TASiteManager
User Guide

About TASiteManager

TASiteManager is a software package from TopAccolades Limited that lets you define, design and manage the navigation of the pages in your web site quite separately from the pages that comprise your content.

In essence, you define the structure of your site and its pages in a spreadsheet page (saved as a tab-delimited text file). You must define three levels of structure:

- **Sections** – each of which can have any number of:
    - **Subsections** – each of which may have any number of:
        - **Pages**

Based on this structure, and making use of a set of parameters stored in a second spreadsheet page (saved as a tab-delimited text file), which allows you to specify fonts, background colours, heights and widths of certain areas of the final page, and other features, a set of pages is created by the software, which provides the full navigation for your web site. A default page is also created for your web site – an entry point for your web site.

The pages that are displayed make heavy use of frames.

The content pages are always shown in the bottom right of the page displayed. Above this is found a menu of sections (named according to the structure spreadsheet), while on the left are found menus of the subsections and pages (either nested together or separately). In the top right corner of the

displayed page are navigation buttons that allow the reader to move through the pages of your web site one at a time, if they choose, as an alternative to using the menus. There is also a Full Screen button that allows the content page to be shown in the full window.

A Site Map is also generated, with a link from each displayed page, which allows the reader to browse through the all the content of the web site.

General information about the site is shown in the bottom left corner of the displayed page.

Each displayed page also shows information about when the site was last updated. This is automatically generated.

Setting up TASiteManager

The full contents of the TASiteManager folder should be copied into your top-level web site folder (ensuring that there are no folder name conflicts).

To make regenerating your site navigation pages easier, open up the system folder, copy **tasitemanager.exe** and paste this as a **shortcut** in the top-level folder of your web site.

Ultimately, your content pages will be defined in sub-folders of the main web-site folder. You may set up and name these folders.

Defining the web site structure – data.txt

The structure is defined in a file called data.txt. The fields in this must be separated by tabs, so probably the best way to create and maintain this is by opening it up in a spreadsheet such as MS Excel.

	A	B	C	D	E F G H
1	Section (First=Title)	SubSection	Page	Type	URL (from home page level or absolute)
2	Your Web Site				
3	Home				
4		Main			
5			Welcome	Local	dummy1/intro.htm
6			Help	Local	dummy1/help.htm
7	Main 1				
8		Main 1 Welcome			
9			Page	Local	dummy2/intro1.htm
10		Main 1 Details			
11			Uses	Local	dummy2/uses1.htm
12			History	Local	dummy2/history1.htm
13			Future	Local	dummy2/future1.htm
14		Main 1 Links			
15			Page	Local	dummy2/links1.htm
16			Google	URL	http://www.google.com
17	Main 2				
18		Main 2 Welcome			
19			Page	Local	dummy2/intro2.htm
20		Main 2 Details			

Row 1 just contains the headings of the columns.

Row 2 must contain the name (title) of your web site in the first column, and nothing else.

The remainder of the document contains the structure, where section names are shown in Column A, subsection names are shown in Column B and Page names are shown in Column C.   Each of these must be in its own row, and there must be no empty rows between.

Finally, to the right of each Page name, two columns must be completed: Column D states whether the page is **Local** (i.e. stored within this web site) or **URL**, i.e. the URL of a pages sitting somewhere else on the web. If the page is Local, the path name of the file must be entered in Column E (relative to the top level of the web site folder, in which the default file sits). If the type is URL, the full URL (including http:// or whatever is appropriate) must be entered. A remote page will be displayed in the bottom-right of the displayed page as if it is a local page; this provides a good means of integrating content from different sources.

Note: Sections and Subsections do not have their own path names or URLs. The content displayed when a Subsection is first opened is the first page of the Subsection; the content displayed when a Section is first opened is the first page of its first Subsection. Of course, the first page shown when the site is opened is the first page of the first Subsection of the first Section.

