Do You Want To Import A Website Or Create One?

There are essentially two ways to use Xara Web Designer:

* You can either use Xara Web Designer to edit and update an existing website of your own or you can use Xara Web Designer to create a new one.

The information is this guide is based on the assumption that the second option is the more likely case.

However, importing an existing website into Xara Web Designer is absolutely no problem, and all of the techniques and methods described in this book can be just as easily applied to existing sites. Basically, an imported website is the same thing as a template.

Any website can be imported into Xara Web Designer in the following way:

▶ Create a new, blank website document (**FILE** > **NEW**)
▶ Select **FILE** > **IMPORT** in the menu to import a website from your hard drive or some other data storage device.
▶ Go to **FILE** > **IMPORT FROM WEB ADDRESS** to import a website directly from the Internet.
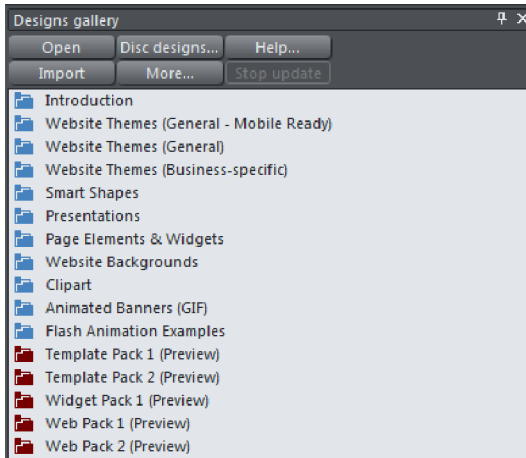
Choosing Templates

Browsing Through The Designs Gallery

We'll take a simple family vacation template as an example to go over the basic features in Xara Web Designer. Of course, all the steps we cover can be applied to any theme or template. We will present (see page 169) the website templates contained in the Premium version at the end of the chapter.

After you start the program,it will display the last project you were working on. You can simply leave this project open if you want.

▶ Open the **DESIGNS GALLERY**.

The button to do this is located to the far right in the Gallery bar (see page 17).
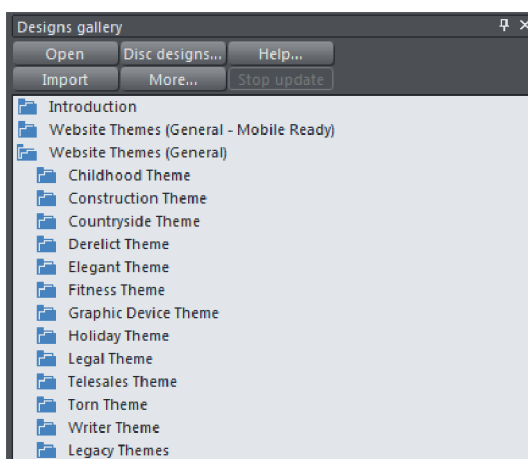

The Designs Gallery contains various folders which can be opened by clicking on them. These folders often contain subfolders.

Blue folders contain content that can be used right away; red folders only provide you with a preview. You can obtain the content in the red folders online.
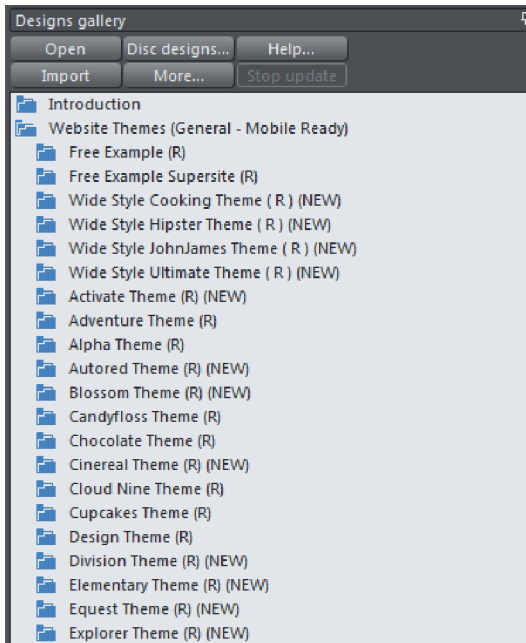
The website templates are located in the uppermost folders labeled "Website Themes".

▶ Click through the folder structure to see which of the listed themes come close to the idea you have in mind.

Some themes are quite specific (e.g. "Sport", "Beauty Salon" or "Finance"), while others are more abstract (e.g. "Arrow or "Infrastructure").

