

Tutorial: Working with Tables

ISMART CREATE & BULLETIN

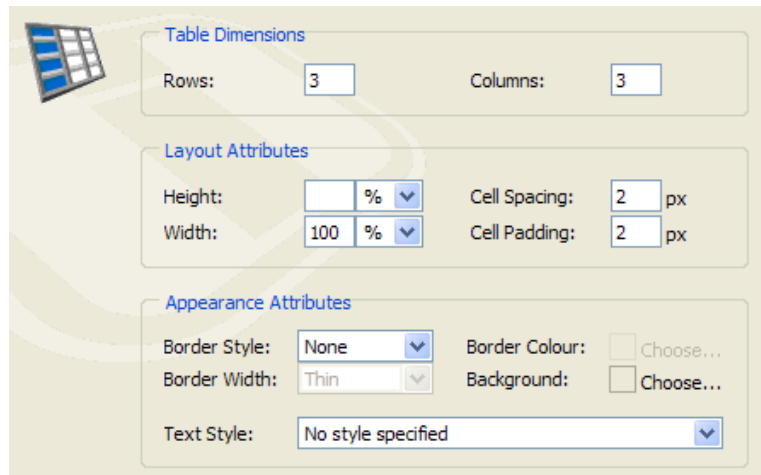
Tables are one of the most useful tools when it comes to creating online layouts. Tables can hold both text and images, and are used to ensure the precise positioning of elements on the page. When you insert a new table you can edit a range of properties which determine its appearance. These can be changed at any time by clicking on the table's outside border to select it, right-clicking and selecting **Properties** from the drop-down menu.

TABLE PROPERTIES

Table Dimensions Specify the number of horizontal rows or vertical columns a table contains.

Layout Attributes Specify the **Height** and **Width** of the table as either a percentage of the content area's dimensions, or as a specific pixel width.

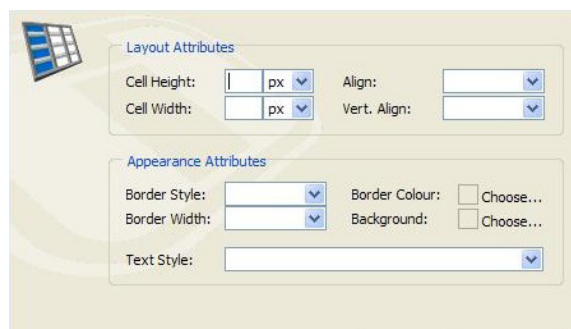
Appearance Attributes Add a border around your table and choose it's style (solid, dashed, etc), colour and thickness. **Cell Spacing** adds space between each individual table cell (letting the background colour show through if one is selected). **Cell Padding** indents the content of each cell away from cell walls (from the top and bottom as well as left and right). You can also choose a text style to apply across the whole table.



The screenshot shows a 'Table Properties' dialog box with three sections: 'Table Dimensions', 'Layout Attributes', and 'Appearance Attributes'.
- **Table Dimensions:** Rows: 3, Columns: 3.
- **Layout Attributes:** Height: [] %, Width: 100 %, Cell Spacing: 2 px, Cell Padding: 2 px.
- **Appearance Attributes:** Border Style: None, Border Width: Thin, Border Colour: Choose..., Background: Choose..., Text Style: No style specified.

TABLE TOOLS

Once you have created a table, you can alter most of it's properties by right clicking on it. However one feature you cannot change in this way is the number of rows and column. To change these you must use the table tools in the bottom row of the toolbar. These allow you to add or remove columns, rows or individual cells. (It is important to note that due to problems with certain versions of Internet Explorer, using the remove row function may sometimes cause the browser to close. It is usually best to create less rows in a table and add more later as you need them, rather than trying to remove them).



CELL PROPERTIES

Once you have inserted a table you can also change the properties of individual cells. Simply right-click somewhere inside the cell where there is no content and choose **Properties**.

Layout Attributes Specify the **Height** and **Width** of the cell as either a percentage of the table's dimensions, or as a specific pixel width. Any change to the cell's height or width will affect all the other cells in its column or row. **Align** and **Vertical Align** determine the positioning of content within the cell, for instance left, right, centre, top, middle or bottom.

Appearance Attributes Add a border around your cell and choose its style (solid, dashed, etc), colour and thickness. **Background** sets a background colour for that particular cell - allowing you to colour each cell in a table differently.

HELPFUL HINTS – TABLE SIZES

There are two choices when setting the size of a table; percentages or pixels. If a percentage is used, the table will automatically scale to that proportion of the available space. For example, if 100% is chosen, the table will always stretch right across the available space, while a 50% table will only take up half that, and so on. As the available space changes, for instance when a browser window is resized, the table will change to reflect the new size. Using pixels ensures the table always remains a set size, important if your layout requires precise sizing to work. It is also useful to prevent columns of text from getting too wide as it can be difficult to read text which stretches the whole way across the screen.

The vertical height of a table depends on the amount of content inside it. When you first create a table, if you have not added any content you will notice that in Preview mode the cells will appear to have almost no height. They must contain content of some kind, either text or images (if you want them to remain empty just type some spaces).

Tables can also be used simply as coloured boxes, by creating a one cell table (1 row by 1 column) and filling it with a background colour. This allows them to serve purely as a design element. Tables can also be nested, or placed inside each other, to allow for more complicated layouts. For instance you could create a table which fills your entire content area, divided into columns for separate areas of content. You could then insert other tables inside the larger one, perhaps with coloured backgrounds to highlight different areas of content, and so on.