



Sparkle
VISUAL WEB DESIGN

Version 2.6

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Introduction

What Is Sparkle

Sparkle is a modern visual website design tool for everybody.

Sparkle combines an all-in-one approach, an understandable interface and a focus on producing high performance and search engine optimized websites.

Traditionally a website is built by drawing a layout in an image editor, preparing and exporting assets, and finally assembling and optimizing the website in a code and jargon-heavy context. This is a tedious, unsophisticated and error-prone job that Sparkle eliminates entirely.

Creating your website with Sparkle is easy, intuitive and fun. A drag-and-drop and highly visual interface lets you place elements on a page with full freedom. If you know how to use Keynote and Pages, you already know how to use Sparkle.



Philosophy

On the surface HTML and CSS are very approachable, and have a bit of a purity allure.

Complexity grows tremendously from the basics, and once you mix a complex layout, retina graphics, device-dependent layout, rich typography and media, browser compatibility, performance-focused code, metadata and sharing, hand coding isn't impossible but requires an incredible attention to detail for all but the simplest websites.

Some day every designer will use a visual tool for web design, just like we no longer write PostScript to create a leaflet and we no longer use the command line for routine file management tasks.

The Sparkle Advantage

We built Sparkle to give designers full control over everything modern HTML and CSS standards offer, without giving up on the visual approach. We are committed to a visual interface, and all our work is focused on it. This is our guarantee to you: Sparkle is visual first.

We also adhere to what web standards offer, because this ensures the generated website is “web native” in feel and performance. As a consequence there are a few ways in which Sparkle might feel limited or inflexible. We will address them when we are confident we can create a great user interface, produce high performance code and ensure the highest compatibility across browsers and platforms.

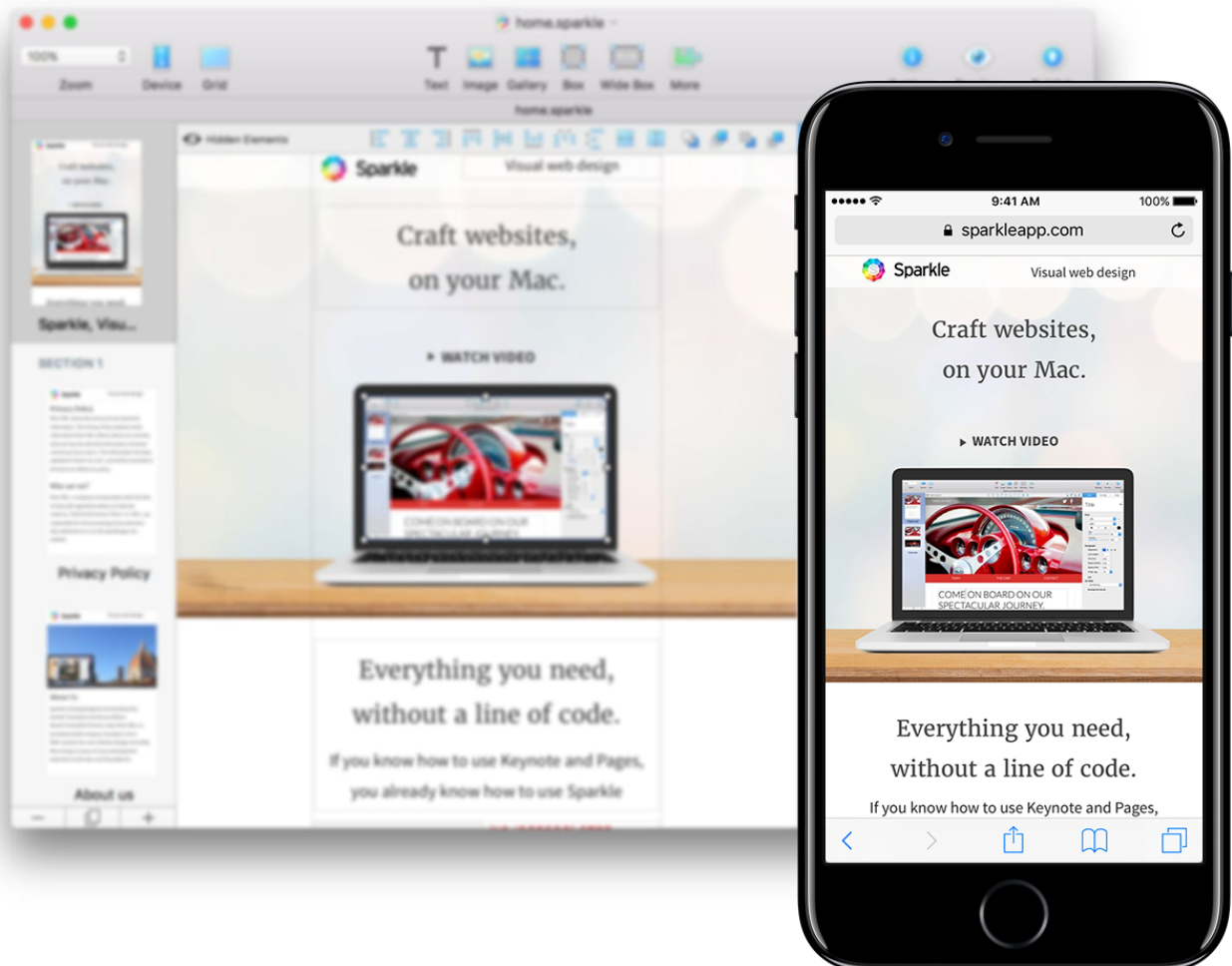
Happy website building!

Visual Web Design

Sparkle has been built from the ground up to be fully visual, with no compromises or unfamiliar language. You create a site from beginning to end, all in Sparkle.

Contrary to popular belief, it is unnecessary to use symbols (HTML, CSS) to create a spatial layout of a web page. Likewise, it is not necessary to understand jargon to create your website.

In Sparkle, what you draw on the canvas is what you'll see on the web page. Sparkle takes care of all the coding and other technical details, to ensure the website it creates is compatible with web browsers, is displayed with a high fidelity on all platforms, is properly accessed through an assistive device such as a vocal screen reader or a Braille interface and is optimized for search engines.



The Editing Cycle

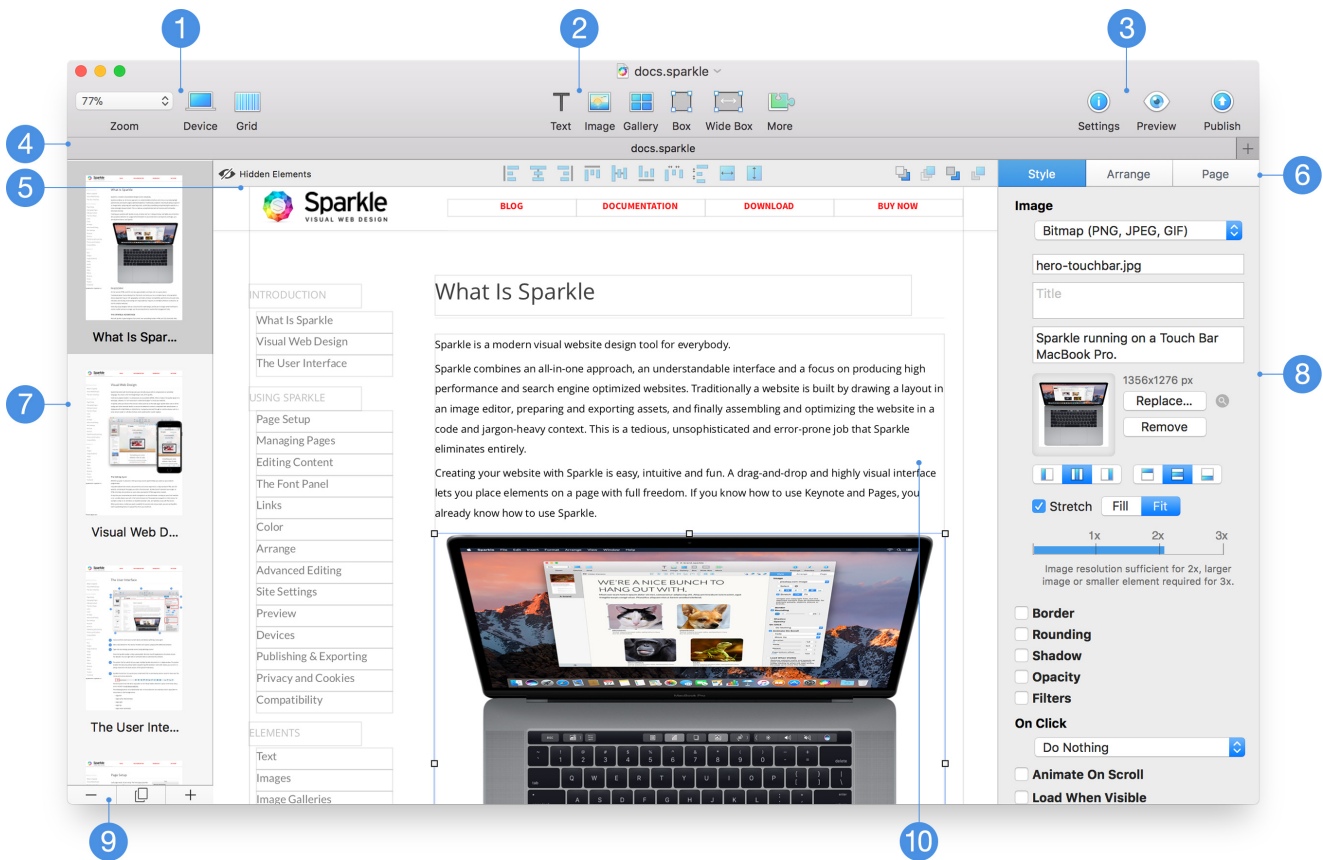
Whether you plan in advance or feel your way around, Sparkle helps you build out your website progressively.

A Sparkle website lives inside a document file, and can be exported as a fully standard HTML and CSS website, containing all the pages you add to the document. Sparkle doesn't represent your pages as HTML internally, but produces an up-to-date, pixel-perfect HTML page when needed.

At any time you can preview your work in progress in an actual browser, running on your local machine or on a mobile device over wifi. In fact some features can't be properly conveyed in a static canvas, for example a video or an animation, so Sparkle's preview is live, and updates as you edit the canvas.

When you're done, or when you want to publish the current state of your work, you can use Sparkle's built-in publishing feature to upload the site to your web host.

The User Interface



1. Canvas control: zoom level, current device and device switching, canvas grid.
2. Add a new element to the canvas; the More icon opens a popup with additional elements.
3. Open the site settings, preview control and publishing control.

Since the Sparkle toolbar is fully customizable, like most macOS applications, the above are just the defaults. You can right click or control click to customize the contents.

4. The system tab bar, which lets you open multiple Sparkle documents in a single window. The system enables the tab bar by default when using the Sparkle window in full screen mode, you can set it to always show from the Dock section of the System Preferences.
5. Sparkle's format bar, for quick access commands that are commonly used or useful to have near the canvas and canvas elements.



The first button from the left is equivalent to the “Show hidden elements” option in the View menu, and is related to multi-device websites.

The following buttons are enabled when two or more elements are selected, and are equivalent to menu items in the Arrange menu:

- align left
- align center (horizontally)
- align right
- align top
- align center (vertically)
- align bottom
- distribute horizontally
- distribute vertically
- same width
- same height
- send to back
- bring to front
- backward
- forward

6. The inspector heading lets you pick which group of settings to display. The Style and Arrange panes always refer to the currently selected element. The Style pane contains most of the element-specific settings such as its visual aspect and behavior, whereas the Arrange pane contains mainly position and size settings. The Page pane contains settings for the current page.
7. The page outline will show all of the pages in your document, with the option of organizing pages in sections. From here you can rename and reorder pages and sections.

The outline thumbnails are a simplified representation of the page contents. For example they don't show the content of very long pages, the different page alignments, menu drop downs or animations, but they're useful for context.

8. The inspector immediately reflects settings for the currently selected item. Conversely, changing a setting immediately reflects the change in the canvas and in any open preview. Each element type has its own settings, which are explained in other parts of this documentation.
9. In the context of the page outline, these buttons let you add, duplicate and delete pages and sections.
10. The currently selected page is shown in the canvas. Sparkle is a WYSIWYG application (“What You See Is What You Get”), meaning you operate on the elements by selecting, moving and resizing them interactively as you do in most modern visual applications.

The canvas can be zoomed from 25% to 400% using the toolbar zoom menu, the most common (and default) zoom behavior is to automatically fit the document width, which lets you freely resize the document window.

While scrolling around the page is easy enough, particularly with scrolling gestures on modern mice and trackpads, when the page is zoomed in a lot you risk overshooting the target location. An alternative, more precise way of navigating around the page, which works when you aren’t editing a text block, is to hold down the spacebar, grab the canvas and move it around.

By default Sparkle shows a number of overlay boxes, lines and guides to help identify and align elements. You can turn them off and on by pressing *tab* to get an in-canvas look closer to the final result, a way to quickly unclutter the view.

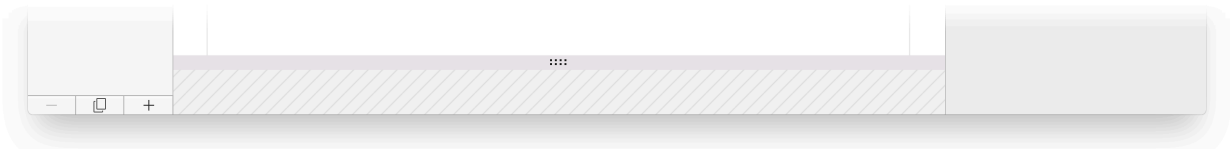
Touch Bar

On Touch Bar equipped MacBook Pros you can access the most frequent commands for each selected element in the Touch Bar strip directly.



Page bottom

Finally the page bottom element, within the canvas, lets you make the page shorter or taller. While the page is generally clipped where content ends, the page bottom is useful in conjunction with elements that follow the page footer (see the Arrange inspector page).



Sparkle and the macOS document model

Sparkle adheres to the modern macOS document model, so documents are autosaved in the background and versioned by the system. Starting with macOS Sierra you can open multiple files as tabs of the same window.

Sharing Sparkle files

Sharing Sparkle website files is safe and secure, we have painstakingly engineered this aspect to ensure sharing flexibility and security. Specifically:

- your web publishing settings are saved in the system keychain, they can't be extracted from the Sparkle file;
- you can move a Sparkle file to a different Mac freely, if it's your own Mac the keychain settings can be synchronized via iCloud keychain and it will work right away, if it's someone else's they can enter the publishing settings again (if needed) and both settings will be retained when moving the file back and forth;
- likewise export to disk settings are only visible on the machine where the application is set up, but multiple disk setups are possible and preserved when moving the document back and forth between different Macs.

Design For Non-Designers

If you aren't a designer, these tips might help you build a more satisfying web presence. And don't think every website builder is a trained graphic designer, quite the opposite! Another thing to consider is a designer might know everything about the latest trends in graphic design, but you're the world's leading expert about the topic your website will revolve around.

Follow an intent

The best way to create a fulfilling website is to think about what your intent is, and setup your project as a consequence. Sparkle elements have many properties, each with defaults, their purpose is to get you running quickly, sometimes working as placeholders, but your goal should be to pick fonts, colors, images, shadows, border thickness or rounding based on your intent, not on the defaults. Have a plan and follow it.

Reduce clutter

Limiting clutter makes your content appear more professional. Clutter comes in many forms.

Limit your font selection to a couple families and a color selection to a couple base colors. You can still have other fonts and colors for select elements, but they should be used sparingly and tastefully, like a colored cushion on a neutral couch. Limiting the number of colors can feel constraining, but you can add variety by using different brightnesses of the base colors, which won't add clutter.

Use gridlines and alignment guides to tidily align elements (except when you expressly choose not to!), and use spacing and distance between elements as a design feature that emphasizes content.

Making use of Sparkle's text styles, synchronized color wells and elements shown in multiple pages ensures the tidiness extends across the whole site.

Empathize with your visitors

What is your typical visitor looking for? What answers do they want? By carefully selecting what to say, and what not to say, you can better cater to your audience, and make the site more effective.

While it can be tempting to put all the material you have on the site, it's also important to provide a well thought out, well organized and overall clear structure, this will be apparent in your site navigation and will make for a better experience.

Typically you will want to limit the amount of text that is required reading, rewrite your headlines until they're clear and to the point, and avoid the use of stock photography intended as content (though it can work as a mood-setter).

Ensure crispness and readability

Always use images with sufficient resolution, even if your screen isn't retina, your site visitors will likely have a high pixel density screen on their smartphone, and will otherwise see a low resolution image. Sparkle's resolution meter next to images helps with this.

On a related note, ensure the text color has enough contrast from the background. While there are official guidelines for accessibility that you might not be required to adhere to, you still want to ensure your site can be read.

Inspiration

We stand on the shoulders of giants, it is natural and healthy to be inspired by something you have seen on the web, to imitate the work of who you admire. However keep in mind that many of the websites you see around the web are severely constrained by the underlying tool or technology, you have much more freedom in Sparkle so we'd like to encourage you to break conventions, avoid clichés and pour yourself in your design. It goes without saying that if you heavily base your design on a template you are only expressing half of yourself.

Dos and don'ts

- Don't create "go to page top" element, people are familiar with scrolling, iOS even has a built-in shortcut for it (tap on clock at the top of the screen);
- don't use Sparkle's multi-device feature by picking a device width based on your content, rather adapt your content to all the device layouts;
- don't overly animate, users tend to ignore repeating animations; on the other hand animations can enhance revealing content (during initial page load or on scroll);

- don't pre-cut images in image editors, Sparkle always generates optimized images and having more available resolution gives you the flexibility to tweak a layout;
- use wireframe/placeholder mode to get a sense of the layout;
- use photography to enhance the content;
- don't use generic imagery, pick the right metaphor or product photography.

Don't Overthink It

If you come from previous generation or web-based website builders, or did some web coding in the past, you might have some preconceived notions about what you need to do or what to look out for.

Sparkle actually takes care of many small and not so small details, to make the technical side of the website building process as painless as possible.

What all this means is you shouldn't overthink it, most of the time Sparkle takes care of what previously was a problem and makes things "just work". You can safely trust Sparkle to do the right thing.

A few examples are in order, so that you can get a feel of Sparkle's smarts.

Image management

Images are by far the largest asset on most web pages, and page load performance is affected by that, so there naturally are many tutorials and tips attempting to address the issue of how to reduce image size. The advice ranges from resizing the image before importing it to recompressing the images with external tools or services. That's entirely unnecessary with Sparkle. Sparkle has a very advanced image processor that, starting from the image you provide, produces tightly optimized images for the different contexts in which the image might be loaded. In a typical project Sparkle might generate 20 different images from the base image, accounting for regular or retina screens, image size on each device (smaller for smartphone, larger for desktop) and file format compatibility (WebP for mobile and desktop Google Chrome). Sparkle also generates carefully designed code to load the proper image at the appropriate time.

File caching

Caching is a temporary storage of previously downloaded assets that browsers use to make repeated visits of the same site faster. Sparkle generates new filenames for a few critical assets every time the site is generated, and conversely works hard to preserve the file names of unchanged files, to make effective use of browser cache. This has the consequence of changing more files than apparently necessary, but the ultimate goal is not tripping up the cache of browsers that might have visited the previous version of the site. It also means many of the output files generated by Sparkle are interconnected and they need to be published together.

