

How to Skin an eZ Publish Now Site

[Bertrand Maugain](#)

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Although there is lots of information about how to publish and manage content with [eZ Publish Now](#) (such as the [Flash demos](#) and the [Website Interface documentation](#)) until now there hasn't been much written about design issues. The purpose of this tutorial is to show that creating a custom design based on [eZ Publish Now](#) is as easy as publishing content.

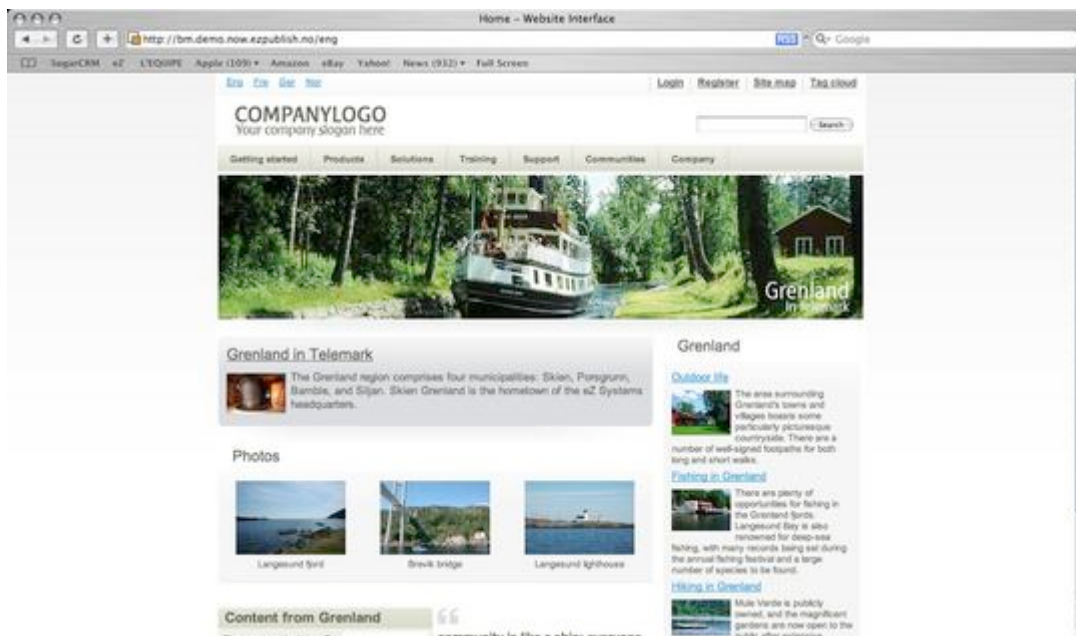
In this tutorial, we will walk through an example that shows how to customize the skin of the default eZ Publish Now design. Note that the goal is not to show CSS best practices, but rather to demonstrate the process of modifying an eZ Publish Now site's CSS and the ease with which it can be done. The actual creation of a design is also beyond the scope of this tutorial, as we will use an existing design as the end goal.

This tutorial will help non-technical designers efficiently apply their creativity when working with eZ Publish. You can follow along step-by-step by using an eZ Publish 3.9.2 installation.

Readers should have some basic knowledge about CSS; therefore, we will not provide detailed explanations for the CSS code used. You should also know how to perform basic editing tasks in eZ Publish; thus, specific instructions on how to edit content have been omitted.

Default and target designs

The following screenshot is the default design of eZ Publish 3.9.2:



Default design

We will work towards the following design:



Target design

Before we work on the design, we will make some simple content modifications and set up our working environment.

Preliminary steps before skinning

Adapting the content

The front page (which uses the Frontpage content class) has different content elements that we can easily adapt. The left column of the target design displays the three latest articles from the Company/Press Room/Grenland section without any corresponding pictures. The center column displays a welcome article (which we will create under the root node). The right column displays boxes from the Products section.

Readers who are unfamiliar with the basic concepts of the Website Interface can consult the [documentation](#) (see the user guide under the **Website Interface 1.2** section).

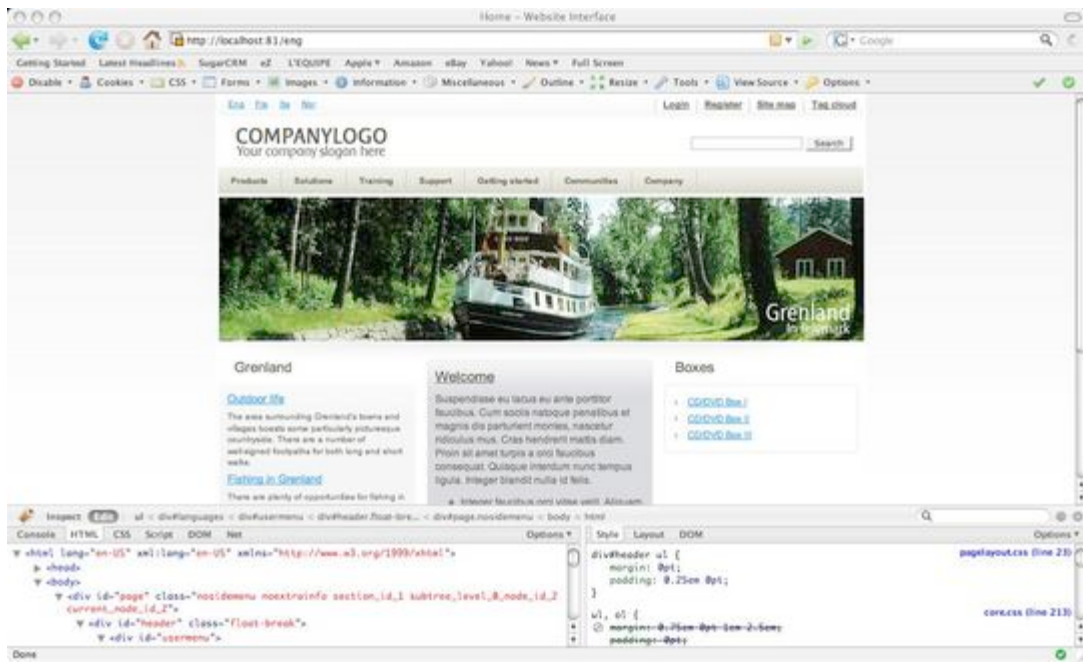
After making the content modification, we now have the following front page:



After content modification

Working environment

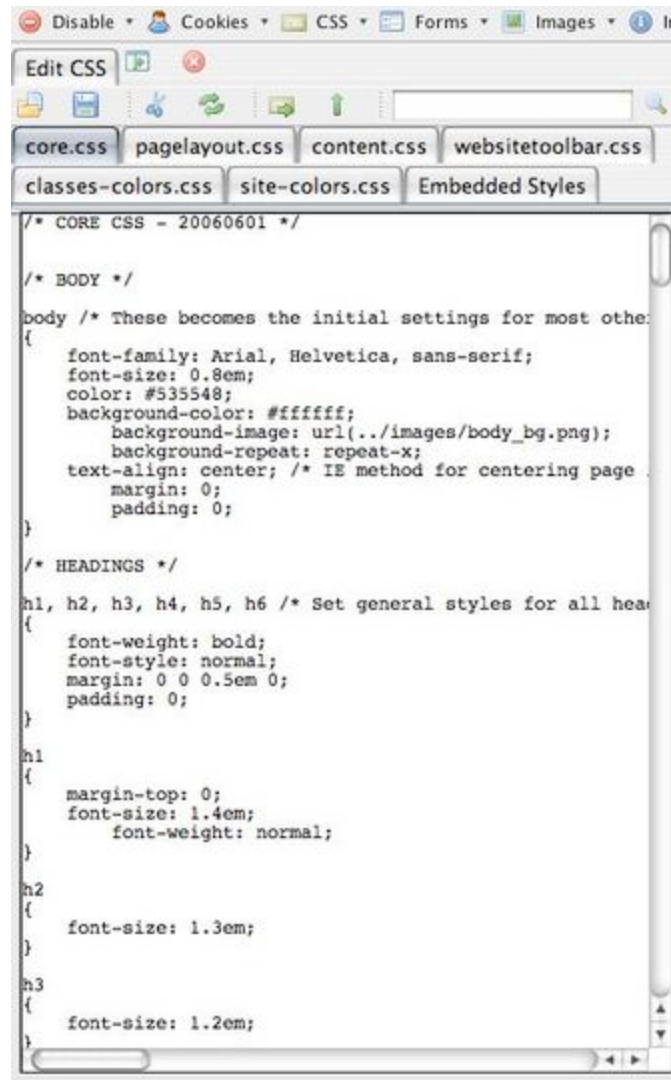
In this tutorial, we will use the [Mozilla Firefox browser](#) and two useful Firefox extensions: the [Web Developer](#) tool-kit (including a toolbar) and [Firebug](#) (which enables us to visualize and identify the CSS elements to be changed):



Firefox with Firebug

CSS files in eZ Publish

The following screenshot shows the different CSS files that are used in eZ Publish, using the Web Developer extension mentioned above:



CSS files used

The CSS files are loaded from left to right, top tab set then bottom tab set. This ensures that overrides occur in the proper order. For example, if an element is defined in *pagelayout.css* and then again in *site-colors.css*, the *site-colors.css* definition overrides the *pagelayout.css* definition. If an element is not defined in *pagelayout.css* and is defined in *site-colors.css*, the *site-colors.css* definition is used.

As you can see from the Web Developer tool, there are 6 stylesheets. Two of them are empty: *site-colors.css* and *classes-colors.css*. These files can contain styles to override the two main CSS files:

- *pagelayout.css* defines all the styles for the global pagelayout (not related to content). This file is overridden by *site-colors.css*.
- *content.css* defines all the styles related to content and specifically to content classes in eZ Publish. This file will be overridden by *classes-colors.css*.

The two empty CSS files can be found at this location in the eZ Publish installation:

```
var/storage/packages/ez_systems/ezwebin_design/files/default/file/
```

At this stage, create a directory called *images* at that path and store all image elements created by the designer (such as backgrounds, graphical buttons, graphical elements and so on) in the new directory. You must have access

and write permissions for this directory.

Name	Date Modified
classes-colors.css	Jun 5, 2007, 1:21 AM
images	Jun 4, 2007, 7:15 PM
site-colors.css	Today, 9:55 AM

Folder for target design files

The general process will be to edit (via a CSS editor of your choice) the two empty CSS files to override the elements of the default design. Where images are needed, simply point the style item to the *images* folder.

You should now have Firefox open (with Firebug installed and enabled) on your eZ Publish installation and be connected to the server in order to update the CSS files.

Step 1: Modifying global font styles

We will begin by editing *site-colors.css* (any CSS editor can be used) to design the front page. See the comments beside each style element in the CSS snippet below for an explanation:

```

body {
  background-image: none; /* This will remove the default background image */
  margin-top: 1em; /* we adjust the margin at the top of the page */
  font-family: Tahoma; /* font chosen for the global site */
  font-size: 11px; /* font size for the global site */
  line-height: 125%; /* amount of space between the text lines */
}

a {
  color: #C80000; /* color for links */
}

/* we also want to add shadows on the sides of the header */

div#page {
  background-image: url(images/head_shadowL.gif);
  background-position: left top;
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
  padding-left: 10px;
}

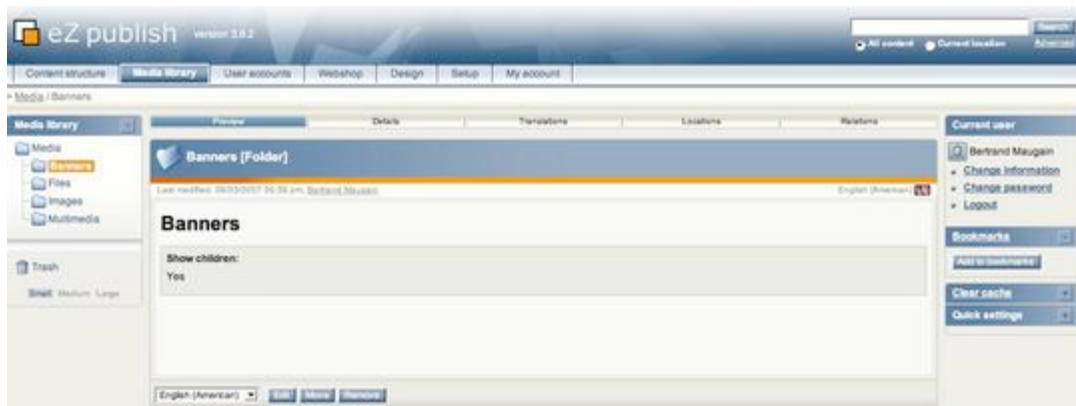
```

Using the code above, we achieve the following result:



Global style changes

We can also change the company logo and the banner, but this does not require any CSS modifications. To add a new logo, log in to the Website Interface as an Administrator and click the **Site settings** link in the top right. You can upload the logo image from this page. For the banner, you need to first upload the banner in the Media/Banners location via the Administration Interface:



Add a banner in the Administration Interface

Then you can edit the front page to add the banner via either the Administration Interface or Website Interface.

We now have the following result:



Global font style changes complete

Step 2: Modifying header styles

In this step, we want to:

1. Add a yellow line to the top of the page.
2. Remove the language links.
3. Modify the user menu at the top right of the page.
4. Adapt the look of the search box.

To achieve #1, first identify the related div by hovering over the header with the cursor. A blue frame will mark the header, and you will see the following in Firebug:



Identify the header using Firebug

We now know that we have to override the `div#header` style from `pagelayout.css` in `site-color.css`. Similarly, we identify that `div#usermenu` is the corresponding section for the user menu at the top. This is where we will add the yellow line.

For #2, we proceed in the same way and find out that the `div#languages` section is the one we want to hide.

