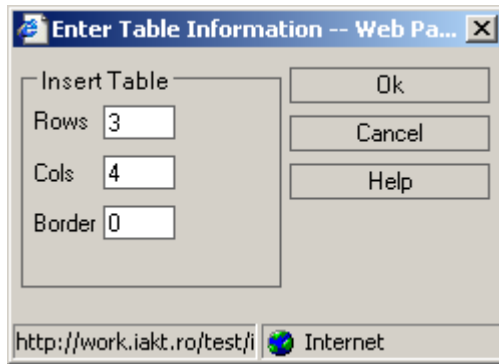
In the next section, you learn how to use the KHTML editor to post your first formatted article online.

Post a rich content article using KHTML

In this scenario, suppose that I want to post an article on my blog where I compare my old photo camera with my newly acquired digital camera. Open the blog homepage, login and then click the Post article link in the Vacations category. You will create a rich content message in the KHTML editor.

Let's see how you can create this entry in a web browser using KHTML. Start by adding some text and formatting it:

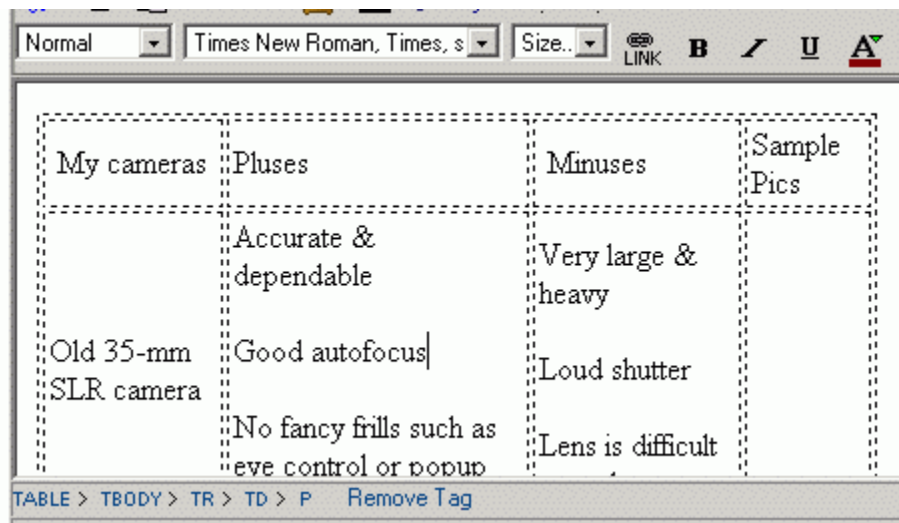
1. Insert the HTML table where the review will be written by clicking the Insert Table button and giving the table three rows, four columns, and invisible borders.



2. Click OK. The page still appears empty. That is because table borders have been set to 0.
3. To view the table guidelines, click the Show/Hide Table Border button:



4. The invisible borders are marked by dotted lines:



5. Write the appropriate content in the inserted table.
6. To bold the text in the table header, place the mouse cursor in one of the cells and select it by clicking the <TR> tag selector in the lower part of the HTML area:



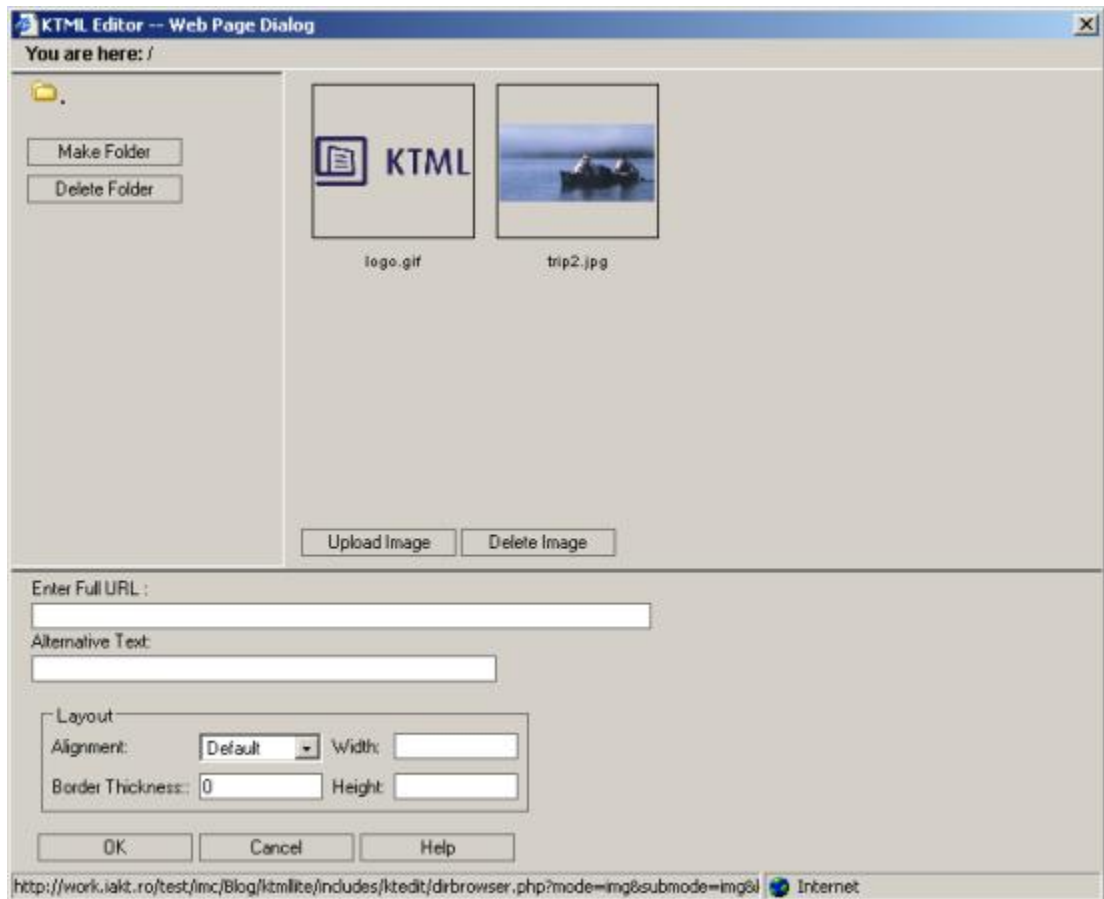
Then click the Bold button.