Downloadable files

A file on your Mac can be made available to your site visitors by dragging it into the Sparkle canvas, or picking it from a file download “On Click” action. It’s not uncommon for Sparkle customers to be confused about this, sometimes thinking that the Mac needs to be kept turned on and connected to the internet. Sparkle however publishes the file along with the website, so the file is fully independent and hosted on your domain.

Publishing

Sparkle has a sophisticated FTP setup process aimed at automatically detecting most technical details about a web host setup and ensuring the publication is later successful. This can lead to occasional confusion, on one hand because the initial data entry seems to not require enough information, on the other because the setup cross check can make Sparkle appear to fail. Less experienced users tend to manage to set up publishing with more ease because they aren’t overthinking or second guessing what Sparkle asks. We definitely suggest trying to plainly provide the information Sparkle asks for, most of the times it just works.

Using Sparkle

Page Setup

Each page needs a basic setup. The first popup specifies the type of page. When you start a new site the first page is set as the “Home Page”, others pages are set to “Regular Page”.

The second field is the page title. By default Sparkle names the page with the prefix “Page” followed by a progressive number. You definitely should change this, it is extremely important in search engine relevance. You can change either here or by clicking on the page title in the “Page Outline”. Page title will appear as the browser page and bookmark name, and in search engines.

The third field, the page filename, is mostly a detail of how your website is set up, but it gives cues to search engines as well. The home page of a website (see above) is commonly named “index.html”. You can’t change the file name for your home page.

Regular pages by default derive their file names from the page title but you can customize it by clicking “Custom Filename” and entering a new file name.

To complete the basic information, the description and keywords will be used for a so called “page meta tag”, a nugget of information that is sometimes used by search engines and other non-human readers as a page description.

If you opt to exclude the page from publishing, you will still be able to edit the page and link to it, and the page will work in preview, but when publishing the page and its assets won’t be exported, and any link to the page won’t work.

Page

Search And Social

Home Page

Page 1

index.html

Custom Filename

At Top Level

Description

Other Information

Keywords, comma separated

Exclude From Publishing

Alignment

Background

Fill

Content None

If you enable the search engine metadata generation in the site settings, the page settings will show an additional section, where you can override the global settings.

If you enable social sharing, the additional section will show the cover image for the current page, when it's shared on social media.

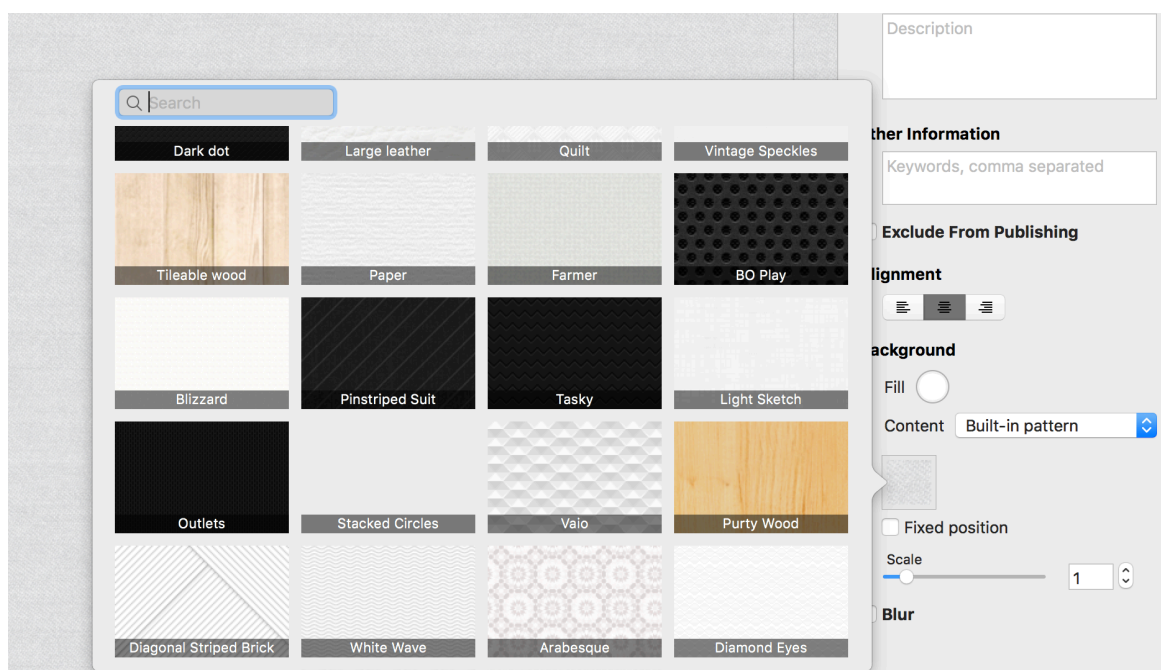
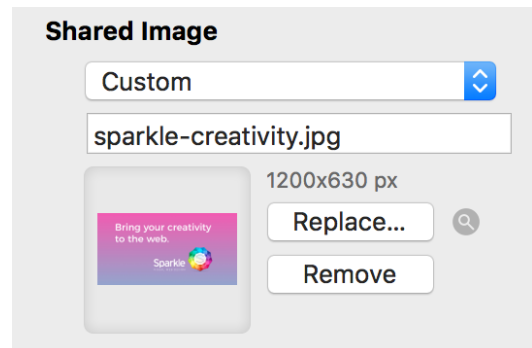
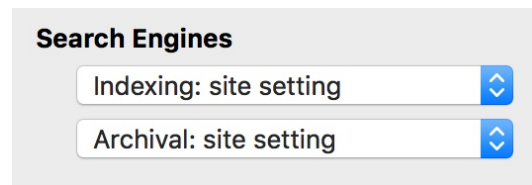
The page alignment controls how the page layout is displayed in the browser when the window is larger than the layout, and it defaults to center.

The background of the page can be filled with a color, with a pattern from Subtlepatterns, a custom image or a video (from Youtube, Vimeo or from your Mac).

To choose a color, click on the round circle and a color picker will appear with some predefined color swatches. For further information about the color settings, check the color page.

The Content menu offers three choices: Built-in pattern, Custom Pattern and Video.

Selecting Built-in pattern and then clicking the thumbnail will show a wide choice of ready-to-use patterns. Choosing Custom Pattern will open an empty window which can be filled with your patterns using the Add button.



The pattern can have a fixed position, which prevents the background from scrolling with the page. It's also possible to specify the pattern scale with a slider and apply a blur effect.

The background color and pattern can both be specified because some patterns are partially transparent and show the underlying color. Also, when the page first loads in a user's browser, the pattern image might not have been downloaded, so the background color is in a way the "first impression" of the site.

The Video option allows the use of video backgrounds that extend to the full window size.

The same options as for the video element apply: YouTube or Vimeo, or from disk or network.

The video can have a fixed position, play without sound (Mute) and in a loop. It is also possible to define a Poster Image.

Note that incorporating videos from YouTube and Vimeo can trigger content blockers or include third party tracking. You should configure privacy options to account for it.

If you have set up Sparkle for multiple languages the page settings will show an additional section, where you can configure the corresponding translated page for each page. By connecting all corresponding pages you will help search engines direct people to pages in their language.

Background

Fill

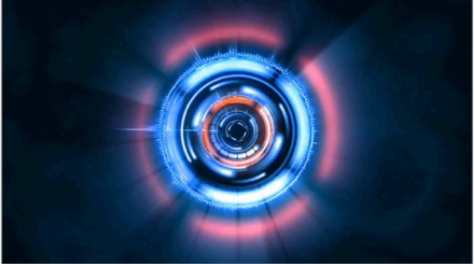
Content

Fixed position

Mute

Loop

ID



⚠ Privacy

Incorporating a Youtube video on the page like this triggers browser content blockers or exposes your visitors to third party tracking. Your jurisdiction might require user consent.

Language

Other Languages

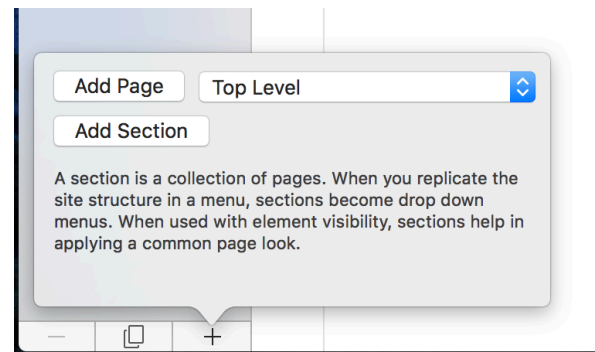
Lang...	Link
de	Willkommen
fr	Bienvenue

Managing Pages

Adding a page

To add a new page click on the + (plus) button at the bottom of the page outline. You can add a new page or a section, which is a collection of pages.

Sections are mainly an organizational aid, but can serve an additional function with relation to section visual uniformity, by using element visibility to show an element or group of elements within a section.



This is explained in more detail in the documentation about the arrange pane.

A page can be renamed either by clicking on the name in the page outline or by changing it in the inspector.

To delete a page, select its thumbnail and then press the “-” at the bottom of the sidebar. The center button at the bottom of the sidebar duplicates the currently selected page.

The order of pages can be changed by dragging the page thumbnail to the new location.

Pages, sections and the menus

When you create a new menu, by default it will automatically add (and remove) items corresponding to the pages. Top level pages and sections are the main items of the menu, the former link to the pages and the latter are sub-menus with links to the pages in the corresponding section as menu items. Please see Menus for a deeper look to menu elements.

The privacy page

Once you enable privacy options, a privacy page will automatically be added to your page outline. This page can only be deleted from the privacy settings. The privacy page is special in that it hosts the privacy banner for editing purposes. While the banner is only edited on this page, it will actually be shown on all pages of the website.

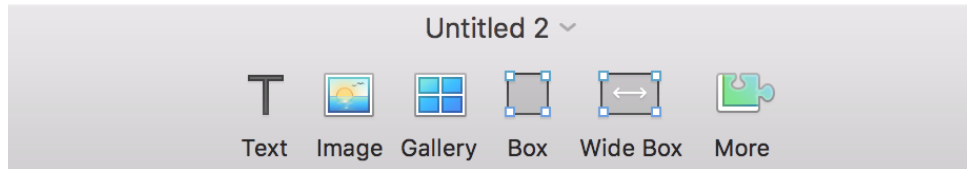
Importing an existing page

Sparkle isn't a coding environment so you can't import code with full fidelity. There are many reasons but the main one is the underlying HTML doesn't include sufficient information on what the purpose, or intent, of any given page element is. For example an image could be a simple image, or a video thumbnail, or a gallery image, they all are identical to the Sparkle importer.

With that in mind, the import feature (which you can access from the Insert menu) will load a page from your old website in an internal browser and scan the page for layout information, producing an equivalent layout in Sparkle. This gives a very reasonable approximation of the original page, and is an excellent starting point for a redesign of your old website.

Editing Content

A new Sparkle document starts with a blank page where you can add the elements to your website layout.

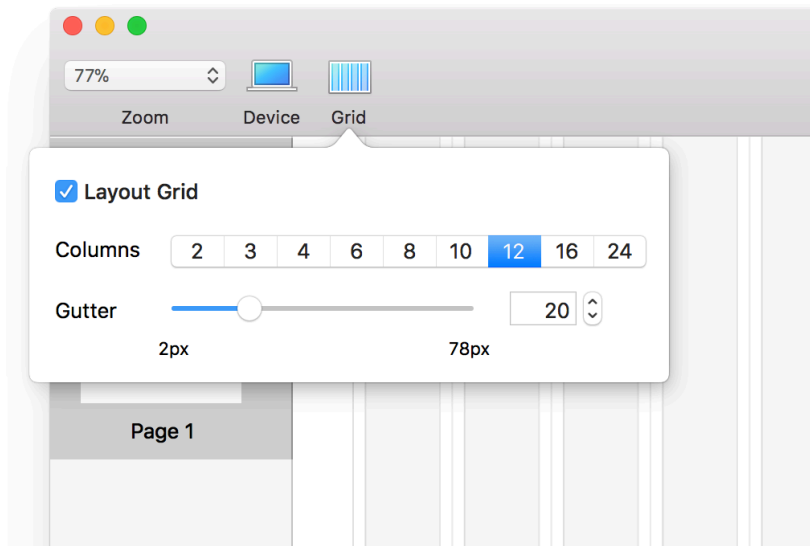


The most direct way to add elements to the canvas is via the corresponding toolbar buttons. Each content type is explained in more detail later in this documentation:

- Text — adds a block of text
- Box — adds a decorative box
- Wide box — adds a box, pre-set to be as wide as the browser window
- Image — adds an image
- Gallery — adds an image gallery
- Map — adds a Google map
- Video — adds a video element
- Audio — adds an audio element
- Menu — adds a menu
- Button, Text Input, Checkbox and Radio button — add form elements or action buttons (see Buttons and Forms)
- Embed — adds code provided by a third party website
- Twitter widget — adds a tweet, a twitter timeline or a twitter profile link
- Facebook widget — adds facebook's buttons (like, share, etc.) or a facebook profile link

Details on element position, size and layering can be found in the Arrange pane inspector documentation page.

In addition to the freeform positioning via dragging or inspector, the Sparkle canvas features a Layout Grid, that elements snap to, magnetically.



Grid settings can be changed using the Grid button on the toolbar. Sparkle defaults to a 12 column grid.

An alternative to grid snapping are the automatic guides based on element boundaries. For example, here the top of the text aligns to the bottom of the image:



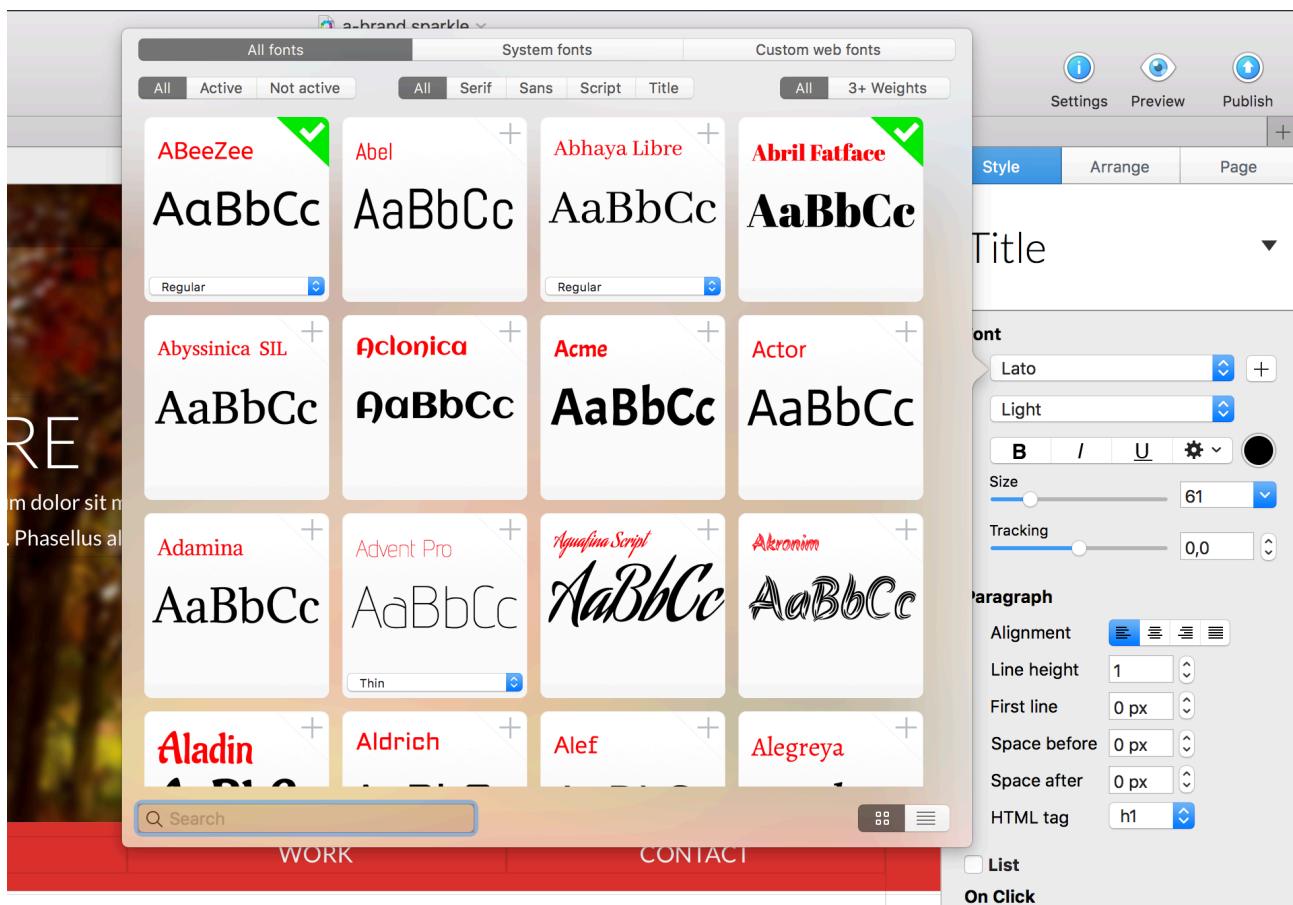
While using magnetic snapping help construct a tidy layout, you can prevent snapping by holding down the control key while dragging an element.

If you want to position an element further down or up on the page, in an area currently not visible, you can drag near the canvas edge and the page will scroll automatically.

The Font Panel

Sparkle offers a one-click install for over 600 web fonts as indexed by the Google's Web Fonts project. You can also use system fonts or add your own web fonts to Sparkle.

