



CityDesk Tutorial

Fog Creek Software

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What does CityDesk do?

CityDesk makes it easy to manage a web site which changes often.

With CityDesk, people who don't know anything about HTML or web servers can easily add, edit, and remove articles from a web site, using a program that is as easy as a word processor. CityDesk will automatically apply standard formatting, according to templates you provide, to those articles. Then it copies them to your web server automatically. Each article can include pictures, sounds, and other media elements.

Here are just a few examples of the kinds of things you can build and maintain with CityDesk:

- A daily newspaper, a monthly newsletter, or a web-based magazine
- A personal journal or weblog
- A company's list of job openings
- A real-estate agent's list of currently available properties
- A company worldwide knowledge base

The real power in CityDesk comes from the fact that you only design the formatting of your site once. After that, it's easy to create new articles which use the same design. Because CityDesk keeps the text of the articles separate from their design, you can change the design in one place, and every article on your site changes accordingly.

Once you set up your site, updating it is just as easy as using a simple Windows-based word processor. The built-in word processor is WYSIWYG ("What You See Is What You Get") and includes a spell checker, word counter, find and replace, and formatting commands.

CityDesk is built around a powerful, robust database engine. This means that different people can update the site simultaneously without any risk of conflict or corruption. You can even have a whole newsroom banging away at the same time; even a virtual newsroom, with contributors all over the Internet!

When you need to manage a site with several different versions, CityDesk is invaluable. Suppose you want to publish a newsletter every week in two languages. CityDesk provides a nice interface for translators where they can see a list of untranslated articles and translate them on the spot in a split-screen environment. If you try to publish the site before everything has been translated, you'll see a warning.

Or suppose you produce a newsletter that has different regional editions. Most of the articles are the same, but you don't want to run your poem "Every Civilized Person Loves the New York Yankees" in the Boston edition. CityDesk keeps track of that and publishes both editions completely automatically.

CityDesk can also keep track of articles that need to be held until a certain date. Just write the article and set the date range, and CityDesk will never publish it before or after those dates. This is a good way to keep fresh content on your web site when you're on vacation.

Many web sites appear in multiple formats. For example, you might have:

- the normal web version
- a "printer-friendly" web version without ads or navigation elements
- a version for Palm Pilots without pictures
- a large-font version for the web site for people who like larger fonts

- a printed version that you hand out on street corners to passers-by (who use it to line bird-cages, those scurvy knaves)
- and so on and so forth.

Setting up template families for each of these versions is a one-time operation. After that, you only have to type in the article once, and it will automatically be published in each and every format without any additional work. Ta da!

We think you'll find that CityDesk is an extremely powerful tool, but one that's quite easy to understand. This tutorial will take you on a whirlwind tour in about ten minutes. After that, you'll only need to consult the documentation occasionally.

Ready? Let's get started!

Lesson 1 - Creating a Simple Site

In CityDesk, every element of your site -- articles, HTML files, templates, pictures, and anything else you want to publish -- is stored in a single file on your hard drive. When you create a site, you're really just creating one file.

▶ Start CityDesk, if it is not already running, by choosing **Start » Fog Creek Software » CityDesk**.

If you have used CityDesk before, it will open the same site as you were last editing. In this case:

▶ Select **File » New Site**

If this is the first time you've run CityDesk, you'll see a welcome dialog. In this case:

▶ Click on **Create a new CityDesk site**

A dialog box will ask you to name your site and save it on your computer.

▶ Type a name for your site and click **Save**.

As you can see, you have now created a new site with a front page called **index.html**. There is a folder called **Articles** and a single article called **Getting Started...**

▶ Try double clicking on the **Getting Started...** article. You can edit it using the built-in word processor.

▶ Click **Save and Close**.

Lesson 2 - Previewing the Site

The Preview command lets you see what your site will look like without publishing it to a web server. It publishes a complete copy of your site into a temporary directory on your own hard drive.

▶ In the main window, click on the **Preview** tool on the toolbar.



A status window appears showing the publish progress. CityDesk is combining the text of all the articles on your site with their respective templates to generate complete HTML pages.

When everything is done, a button appears which lets you preview your site using Microsoft Internet Explorer.

▶ Click on the **Internet Explorer** button. Have a look at this simple site, with only one article.


▶ Close the web browser and click the **Close** button on the Publish window.

In the next lesson, we'll add another article.

Lesson 3 - Adding a New Article

Let's create another article.

▶ In the main window, click on the **Articles** folder. (In CityDesk, you can use folders any way you want to sort and organize articles.)

▶ Select **File » New » Article** or click on the **New Article**  tool.

A new article will appear. Since the **Articles** folder was selected, that's where it will go.

▶ Type a name for the article and press **Enter**.

▶ Double click the article you just created. A window will open up and you can just start typing away. Write something funny about anteaters.

CityDesk's built-in word processor lets you format, spell-check, create hyperlinks, insert pictures, and edit all the attributes of your article.

▶ In the article window, click on the tab that says **Properties**.