Note: if a Subsection contains only one page, this name of this page is not displayed in the side menus.
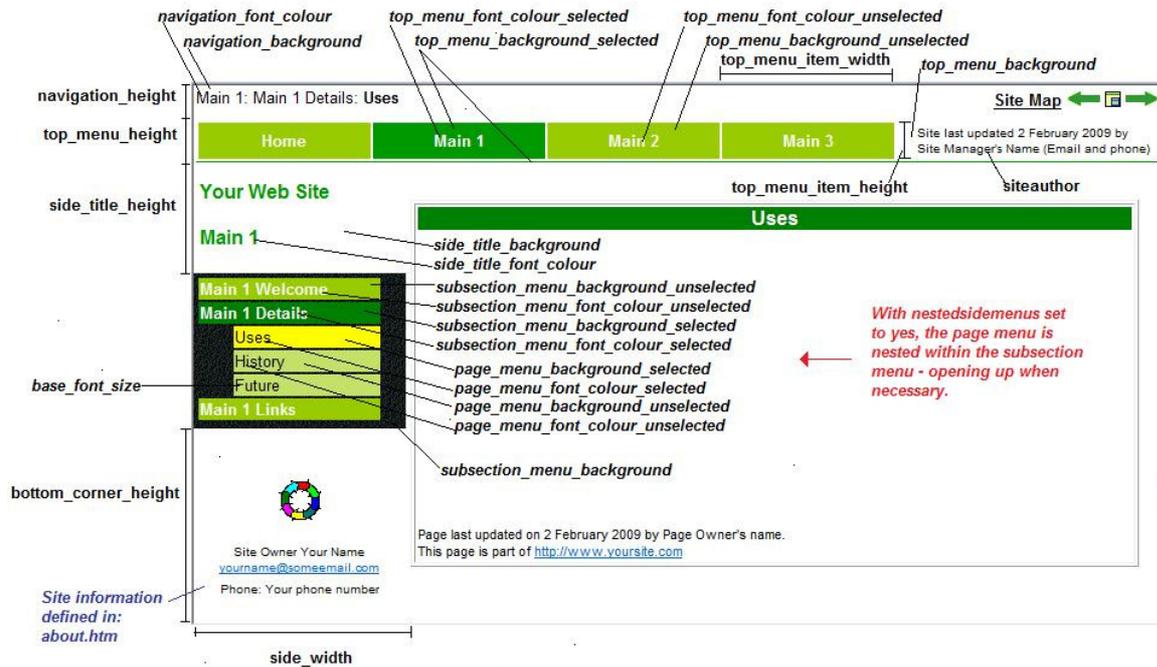
Once this structure is complete, the page must be saved (always as **data.txt** in the top-level folder) as a tab-separated text file.

Please note: if a spreadsheet package such as Excel is used to edit data.txt, the page must be completely closed before you attempt to generate the web site pages, otherwise the application cannot read the file. If, instead, you use a simple text editor such as Notepad, the page need not be closed as it can still be read by the application.