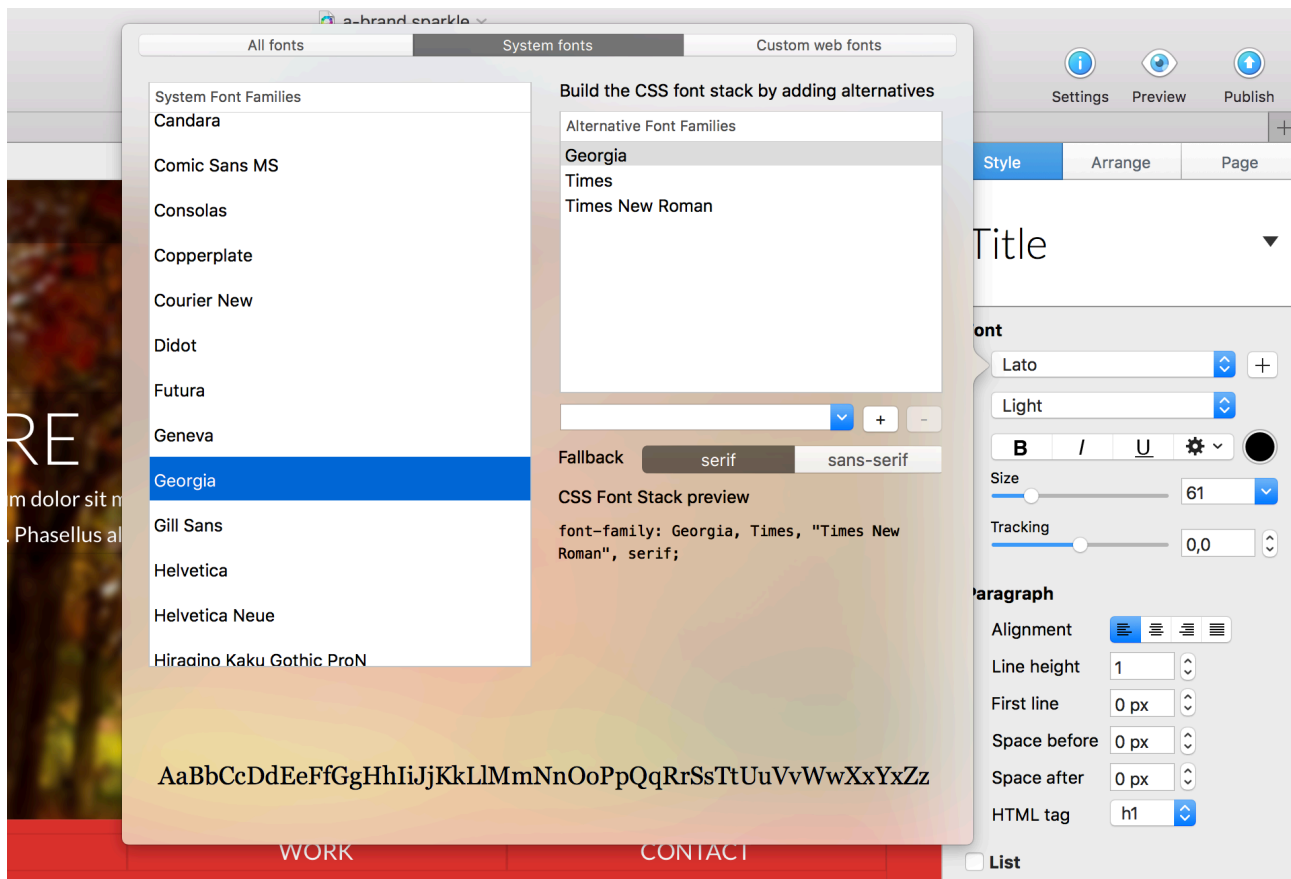
The font panel is used to control the fonts displayed in the font menu. The font panel is opened by pressing the + button next to the text inspector font family menu.



From here all available fonts are shown, with the active ones badged with a green corner. Clicking on a font that is sourced from Google's web font index will result in an automatic download and immediate activation. When used, web fonts sourced from Google will be embedded in the website for privacy and performance.

The top second row of buttons in the font panel acts as a filter on the displayed fonts. Switching to the active view is a quick way to deactivate fonts no longer used, while switching to the not active view helps in looking for new fonts. The serif/sans/script/title button row helps in searching with a specific typeface style. Finally the 3+ weights filter is useful for finding fonts that are typographically more complete. As a rule of thumb, using multiple weights and styles of the same

typeface usually produces a more harmonious and elegant result than using different typefaces.



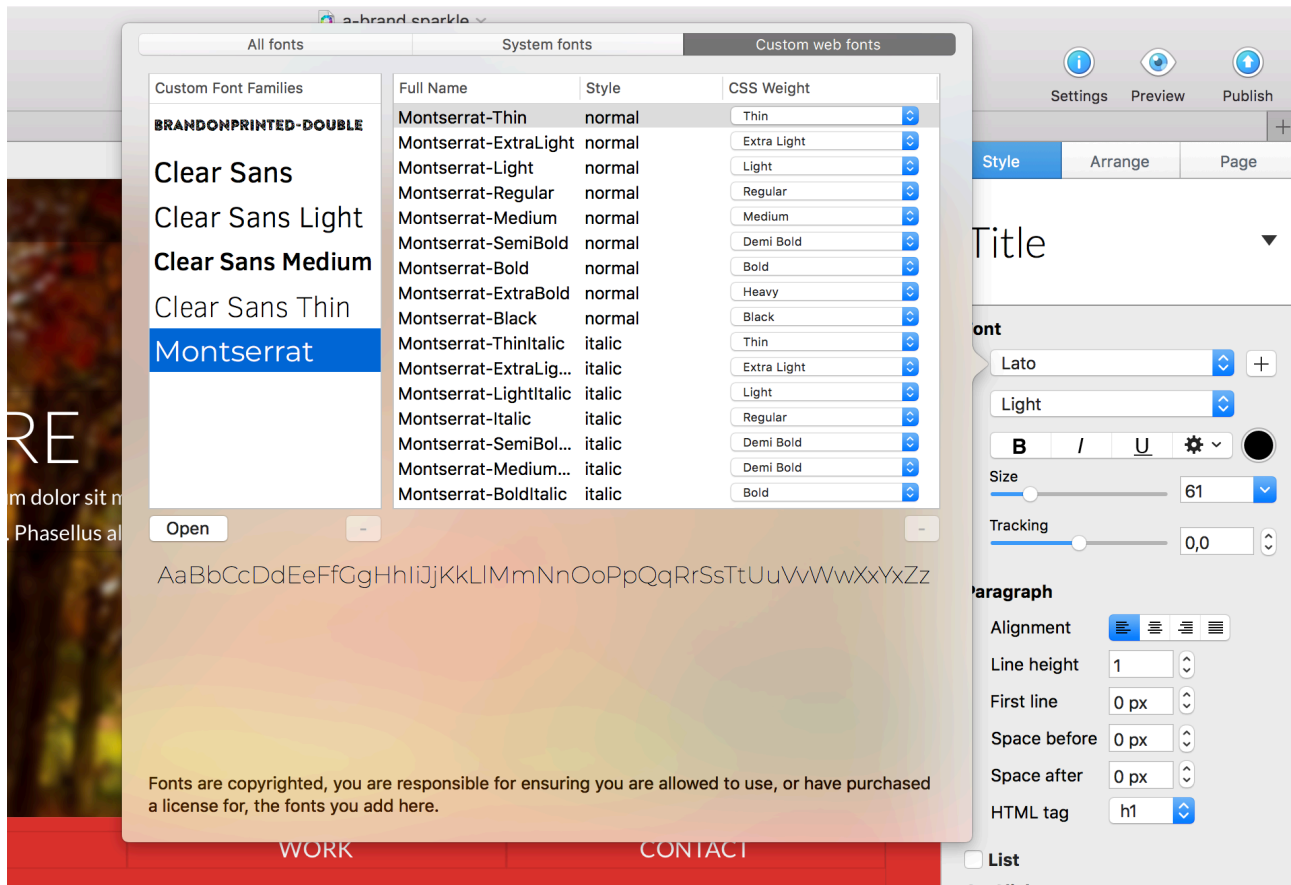
While activating a system font can be done from the main “All fonts” pane, the system fonts provide advanced control over how the font will be displayed across browsers running on different operating systems.

When a web font is picked, the visual representation of each character is transmitted to the browser, at the expense of download time. In the case of system fonts, however, just the font name is communicated to the browser. While Sparkle will display the selected font, the viewer might not have the font installed on their system.

The Sparkle “System Fonts” pane provides advanced control over how the viewing browser will behave when the named font isn’t found. This is known as a “CSS Font Stack”, which is a list of fonts listed in order of preference, for the visiting browser to load as alternatives, until one is found.

Sparkle has pre-defined font stacks for commonly used fonts, so you will likely only need to use this pane to tweak the built-in font stacks or provide font stacks for uncommon fonts.

In the example depicted above, Georgia will be shown in Sparkle and most likely on any Mac system. However, on browsers running on Windows or Linux, Georgia is most likely not installed, so the browser will use Times or Times New Roman instead.



Finally, the custom web font pane lets you add a web font from your local system. When used in a website, the font files will be embedded as part of the site. Through this pane you can enter multiple weights for each font family, and they will be grouped as a single font.

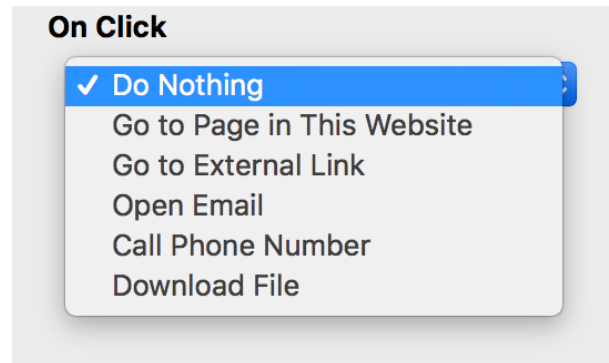
Sparkle will accept a font in TTF, OTF, WOFF or WOFF2 formats, generating the needed web-ready formats internally.

Links

Sparkle's On Click menu allows you to add a link or action to any text, image, button, menu item or group.

By default the menu is set on "Do Nothing", but it can be set to any of the following:

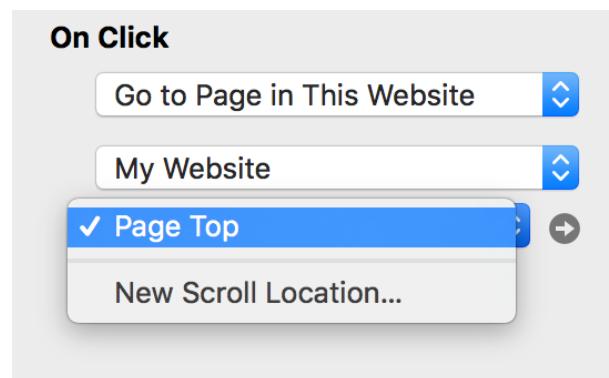
- Go to Page in This Website
- Go to External Link
- Open Email
- Call Phone Number
- Download file



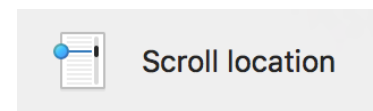
Images and buttons have additional options, check the respective documentation pages.

Go to Page in This Website

Sparkle knows about all the pages in the site, so it makes it really quick to pick one as a link destination. One additional refinement is picking a location in the page, so that when the user clicks on the link the browser will smoothly scroll to the selected location.

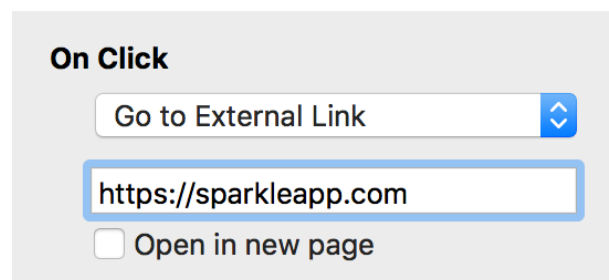


Scroll locations can be created both by selecting "New Scroll Location..." and by adding a new one to the page by picking the "Scroll Location" icon on the "More" popup.



Go to External Link

This is the most general form of link, where you enter a web address (also referred to as URL, Uniform Resource Locator) like you would find it in the browser. The address text box supports web addresses (usually prefixed with `http://` or `https://`) and other kinds of addresses as well.



Open Email

The Open Email option has a field to specify the recipient's address. Clicking on the resulting link will open a new message in your default client email or redirect to a webmail interface. If spam is a concern, a better option is to create a contact form.

Call Phone Number

The Call Phone Number option will cause the site visitor's device to make a phone call to the specified number (after confirmation).

On many desktop devices the phone call is often routed via video calling software.

Download File

The Download file option lets you choose any file on your Mac, such as a PDF or a ZIP archive, to be offered for download from the website. The file will be published along with the website, and downloaded from there.

A shortcut to create a link to a downloadable file is to drag and drop it onto the Sparkle canvas, which will create the download link.

On Click

Open Email

feedback@sparkleapp.com

⚠ This address will be hidden until the visitor clicks on the link. For better spam protection, use a button that emails a form via the server.

On Click

Call Phone Number

+1-800-555-1212

On Click

Download File

project.zip

project.zip

Remove Replace... 🔍

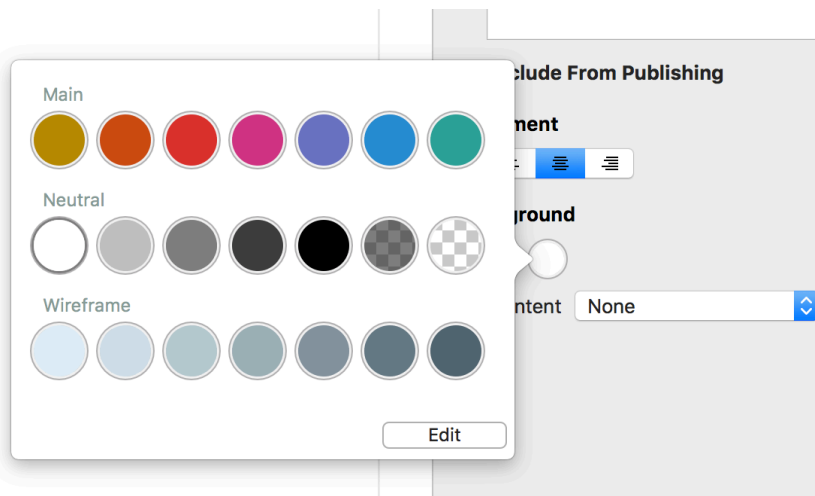
Store In This Document

Color

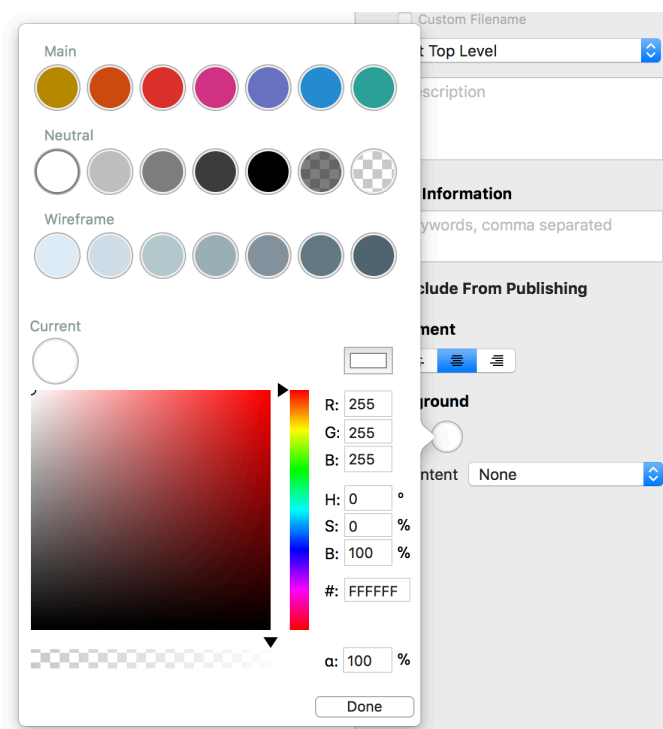
Sparkle adopts a unified palette across the entire website, the color picker is a swatch of colors that can be used anywhere a color is needed: text, backgrounds, fills, shadows, borders, etc.

The purpose of the swatches is to help in maintaining color consistency across elements and pages. When the color value of a swatch is changed, all elements using the color in all pages will change.

For example the page background color picker:

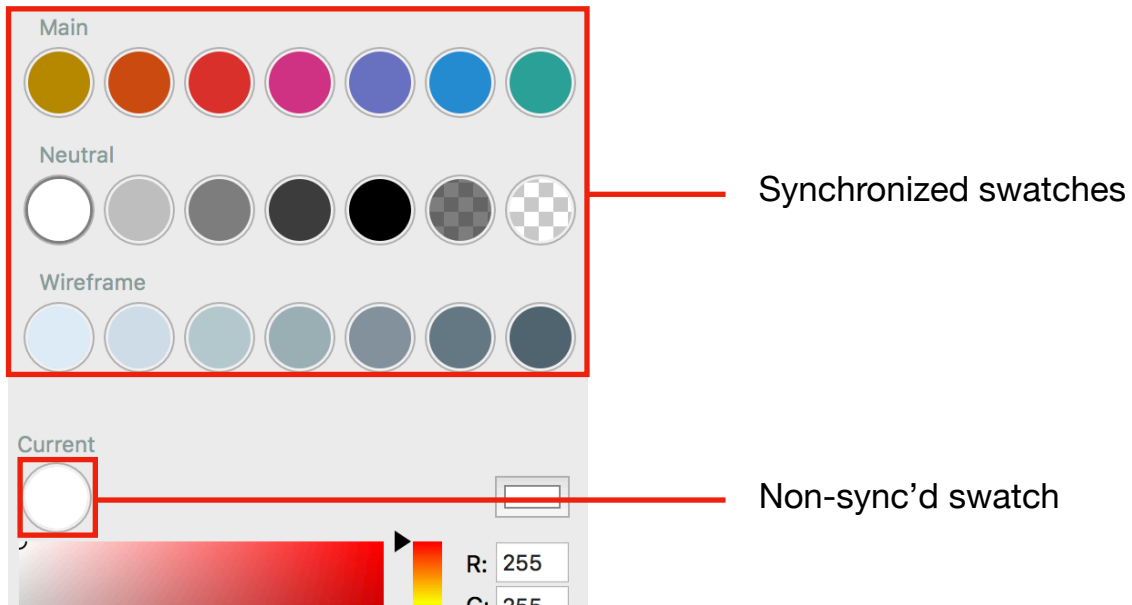


The active color swatch has an outline. The Edit button gives access to the whole range of choices. Also, a specific color can be selected by RGB, HSB and HTML hexadecimal values.

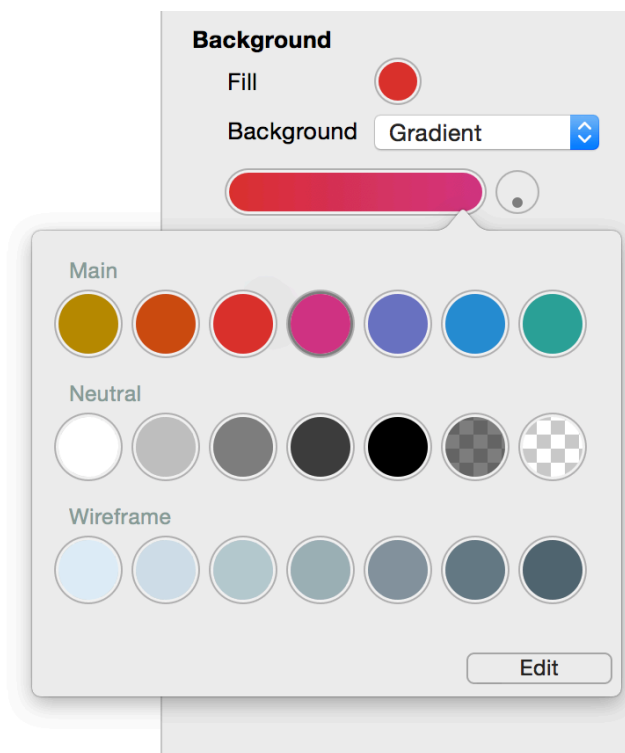


If needed the expanded color picker has a system color wheel on the left side below the swatches, to access your system color picker's palette or to sample an on-screen color.

For the purpose of maintaining a consistent color scheme across the entire site, all swatches in Sparkle are synchronized across elements. That is when you change the color value of a swatch, all elements that use it will change to that color. The exception to this is the "current" swatch, which is not synchronized.



Finally the color picker for the box element lets you select a gradient, by setting the two ends of the gradient separately.