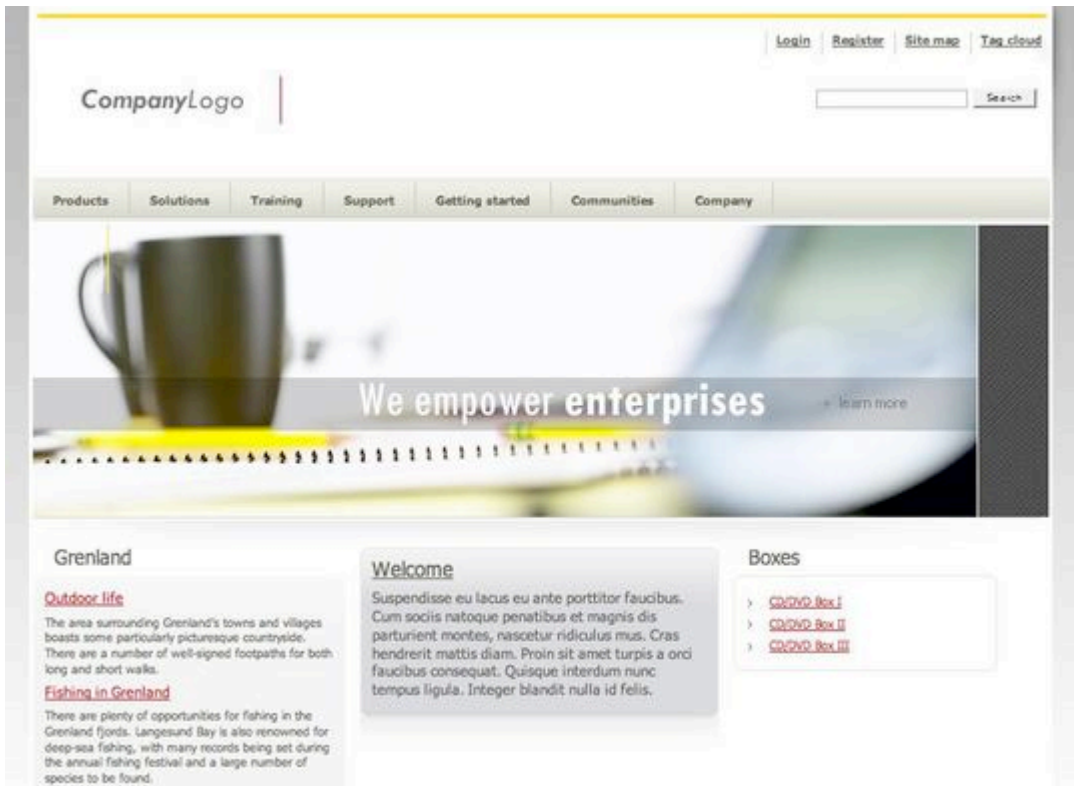
Add the following CSS code in `site-colors.css`:

```
div#header {
padding-top: 1em;
background-image: url(images/head_shadowR.gif); /* shadow on the right side. The rest is adjust
background-position: right top;
background-repeat: no-repeat;
margin-right: -14px;
padding-right: 15px;
height: 115px;
}

div#usermenu {
padding-top: 1em;
background-image: url(images/body_top_bg.png); /* yellow line and adjustments */
background-repeat: no-repeat;
background-position: center top;
}

div#languages {
background-image: none;
display: none; /* hidden */
}
```

Here is the result so far:



Header styles 1 and 2 complete

For #3, we need to remove the background image of the links on the user menu at the top right, as well as the border to the left of those links (to remove the vertical lines between each link). We will then add a background image -- which has already been stored in the *images* folder -- for these links.

For #4, we need to change both the **Search** button and the text field. After having identified the right divs with Firebug (*input#searchbutton* and *input#searchtext*), we override the CSS to add our new background images for these elements.

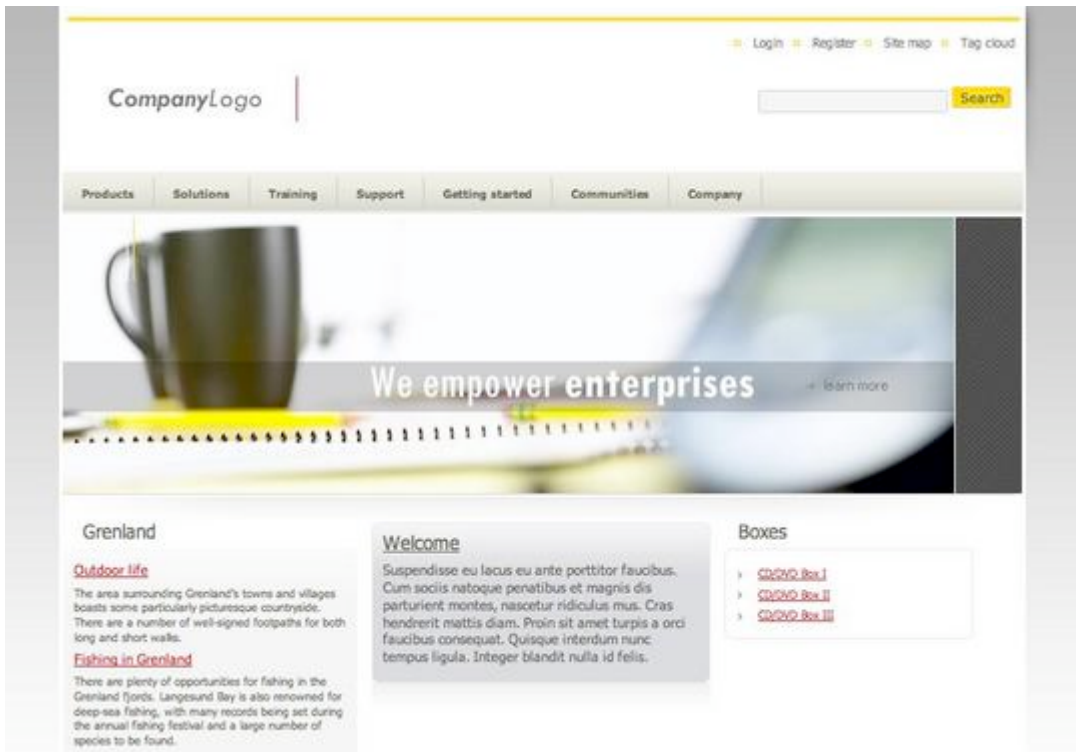
Thus, add the following CSS code to *site-colors.css*:

```

-----
div#links {
  background-image: none; /* background image removed */
}
div#links a {
  font-weight: normal; /* eliminates the bold */
  text-decoration: none;
  color: #686868; /* new color */
  font-size: 10px; /* size adjustment */
  font-family: Tahoma; /* chosen font */
  border: none; /* removes the vertical separator */
  background-image: url(images/links_bg.png); /* adds the yellow separators */
  background-position: left 5px; /* position of the separators */
  padding-left: 15px;
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
}
input#searchbutton {
  background-image: url(images/search_button.png); /* adds the right search button given by the d
  width: 47px;
  height: 17px;
  border: none;
  padding: 0;
  text-align: center;
  font-size: 10px;
  color: #3D3D3D;
}
/* the text field */
input#searchtext {
  background-image: url(images/search_text.png); /* a text field a bit more gray */
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
  width: 151px; /* adjustments based on the size of the target design */
  height: 17px; /* idem */
  border: none;
}
-----

```

The header modification is now complete:



Header styles complete

Step 3: Modifying main navigation menu styles

The main navigation menu of the target design has no background image. It is plain text with a specific font and arrows to the left of each link. Thus, we first need to remove all design elements from the original design.

