

ImageReady: Slices

Lesson 10: Introduction to Slices

What are slices?

A slice is a rectangular area of an image. You define slices using the Slice tool. Slices are useful for creating links, rollovers, and animations. They are also useful for optimizing web graphics, because you can specify different types of optimization for different areas of the graphic.

Unlike image maps, ImageReady saves each slice as a separate file, and creates an html document that reassembles all of the slices properly on the page. Each slice has its own color palette, optimization settings, links, rollover effects, and animations.

Are there different kinds of slices?

There are three different kinds of slices: *user slices*, *layer-based slices* and *auto-slices*.

- User slices are those you create with the Slice tool.
- Slices created from a layer are called layer based.
- Auto-slices are automatically created by ImageReady to fill in any remaining space in the graphic that is not defined by you as a slice.

(Note: In this tutorial, layer-based slices will not be discussed in any detail; please see the online help files for more information on this topic.)

Why use slices instead of image maps?

An image map can be a very large file, since the entire graphic is saved, and large files are slow to download. With slices, you can store only the parts of the image that are important, and throw away large areas of white space. You can additionally reduce the file size by breaking the graphic into slices and using selective optimization, which means choosing high quality settings for important areas of the graphic while optimizing more stringently for less critical areas.

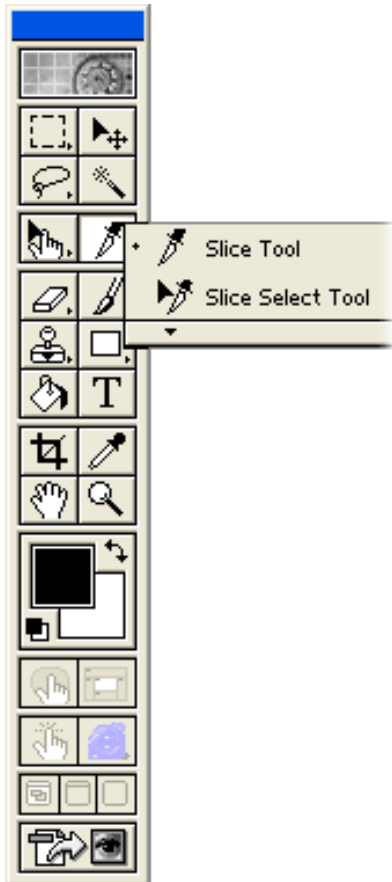
However, slices can only be rectangular in shape. If you need link and/or rollover areas that are circles or polygons, you must use image maps.

ImageReady: Slices

Lesson 11: Creating Slices

How do I create user slices?

You can create user slices in one of three ways: with the slice tool, from a selection, or from guides.



The Slice Tool:

- 1) Select the Slice Tool from the toolbox.
- 2) Choose a slice style in the options toolbar:



- **Normal**—shape of slice is determined by dragging
- **Constrained Aspect Ratio**—enter the relationship of the width to the height (for example, if you want a square, enter 1 for width and 1 for height)
- **Fixed Size**—enter the dimensions you want (in pixels)

- 3) Draw the slice. If you chose Normal or Constrained, drag the mouse across the area you want to be a slice; if you chose Fixed, then simply click where you want the upper left corner of the slice to be.

Selection:

- 1) Use the regular selection tools to select an area of the graphic.
- 2) Pull down the **Slices** menu and select **Create Slice from Selection**. Remember, slices must be rectangular, so if you select an irregular area, the slice that's created will be large enough to encompass your entire selection.

Guides:

1) In ImageReady, you can create guides just as you can in Photoshop: by dragging them from the rulers onto your graphic. Place your guides on the image where you would like the boundaries of the slices to be.

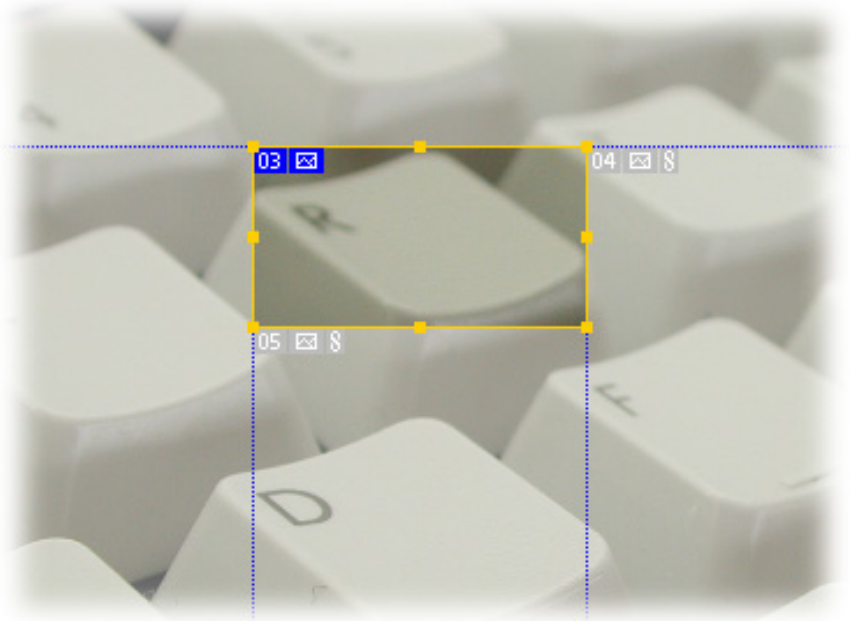
2) Pull down the **Slices** menu and select **Create Slice from Guides**.