Animation

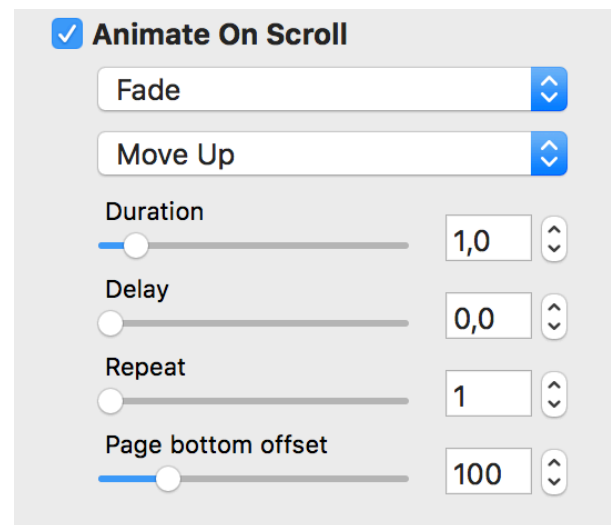
You can enable animation on several elements. Animation is not synchronized with scrolling, rather it is triggered by scrolling. The purpose is to produce a reveal effect to the elements it's applied to. When the animated element is in view when the page loads, it is immediately triggered.

There are many effects to pick from, which are not shown in the Sparkle canvas, you need to check them in preview.

Once triggered the animation starts after the specified delay, for the specified duration. When setting up animation for multiple elements, the delay setting can be set to different values for each element, to spread out animations, giving a more organic feel to the whole.

The page bottom offset is a setting for how many pixels need to scroll for the animation to trigger, relative to when the element comes into view. Setting a bottom offset of 0 would make the animation trigger as soon as the top of the element becomes visible, but that might be a little too soon and hide a bit of the animation.

Animation and flashing content is frequently associated with advertising by visitors, so you should strive to use it sparingly and tastefully, particularly when it comes to the repetition.



The Arrange inspector

The Arrange inspector pane, the Arrange menu and the format bar controls let you manage element layering.

Elements are drawn in the order they have been added to the project. Draw order is not important if elements don't overlap each other. When overlap occurs you need to control ordering.

The Back button brings the element behind all the others, while Front brings it in front of all others. Backward moves the element one step behind in the layering (its position is swapped with the following element), while Forward moves it a step ahead (its position is swapped with the previous element).

The Full page width setting can be used for boxes, galleries, maps and embed elements, to make them extend beyond the page margins, full bleed.

The Follow footer setting anchors elements to the page bottom handle.

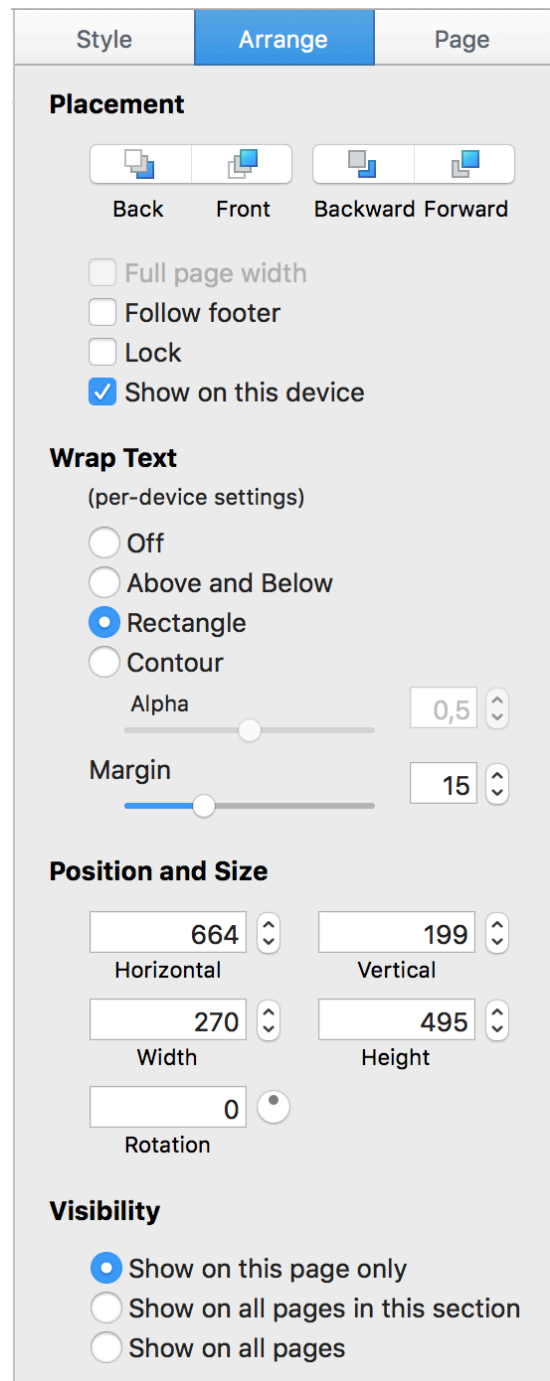
The Lock setting prevents an element from being moved on the canvas, and also removes it from the current selection in many circumstances.

The Show on this device setting toggles visibility of the element on the current device, to be used in conjunction with multi-device setups.

Elements can be resized by:

- specifying the desired width and height in the Arrange inspector pane;
- using the handles on edges and sides—holding the shift key while dragging preserves the element aspect ratio, that is the proportion of width to height.

Elements can be moved by:



- specifying the desired horizontal and vertical position in the Arrange inspector pane;
- dragging them directly—holding the shift key while dragging constraints movement on horizontal, vertical or diagonal axes.

Most elements can be rotated via a rotation setting in the Arrange inspector pane.

Text wrapping

After adding an image in the canvas you can set the text wrapping options to control how text will flow around the image. Text wrapping in fact can be used for any canvas element, not just images. By default text wrapping is off, so text will overlap the element (or end up below the element).

Setting “Above and below” clears the sides of the image, forcing the text to skip the entire horizontal stripe where the image intersects the text box.

Setting “Rectangle” causes text to avoid the the frame of the element, pretty much the frame you see in the Sparkle canvas.

Setting “Contour” causes text to fill areas of the image that aren’t fully opaque, so if you have a bitmap or SVG image with transparent regions, text will wrap the contour of the image content.

Image transparency often looks clear cut, but there often actually is a multi-level transparency value, Sparkle represents that in a 0 to 1 range, so if you have a transparency gradient you can control how far in the text will overlap. The margin option is always on top of the actual edges of an element, as a safe area to prevent text from getting too close to the content.

Text wrapping also accounts for element rotation and image or box corner rounding (with the Contour option), so you can get creative about text layout even without transparent images.

As a layout tip, wrapping will be more visible and more pleasing when text is tight around the element, so text should be possibly aligned to account for it, if possible. For example an image on the left will work best with left aligned text, an image on the right will work best with right aligned text.

The domestic cat (*Felis silvestris catus* or *Felis catus*) is a small, typically furry, carnivorous mammal. They are often called house cats when kept as indoor pets or simply cats when there is no need to distinguish them from other felids and felines. They are often valued by humans for companionship and for their ability to hunt rodents. There are more than seventy cat breeds recognized by various cat registries.



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A final note on the edge case of a text frame lying entirely inside an element set for text wrapping. In this case, the text inside won't be affected by the text wrapping settings. This lets you design an element that contains text within but forces text around it to wrap.

Visibility

Sparkle's visibility setting is key in helping show some common page features across the website identically, for visual consistency.

You can show the page header, a navigation element or the footer in a consistent way on all site pages, or perhaps just in a section.

When an element is visible on multiple pages it remains fully editable in all of them. A useful trick is to group, say, the page header elements, and make the group visible on multiple pages, instead of setting visibility on the individual header components.

The multi-page visibility applies to all properties, including position. This makes the Follow footer setting particularly useful, because by anchoring an element to the page bottom, it lets you have a common footer on pages of different height.

Advanced code integration

If you have enabled the relevant option in the Miscellaneous site settings, you will find an additional section at the bottom of

the arrange inspector. This lets you enter the HTML id attribute for the main HTML element that constitutes the Sparkle element. This is implementation dependent and might change across major Sparkle versions. The main purpose is element targeting via Google Tag Manager, or code integration via Javascript.



Code integration
id #

Advanced Editing

These are some Sparkle features that help during editing or help in making a website feel more consistent and uniform.

Multiple elements can be grouped so that you can move and resize them as a single unit, you can do this from the Arrange menu or via the context menu (right click or control click). You can lock an element to avoid inadvertently moving, modifying or deleting it, either from the Arrange menu or from the Arrange inspector.

Embedding

The “Embed” function allow you to insert HTML code snippets in a Sparkle website. You will typically use “Embed” to insert third party content for which an “embed code” has been provided (sometimes indicated by the HTML code “<>” parenthesis).

To ensure privacy to site visitors, by default the code is activated only after user consent (if the site is using Sparkle’s privacy features), and a global page setting is ensuring the address of the page isn’t shared with any loaded third party service. These might need to be changed for compatibility with different services, on a case-by-case basis.

This feature is mostly intended as a stopgap while we develop more native Sparkle elements.

Site Settings

The toolbar button “Settings” opens a dialog where you can control:

- general site settings
- site verification with search engines
- search engine metadata
- website icons
- image generation and compression
- social network sharing metadata
- Google Analytics settings
- Local Business
- privacy settings (see privacy and cookie law)
- publishing settings (see publishing and exporting)
- other miscellaneous settings

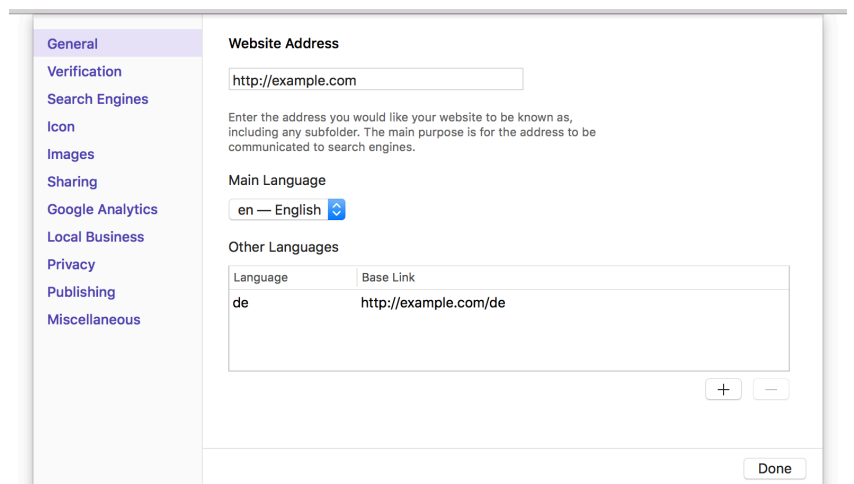


General site settings

This section contains the website address and the website language. The address is important information for search engines and for sharing.

The website language is also an aid to both search engines and other non-human visitors that can safely learn the website language without attempting to infer it from the contained text.

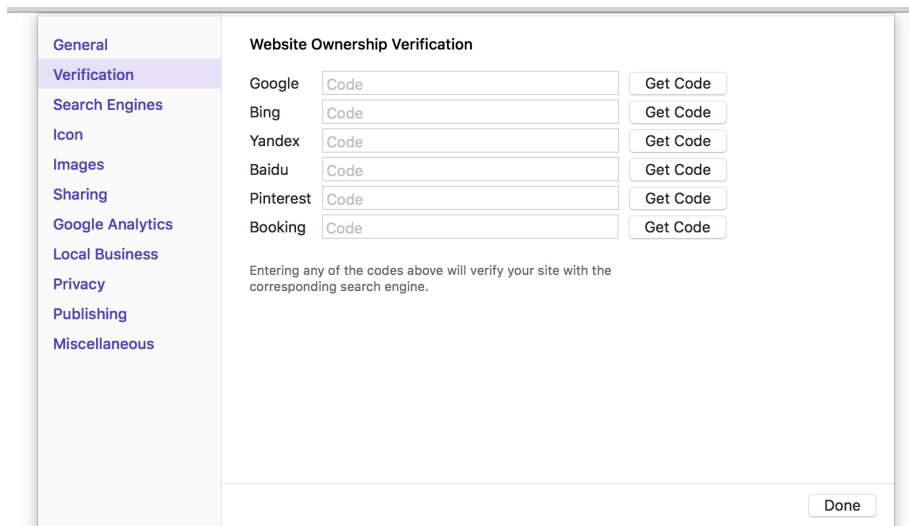
Search engines try to find pages that match the language of the searcher, so if you are translating the website to multiple languages, you can add each additional language here as well, which will then let you annotate each page of your site with its specific language and the corresponding pages in



the other languages your site supports. For each added language you will need to indicate the base link, or common ancestor to all page addresses, which is used when the translated pages are on a different domain.

Site verification

The first step after you complete your website is to make it known to search engines, so that they can start indexing it. Here you can copy/paste the codes provided by the webmaster section of the major search engines.



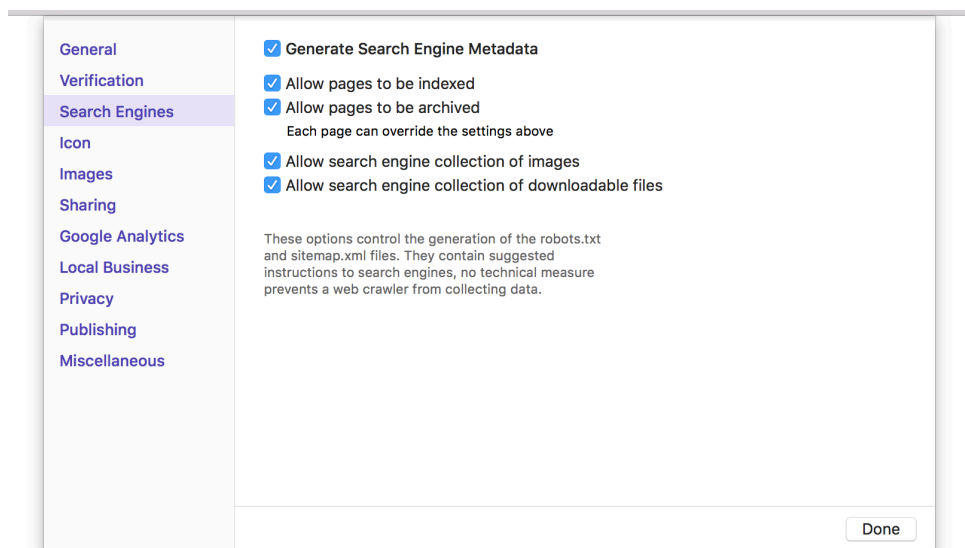
The screenshot shows a settings panel with a sidebar on the left containing menu items: General, Verification, Search Engines, Icon, Images, Sharing, Google Analytics, Local Business, Privacy, Publishing, and Miscellaneous. The main content area is titled "Website Ownership Verification" and contains a list of search engines with input fields for their verification codes and "Get Code" buttons:

Search Engine	Code	Action
Google	<input type="text" value="Code"/>	<input type="button" value="Get Code"/>
Bing	<input type="text" value="Code"/>	<input type="button" value="Get Code"/>
Yandex	<input type="text" value="Code"/>	<input type="button" value="Get Code"/>
Baidu	<input type="text" value="Code"/>	<input type="button" value="Get Code"/>
Pinterest	<input type="text" value="Code"/>	<input type="button" value="Get Code"/>
Booking	<input type="text" value="Code"/>	<input type="button" value="Get Code"/>

Below the table, there is a note: "Entering any of the codes above will verify your site with the corresponding search engine." At the bottom right of the panel is a "Done" button.

Search engines

Search engines can make use of a so called "sitemap.xml", a file that tells the search engine bot exactly what files are available in the website. This is paired with a "robots.txt" file, which tells the bot what it can and can't see. This settings pane tells Sparkle to produce the files. The pages have further granular control over indexing (availability for search) and archiving (storing for later use) by search engines.



The screenshot shows a settings panel with a sidebar on the left containing menu items: General, Verification, Search Engines, Icon, Images, Sharing, Google Analytics, Local Business, Privacy, Publishing, and Miscellaneous. The main content area is titled "Search Engines" and contains several checked options:

- Generate Search Engine Metadata
- Allow pages to be indexed
- Allow pages to be archived
 - Each page can override the settings above
- Allow search engine collection of images
- Allow search engine collection of downloadable files

Below the options, there is a note: "These options control the generation of the robots.txt and sitemap.xml files. They contain suggested instructions to search engines, no technical measure prevents a web crawler from collecting data." At the bottom right of the panel is a "Done" button.

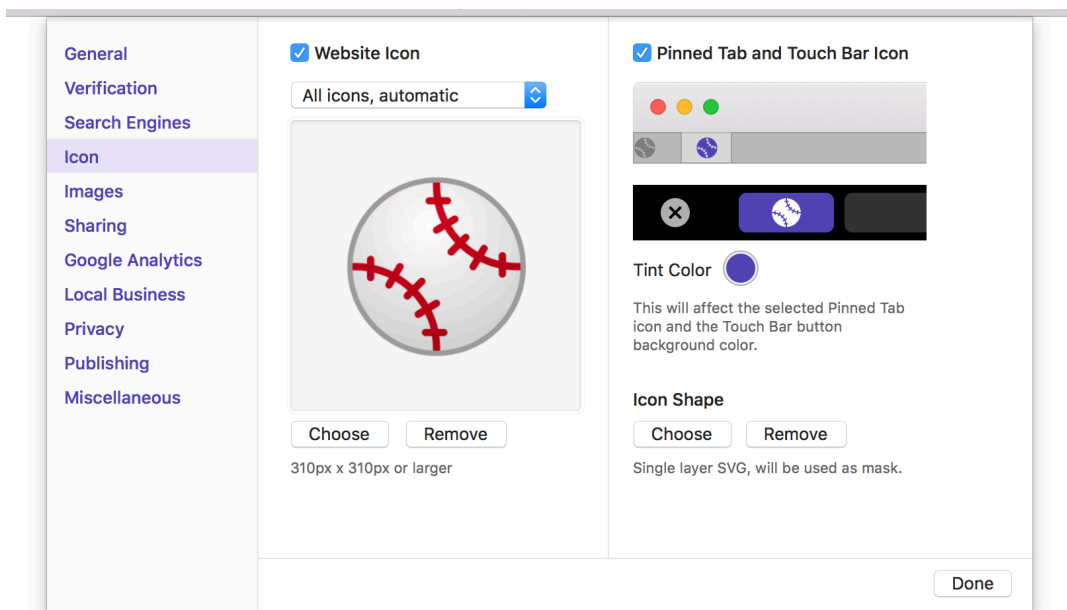
Website icon

The website icon, sometimes referred to as a favicon, is an image that is associated with the site and is displayed in different locations depending on the browser. For example Safari shows it in the address bar, next to the website address and in the history menu, next to the page title. Google Chrome shows it in the browser tab, next to the page title. Mobile Safari shows it in the recent website grid in the new tab page.

You can pick a single square image that will be scaled to all the required sizes, or control individual icons by selecting each one in the popup menu.

Additionally, Safari supports a specific icon for pinned tabs and for the MacBook Pro Touch Bar. This icon is used as a mask, and needs to be a vector file in SVG format. The settings page gives you a high fidelity preview of exactly how the SVG will look in a pinned tab and in a Touch Bar.

