

Before we jump in and start building our websites we'll need to familiarize ourselves with Muse and its features. Much of the interface and toolset will be recognizable to you if you've used any of Adobe's applications before. There are a few differences, of course. In this chapter we'll take an overview of the application's features.

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Introducing Adobe Muse Features at a glance

We'll be approaching the program as though it has only just been installed. This way we start at the same level, regardless of your previous experience. It's well worth following from the beginning, even if you have used the program before; there's always something that you might have missed.

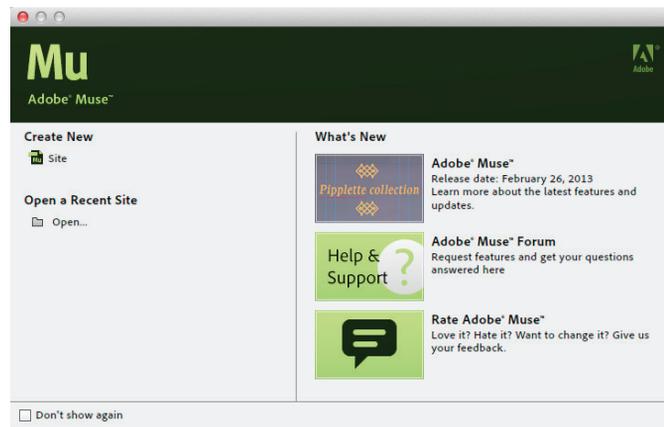
The Welcome Screen

As with most of the Creative Cloud applications, when we first launch Muse, the first thing we see is the Welcome screen.

On the left we have the options to create a new site and also to open any recent sites we have been working on, this is empty at the moment, as we're yet to create any.

On the right are links to online learning resources and to interact with the Muse community. These all require an active Internet connection; as this is a web-design program, it's highly likely you already have one of those, of course!

We can also choose to prevent the dialog from opening each time by checking the box in the bottom-left corner. The dialog will remain visible until we choose an action but will no longer show when Muse is launched. This is personal preference, of course; I prefer not to have it showing. If you later decide you do want it showing, it can be toggled in the program preferences. It's also possible to start new sites and open recent ones from the menus.

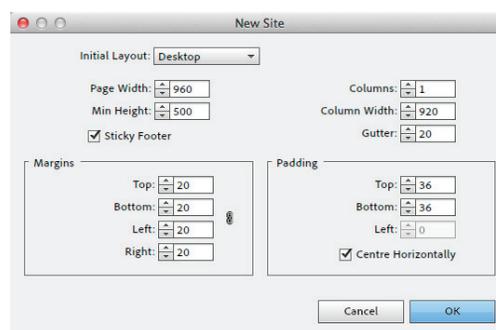


Creating a new site

The next step is to start off our new site project. To do this we can click the **Create New > Site** button. This opens the New Site dialog; we can also invoke this by choosing **Create New > Site** if we opted to not display the welcome dialog.

Here we can choose the initial layout type from Desktop, Tablet or Phone. Each preset has a default set of values based on the standard sizes for their respective devices. These can also be set manually, of course and will not be overridden when reselecting the preset.

We would generally have an idea of the layout beforehand and could set the values



The dimensions and layout of the site can be set initially using the New Site dialog.

up now. For the purposes of this chapter, however, we'll leave the dialog at its defaults; they can be edited at any time once we are in the main working area. Clicking **OK** takes us into the **Plan mode**.