7. To change the text color, click the Foreground Color button and use the color picker to select the desired color (choose #003399).

8. To turn the pluses and minuses into bulleted lists, select the text and click the Bullet List button (left of the Numbered List button).

Now insert some sample pictures you've taken with each camera. One of the advantages of KHTML is that you can upload and insert the image using the same interface:

1. Place the mouse pointer in the first cell from the Sample Pics column and click the Insert Image button.
2. A new interface appears. This window provides a navigation panel (on the left) with folder explorer and folder management buttons, an image browser with thumbnails (center-right), and the image properties panel (the lower part).

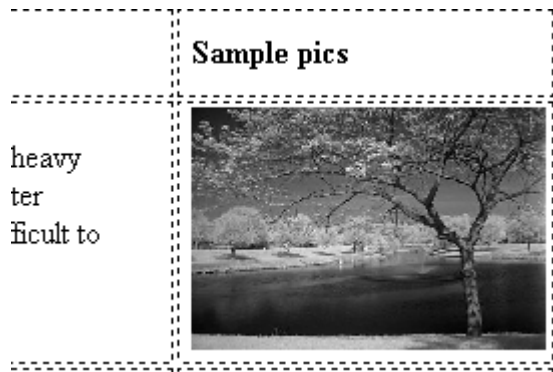


3. To upload an image to the server, click the Upload Image button.
4. In the Upload Image dialog box, click the Browse button to select the image. You can resize it to 160 x 120 pixels and sharpen it to remove the blurry effect created by resizing the image.

Note: To resize and sharpen images prior to uploading, you must have the

ImageMagick PHP library installed on your web server.

5. Click Upload, select the image, and then click OK to insert it.

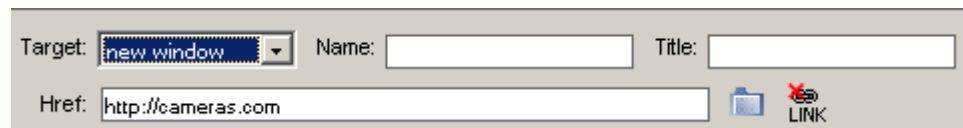


Tip: You can use KHTML in a similar manner to upload files to the server and link them to your article. The file upload interface is very similar to the one for images.


6. Repeat Step 3 to upload the second image.

It's always a good idea to link the name of each camera to the site of the producer. Follow these steps to create a link in KHTML:

1. Select the text "Old 35-mm SLR camera".
2. Click the Insert Link button. Notice that the lower panel of the KHTML area changes. The displayed panel is very similar to the Property inspector in Dreamweaver and will help you configure the link properly.
3. In the Link inspector, enter the URL of the producer's website in the Href field (for instance: <http://www.old-camera.com/>).



4. Select new window from the Target pop-up menu to make the producer's page open in a new browser window.
5. Repeat Step 1 for the second camera.
6. Before saving the article, you might want to make the table wider so that it spreads across the whole page. KHTML comes with a handy feature to help you out: You can switch to the Code view at any time in order to edit the HTML code directly. Just click the Show Code/Design button, find the <table> tag, and change its width attribute to 100%.



```

<table border="0" cellpadding="2" cellspacing="2" width="100%">
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;My cameras</strong></td>
<td><strong>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;Plusses</strong></td>
<td><strong>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;Minuses</strong></td>
<td><strong>&nbsp;&nbsp;&nbsp;Sample pics</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>

```

Tip: KHTML Professional comes with a visual Property inspector for modifying all table attributes, including colors, dimensions, alignment, and number of rows or columns. This feature is not available in KHTML Lite.

7. Click Insert Record. Your article will be stored in the database and also published on your blog.

You can also use KHTML areas in update forms, such as the NeXTensio form used to update articles (articles_form.php). Article contents display in the form exactly as they looked the last time you edited them. You will not lose any formatting and the HTML code behind them is not broken (because it is safely stored in the database).

You can configure KHTML areas with a minimum set of features (buttons) to replace text areas that do not require advanced formatting. Uncheck the ones that you do not need in the configuration dialog to save space.

Let me remind you that after performing several operations in the blog (such as adding a comment, updating an article, managing topics), you can go back to the initial index page (the one listing the last 10 articles posted) by clicking the link added to the blog image in the top left corner.

Conclusion

In this 6th part of the article, I showed you how to replace a standard HTML text area with a rich text editor (**KHTML**) and use this editor to format an article, create tables and links, and upload images.

This was the last part of the blog article. You now have a fully featured and completely functional blog application. Feel free to improve it in any way you wish using [Dreamweaver 8](#) and any of [our Dreamweaver extensions](#).

You can also try [building a subscription-based calendar of events](#) that allows users subscribe to event categories and keep updated with the latest events.