If you create your slices from selections or with the Slice tool, auto-slices are automatically created to “fill in” the areas where you did not choose to have a slice. (If you create your slices all at once from guides, all slices are user slices.)

Important Tip! Before you begin to make your slices, pull down the **View** menu and make sure that both **Snap** AND the **Snap to > Slices** choices are checked. This will make sure that you don't get gaps later on in-between your slices on your web page.

What do slices look like?

Let's say that you want to send a user to another page when they click anywhere on the “R” key in the graphic below. Using the Slice tool, you create the slice:







The newly-drawn user slice is now selected, and has an orange outline with handles. Auto slices were automatically created (and numbered) to fill in the rest of the image. Notice that the other areas of the image seem to have faded; this helps you easily differentiate between user slices and auto slices (the actual image is not changed).

Other visual differences between user and auto slices:

- A user slice has blue squares in the upper left corner; auto slices have gray squares.
- The boundaries of auto slices are dotted blue lines; the borders of a user slice are solid blue. (When a slice of either type is selected, it is outlined in orange.)

Slice symbols, which appear after the slice number, convey useful information about the slice. Here are the most common:

- Image Slice—The slice has an image associated with it (this is the default). 
- No-Image Slice—The slice does not have an image associated with it. 
- Rollover—The slice has a rollover associated with it. 
- Link—The slice is linked to other slices with the same color link symbol. 

The above items will be addressed in more detail in a later lesson.

All of those slices are distracting. How do I hide them?

You can show or hide slices by clicking the Slice Visibility button on the toolbox, located right next to the Image Map Visibility button.

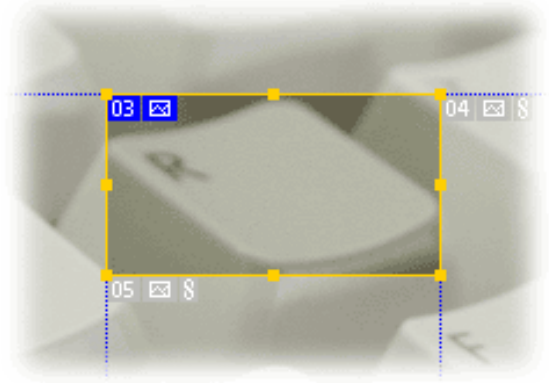


Lesson 12: Modifying Slices

How do I select a slice?



To select a slice, choose the Slice Select tool from the toolbox (located on the same fly-out menu as the Slice tool), then click on a slice. If you wish to add more slices to the selection, hold down the Shift key as you click them. A selected user slice will look like this:



How do I modify a slice?

You can move, resize, or delete a slice that you have created with the Slice tool.

Move:

- 1) Select the user slice(s) you want to move.
- 2) Drag the slice to its new location. If you hold down the Shift key, the movement will be restricted to horizontal, vertical, or 45 degree diagonal directions. (Auto slices will automatically resize to accommodate the move.)

Resize or reshape:

- 1) Select the user slice(s) you want to change.
- 2) Point to a handle on the border of the area, and then drag it to its new location. (Hold down the Shift key to constrain the slice to the same proportions.)

Delete:

- 1) Select the user slice(s) you want to delete.
- 2) Press the Backspace or Delete key. (Auto slices will automatically resize to accommodate the deletion.)

Tip: Once you have your slices arranged the way you wish, you can lock them so that you don't inadvertently move or resize them. To lock all slices, pull down the **View** menu and select **Lock Slices**.

Lesson 13: The Slice Palette

What is the Slice palette?

Once you have drawn your slices, you will want to set the options for each one, and the Slice palette lets you do that. You can name the slice, specify link options, set up frame options, and assign an Alt tag to it.

To view the Slice palette:

Pull down the **Window** menu and select **Show Slice**.