Here you can select options that affect how your article will appear. For example, you can write a headline or select which template to use. You can also schedule your article to be published on a certain date or associate certain keywords with the article for searching later on.

▶ Provide a headline for your article. Type your name in the author box. Don't be bashful!

▶ In the article window, click on the tab that says **Extras**.

This is where you write other pieces of the article such as the teaser. (A teaser is a short introduction to the article that makes people want to read more.) Where these pieces appear depends on the template you are using.

- ▶ Type a teaser and a sidebar.
- ▶ Click **Save and Close**.
- ▶ Preview your site again. Notice that your new article now appears next to the original one.



Lesson 4 - Changing the Appearance of Articles

You can change the appearance of all your articles in one place just by changing the template.

▶ Make sure Designer Mode is on by selecting **View » Designer Mode**. When designer mode is on, a row of extra designer tools will appear in the toolbar.

▶ Select **View » Templates** or click on the Templates tool on the tool bar.



▶ Double click on the template titled **Simple (.html)**.

A template is an HTML boilerplate document containing all the stuff that is the same for every article which uses it. Any change you make here will change the appearance of all articles that use the template. You can have as many templates as you want.

More advanced changes can be made by clicking on **HTML View** and editing the HTML directly. You can also edit the template using a more sophisticated HTML editor such as Macromedia Dreamweaver, Microsoft FrontPage, etc. To use any external editor that is registered on your system, just right click on the template icon in the **Templates** window.

Everything you see between **{** and **}** is a *CityScript* element that will be replaced when you publish your site. *CityScript* is CityDesk's built-in scripting language. It's very easy to learn and you don't have to be a programmer.

For example, **{\$.headline\$}** will be replaced by the actual headline of each article. (The article's headline comes from the **Properties** tab in the article editor.) **{\$.body\$}** is replaced by the main text of the article.

CityScript also lets you create *variables*. Variables represent chunks of text that can be changed in one place, affecting the entire site. For example, a company's name might appear on every page of the site, represented by a variable. In the case of a merger, buy-out, or if the name turns out to be obnoxious in Basque, the company's name can be changed just once on the variable list and this change will be reflected everywhere it appears on the site. In this template, we use two variables: `{$.SiteName $}` and `{$.TagLine $}`.

- ▶ Close the Simple Template window and the Templates window beneath it.

Lesson 5 - Changing the Front Page

CityDesk lets you drag any file you want into your site:

- HTML files
- Pictures
- Other text files
- Other binary files

These files can be sorted into folders. The entire tree will be published on your web server.

Your site contains one such file, an HTML file called **index.html**. This is there because most web servers look for a file named **index.html** to display when web visitors enter the site.

► Double click on **index.html** from the main window to edit the front page.

This opens up the front page in a built-in word processor. HTML files can contain CityScript just like templates.

What's going on in this file? Let's look at the CityScript one line at a time. Follow along:

{\$.SiteName\$}

The dot here tips us off that **SiteName** is a variable. When this page is published, CityDesk looks for a variable named **SiteName** and prints its value here.

{\$.TagLine\$}

Another variable, using a smaller font this time.

{foreach x in (all)}

This is the beginning of a *loop*. CityDesk will repeat everything between the **foreach** statement and the **next** statement once for every article in the site.

{x.headline}

This pulls out the headline from the article. Notice that this appears in blue with an underline. You know what that means, right? Right! It's a link! Specifically, a link to the article itself. This was done by editing in HTML View, where the headline is coded as:

```
<A href="{x.link}">{x.headline}</A>
```

CityDesk replaces **{x.link}** with the article's actual URL at publishing time.

{setDateTimeFormat "English" "dd MMM, yyyy" "hh:mm"}

This sets the format that CityDesk will use for printing dates. Why do we care? Well, because we're about to print a date:

{x.fileddate}

Ah yes, that prints the date that the article was filed.

{x.teaser}

This displays the teaser field from the article: a short block of text on the home page that makes people want to read the article.

{next}

And that's the end of our loop. If there are any more articles remaining that we haven't printed, CityDesk jumps back up to the **foreach** statement and runs through it all again, this time assigning **x** to a different article. When we've finished listing all the articles, CityDesk will stop looping.

- ▶ Close the **index.html** window.

Lesson 6 - Changing a Variable

Variables, which are elements of CityScript, can be used in articles or in templates to represent chunks of text you need to use more than once throughout your site. When CityDesk publishes a site it replaces all variables with the text each represents.

Suppose you have a mentally unstable boss who asked you to create a web site praising the Boston Red Sox. Since you know he is mentally unstable, instead of writing

The Boston Red Sox rule the Earth

you define a variable **FlavorDuJour** which is defined as **Boston Red Sox**. Now you can write things like:

The {\$.FlavorDuJour\$} rule the Earth

and

All hail the {\$.FlavorDuJour\$}!

As you can see, to use the variable name, we surround it with {\$. (note the dot) and \$} (no dot).

Now, next week, when psycho-boss wants you to change the site to praise, say, the Mighty Ducks instead, you just change the variable **FlavorDuJour** in one place and CityDesk takes care of the rest.