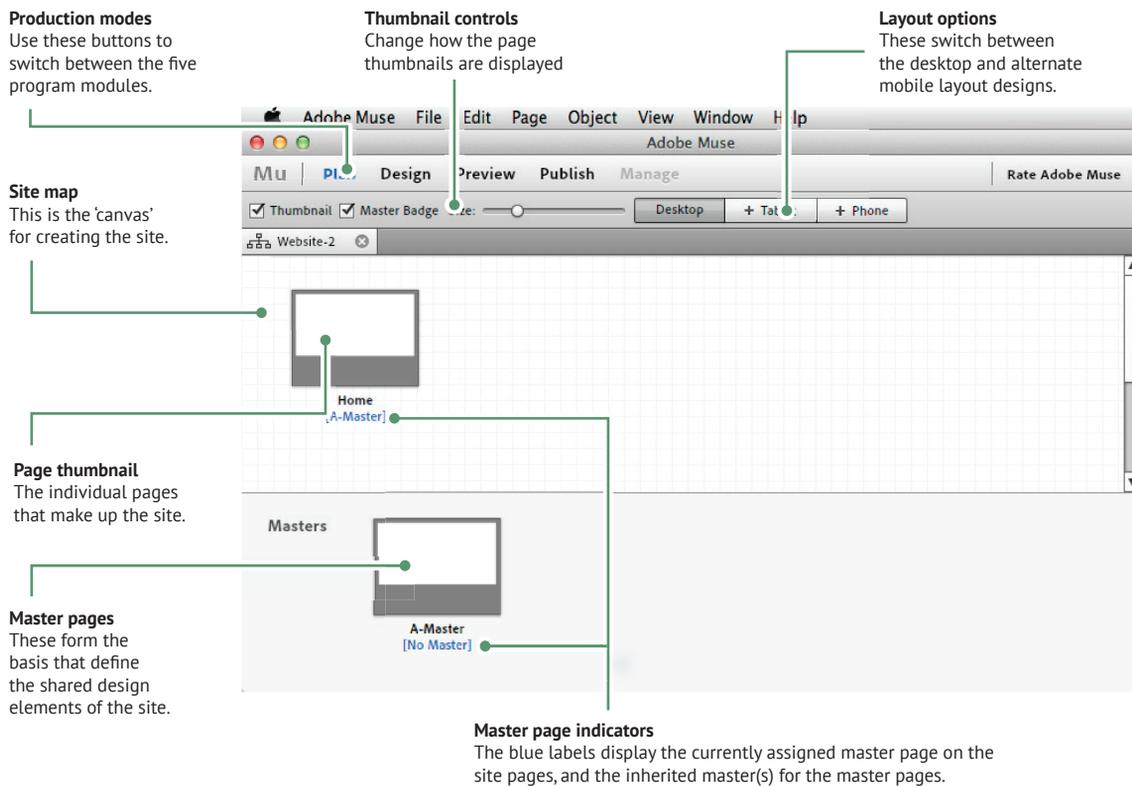
It's also possible to bypass the dialog altogether by holding **Opt/Alt** when clicking the option to start a new site on the welcome dialog.

Working in Plan mode

Plan mode is where the layout of the site is created and controlled. This has two sections, the site map at the top and the master page view at the bottom. When we create a new site, we always start with a Home page and a Master page (named *A-Master* by default). If you've worked with Adobe InDesign, the concept of master pages will be familiar; these generally contain the site assets that are going to be consistent across the site. These will often be the header and footer components, site navigation and background color or pattern. Many sites will only need one master, whereas others may have several, depending on the design. It's also possible to create master pages that inherit only certain traits of their peers, such as the footer elements, giving us more design options, whilst keeping the overall theme and ease of use.

We can open several sites at once, they appear as tabs at the top of the workspace. This can be useful if we want to copy previously used elements from one site to another. Do bear in mind that this may decrease the performance of the program.

Once we start creating pages, we can choose the order in which they appear, add and remove pages and also organize the pages at different levels to create a hierarchy; Muse can automatically generate the site navigation based on this layout. All this will become clear as we progress through the chapters.



1 Introducing Adobe Muse

Design mode

Design mode is where the page building happens. All text, images and special content (Photoshop buttons, rectangles, widgets, and embedded HTML) is created here. To open a page into this view, we double-click its thumbnail in the Plan mode. The screenshot below shows a master page in the workspace.

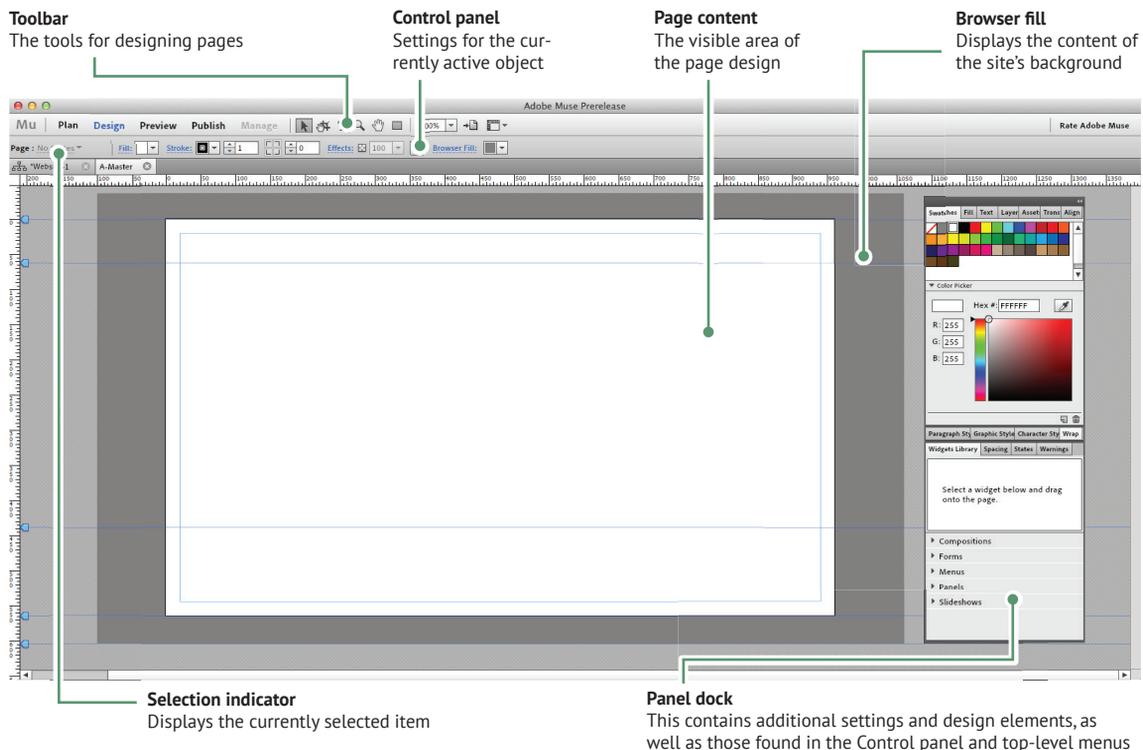
Unlike other Creative Cloud programs, the toolset in Muse is minimal and resides at the top of the window, rather than being within the workspace itself. Below the toolbar is the Control panel. This displays the settings and options relating to the currently selected object in the design.