Using Firebug, we identify the appropriate section: `div#topmenu ul`. This is a frame for all the list elements of the main navigation menu.

The following CSS code in `site-colors.css` removes the gray areas from the right and left of the menu:

```
/* TOP MENU */  
  
div#topmenu {  
  margin-top: -20px;  
  padding-left: 0.5em;  
  background-color: #FFFFFF; /* white color + adjustments */  
}  
  
div#topmenu ul {  
  background-image: none; /* gray part removed on the right side of the menu */  
}
```

We achieve the following result:

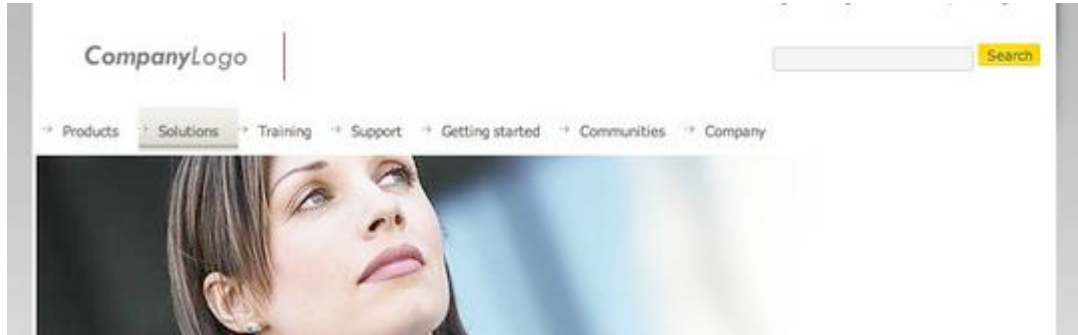


Gray areas removed

Then, we will remove the background image behind each element of the top menu (using Firebug, `div#topmenu li` is identified as the appropriate section) and modify the style of each link (`div#topmenu li a`):

```
div#topmenu li {  
  background-image: none;  
}  
  
div#topmenu li a {  
  font-weight: normal;  
  font-family: Tahoma;  
  border-right: none; /* we remove the vertical line that was there as a separator */  
  background-image: url(images/topmenu_a.png); /* we add the small arrows */  
  background-position: left center; /* we position these arrows on the left of each link */  
  background-repeat: no-repeat;  
  font-size: 11px;  
}
```

When we hover over one of the menu items, there is still a hover effect with an underline. Firebug identifies this section as `div#topmenu li a:hover`. Also, when we click on a menu item, there is still a gray background (in the `div#topmenu li.selected` section):

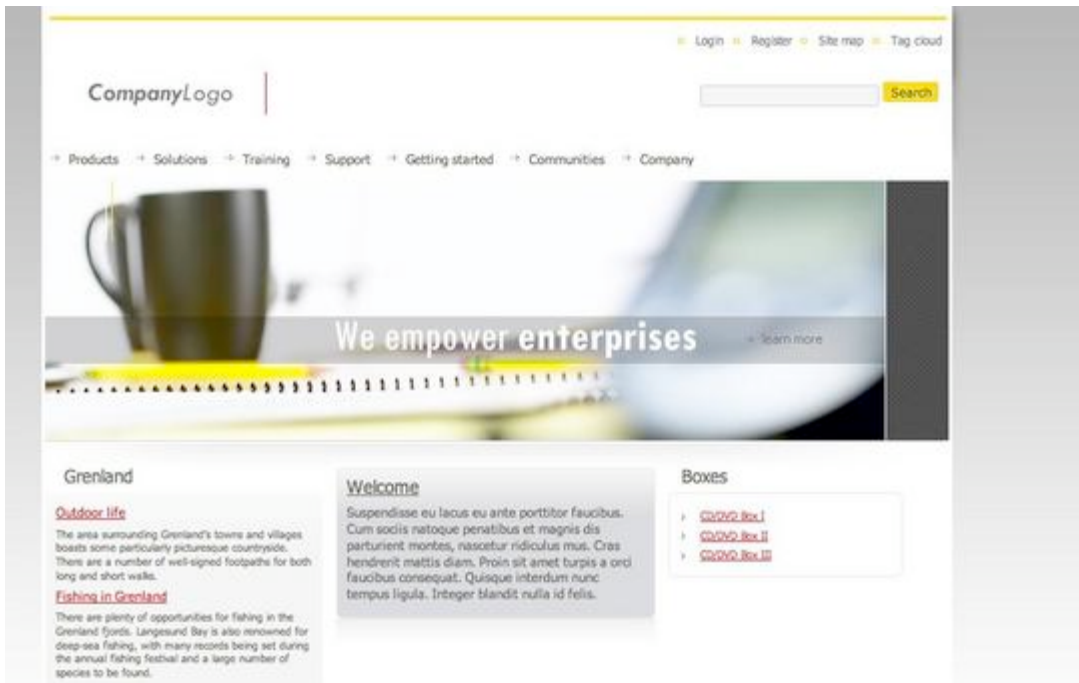


Gray background on selected menu item

Here is the corresponding CSS code for `site-colors.css`:

```
div#topmenu li.selected {  
  background-image: none; /* remove the grey background when one item is selected */  
}  
  
div#topmenu li a:hover {  
  border-bottom: none; /* remove the line under each element */  
}
```

The new main navigation menu design is now complete:



Main navigation menu styles complete

Step 4: Modifying left block styles

We will now modify the three content blocks on the front page, starting with the left block.

The three articles on the left are contained within a light gray box with rounded corners. We will remove this box from a div called `box-3` (as identified by Firebug):

```
/* Box 3 */  
  
div.box-3 div.border-tl, div.box-3 div.border-tr, div.box-3 div.border-tc, div.box-3 div.border-br {  
  background-image: none; /* remove background of the box in all parts */  
}  
  
div.box-3 div.border-mc {  
  background: none; /* for the center part of the box, we just need to remove the background with  
  padding: 0;  
}
```

The box has now been removed:

Grenland

Outdoor life

The area surrounding Grenland's towns and villages boasts some particularly picturesque countryside. There are a number of well-signed footpaths for both long and short walks.

Fishing in Grenland

There are plenty of opportunities for fishing in the Grenland fjords. Langesund Bay is also renowned for deep-sea fishing, with many records being set during the annual fishing festival and a large number of species to be found.

Hiking in Grenland

Mule Varde is publicly owned, and the magnificent gardens are now open to the public after extensive restoration. The gardens are open all year and are beautifully situated by the Eidangerfjord.