In the default set-up, the Simple template has a variable **SiteName** used for the title at the top of each page. To change the text inserted, just change the value of the variable.

- ▶ In the main window, select **View » Variables** or click on the Variables tool on the toolbar.



You'll see a list of each variable's name and the text it represents.

- ▶ Double click on the variable called **SiteName** and give it another value. Give your site a name that reflects your individuality and creativity, like "Welcome To Jim's Home on the Web" (assuming that your name is Jim, of course).

Each time CityDesk sees something that looks like

{\$.SiteName \$}

it will replace it with the text you just typed in.

- ▶ Preview your site and notice how the title has changed on every page.

Lesson 7 - Publish to an FTP Server

Your web site is not much good if people can't see it! For people to see it, it has to be on a web server somewhere. The **Publish** command uses the Internet FTP protocol to copy all the final files onto a web server. (Optionally, it can also copy the site into another folder, simply copying the files to a destination you choose.)

- ▶ Click on the Publish tool in the toolbar or select **File » Publish**.



This will bring up the Publishing window. Since this is your first time publishing to an FTP server you need to tell CityDesk where you want to publish the site. From the Publish window:

- ▶ Click on **Edit Locations...** button (you must be in Designer Mode to see this button).
- ▶ Click on **Add** button
- ▶ Set up publishing options (via a wizard):
 - ▶ For the method, select **FTP** (you can also publish by just copying the files to a folder, locally or on the network)
 - ▶ Enter the server information (server name, username, password, subdirectory, and the URL) for your web server
 - ▶ For Template Family click **Next**.
 - ▶ For Select Language click **Next**.
 - ▶ For Target Audience click **Next**.

Template, Language and Target Audience are more advanced features described elsewhere in the documentation.

- ▶ Give the location a meaningful name, like "asdf", and click **Finish**.

- ▶ Close the **Publish Locations** window.

You can create as many publish locations as you need with different names. For example, if you have a web server in France and another one in the United States, you can set up a separate publish location for each one. Or, for example, you might set up two publish locations if you maintain an internal web server for testing and an outside web server for the final web site.

- ▶ In the main **Publish** window, choose the publish location you just created (asdf?) and click on the **Publish** button.

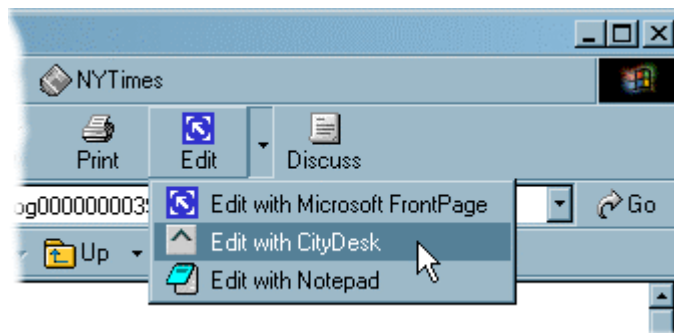
CityDesk will generate the HTML files and transfer them over to the server.

Now that you've set everything up, in the future you can publish to this FTP server just by clicking on the publish tool.

Lesson 8 - Editing from Your Web Browser

Murphy's Law requires that all web sites contain embarrassing typographical errors (like calling to the CEO of your company "Old Farhead" instead of his actual name). When you're looking at your own web site on the web, it's nice to be able to fix those the minute you notice them.

When you first ran CityDesk, it installed a tool bar icon in Internet Explorer that lets you edit pages that you created with CityDesk. When you click on the icon, a new copy of CityDesk starts up and takes you right to the article you were looking at.



To use this feature to edit a file, you need be at the computer that has the original CityDesk file.

- ▶ Use the **Preview** button to preview your site. Click on the **Internet Explorer** button to view it in Internet Explorer.
- ▶ In Internet Explorer, click on the link to the **Getting Started** article.
- ▶ Click on the down arrow to the right of the Edit button in the Internet Explorer toolbar. Choose **Edit with CityDesk** from the list.

Another copy of CityDesk will launch and take you directly to the **Getting Started** article, which you can easily edit, save, and republish.

Note: If you don't see the **Edit** button in Internet Explorer, you may have to customize your toolbar. Here's how:

- ▶ In Internet Explorer, right-click on the main toolbar (this is the one that has Back, Forward, etc.)
- ▶ Click **Customize...**
- ▶ Find the **Edit** button on the left hand list and click **Add**.
- ▶ Click **Close**.

Lesson 9 - Making Backups of Your Site

Generally, when you make a change in CityDesk, it's permanent. So you should always make frequent backups of your site.

Because CityDesk stores everything in one big file, making a backup of your site is very simple: just exit CityDesk and copy the file to a safe location.

Remember: It is not sufficient to back up the web server where you publish your site. This will only preserve the final form of your site in HTML format, not the CityDesk database which generated it.

Well, that's the end of our tutorial! You know enough about CityDesk to be dangerous. For everything else, we have complete documentation. Enjoy!