Defining the parameters of the displayed pages – parameters.txt

Parameters are stored in a file in the top-level folder called **parameters.txt**. This can be edited in a similar way to data.txt, although in this case Notepad is probably easier to use (but remember to separate parameters and their values by a tab.
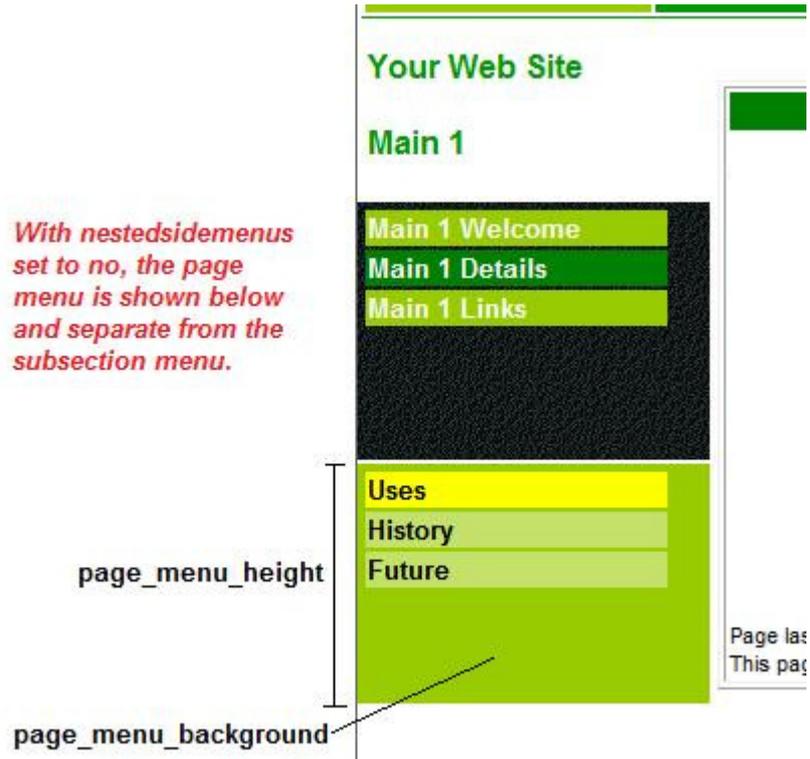
The parameters specify various layout and design options, such as colour, font face, background colours or graphics, sizes, and more. The following graphic demonstrates what these are:

Notes:

- Heights and widths are given in pixels.

- base-font-size is given as an HTML laguage size, e.g. 3 is 'medium', 2 is 'small', 1 is 'smallest'. You will probably find a value of 2 satisfactory. The parameter font-face should be the name of a font face such as **Arial** or **Times New Roman**.

- Colours of fonts may be given as acceptable HTML colour names, e.g. white, green, or as Hex values, e.g. #C0C0C0

- For backgrounds, either simple colours may be defined (as for fonts), or else a GIF or JPG file may be specified as background. So, a background colour parameter might be defined as **red**, **#FF0000** or as **mypic.gif**.

- The parameter **siteauthor** defines what HTML text should follow the text about the last update, namely: This **site was last updated <Day> <Month> <Year> by** , so would normally contain the name of the Site Manager.

- The parameter **nestedsidemenus** should be defined as **yes** if the subsection and page menus are to be shown nested, or as **no** if the page menu is to be shown below and separate from the subsection menu. If set to **no**, the parameters **page_menu_background** and

page_menu_height come into play.

- The parameters **subsection_menu_ensureselectedshown** and **page_menu_ensureselectedshown** should be set to **yes** if you wish to try to ensure that the menu displays the selected item in the visible area. If set to **no**, the bottom of the menu may be hidden, so that the name of the current subsection or page may be accessible only by scrolling.

- Two parameters are concerned with the formatting of the Site Map:

- The parameter **default_file_name** specifies the name of the file used as the default file for the web site, i.e. the one that will appear at the top level and be the one opened when someone specifies only the base URL of the web site, e.g. http://www.yoursite.com

- The parameter **default_file_type** can take one of two values: **frame** or **iframe**. If the value frame is specified, the default page consists of a single frame that displays the first page of the site. If the value iframe is specified, the first page is displayed in a floating frame (iframe), and beneath this is an area containing some text referring to TASiteManager that has a hyperlink to a site map. This is concerned with ensuring that search engines can index your site (see *Search engines and your web site* later). There are three parameters that come into play only if iframe is specified:

  o **iframe_height_percentage**: This specifies the height of the iframe as a percentage of the window. Suggested value is 95-97.

  o **iframe_main_background**: This specifies the background colour of the area below the iframe.

  o **iframe_main_text_colour**: This specifies the text colour of the hyperlink text below the iframe (bear in mind that this is the default colour and will probably be displayed differently as it is a hyperlink).