Just below the Control Panel is the tab area. As with the Plan mode, we can have several pages open at once, each being represented by a tab with the page title. In Muse, windows cannot be separated from the tab bar, as they can in other applications.

The main workspace has three areas. The lighter gray area is the application background. The darker gray represents the browser fill: the area around the page content that stretches to fill the window when the page is viewed in the web browser. The white area is the page or master page content.

Around the workspace are the rulers, the measurements are in pixels. The rulers can be toggled on and off from the View menu and the View Options menu in the Control panel, or by right-clicking on the rulers themselves.

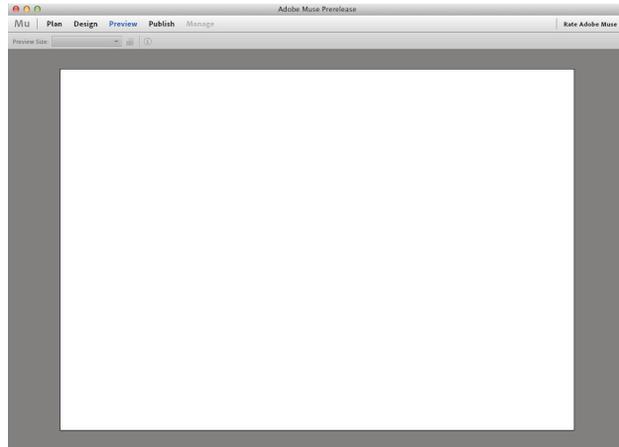
The large floating dock on the right contains panels with the settings for each tool and object. Some mirror those available in the Control panel and top-level menus, others can only be accessed from the panel. The individual panels can be moved between sections in the dock and toggled on or off but cannot be dragged out independently. The whole dock can be collapsed down to a single column of icons to free up space.



Preview mode

Preview mode displays the currently active page rendered as it will appear in the browser. Everything works as it should, including site navigation and any externally referenced page content such as embedded video.

The initial page generation can be a little slower than it is when viewed in a browser, particularly when navigating the site for the first time or if the content has changed since the last view. Subsequent previews will be much faster.

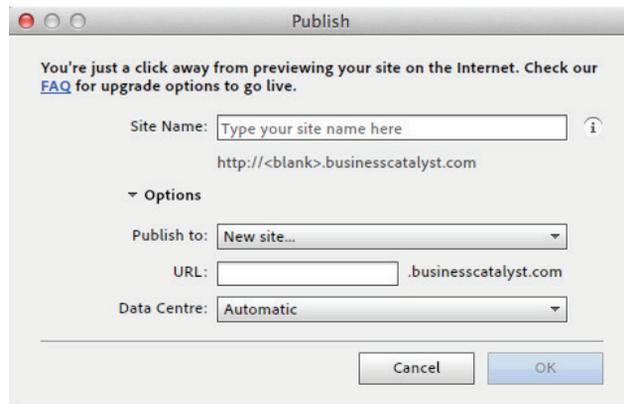


Publish mode

Technically, this is not a window view and is only applicable to Muse trial sites and if you choose to fully host the site through Adobe.

A standalone Muse subscription comes with one trial site, subscription to the full Creative Cloud edition has five sites.

When selected, a dialog appears with the existing live or trial site details, or the option to create a new site. Once published, the live version of the trial site is displayed in a new browser window.



Manage

Again, this is only available for trial sites and live sites hosted by Adobe. Clicking the Manage option opens a browser window and logs in to the Muse Dashboard.

This gives you access to, amongst other things, hosting details such as space and bandwidth use, site reports and also access to the in-browser editing system.