Web browsers generally assume the website icon won't be changed often, so they hold on to (cache) the icon for a very long time. For this reason Sparkle's preview service does not show the website icons. Once you change the website icon you will need to clear the browsers' website icon cache. Return site visitors will see the new icon after their browser's icon cache has expired, which can be many weeks or even months after you change it.



Images

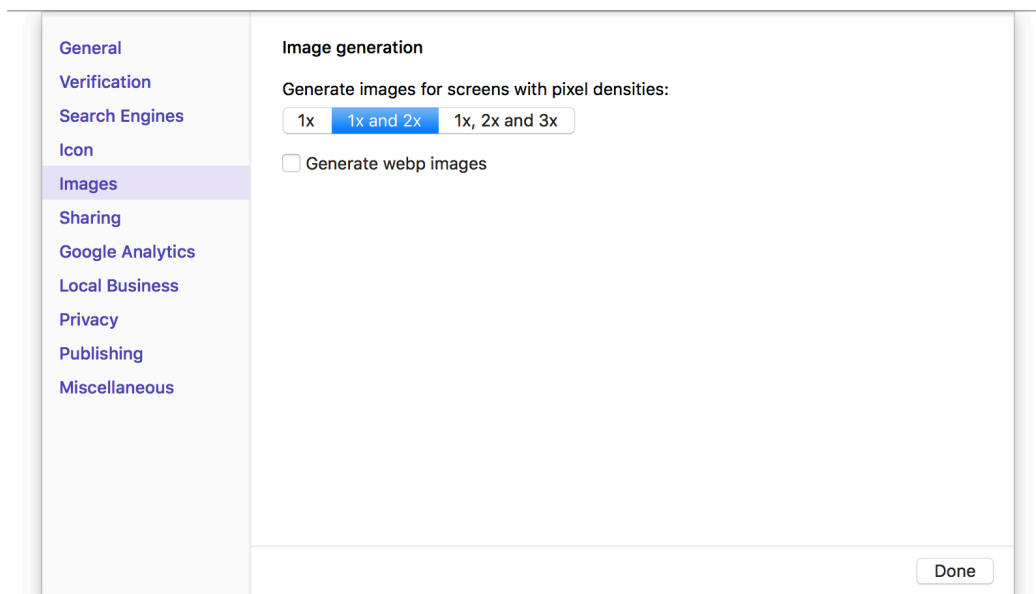
This settings pane lets you pick which screens the generated images should support: @2x is common in modern phones and tablets such as any iPhone 4 or later, @3x is a very high resolution available in phones such as the iPhone X and plus iPhones (8+, 7+, ...).

Generating @2x and @3x assets makes the website look crisper at the expense of larger images and more network bandwidth used by visitors to transfer the images when viewing the site.

The webp option causes Sparkle to generate an additional image in the webp image compression format for each image on the site. It is currently supported by Chrome and mobile Chrome.

Sparkle generates the page code in a way that ensures that modern browsers only download the appropriate resolution images, so while on disk or on the web host the site might be very large, only a fraction of the images is used by any one visitor.

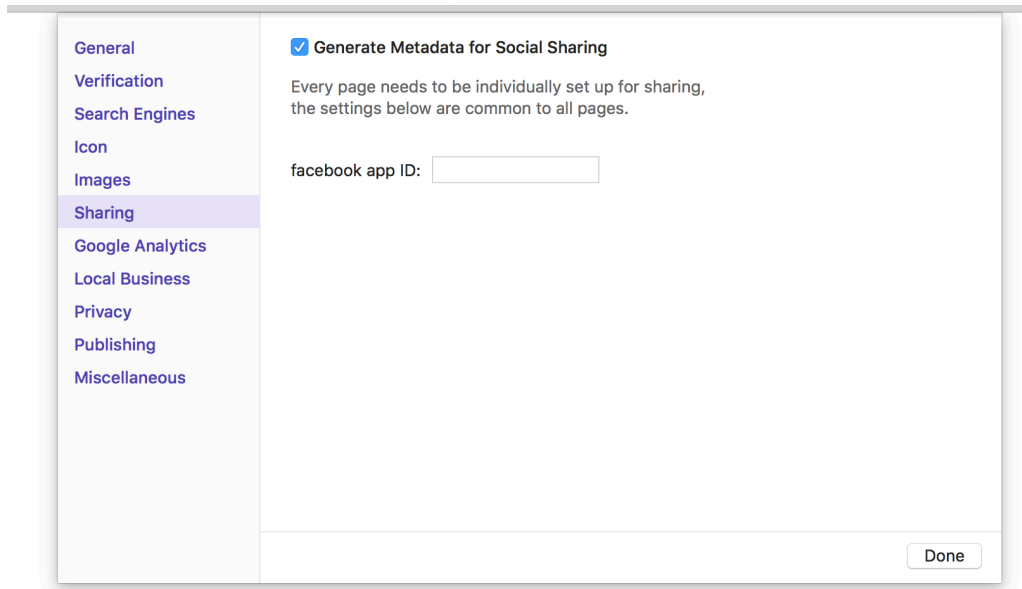
The additional image sizes and formats only affect the website publishing time and the size on disk of the website, they don't affect the page download time for site visitors, in fact they improve image quality, speed, or both.



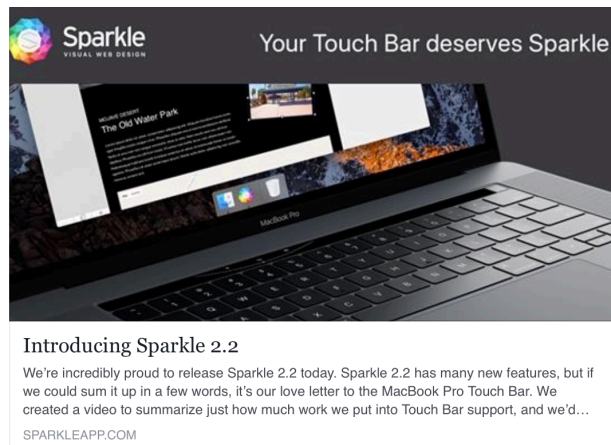
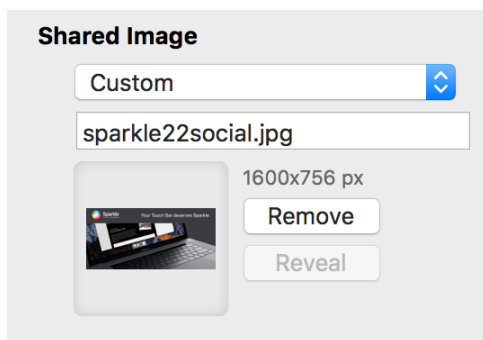
Sharing

By enabling the main checkbox in this pane you enable the generation of the OpenGraph metadata that's necessary for sharing on the major social networks,

Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest and in-app sharing in Telegram, Slack, etc. A few metatags are added to the page so your site is Twitter compatible as well.



After enabling this setting the page settings of each page can then optionally include an image that will become the cover image of the sharing “card”. For example here are the page settings and the corresponding Facebook card.



Google Analytics

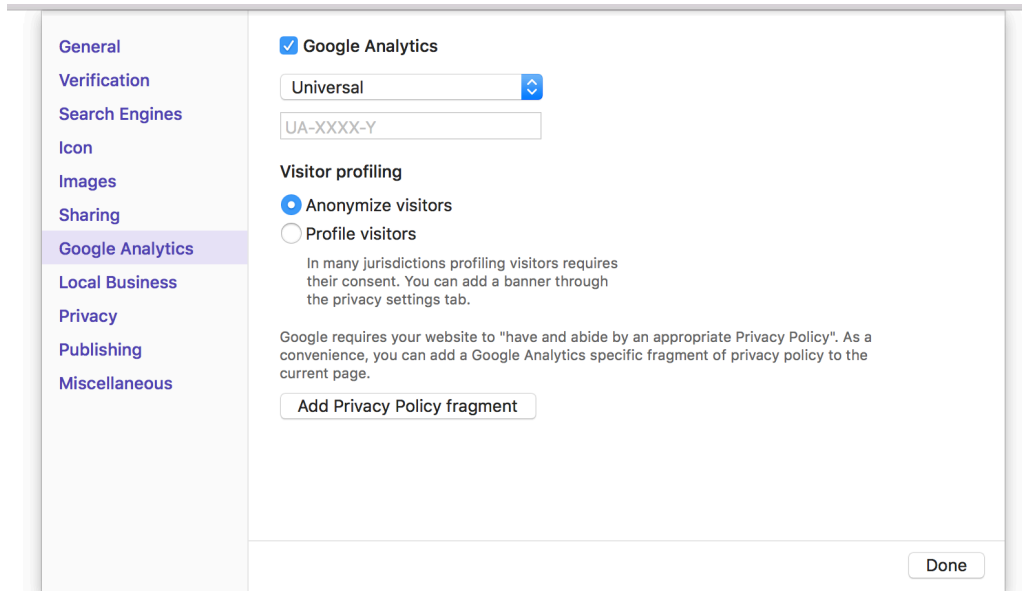
If you have a Google Analytics account you can activate user tracking on your website by entering the identifier found on the Analytics control panel.

The visitor profiling option lets you run GA in anonymous mode or in tracking mode, whereby visitor identification information is collected. The latter has an impact on the privacy consent/cookie laws. See the privacy section.

The “Add Privacy Policy Fragment” creates a text element with Google’s privacy policy, which Google Analytics users have agreed to add to the site.

Please refer to Google Analytics documentation for further information:

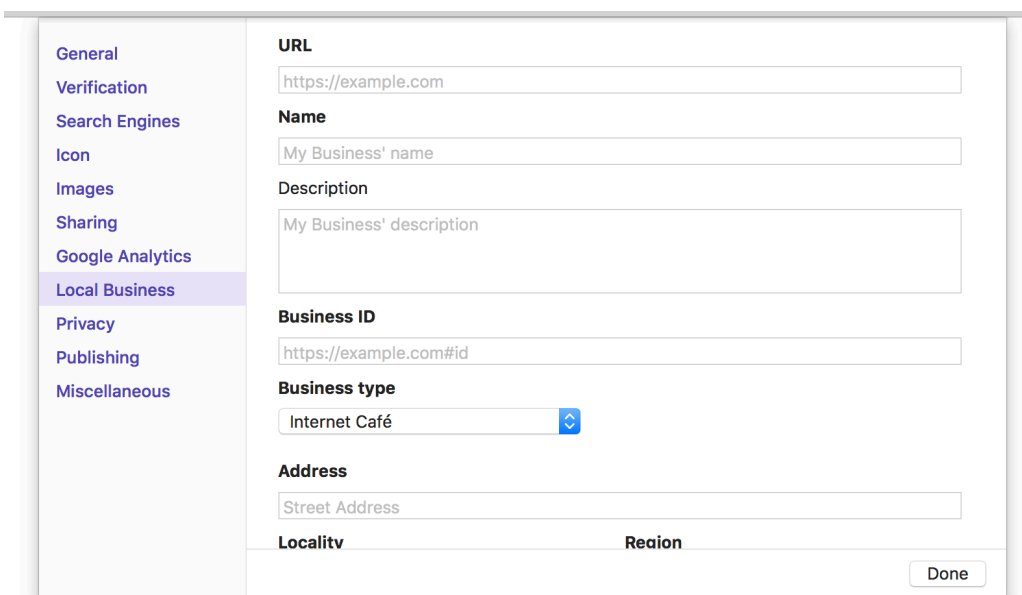
<http://www.google.com/analytics/>



The screenshot shows the Google Analytics settings panel. On the left is a navigation menu with categories: General, Verification, Search Engines, Icon, Images, Sharing, Google Analytics (highlighted), Local Business, Privacy, Publishing, and Miscellaneous. The main content area is titled "Google Analytics" and includes a checked checkbox for "Google Analytics". Below this is a dropdown menu set to "Universal" and a text input field containing "UA-XXXX-Y". The "Visitor profiling" section has two radio buttons: "Anonymize visitors" (selected) and "Profile visitors". A note explains that in many jurisdictions, profiling requires consent and can be added via the privacy settings tab. Below this is a text box stating that Google requires a privacy policy and provides an "Add Privacy Policy fragment" button. A "Done" button is located at the bottom right of the panel.

Local Business

The information entered in this panel won’t be visible to site visitors directly, rather it is stored as so called “structured data” that search engines read. This metadata helps improve the search ranking in local search results. In some cases search engines will show a “card” summary of your website, making it stand out in search results.



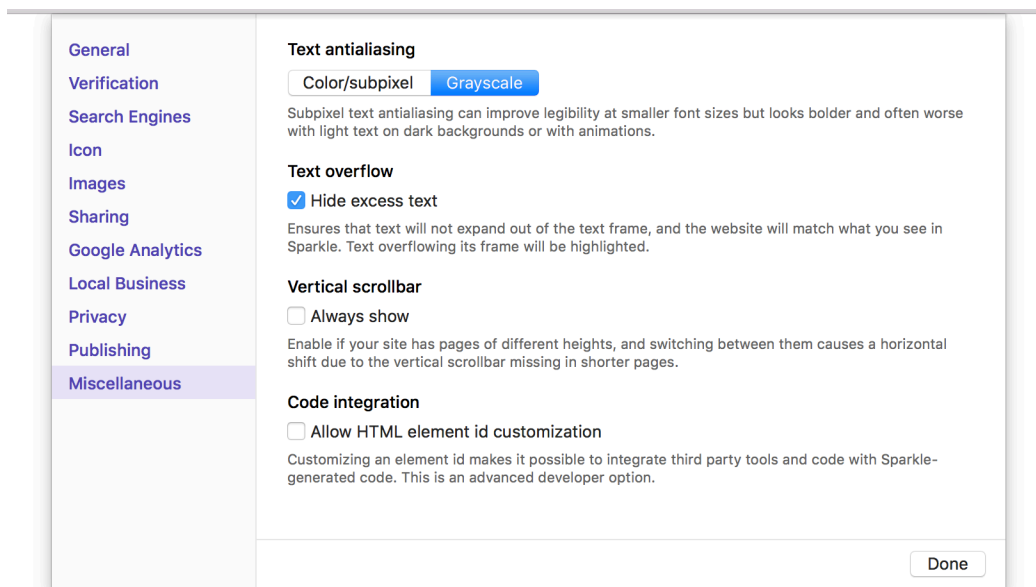
The screenshot shows the Google Analytics settings panel for "Local Business". The left navigation menu is the same as in the previous screenshot, with "Local Business" highlighted. The main content area contains several fields: "URL" (https://example.com), "Name" (My Business' name), "Description" (My Business' description), "Business ID" (https://example.com#id), "Business type" (Internet Café), "Address" (Street Address), and "Localitv" and "Reaion" (partially visible). A "Done" button is at the bottom right.

Miscellaneous

Text antialiasing affects how text is displayed. Subpixel antialiasing improves legibility at smaller font sizes, but looks fatter and bolder than grayscale-antialiased text. This effect is particularly visible with light text on dark backgrounds, for example white on black. Subpixel antialiasing is not supported on mobile browsers and is generally also not compatible with animation, so a page with animations will visibly change from bolder text with subpixel antialiasing to thinner text with grayscale animation, for the duration of the animation, and then back to bolder text. As this is undesirable, Sparkle defaults to grayscale text antialiasing.

Hiding text that extends beyond the text frame ensures Sparkle’s layout is always precise and as close as possible to the canvas editing.

Adding an always visible vertical scrollbar, even on pages that don’t require scrolling, is a way to prevent the page from jumping horizontally when switching between pages of mixed length. This option is only visible if your system is showing vertical scrollbars, which is not the case if you have a touch pointing device.

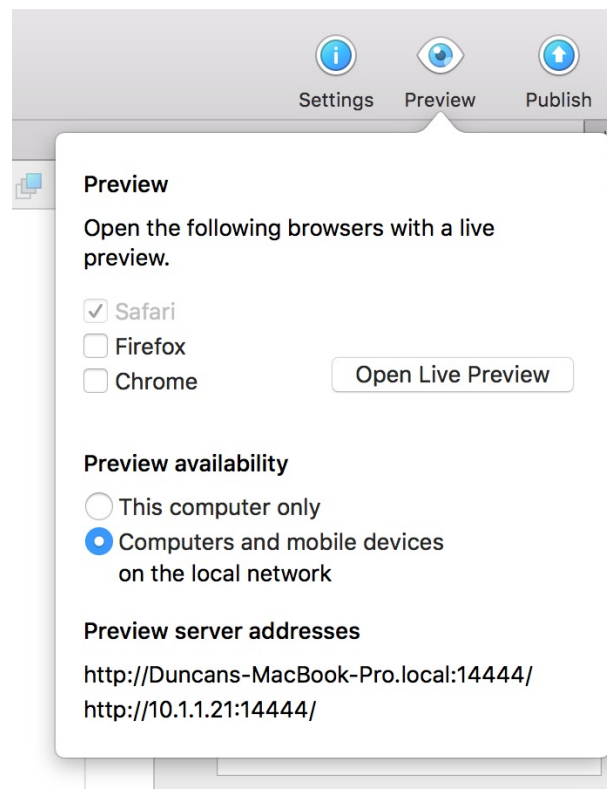


Preview

You can live preview your website while working. Pressing the “Preview” button on the toolbar opens the preview popup, where you can select browser to use.

Clicking the “Open Live Preview” button opens the preview service in the selected browsers, the content is regenerated on the fly as you edit the site, so depending on your workflow and screen layout you can choose to open the live preview occasionally or keep the live preview always visible, side by side the Sparkle window or on a second screen.

Sparkle supports live preview in Safari, Firefox and Chrome. If you opt to make the preview available to other computers and devices on the local network, you can use live preview for example on an iOS device as well.



The preview feature works with even while offline, except for elements sourced on the web (videos, social, third party code integrations, etc).

If your document contains multiple device layouts, the preview is also affected by the “Preview current device only” setting in the devices popup. If the setting is checked, the live preview will display the current device layout regardless of the actual device or browser window width. If it is unchecked, live preview will show the appropriate layout for the device, which means you might edit position and size of something that’s not visible on the preview browser.

Devices

Different size devices aren't an exception, a significant fraction of the world population views the web on mobile devices.

Sparkle addresses this by letting you pick a different position for all the page elements, for a few popular device sizes.

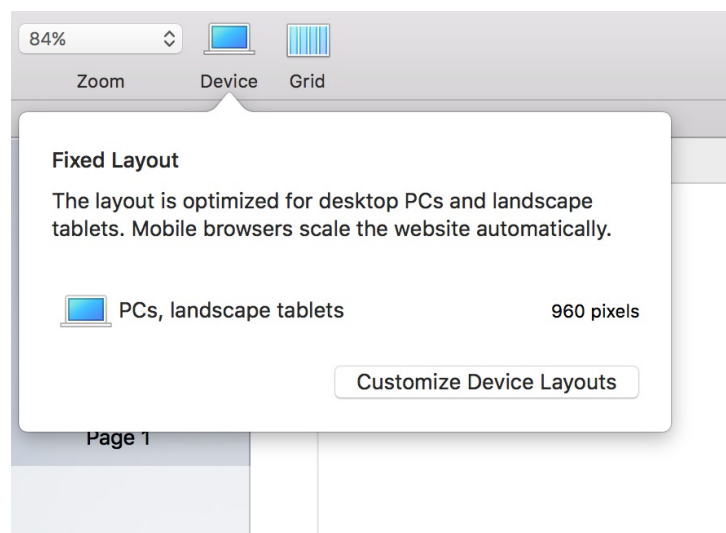
While the devices sizes are shown in the devices popup, this isn't intended to be a mechanism to pick a size that fits your content. The multi-device world we live in means you need to make the content usable to every possible device.