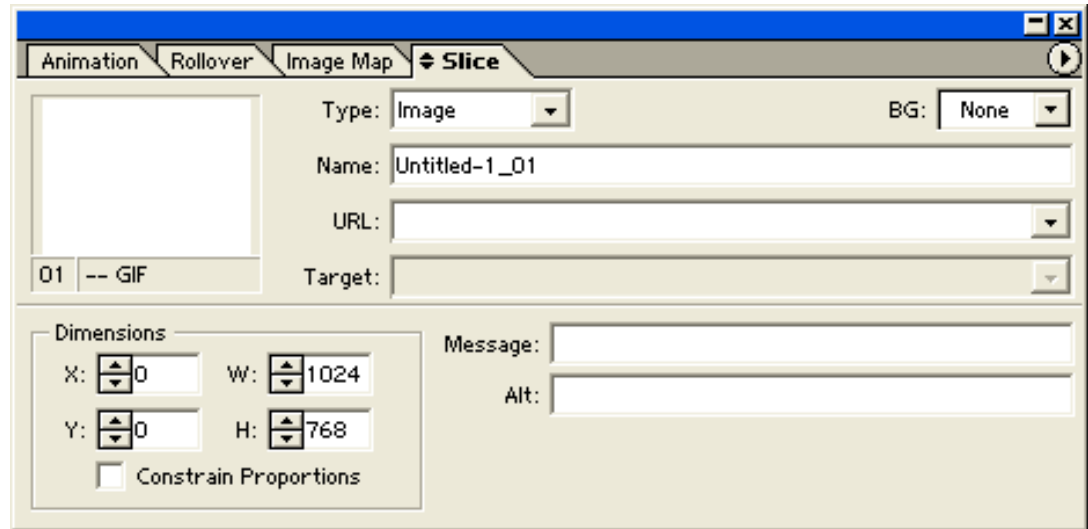
OR

Pick the Slice Select tool, then double-click on a slice.

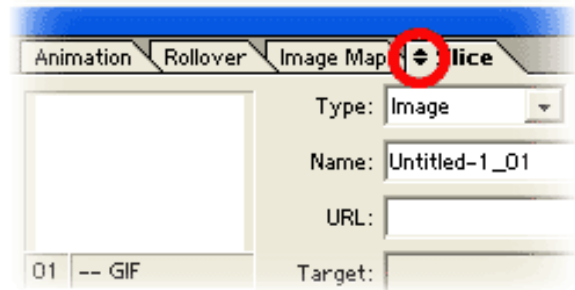
OR

Pick the Slice Select tool, then click the **Slice Palette** button on the options toolbar.

The following window should appear:



Note: If the bottom half of the pane is not visible, click the small triangles icon on the Slice tab to open up the lower area:



How do I set my slice options?

The first step in setting the options for a user slice is to select the desired slice (see the previous lesson).

There are seven fields on the Slice palette for setting your slice options (not including Dimensions). They include Type, BG, Name, URL, Target, Message and Alt. (Note: If you set any options for an auto slice, it will automatically be converted into a user slice.)

Type field

The default setting is **Image**. However, if the slice encompasses an area where the background can show through and no part of the current graphic needs to be preserved, select **No Image**. This helps to optimize the web page by reducing the number of graphic files that need to be downloaded. You should set as many slices as possible to No Image, since this is a primary benefit of using slices over image maps.

Note: You can type text into a no-image slice, and format it using standard HTML tags. But be careful—if you enter too much text, it will change the layout of your web page.

BG (Background) field

You can set a color to fill in transparent areas in your graphic and to fill no-image slices. Your choices are: none (the default), matte, the current background color, the current foreground color, select from the palette, or choose Other to select from the color picker.

Name field

To name the slice, highlight the default name in the name field of the Slice palette and type a new name. (Choose a name that will make it clear what that slice is for.)

URL field

To create a link that will take the user to a new web page when the area is clicked on, enter the destination URL in the URL field. You can enter a relative URL if the desired page is in

the same site (for example, ***modifying.htm***) or you can enter a full URL. If you enter a full URL, be sure to include "http://" at the beginning (e.g., ***http://iit.bloomu.edu***, not ***iit.bloomu.edu***).

Target field

If you want the above link to open a new window, leaving the current page open, then select ***_blank*** from the Target pull-down menu. Otherwise, if you want the new page to open in the same window, select ***_self*** or leave the Target field blank.

If you are using frames, you can enter the name of the target frame, or choose ***_self***, ***_parent***, or ***_top*** from the Target pull-down menu to specify what kind of frame behavior you want.

Message field

If you want explanatory text to show up in the status area of the browser when the user points to a slice, enter that text in this field.

Alt field

Sometimes it can take a long time for a graphic to download, or sometimes it won't load at all. When this happens, it is helpful to the user if text is displayed where the user slices are so that they can still use the links even though they can't see the graphic. The Alt field lets you specify appropriate text for each user slice.

End of Lesson

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Contact Dr. Mary Nicholson at mjnich@bloomu.edu