Light gray box removed

We then need to add the background image behind the title "Grenland". We identify this div as `vertically_listed_sub_items div.content-view-embed h2`, and add a style item in `classes-colors.css`:

```
div.vertically_listed_sub_items div.content-view-embed h2 {  
  background-image: url(images/vert_h2_bg.png); /* we add the black background and the arrow */  
  color: #FEE439; /* yellow text */  
  height: 22px; /* adjustments */  
  padding-top: 6px;  
  padding-left: 25px;  
  font-family: Tahoma;  
  font-size: 12px;  
  font-weight: bold;  
}
```

From the result below, you can see that each article title now has the same background image:



Article titles with background image

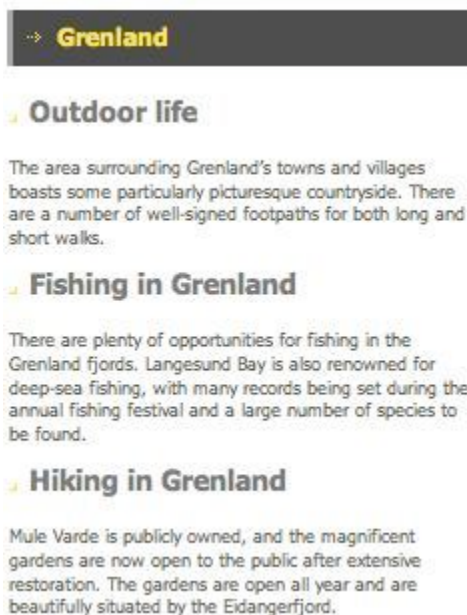
We need to override the `h2` title of the Article class and also make some other modifications, such as the color of the link. Because these styles are content-class related, they are added to `classes-colors.css`:

```
div.vertically_listed_sub_items div.content-view-embed div.class-article h2 {
  background-image: none; /* we remove the introduced background */
  font-weight: normal;
  font-size: 14px;
  font-weight: bold;
}

/* this is the link property of the article title */

div.vertically_listed_sub_items div.content-view-embed div.class-article h2 a {
  color: #686868; /* we change the color according to the target design */
  text-decoration: none; /* we remove the underline */
  background-image: url(images/dot.png); /* the yellow element on the left of the link */
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
  background-position: left 10px; /* adjustments */
  padding-left: 10px; /* idem */
}
```

The block is almost complete:

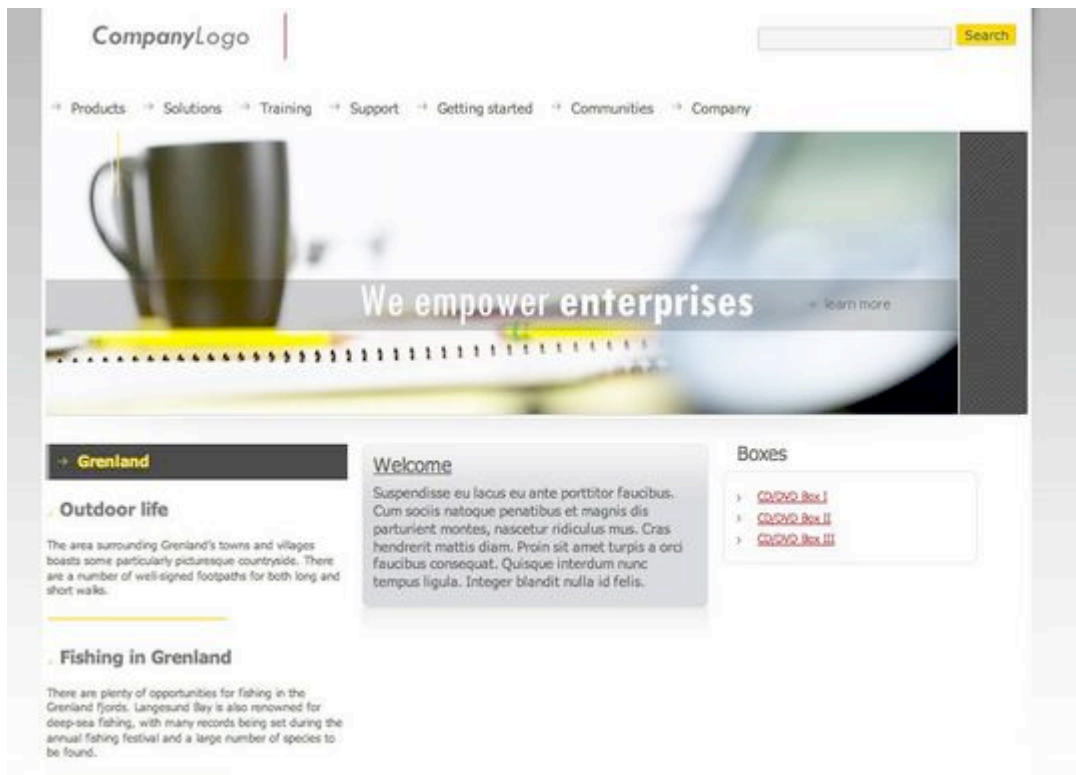


Left block almost complete

The last style for this block is the yellow separator between articles. Using Firebug to select the text of one of the articles, we find the `div.content-view-embed div.class-article div.attribute-short`. In our case, we want to apply the separator as a background image for objects of the Article class. Add the following to `classes-colors.css`:

```
div.vertically_listed_sub_items div.content-view-embed div.class-article {
  background-image: url(images/separator.png); /* separator added. Rest is adjustments */
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
  background-position: left bottom;
  padding-bottom: 1.5em;
  margin-bottom: 1.5em;
}
```

Here is the result so far:



Left block styles complete

Step 5: Modifying middle block styles

Similar to what we did with the left block, we identify the box (*box-2*) with Firebug, then remove the background with the following CSS code in *site-colors.css*:

```
-----  
/* Box 2 */  
  
div.box-2 div.border-tl, div.box-2 div.border-tr, div.box-2 div.border-tc {  
  background-image: none;  
  display: none;  
}  
  
div.box-2 div.border-ml, div.box-2 div.border-mr, div.box-2 div.border-bl, div.box-2 div.border-br {  
  background-image: none;  
}  
  
div.box-2 div.border-mc {  
  background: none;  
  padding: 0;  
}  
-----
```

This gives the following result:

Welcome

Suspendisse eu lacus eu ante porttitor faucibus. Cum sociis natoque penatibus et magnis dis parturient montes, nascetur ridiculus mus. Cras hendrerit mattis diam. Proin sit amet turpis a orci faucibus consequat. Quisque interdum nunc tempus ligula. Integer blandit nulla id felis.