Sparkle makes this an optional advanced topic that you can tackle later in the development of your site, a concern that can come after you have nailed the "what should go in the site" question, in addition to layout on one device.

A responsive site is the sum of all layouts, it's helpful to think about it that way, instead of fighting the limitations of a single device. On the other hand if you only have a single layout, the 960 pixel wide desktop PC layout is the most universal, which is why it's the default in Sparkle.

Single device

If you don't add multiple devices to your website, Sparkle will generate a single fixed layout, which by default is a desktop layout 960 pixels wide. The site code will contain instructions for mobile browsers to act in a "compatibility" mode, so the page content will be zoomed out to be entirely in view, and the user will be able to pinch to zoom it.



The downside to this approach is search engines are increasingly flagging this as a negative.

Adding multiple devices

The way you can think of multiple devices is like different windows on a house, you're seeing the same content, but the window shape is different.

As a consequence, adding elements on one device will result in the same elements being added to all devices, removing elements will remove them from all devices.

This also means you will need to review the position of a newly added element on other devices.

Sparkle lets you change element position and text properties for each device, so you can for example place two images side-by-side on a desktop, but stack them on a mobile layout.

A fast workflow

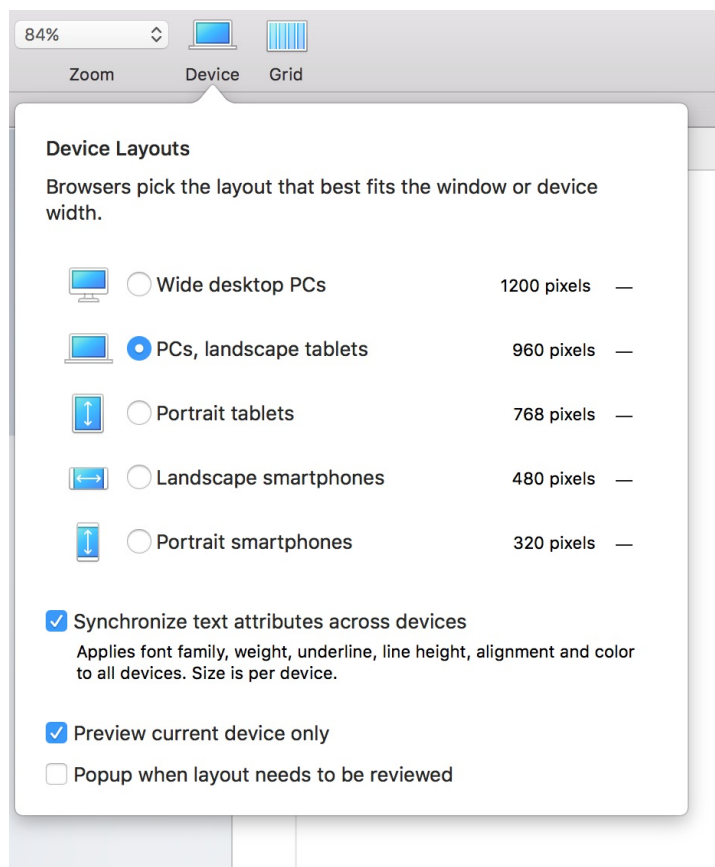
When you add a device, Sparkle

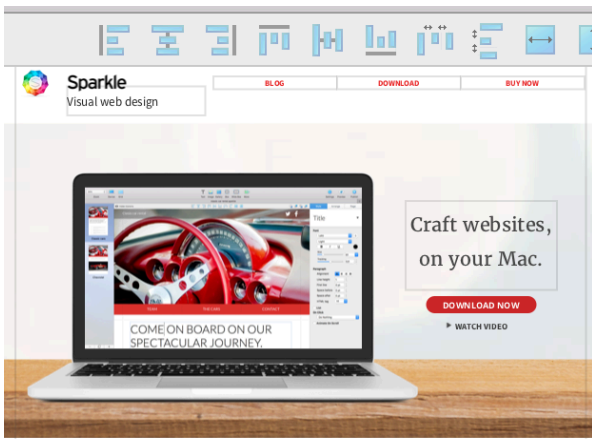
scales all the elements up or down to fit the new device, and it does so from the device with the nearest size.

We can take advantage of this feature by observing that in general only the desktop layout and the mobile layout will be radically different, you don't actually need to have five different layouts.

The quickest way to build layouts for all devices is to do the following. Assuming you have finished and are happy with the default 960 pixel wide layout:

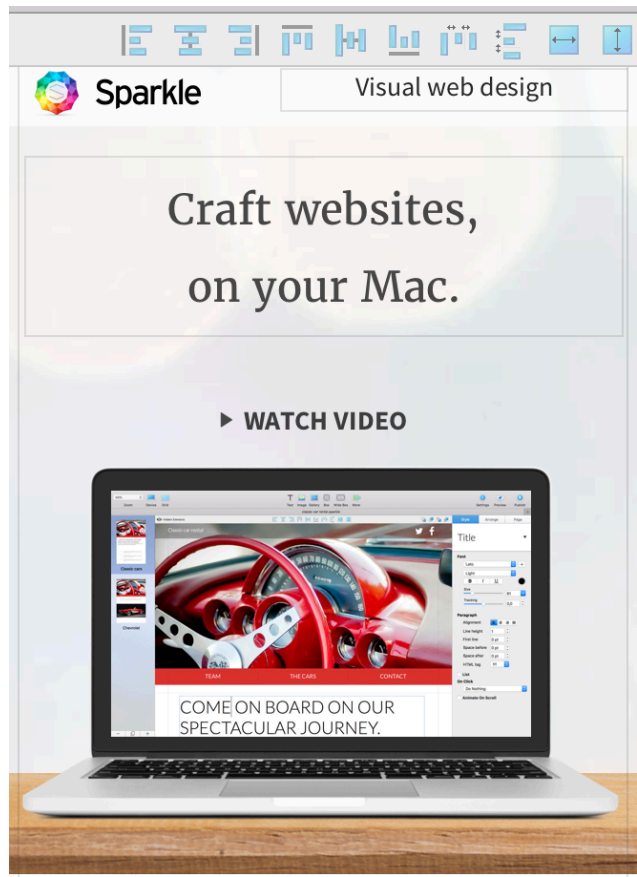
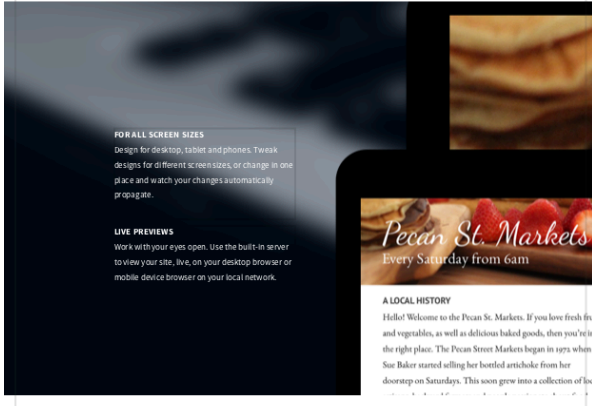
- add only the portrait mobile phone layout (320 pixels wide);
- go through each page in your site and rearrange/reflow text and other elements;
- if you have used text styles properly you can set a new text size on the mobile device, apply to style and it will only apply to the current device, resizing all your text instantly;
- once you have the layout working properly on all pages for the 320 layout you can go back to the devices popup and add all devices, because they'll be scaled from the nearest device they'll most likely be sensibly-built, requiring perhaps minor tweaks here and there.





Everything you need, without a line of code.
If you know how to use Keynote and Pages, you already know how to use Sparkle

<p>NO 'BEFORE' STEP No need to design in another app. Sparkle has powerful image, text and layout tools.</p>	<p>WEB FONTS Browse and use web fonts from Google for beautiful typography.</p>
<p>NO 'AFTER' STEP Automatic image optimization and built-in FTP.</p>	<p>MEDIA-READY Drop-in video, audio, buttons, forms, galleries and menus.</p>
<p>HIGHEST QUALITY Stay sharp and crisp, with pixel-perfect design to ois and vector support.</p>	<p>SERIOUS SMARTS SEO, Google Analytics, Twitter and Facebook integration.</p>



Everything you need, without a line of code.
If you know how to use Keynote and Pages, you already know how to use Sparkle

NO 'BEFORE' STEP
 No need to design

This is an example of the difference in layout, a zoomed out layout on the left, a 100% view on the right.

Text and devices

When you add a new device, you'll find text scaled to fit the device. For example: you have a 15pt font size in a 960px layout and a 320px device is added, the font will be scaled to a 5pt size. Styles are also changed to reflect the scaling. However, the same style name has a font size that's specific to device, so when you modify a style in a device, other devices will not be affected by that change.

We suggest that you check and possibly adjust the styles before you start working on a newly added device.

Device differences

In some circumstance you might want to hide an element on smaller devices, or use an element with different properties.

That can happen either because an element isn't appropriate for mobile, or because you need an element with different properties on a different device.

For this you can use the “show on this device” checkbox to selectively show/hide elements.

Preview and devices

A subtlety of preview is that when you build a multi-device site, the layout shown depends on the browser width. To limit confusion, preview only shows the current device. But if you want to preview how the site will work once published, or if you have a desktop and mobile browsers both showing the live preview, you need to turn off the “Preview current device only” checkbox.

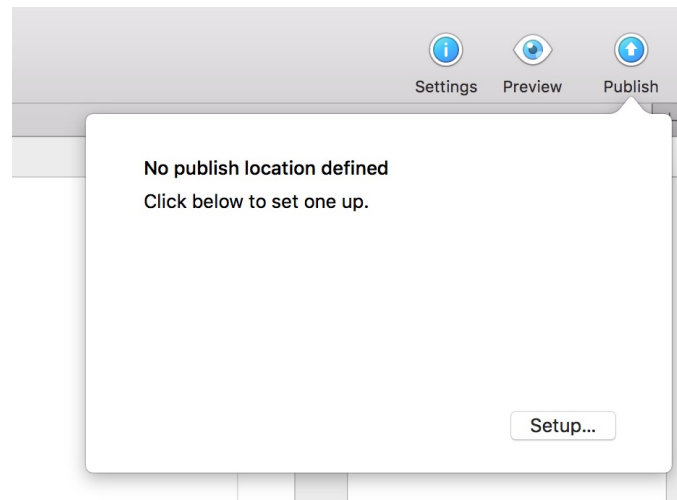
Publishing and exporting

Publishing is the step of website construction that transforms your Sparkle layouts into a world-viewable website, comprised of HTML, CSS, images and Javascript.

You can publish your site either when you're done building it, or for a live test. You initiate publishing via the "Publish website..." option in the File menu or through the "Publish" icon in the toolbar.

On first publish you will have to set up a location. Click on the "Setup..." button to get started.

A publishing location stores all settings so that updating the site is a single click away. Sparkle also uses the location information to only publish actually changed files.



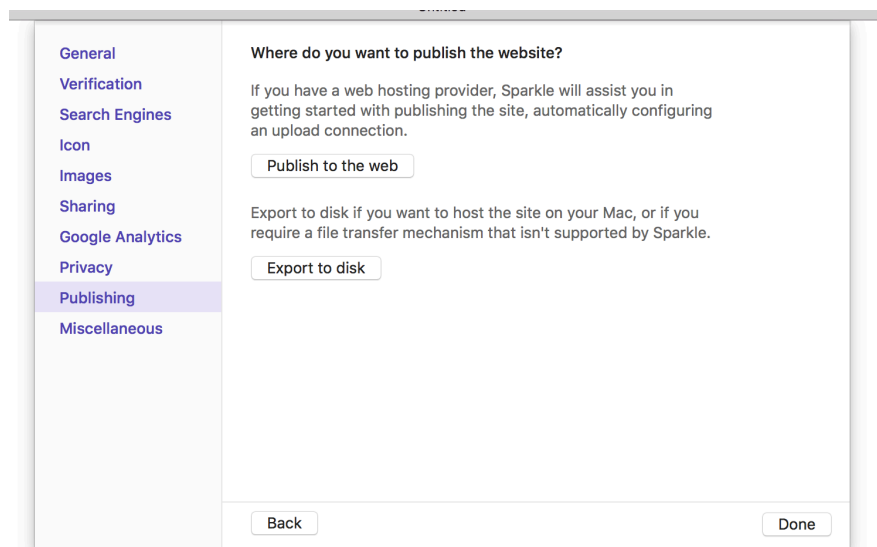
Where to publish

To publish your site to the web you will need to have a hosting plan with a web hosting company. This isn't included in Sparkle. We generally recommend any of the top sites listed on [this ReviewSignal page](#).

Sparkle can:

- publish to the web, Sparkle will transfer files to your web host with its built-in ftp client;
- export to disk, Sparkle will generate the files on disk, you will need to transfer files on your own using a third party tool, such as [Cyberduck](#), [FileZilla](#) or [Transmit](#).

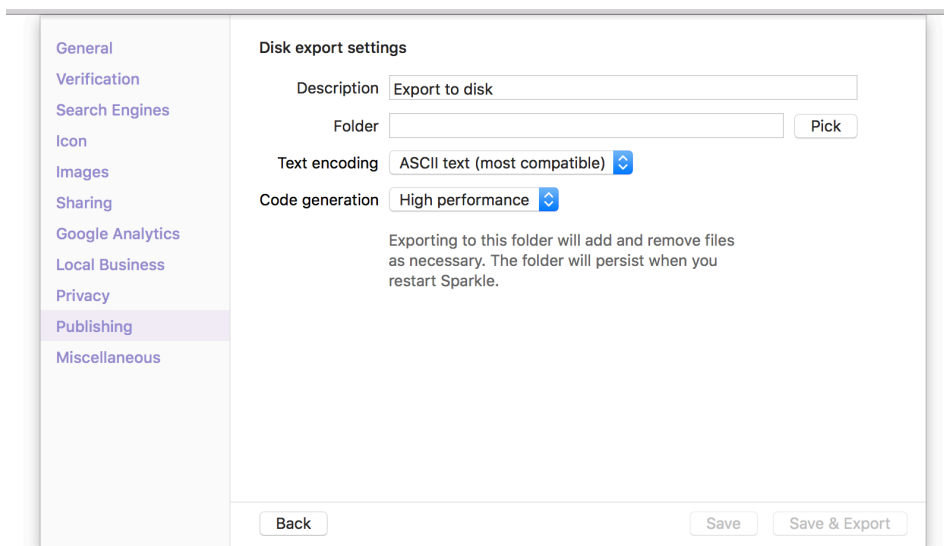
The initial screen reflects this.



Export to disk

Exporting to disk is straightforward, you are requested to pick a folder and name the location. Additionally the text encoding option lets you choose how non-ASCII characters are represented in the web page code. It conservatively defaults to ASCII text, which makes the page source somewhat larger but is compatible with all web servers. You can set it to UTF-8 for a more compact page source if you know the server is compatible (the browser will otherwise show incorrect characters). This setting is auto-detected when Sparkle publishes directly to the web.

By default Sparkle produces high performance HTML that works when uploaded to a web server. If you intend to load the HTML files directly in the browser from the local disk you will need to set the code generation option to “Offline compatible”.



Publish to the web

Publishing to the web is more complex, but while it has some upfront annoyance, once it's done you can subsequently publish updates with a few clicks.

While referencing your web host's settings, either in an email or in the section of their web portal that discusses FTP and domain management, fill in the setup screen:

Connection setup

These settings are provided by your web hosting provider, usually in an email or in the FTP section of their customer portal.

Web address	<input type="text" value="sparkleapp.com/fun/test"/>	Here you should enter the website address, including subfolder path
Server	<input type="text" value=""/>	The FTP server name is communicated by your web host
User	<input type="text" value=""/>	The FTP username is communicated by your web host
Password	<input type="password" value=""/>	The FTP password is communicated by your web host
Connections	<input type="text" value="1 — Most compatible"/>	Number of connections to the server
Protocol	<input type="text" value="Autodetect (secure only)"/>	The protocol generally works with auto-detection, but you can manually set it based on your web host's suggestions if Sparkle has trouble connecting

Sparkle needs the web address because it will check that the FTP space it connects to corresponds to the web address you want. This helps autodetect a number of settings that ensure Sparkle works with the widest variety of web hosts and servers.

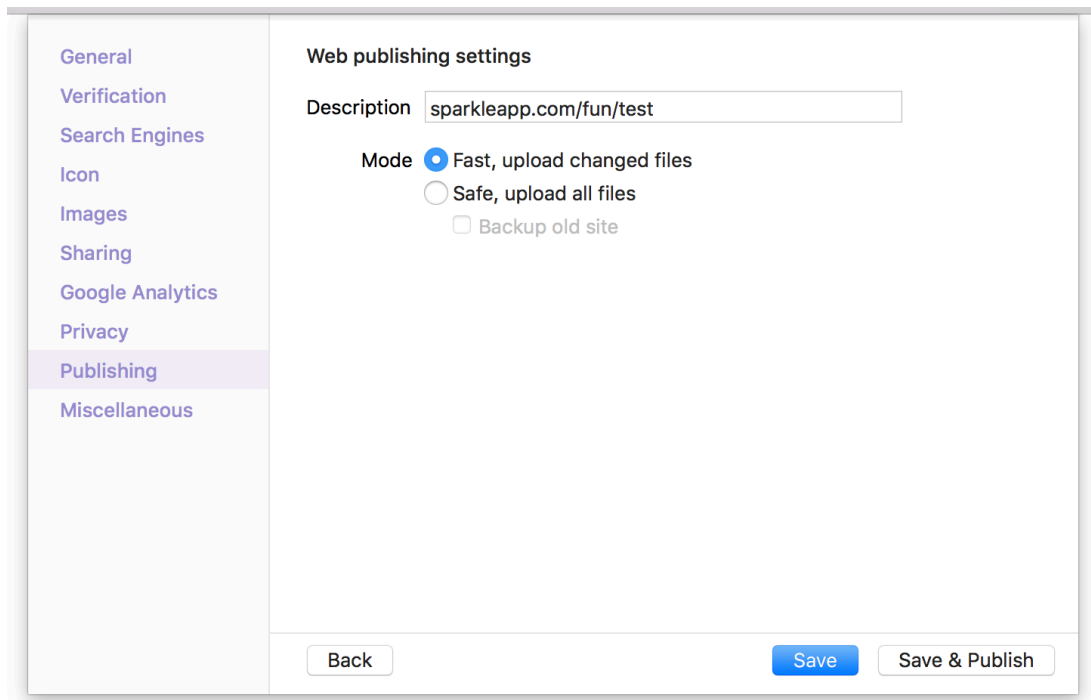
Your web host will provide the server address and user name and password. They might also suggest a preferred protocol.

A higher number of connections generally corresponds to a fast transfer speed, though will also need a faster connection for the higher number of connections. Some web hosts limit the number of connections, in some cases blocking any further connection for some time, and note that this counts for all apps you might have open on your Mac. For example if your web host only allows a single connection and you already have an FTP app open, Sparkle might not be able to connect.

