

# **Webpage Skin How To:**

## **What is it?**

A webpage skin is a design that is applied to a website to give it a creative background that enhances the information and can be used to show unity across several pages. A webpage skin is made up of graphics that are applied as a background to a webpage to make it more interesting to the viewer.

A good example of a webpage skin can be found on Bebo, all Bebo pages have the ability to have their own unique webpage skins. We will be looking at a range of these to gain ideas and for research purposes.

## **Things to consider**

Your webpage skin should be used to enhance your topic. You need to ensure that the webpage skin does not cause any confusion as to what the website is about. Because the webpage skin is graphical for visual people it is the first thing they will notice you want it to clearly identify what your topic is.

When creating a webpage skin you must consider the other elements on your page like: background colour

Text colour

Number of pages

Links colour

Font type

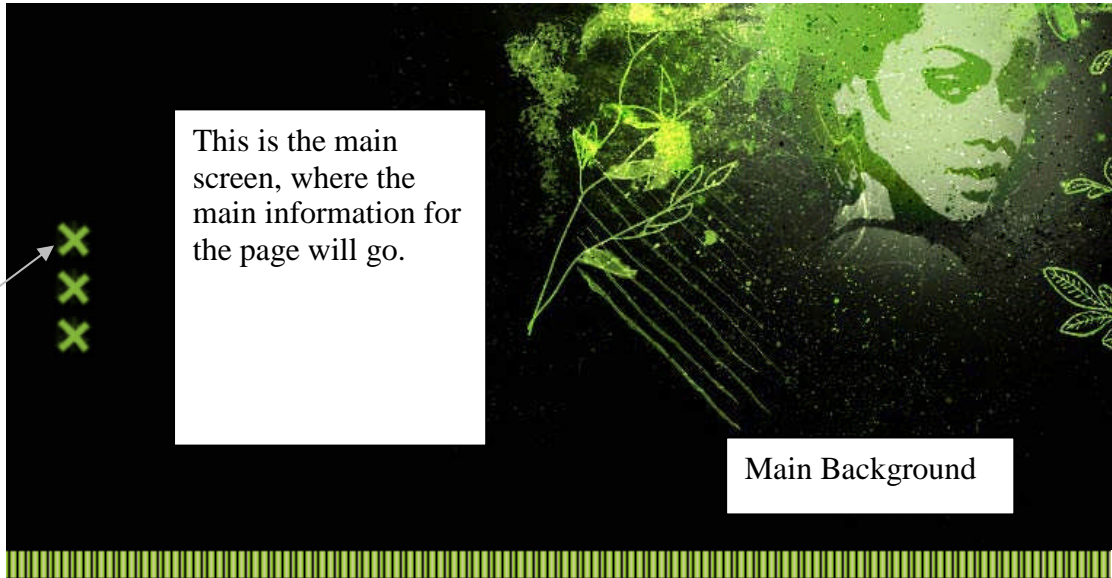
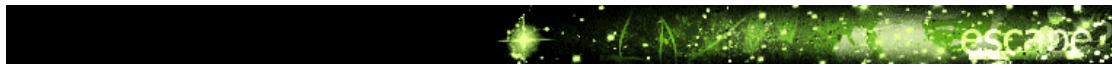
When considering these items you must consider the colours you will use and ensure your skin will compliment them rather than clash with them.

See sample screenshots of Bebo Webpage skins.

Navigation Background

What does it look like?

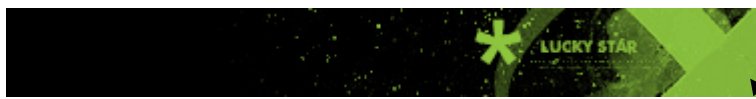
### Sample Skin



This is the main screen, where the main information for the page will go.

Main icon

Main Background

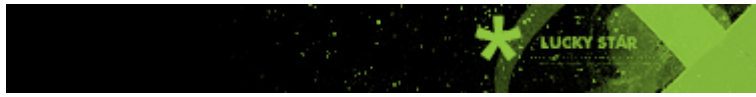


Module information and text goes here  
Can include pictures  
Blogs  
Videos

Main footer  
 Repeated.