Middle block with background removed

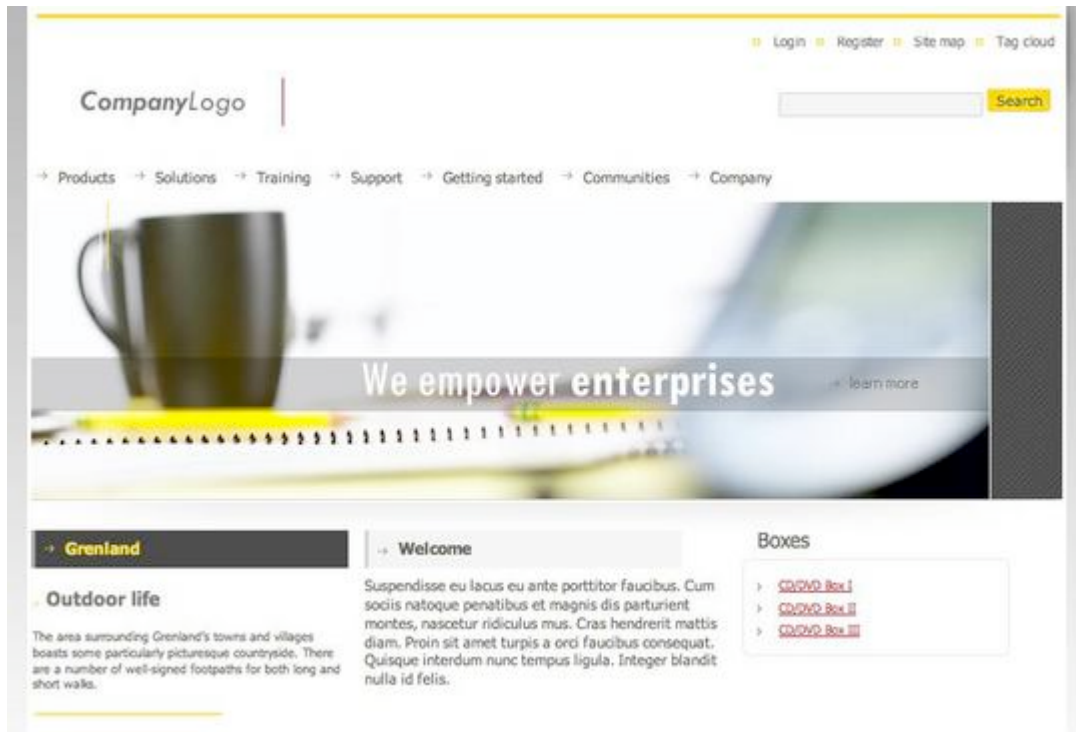
There is a graphic element under the box, which is identified as the *highlighted_object* div. Remove this background with the following code in *site-colors.css*:

```
div.highlighted_object {  
  background-image: none;  
}
```

We can now focus on the new style for the box. We need to add the background image for the title of the article as well as the link properties in *site-colors.css*:

```
div.highlighted_object h2 {  
  background-image: url(images/high_h2_bg.png); /* image for the target design */  
  background-repeat: no-repeat;  
  color: #FEE439; /* color followed by adjustments */  
  height: 22px;  
  padding-top: 6px;  
  padding-left: 25px;  
  font-family: Tahoma;  
  font-size: 12px;  
  font-weight: bold;  
}  
  
div.highlighted_object h2 a {  
  text-decoration: none; /* to remove the underline */  
}
```

The new middle block is now done:



Middle block styles complete

Step 6: Modifying right block styles

The right block is an itemized list with the same title style as the middle block. We will modify the `border-box` div in `site-colors.css`.

```
div.itemized_sub_items {  
  width: 100%; /* if you don't do that you will have the box stopping before the banner on the right */  
}  
  
div.itemized_sub_items div.content-view-embed h2 {  
  background-image: url(images/high_h2_bg.png); /* clear gray background and the rest is adjusted */  
  background-repeat: no-repeat;  
  color: #FEE439;  
  height: 22px;  
  padding-top: 6px;  
  padding-left: 25px;  
  font-family: Tahoma;  
  font-size: 12px;  
  font-weight: bold;  
}
```

This is the right block so far:



Right block after first few modifications

We now need to remove the border from the *border-box* div. Firebug shows that this border is built using 3 parts: top, middle and bottom:

```
▼ <div class="border-box">
  ▼ <div class="border-tl">
    ▼ <div class="border-tr">
      <div class="border-tc"/>
    </div>
  </div>
  ▼ <div class="border-m1">
    ▼ <div class="border-mr">
      ▼ <div class="border-mc">
        ▶ <ul>
      </div>
    </div>
  </div>
  ▼ <div class="border-bl">
    ▼ <div class="border-br">
      <div class="border-bc"/>
    </div>
  </div>
</div>
```

Borders identified in Firebug

Next, add the following code to *site-colors.css* to remove the background frame:

```
div.itemized_sub_items div.border-box div.border-tl, div.itemized_sub_items div.border-box div.b
background-image: none;
}

div.itemized_sub_items div.border-box div.border-mc {
background: none;
padding: 0;
}
```

This is the result so far:



Right block without background frame

The list items and their links need to be customized in *site-colors.css*:

```
/* the #main needs to be used since the we work on global styles defined in the main div */  
  
div#main div.itemized_sub_items div.content-view-embed ul li {  
  background-image: url(images/itemized_li.png); /* the dashes under each listed element */  
  
  /*adjustments*/  
  
  background-position: bottom left;  
  background-repeat: repeat-x;  
  padding-top: 0.5em;  
  padding-bottom: 0.5em;  
}  
  
div.itemized_sub_items div.content-view-embed ul li a {  
  background-image: url(images/itemized_a.png); /* we add the yellow arrow on the left side of ea  
  text-decoration: none; /* we remove the underline of the links */  
  color: #686868;  
  font-size: 11px;  
}
```

The new style for the right block is now ready:



Right block style complete

Step 7: Modifying footer styles

By default, the footer looks like this:

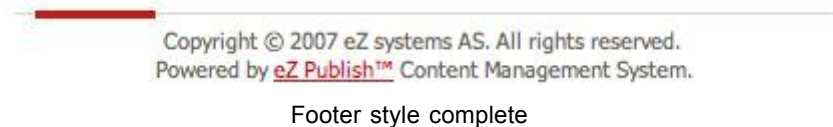


Default footer style

The *footer* div is easily identified and then modified in *site-colors.css*:

```
div#footer {  
  background-image: url(images/footer_bg.png); /* background image and other adjustments */  
  font-size: 11px;  
  margin-top: 3em;  
  margin-bottom: 2em;  
}
```

We get the following result:



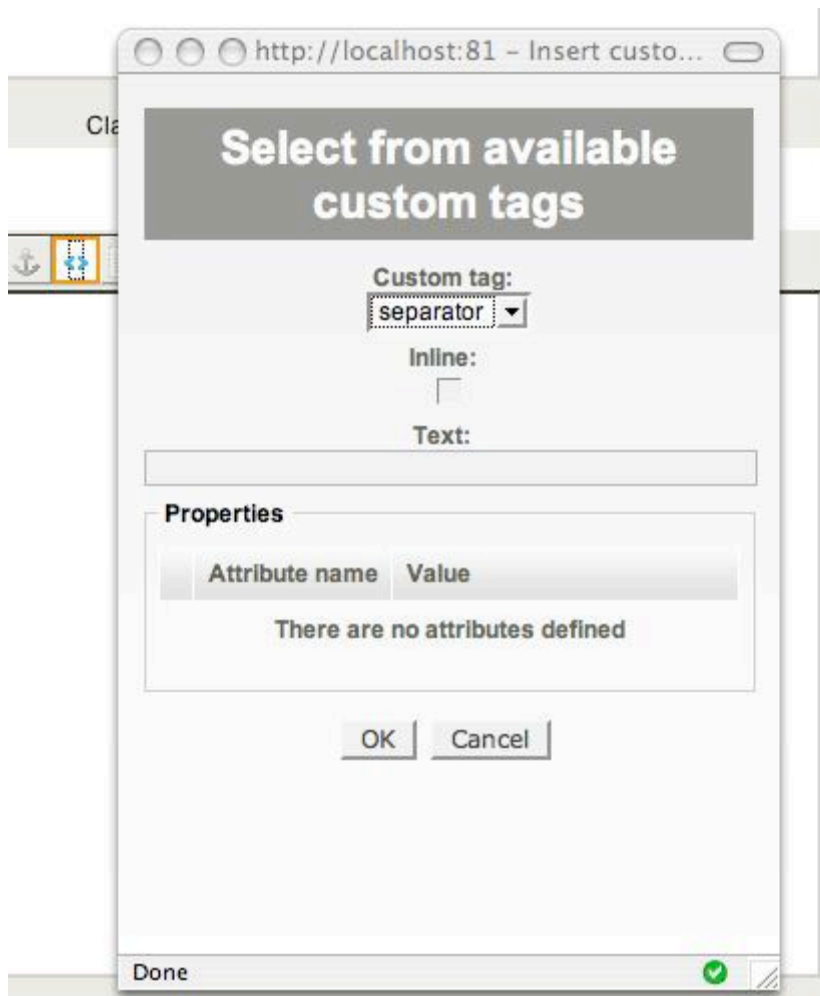
Copyright © 2007 eZ systems AS. All rights reserved.
Powered by [eZ Publish™](#) Content Management System.