Setup completion

If the connection succeeds and your web host is set up in a way that Sparkle can auto-detect, after a few seconds you will see the location save screen, signaling setup completion.

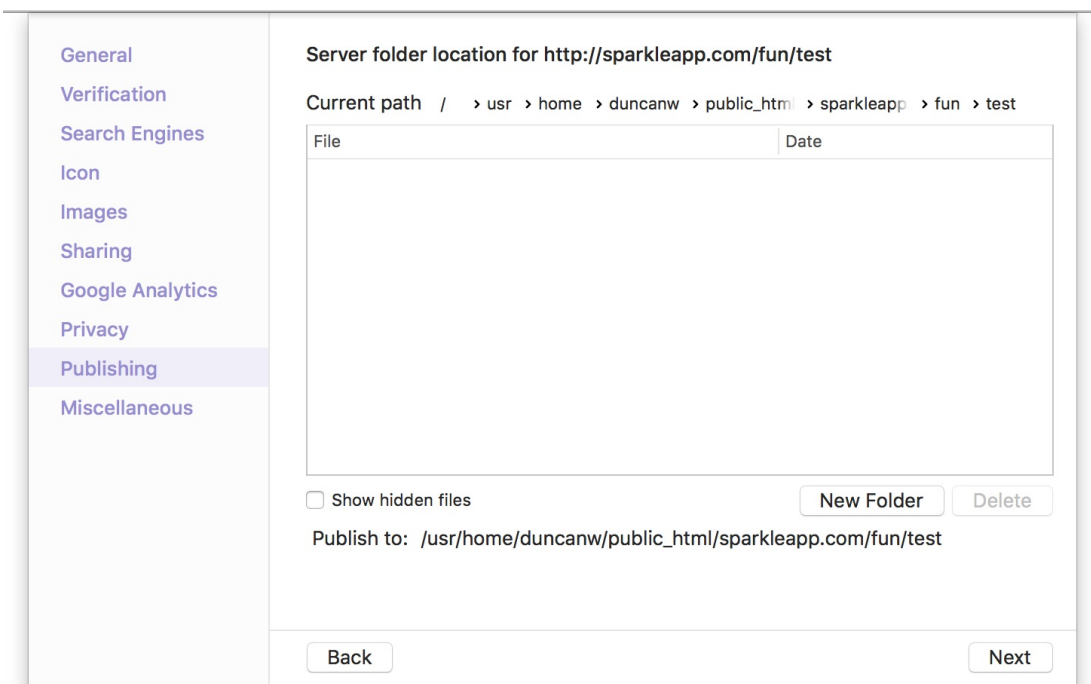
There are two possible file transfer modes: the fast mode transfer only changed files, and removes no longer needed files (if they haven't been modified on the server). The safe mode transfers all the files every time.



Intermediate step

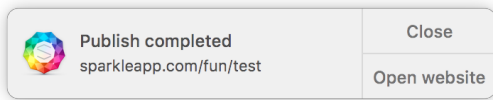
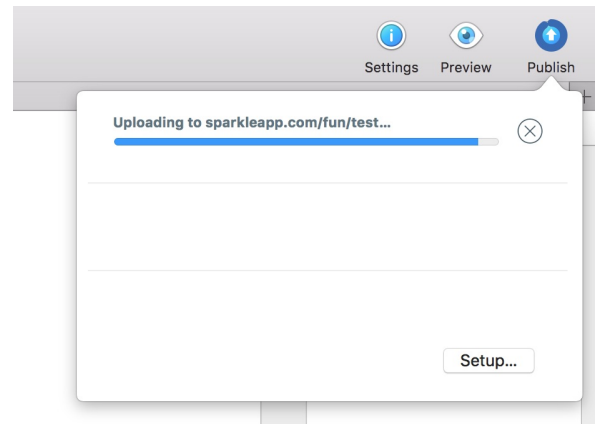
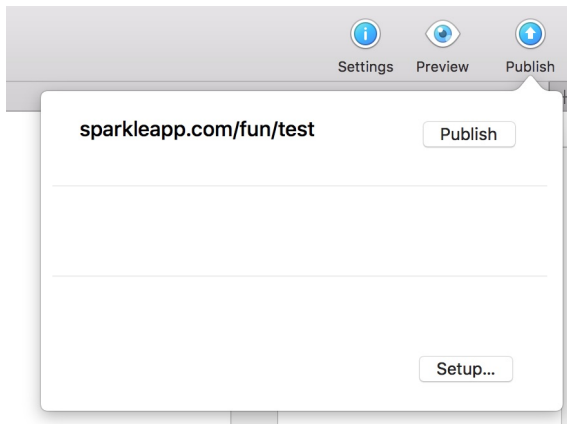
In some cases Sparkle can't figure out how your web host is set up, so you need to assist it.

Before the setup completion screen, Sparkle will show the filesystem of your web server, and you will need to locate the folder where the website needs to be published at the requested address. This varies on a host-by-host basis.



Publishing updates

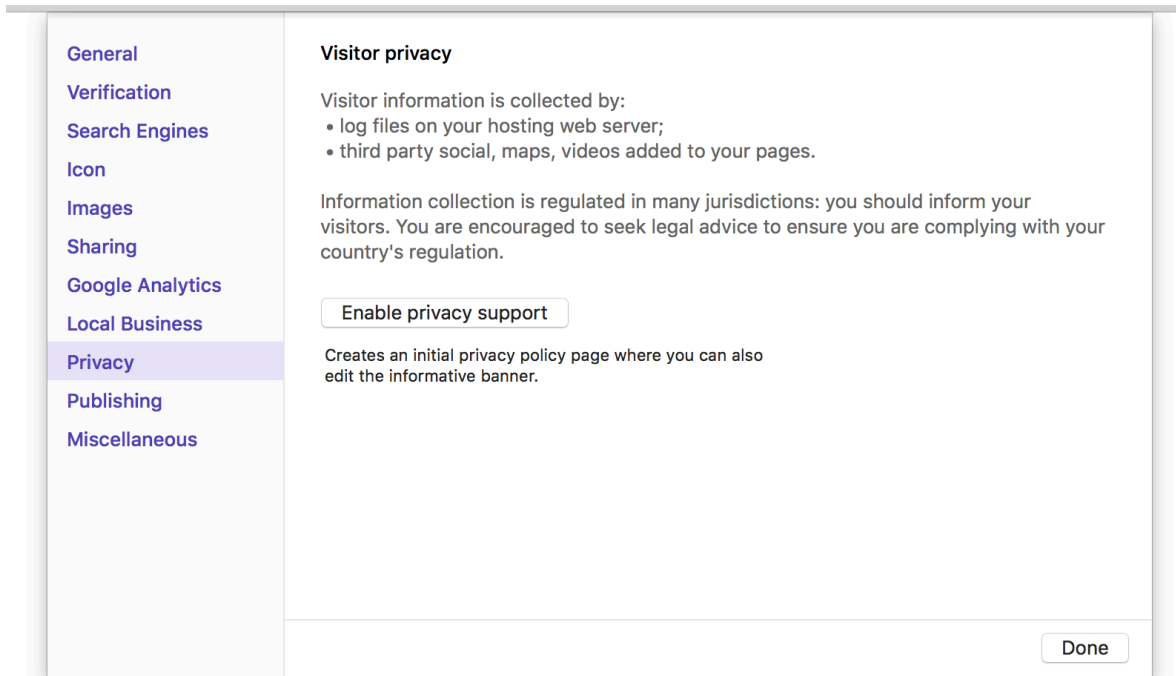
When you make changes and want to update the website, click on the Publish toolbar icon and click on the Publish button for each location you want to update.



A notification will inform you of the publish completion if you have switched away from Sparkle.

Privacy and Cookies

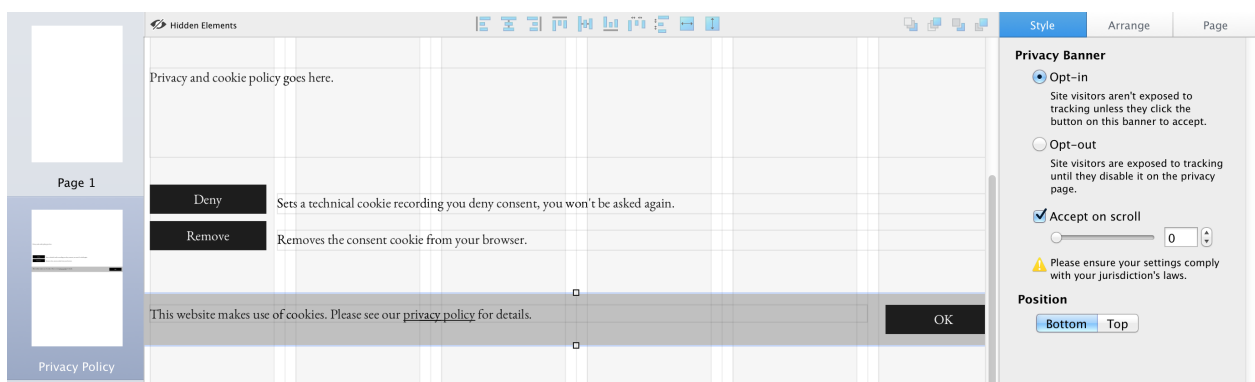
In Sparkle's Settings there is a Privacy tab to help you comply with laws regarding tracking and data collection. It does not replace the advice of a legal expert, but it does help you comply.



Pressing the "Enable privacy support" button will create a new privacy policy page and also generate an informative banner.

The box with your policy is empty and you'll have to fill in the legal text. The "Deny" and "Remove" buttons are linked to code that sets a cookie remembering the visitor denied consent or removes it if it was previously accepted.

In the Style settings you can choose whether visitors are or aren't immediately exposed to tracking, if you want to accept scrolling as implying acceptance (after which the banner will fade away immediately or after a chosen amount of time) and where you want the banner to appear, at the bottom or at the top of pages.



The text in the banner is customizable and you can choose if the privacy policy link goes to the page created by Sparkle or to any external url of your choice.

The consent banner is visible and floating on the privacy page, but will be shown on all site pages in the designated position, until the user accepts the policy.

A Sparkle-built website, if unchanged externally, does not inherently collect personal information, and as such is not the subject of GDPR, which is a law addressing collection and storage of personal information. For further information refer to this article on [GDPR vs. cookies](#).

If you have a contact form you will most likely need to link to your privacy policy, and you might need consent, and collecting proof of consent, depending on what personal data you will be collecting.

For any third party integration you will need to assess on a case-by-case basis what personal data is collected and how to communicate it.

Compatibility

Sparkle requires Mac OS X 10.9 Mavericks or later and runs smoothly on the latest 10.10 Yosemite, 10.11 El Capitan, 10.12 Sierra and 10.13 High Sierra.

Websites generated with Sparkle have been tested in a variety of scenarios.

Specifically Sparkle websites work on all current versions of the major browsers of each platform:

- Safari
- Firefox
- Microsoft Internet Explorer and Microsoft Edge
- Google Chrome

and the mobile browsers:

- Safari on iOS
- The Android “Browser” (up to Android 4.x)
- Google Chrome on Android

Compatibility and visuals are degraded in older versions, but this is very minor for browsers shipped in the past 5 years.

Sparkle has specific provisions and workarounds to make sites work on Internet Explorer back to version 9 with a visual degradation for some features.

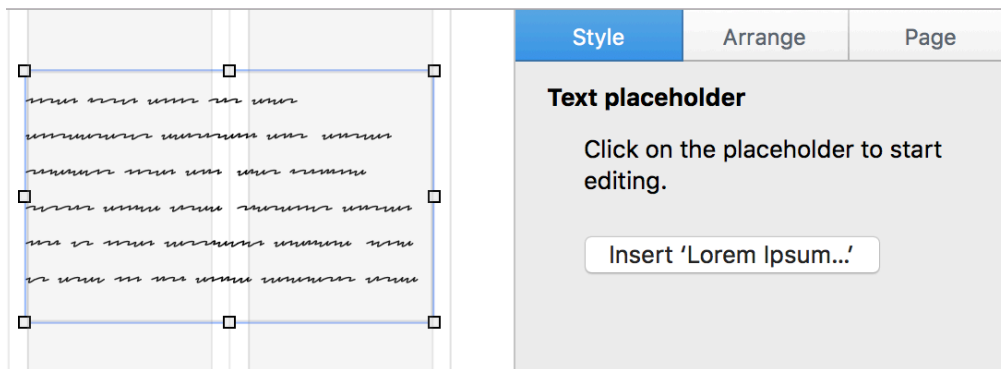
Elements

Text

When you first add a text element, the content is displayed as a placeholder, using the Redacted font (which looks like unintelligible squiggles) until it is edited. This lets you think of a webpage in wireframe terms, roughing out a layout before perfecting it.

Once you have found a suitable text placement, you can exit the placeholder/wireframe mode by either starting to edit or pressing the “Insert ‘Lorem Ipsum’...” button available in the Style pane of the Inspector (which will enter just enough words to fit the text box).

“Lorem Ipsum” is nonsensical, improper Latin filler text, commonly used to demonstrate the visual representation of text, and is useful if you want to experiment with typography before entering the actual content copy.

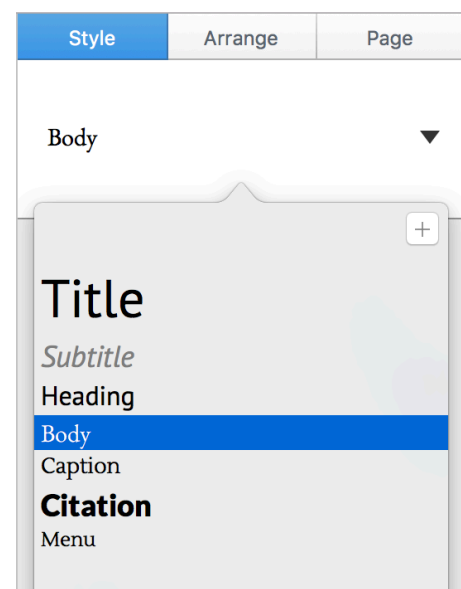


Editing is done in the Working Area directly. To enter editing mode click twice anywhere on the text element, or just once if you filled it with "Lorem Ipsum". The Inspector will show settings to manage the text appearance: style, font, weight, size, color, paragraph options and more.

The Inspector setting is applied to the whole text when the text box is selected or, when in editing mode, just to the current selected text .

Style

The first box of the Style panel shows the current text style, which is a combination of font family, weight and style, text size and color, and paragraph attributes. Using styles helps with website consistency, e.g. allowing you to be sure that all headings (or captions, etc.) look the same.



To change text style click on the down pointing triangle and choose one from the popup list. Sparkle comes with a few preconfigured styles (Body, Title, Citation, etc.). You can rename, delete or create your own by using the + button.

When a style name is followed by an asterisk, “(*)”, it means the text under the cursor (or in the current selection) is based on an existing style but has differences. Two buttons appear under its name: "Apply Changes", which commits the changes, and "Revert to Style", which reverts back to the original settings.

Font

This section of the text inspector controls basic typographic features such as font family, weight and other type traits such as italics and underlining.

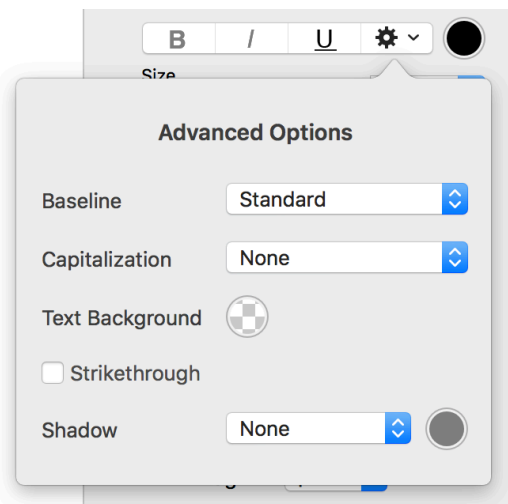
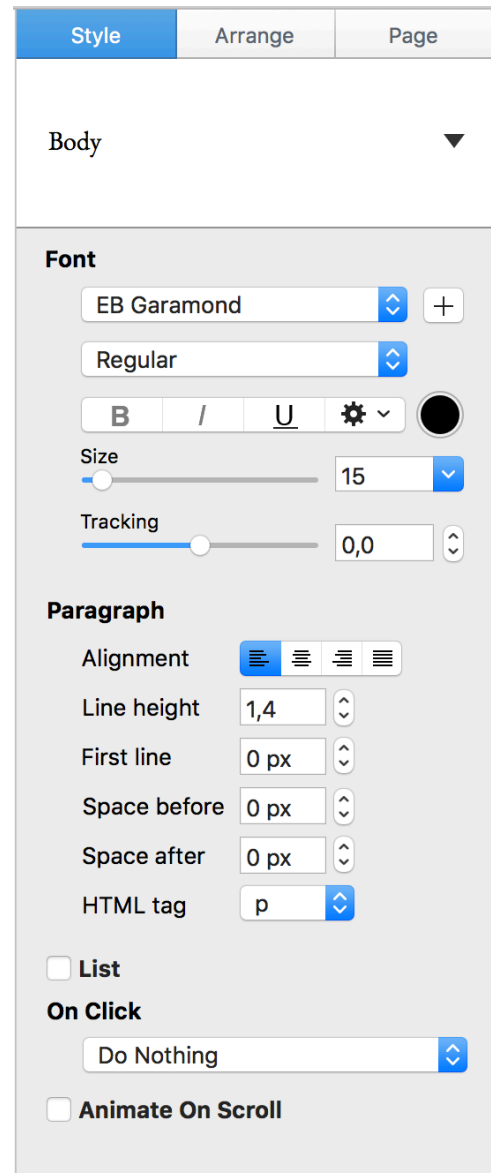
The + button next to the font family menu opens the font panel, through which you can add and remove fonts (including web fonts) to Sparkle.

Text color can be defined by clicking on the color well, which will make a color picker appear.

Size and text tracking, which can be used to tighten or loosen text for stylistic reasons or to better fit the available space, are also controlled here by writing values, or using menus, arrows and sliders.

Advanced text options

Clicking on the cogwheel icon opens the advanced text options. These include a subscript/superscript text setting, forcing the text uppercase or lowercase, setting a background color for the text, strikethrough and two shadow styles.



Paragraph

The alignment and first line settings control horizontal alignment, while the line height, space before and after control the vertical alignment of text.

Line height is a multiplier of the text size. In a multiline paragraph a line height of 1.25 to 1.5 is optimal for text legibility.

Space before and after add spacing between paragraphs, and can help in scanning through a page. For example this document has a spacing of 10 points after each paragraph.

The HTML tag setting lets you control the tag that will be used in the code. This is necessary for search engine optimization and special browsers for people with disabilities will benefit from the proper tagging. Sparkle can automatically detect and set this by evaluating how text is used on the page.

List

The List checkbox will transform any block of text delimited by a new line character or a series of paragraphs into a list. You can choose the style (bullets, squares, check marks, etc.) and type (unordered or ordered) of the points preceding each item, as well as modify the hierarchy and the indenting.

On Click

The On Click menu is for adding a link or an action to text, such as sending an email address or starting the download of a file. For more details see the page about Links.

Links have a particular text style associated with them, which is identical to the original but with the addition of underlining. You can customize the link style and, by applying the changes, it will be applied to all links.

Animate On Scroll

Text, like many other elements, can be animated. See the animations page.