Module header, repeated on all modules



Pages can have several modules on them each containing different information

Module background, repeated on all modules



## So how do I make it?

The webpage skin we are going to be making is made up of several parts

Part	Save Name	Width (pixels)	Height (pixels)	Size(KB)
Navigation Background	nav_bg.jpg/gif	760	40	10KB
Main Background	main_bg.jpg/gif	760	375	40KB
Main Footer	main_footer.jpg/gif	11	15	1KB
Main Icon	main_icon.jpg/gif	20	20	1KB
Module Header	module_header.jpg/gif	375	44	10KB
Module Background	Module_bg.jpg/gif	375	50	10KB

## So what does all that mean?

Basically your website is divided into 3 parts

1. Navigation bar (top of screen)
2. Main screen
3. Modules

### Navigation bar

The Navigation bar is at the top of the page and contains the page navigation (tabs linking to other pages in the website).

This bar can also contain the page title, as it sits at the top of the page.

### Main Screen

This is the main part of the page, where the main information is displayed. This is the focus area of the page.

Also on the main screen is links to other pages (these are optional).

The main screen background should set the theme of the page so is very important and needs to be clear.

When creating the main screen keep in mind that this is where the main information for the page will go so you do not want to make the background to complicated, and ensure that the when the text is placed on the background it will be readable.

Also included on the main screen is an optional footer, which can be used to enhance the main screen adding colour or design to it.

## **Modules**

Modules appear underneath the main screen, modules have a header and footer. The header contains the module title, while the footer is a design feature.

Modules contain a range of items, e.g. text, pictures, movies, blogs and much more.

## **What about the size?**

### **Width and Height**

For each item on the page you have been given a specified height and width. This is to ensure that that layout of your page fits neatly on the screen and works well together. You must ensure that your images are set to the specified width and height.

### **Size (KB)**

The size of each element is important to ensure the page loads quickly. Because the webpage skin is to be applied as a background you do not want it taking a long time to load.

When considering the size of your images there are several properties that can be altered to reduce the size but you must ensure you do not affect the quality of the image.

### **GIF vs JPEG**

GIF format is best for illustrations with flat colour and sharp detail. A GIF is mainly used for images created using vector tools. (shapes, text, lines). Animations are also saved as animated gifs.

When working with GIFs in fireworks you can alter the amount of colours used for the image. The higher the amount of colours used the clearer the image, but also the bigger the file. By adjusting the amount of colours used you can lower the size of an image but be careful not to lose too much colour or the image will become unclear.

JPEG - online publishing of photographic images or any images that require lots of colour. JPEG files are from photos or pictures that have been manipulated using bitmap tools (smudge, burn, paintbrush, fill tool, colour stamp).

When working with JPEGs you can alter the image quality and smoothness, both of these can help to reduce the size of the file, but keep in mind the higher the quality the larger the file and the clearer the image.

## Getting started

Once you have chosen your topic (very important) you should start thinking about the colour scheme you want for your website.

This should include

Background colour

Text colour

Link colour

Skin colour

Once you have decided on a colour scheme you can start planning your webpage skin in detail. What images, colours and shapes will you use to enhance your website. How will each of the pieces work together complimenting each other and the information being displayed.

When you have finished the planning you can start creating. It is always best to start at the top and work your way down.

The navigation bar is at the top of the page and needs to be

Width: 760

Height: 40

Size: 10 KB

You can set up the width and height in fireworks, the size will be determined when you export the image.

Make your way through each part of the webpage skin using the specifications table.

## Testing

There is a webpage template saved on the shared drive for you to copy to your home drive and use for testing your webpage skin.

Open the template and insert the different components into the template to see how they would look on a webpage as a complete package.

You need to copy the webpage\_skin folder from W: drive to your H: drive

To insert your webskin into Frontpage:

1. Open Frontpage, then open the website that contains the layout for your webpage skin File > open site > webpage\_skin

The index page shows what the sample webpage skin would look like on a webpage, press F12 to see this on an internet page.

2. Open the yourskin page. At the moment this is an empty table ready for your to insert your webpage skin elements.
3. To start we are going to insert the navigation bar at the top.
4. Right click in the top cell of the table and select Cell properties
5. Place a tick in the Use background column

6. Browse and select your navigation bar
7. Your navigation bar will now appear on the page.
8. Repeat this process for the main page image, module header and module footer and main icon.

When it comes to the main page footer we have to alter it slightly so that the small single image we created is repeated across the page.

9. Right click in the cell, select cell properties and this time click on style > format > borders and select the shading tab
10. Browse and find your image
11. Set as repeat then press ok. Ok.

Once you have inserted your webpage skin you can save and then press F12 to see what it would look like on the Internet.