Footer style complete

Adding additional content

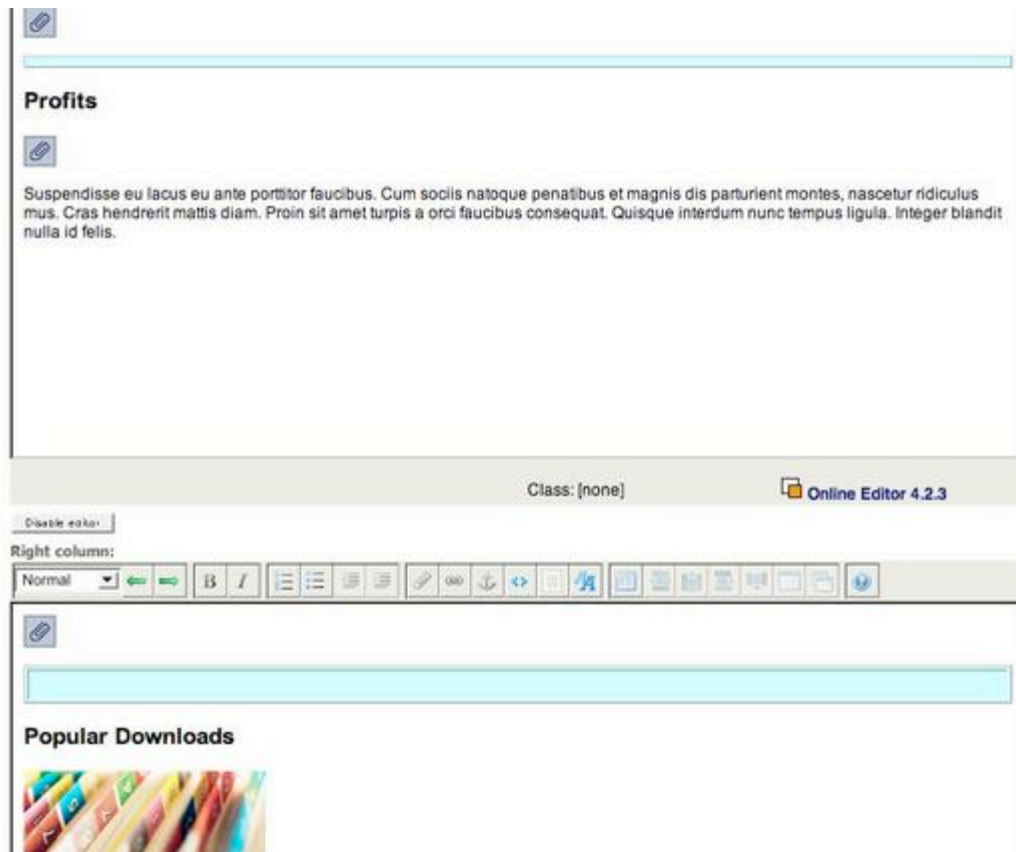
The target design has some additional content on the front page.

First, we add the additional pictures in the Media/Images node via the Administration Interface. Then, we can edit the front page to add some static text with *h2* titles. Insert the corresponding pictures for both the middle and right blocks. It is important to add a separator between the fetch icon and the new text. To do this, click on the **Custom tag** icon in the Online Editor and choose the separator tag.



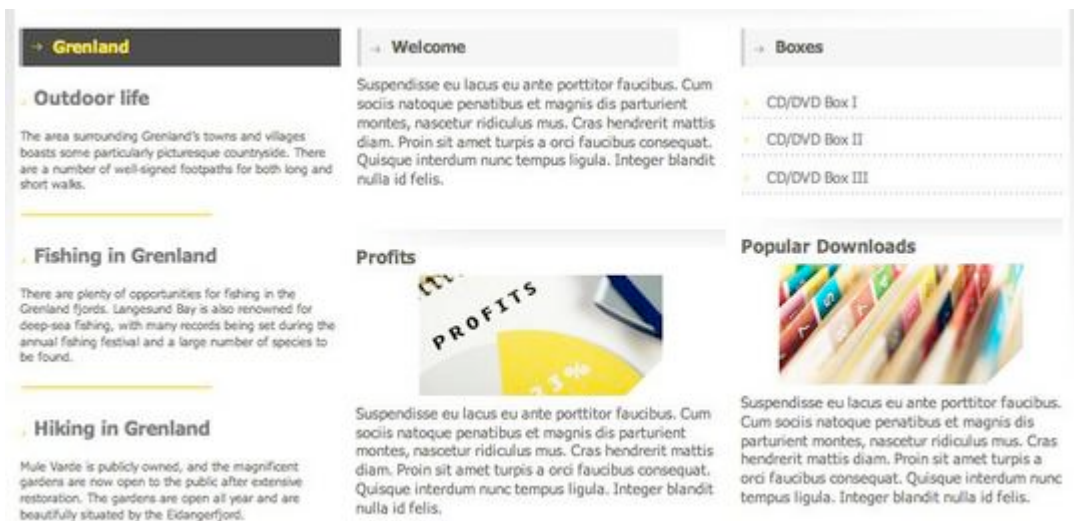
Select the separator tag

The Online Editor text areas should now look as follows:



Add new content with the Online Editor

After publishing the content, the site now looks like this:



Front page with new content

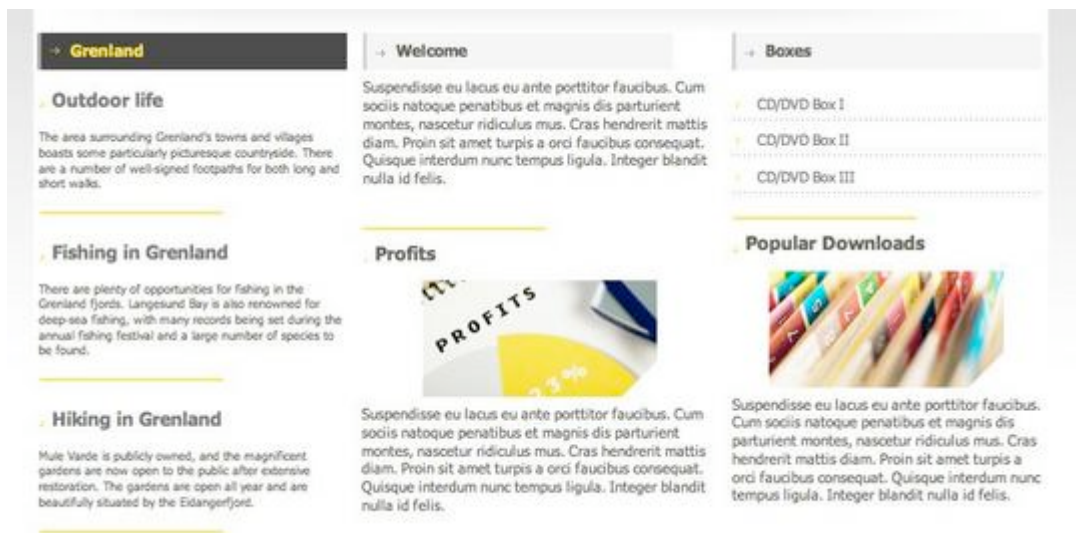
The final step is to style the titles and the separators. The two sections involved (as identified by Firebug) are *h3* and the *separator* div. (The reason why it is *h3* instead of the *h2* that was previously added is that the XML header tags in the Online Editor are one level above the equivalent XHTML tags. *h1* in XML in the Online Editor is equivalent to *h2* in XHTML; *h2* in XML in the Online Editor is equivalent to *h3* and so on.) We then add the following code to *site-colors.css*:

```
/* SEPARATOR */

div.separator {
  background-image: url(images/separator.png);
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
  clear: both;
}

h3 {
  font-family: Tahoma;
  font-size: 14px;
  background-image: url(images/dot.png);
  background-repeat: no-repeat;
  background-position: left 10px;
  padding-left: 10px;
  margin-bottom: 1em;
}
```

We are done applying the new design!



Target design complete

This design can now be reused for other websites and specifically for [eZ Publish Now](#) projects.

Creating a site package

Now we will briefly outline the processes for creating and importing a site package for this tutorial, using the eZ Publish Package Wizard.

See section 6 of the [Website Interface Customization Guide](#) for full details on how to create site packages.

Once the site package is generated and saved locally, you can install it on other eZ Publish installations via the Administration Interface. See section 7 of the [Website Interface Customization Guide](#) for full details.

First, log in to the Administration Interface of the existing site and click the **Packages** link in the **Setup** section. Then, click the **Create a new package** button, select the **Site style** radio button and click the **Create package** button.

After adding a thumbnail to represent the package, the wizard will prompt you to upload the *site-colors.css* and

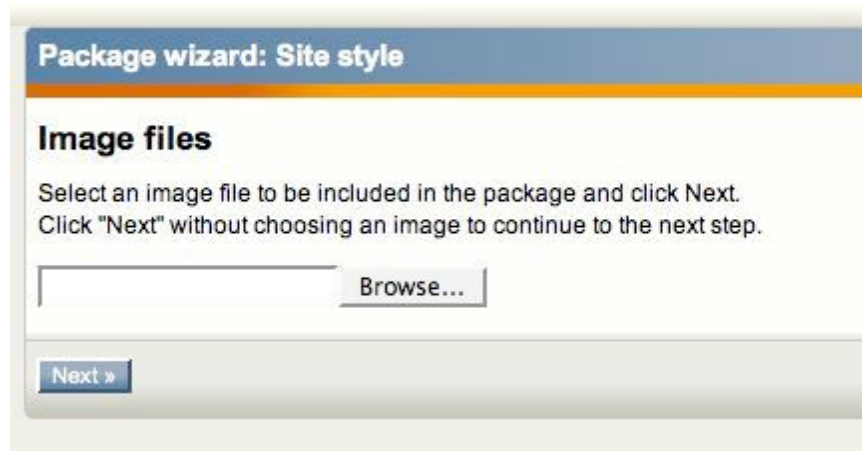
classes-colors.css files:



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Package wizard: Site style" with a sub-heading "CSS files". The form contains two instructions: "Please select the site CSS file to be included in the package." and "Please select the classes CSS file to be included in the package." Each instruction is followed by a text input field and a "Browse..." button. At the bottom of the form is a "Next »" button.

Upload site-colors.css and classes-colors.css

Next you need to upload (one by one) all of the pictures from the *images* folder:



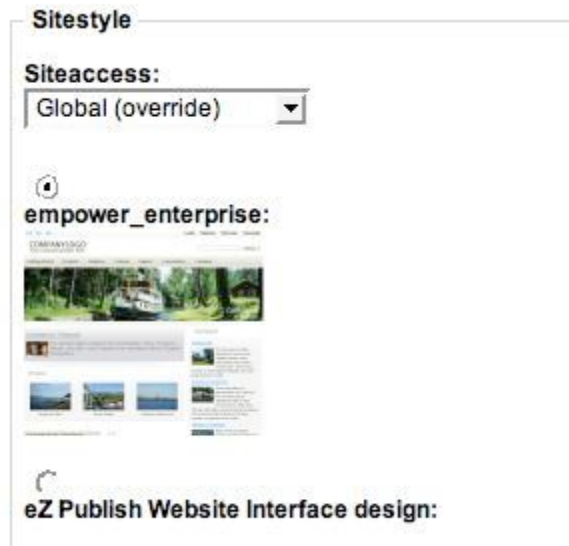
The screenshot shows a web form titled "Package wizard: Site style" with a sub-heading "Image files". The form contains two instructions: "Select an image file to be included in the package and click Next." and "Click 'Next' without choosing an image to continue to the next step." Below the instructions is a text input field and a "Browse..." button. At the bottom of the form is a "Next »" button.

Upload all image files

Fill in some extra details about your site package, then export the package (to be saved locally).

You can then easily reuse this design by importing the package via the Administration Interface of any eZ Publish 3.9.x website. Click on the **Setup** tab, then the **Packages** link, and finally click the **Import new package** button.

If you have an [eZ Publish Now](#) installation, you can (once imported) select the package through the Website Interface by clicking the **Site settings** link at the top right and choosing the imported site package:



Select the site package in the Website Interface

Other than the content modifications that were made, the imported site package looks the same as the target design:



Newly applied site package

The site package for the target design is [available for download](#).

Conclusion and resources

In this tutorial, we have demonstrated how to change the design of the default [eZ Publish Now](#) installation with mostly CSS changes. Once the design is complete, you can create a site package that can be imported into other

eZ Publish installations.

Keep in mind that this tutorial is not intended for learning good CSS code, but rather to show the possibilities that are available with CSS and [eZ Publish Now](#).

We welcome your comments and tips regarding eZ Publish design issues.

Resources

- [PDF of this article](#)
- [Site package for the target design](#)
- [eZ Publish Now](#)
- [eZ Publish Now Flash demos](#)
- [Website Interface documentation \(including the Customization Guide\)](#)
- [eZ Publish documentation](#)
- [Mozilla Firefox browser](#)
- [Firefox Web Developer extension](#)
- [Firebug Firefox extension](#)