Themes from the folder "Website Themes (General - Mobile Ready)" contain a bracketed (R) at the end of their name. The R stands for "responsive" and tells you that the template contains a variant intended for mobile devices.
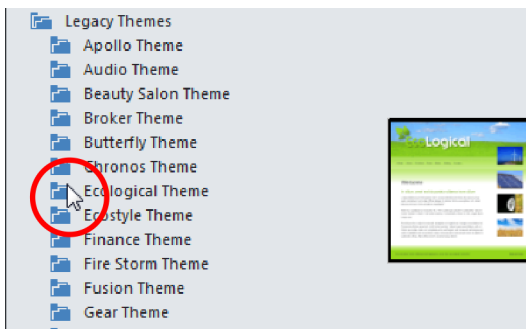

Templates with Variants

We will cover these website templates later (see page 180).

▶ You can preview each template by hovering the mouse pointer over the folder icon beside the name.

A thumbnail will appear in the area to the right:

Short Preview

▶ All the pages contained in the website template can be previewed in detail by opening the folder.

This displays all of the content in the folder, as well as all of the elements that belong to the template. If you click again, the folder will close.

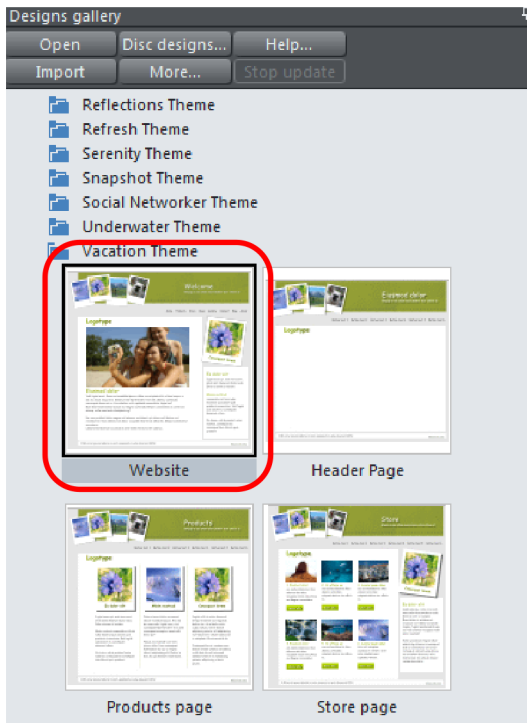Both of these preview features are very helpful when browsing through the Designs Gallery.

▶ Drag the mouse pointer over the folder icons slowly from top to bottom and have a look at the thumbnails to get a first impression.
▶ If you see a template that interests you, click on the folder to open it.
▶ Click again to close the folder and move on to the next one.

Detailed Preview

Loading A Template

▶ As described, try to find a template that most closely resembles the idea you have in mind.
▶ Double-click on the first item in the folder labeled "Website".

This item represents the entire website. The other entries represent individual website elements which can be used separately.

This will open the website, including all subpages, in a new program window

To load elements from the Designs Gallery:

▶ Double-click to open the content in a new window as individual documents.
▶ Drag & drop to copy the content to the current document.

After loading a website template, you will see the following:

1 **Document Tabs:** Double-clicking loads the template as a new document. The previous document remains open and can be accessed here.

2 **Website Navigation:** The template is made up of several pages that are linked to each other. Each page has navigation buttons that can be used to move from one to the other. You can edit the links by clicking on the buttons.

3 **Browser Preview:** These buttons export the document to the browser preview feature. You can switch back and forth while editing to preview the current state of your work in a browser.

4 **Page & Layer Gallery:** Here you can see all of the pages in the template. All of the listed elements are integrated into the project and can be opened for editing by clicking on them. You can change the order of the pages or delete them.

5 **Gallery Bar:** All of the currently opened galleries are located on the far right. You can add additional galleries by going to the UTILITIES menu.

Previewing With The Internal Browser

Xara Web Designer basically offers two different views: the editing view and the browser preview. The editing view is where you write your text, draw lines, arrange your photos, logos and graphics and adjust web properties (e.g. pop-up galleries, mouseover effects and links).

In order to check your editing you'll need to view the page as it will appear to visitors online. There are two types of browser preview which can be accessed up in the control bar.

The first button only exports the current page and displays it in the browser.

The second button exports the entire website and opens it in the browser.

These previews aren't simulations, they are actual HTML exports displayed in the browser of your choosing.

If you only preview the current page, the internal links will not work because the linked pages are not available. This means that if you want to move from a subpage to the homepage, you have to export the homepage as well.

The safest thing to do is export the entire website. Once your website is online and you are sure that the internal navigation works fine, you can do single page previews after updating specific pages.

▶ Click on the second button to display the complete website in the preview browser.

Website Preview

At the top right you will see the icons of the most common Internet browsers.

Browser Icons

All of these browser are available for free online. It's advisable to test your website on all browsers before publishing it, because not all browsers display the same HTML code the same way. Even if your website looks perfect in one browser, a different one may display the elements in a totally different position.