The layout of the main displayed pages also depend on a number of items found in the **common** folder:

- Gif files: left.gif, right.gif and noarrow.gif, used to provide the step-through navigation buttons

- Gif file: fullscreen.gif – used to provide the button to request that a content page be shown in the full window, either on the main display pages or in the Site Map.

- about.htm – a file that includes content to be displayed in the bottom-left corner of each displayed page. This would typically include a logo and some details about the site/site owner.

You may edit these as you wish.

Defining your content pages

Your content pages should be placed in your own sub-folders of the main web-site folder. The folders dummy1 and dummy2 contain some mock pages that demonstrate the basic idea.   You might wish to change the names of these folders and pages as a basis for your content pages.

The mock pages in dummy1 and dummy2 demonstrate how you can make your content pages match the style of your navigation pages, and also how you can include some essential information on each content page.

1) They include HTML code that specifies a style sheet to be applied to the page.   The file style.css at the top level specifies that the styles for various paragraphs in HTML.

2) They specify that the Javascript code pagejs.js, also found in the top-level folder, should be executed at the bottom of the page. Typically, this would include printing a link to the main web site URL, so that if anyone opens up a page without the surrounding navigation, they can click on this to see the Home Page of the web site.   Just change the name after **var thesitename=** to be your site URL (within single or double quotes).

To edit your content pages, simply use your favourite web page editor or may just Notepad, if you fully understand HTML.

Generating the web site pages

Once you have created your content pages and completed the files data.txt and parameters.txt, you are ready to create the full set of navigation pages. Simply double-click on the shortcut to tasitemanager.exe. You will see a dialogue boxshowing you the names of the files being created.

The main files are generated in the B folder (once all existing files have been automatically deleted). The site default page is also created, which displays the first page (pageframe_1_1_1.htm) in a frame, thus ensuring that users of the site continue to see the main web-site URL.

Once complete, click on the file default.htm (or whatever you have defined it to be), and you should see your web site displayed, with full navigation and Site Map.

Trouble-shooting

If an error arises, the most likely fault is that parameters.txt or data.txt is still open in a spreadsheet application. Please close the open file and try again.

If the pages generated do not seem to match with what you have defined in data.txt, please check the following:

- Ensure there are no empty lines in data.txt before the row for the last page

- Ensure that you have just the name of the web site in the first cell of the second row

Publishing your web site

You may leave TASiteManager on your actual web site server. If, instead, you maintain your web site offline, simply ensure that you publish the following files and folders:

Top-level files: default.htm (or whatever you have chosen to name the default page); pagejs.js and style.css if you have used these.

Folders: pages, common and all your content folders

Other files and folders can be published, but they are not needed.

Updating your web site

You can edit the individual content pages without needing to re-generate the navigation pages. If, however, you change the names of files or add/remove pages from your web site, simply edit the structure file (data.txt) and double-click on the shortcut to tasitemanager.exe, and then re-publish your site if necessary.

If you wish to change the format, simply change parameters.txt or the items in common, as appropriate, and re-generate the pages.

Search engines and your web site

The web site produced using TASiteManager is frame-based, which means that the content pages are contained within a set of HTML frames. Some search engines have difficulties in indexing such pages. You can take one of two approaches to ensure that your pages are indexed:

1) If you choose the **default_file_type** to be **frame**, the code for the highest-level default frame page includes a hypertext link to **pages/sitemapsearch.htm** in the <noframes> section. Most search engines will follow this link and index your site. This page contains links to the content pages of your site only, not the navigation pages, as well as a link to TopAccolades.

2) If you choose the **default_file_type** to be **iframe**, the floating frame in which the site is displayed has beneath it a narrow text area with a text hyperlink to **pages/sitemapsearch.htm**. This should ensure that all search engines will index your site content correctly, as this link is within a normal web page.