Images

Images are the best way to make your page interesting and distinctive, and they obviously inform, provide context and set the mood. Images are also the main source of page weight, because browsers download them immediately along with the page.

For these reasons there are several ways to integrate images in the page and many options.

You add an image by dropping it into the canvas straight from the Finder or by adding it from the “More” popup. You can replace an existing image by dropping it over the image thumbnail in the settings, or over the image in the canvas.

An alternative to using the image element is setting the image as the background of a box.

Images have an initial placeholder look, which can be useful when you first rough out a layout without also adding content.

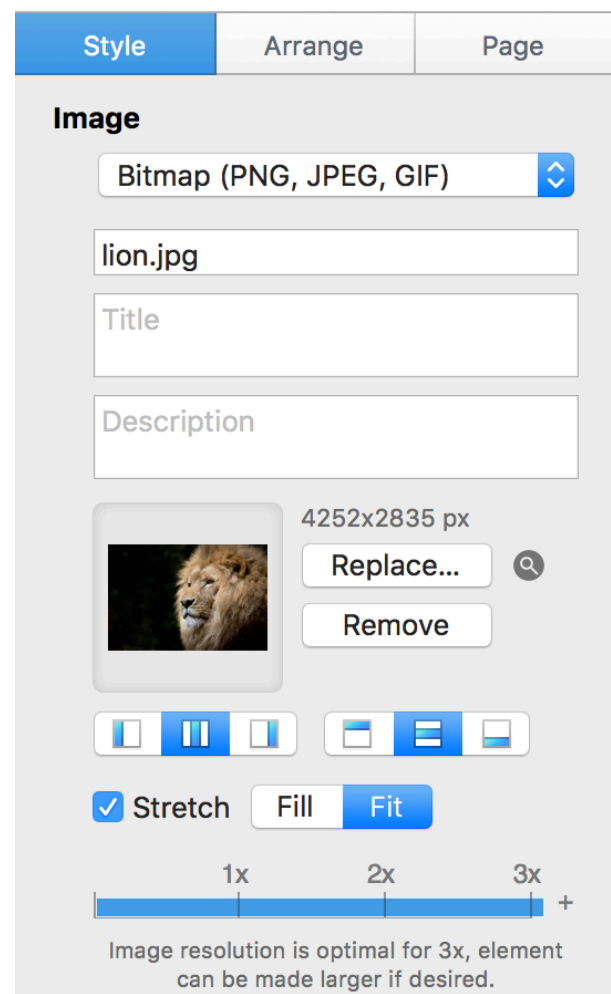
Bitmap images

The basic and most common image type is a bitmap image, which includes images coming from digital photography or image creation tools that aren’t expressly vector-based.

Sparkle will load most bitmap image types supported by the system, including JPEG, PNG, PNG with transparency, GIF, TIFF and digital negative (raw) camera files.

GIF images are exported unchanged, while PNG and JPEG images are resized and compressed for the exact size used by the element. Other image formats are exported as JPEG, resized to the required sizes.

Image options include a title text, which will be shown as a tooltip in most



browsers, and a description text (sometimes referred to as the “alt tag”), which is an accessibility option used by screen readers and other assistive devices, but not otherwise visible in the browser.

The image frame in the canvas is the maximum space for the image. How the image fits the frame is controlled by the alignment and stretching controls.

If the “Stretch” checkbox is disabled the image will maintain its original dimensions (and will be cropped or letterboxed if necessary). Its position in the element frame can be aligned horizontally and vertically by using the six buttons: left, middle, right, top, middle, bottom.

If the “Stretch” checkbox is enabled, an appropriate scaling factor will be applied by Sparkle. The “Fit” button ensures the entire image is visible, but will produce a horizontal or vertical letterboxing. “Fill” ensures the image covers the entire frame, but the image will be clipped at the frame edges.

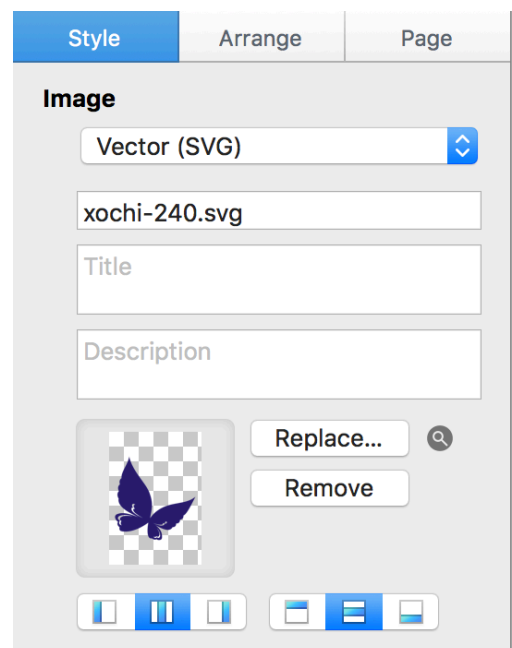
The “resolution report” bar below the stretching controls helps you assess the quality of the output image and whether there are enough pixels for high dpi (retina) and even normal size usage. As you resize the image the bar updates automatically. Ultimately you should ensure you don’t drop below 2x, if that happens many devices will show an image that’s perceivably low resolution.

Sparkle supports browsers running on high dpi (retina) devices or very high dpi (3x retina). When the source image size is sufficient, the image will be automatically generated for normal (1x), high dpi (2x) resolutions, or very high (3x). Image generation options are available site-wide in the settings panel.

Tip: drag-and-dropping an image with a name ending in @2x (for example pic@2x.png) its dimensions will be halved and it will be placed on the canvas at the 1x size. Likewise for a @3x suffix.

Vector images

Sparkle can load SVG vector images, which scale to different resolutions and devices. Like for bitmap images you can drop them right on the canvas, or onto existing images. SVG images will be exported as is, no resolution report is necessary because they inherently scale in a crisp way to multiple devices.



Vector images are generally very compact, making them ideal for whenever you don't need bitmap-format photography.

SVGs are easily found on the web and can be produced by many desktop apps, we definitely encourage their use.

Live Photos

Sparkle supports the hybrid photo-video combinations that iPhones can shoot. By entering both the image and the movie file exported from Photos, you can produce a page that lets your site visitors see and interact with the Live Photo.

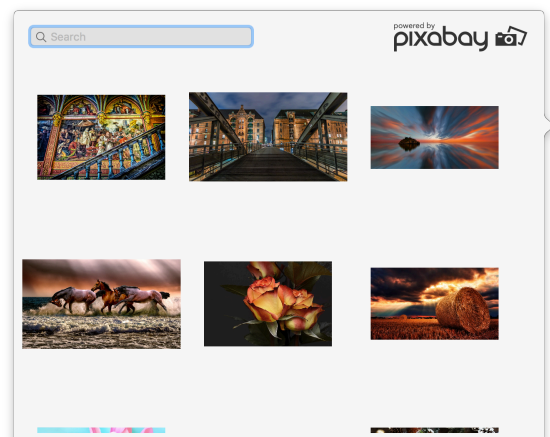


You can get the still and movie files for a Live Photo by syncing your photos to Photos on the Mac and then picking the photo and using the File -> Export Unmodified Original command.

Pixabay.com images

Sparkle makes it super convenient to pick a stock image from the free pixabay.com collection of over 1.6 million images. All images are made available under a Creative Commons CC0 license.

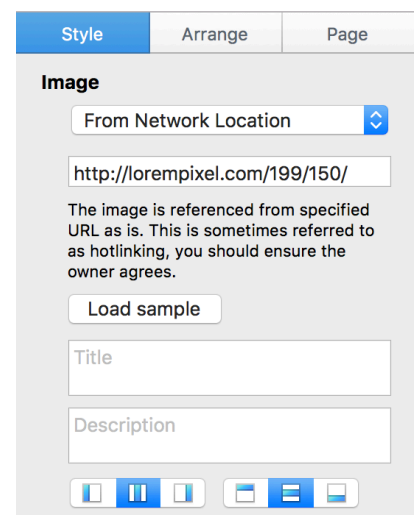
They can be used freely, even for commercial use, without asking permission from the image author. However it is still your responsibility to make sure the depicted content (persons, logos, private property, etc.) is suitable for your website and does not infringe any rights.



Images from network location

This is mainly used to hotlink images in other web locations, it's a relatively infrequent case and Sparkle can only have very limited control, so the options are very minimal.

Your website will effectively be using someone else's bandwidth, so you should ensure the owner agrees



with your hotlinking.

Image optimization

You do not need to resize or compress images before adding them in Sparkle. When you publish or export the website, Sparkle will resize and recompress the images as needed. In fact it's probably best if you are generous with the image dimensions and quality.

The generous dimension gives you the composition freedom to move and size the image anywhere in your layout without being constrained by a pre-cut size, keeping an eye on the resolution report tells you if the quality of the published image will be degraded. By using highest quality images you will help Sparkle minimize compression artifacts when publishing, ensuring the best results.

This suggests that it's probably best if you don't resize images in an external application before importing them to Sparkle.

In general, if you add multiple devices Sparkle will generate multiple images and serve only the one with optimal resolution and density for each viewing device. This allows modern browsers to only download what they need, resulting in improved performance and savings in data transfer.

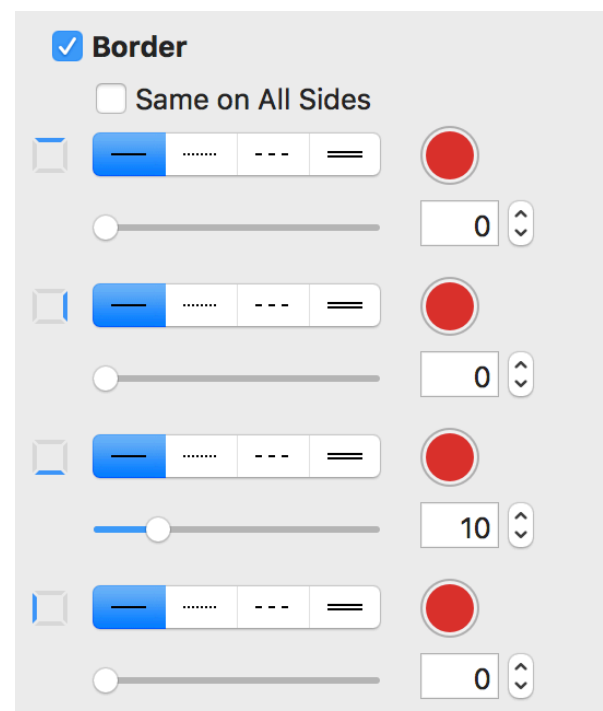
Ultimately for each input image Sparkle will be generating an image for each device and each screen density, both in JPEG and in WebP (if the option is set in the settings).

Image border

Further down in the inspector, common to all image types, you can specify an image border. The border is added outside of the image extent. You can either have a single border setting for all sides or a separate setting for each edge, the canvas will show the exact output.

Image corner rounding

Image corners can be rounded with a specified pixel radius, you can opt for each corner to be rounded or not.



In an extreme rounding setup you can have a square image with the radius exceeding the image size, ending up with a circular image. Incidentally this is a popular style for a profile picture look.

The border, when visible, will follow the rounded edges.



Image drop shadow

Drop shadows used to be cool and trendy, for this reason alone their use can make your design look dated.

However used carefully and tastefully they can add a subtle 3D effect and provide an organic sense of depth.

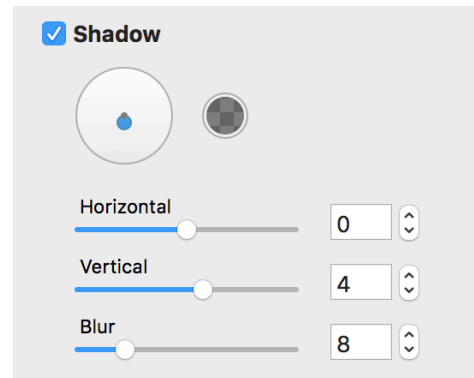


Image opacity

Adjusting the opacity can be useful for some visual effects. Opacity affects the image content as well as the border and the shadow, if present.

Image filters

Image filters are a quick way to enhance or alter an image. Adding filters is non-destructive, meaning the original image is preserved. The filters can be combined, including used multiple times and in different orders.

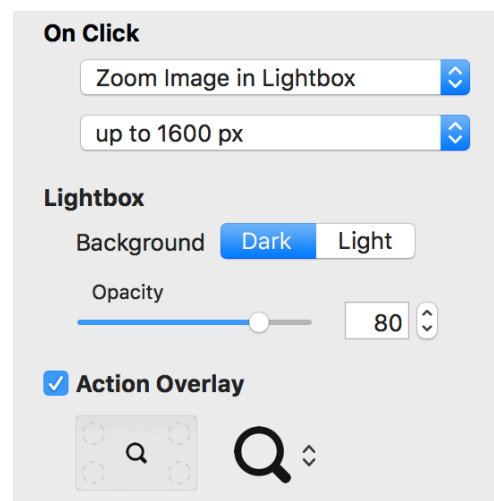


Interaction

As with text, you can define what happens when an image is clicked on. The usual On Click actions apply, plus an image-specific option to zoom the image in the window, shown in a lightbox that overlays the page.

Scroll animation

Scroll animation is common to several elements, see the animations page.

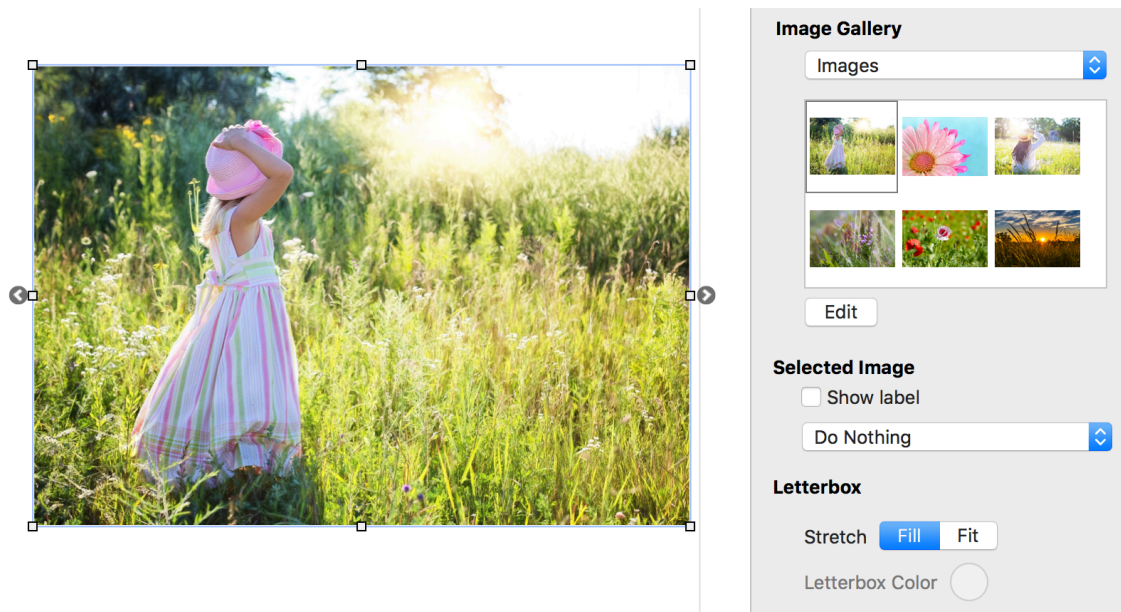


Load when visible

Browsers begin downloading images even before having loaded the entire page. If your page contains many images, they will all be queued up for download, and this can effectively make the overall page load be slower. The “Load when visible” option delays image load, so it is worse for images at the top of the page, but by setting it for images not initially visible it will speed up overall page load time. Additionally if the site visitor never scrolls down to reveal all images, fewer images will have been downloaded so it will save on bandwidth as well.

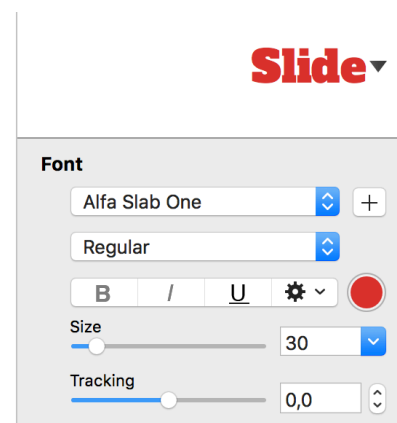
Image Galleries

A quick way to create a gallery is to add it from the Sparkle interface (toolbar, Insert menu or the “More” popup) and then add the images. A quicker way is to drag the images from the Finder directly to the Sparkle window and let Sparkle create a gallery.



The default settings produce a gallery with cross-fading images, manually advancing using the side arrows or the swipe gesture on touch devices. You can add further images by dragging them over the gallery or thumbnails in the settings inspector. Clicking on the Edit button opens the full list of images, from where you can reorder images or set the image storage mode.

By enabling the slide label you can add contextual information, with full text styling abilities. With selection behavior similar to groups, once the gallery is selected, a click on the label will select it and make it editable, like a regular text



block. You can add On Click behavior to the text alone, via the text settings, or add it to the entire slide via the gallery settings. The same On Click settings that apply to images can be used for image galleries.

The letterbox mode determines whether the image will always cover the gallery frame or be fitted within the frame. In fit mode the parts of the frame that aren't covered by the image will be filled with the letterbox color.

The transition style determines how the next image replaces the current one. The transition speed, in seconds, is the time for the crossfade or slide.

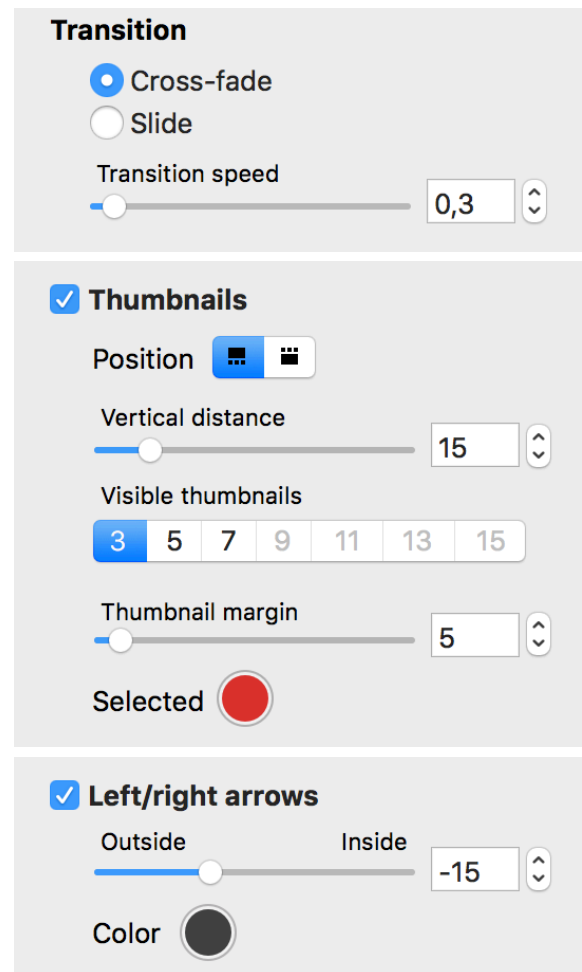
When you have 5 or more images you can add thumbnails, placing them above or below the image, and controlling distance, margin and the selection outline color. The thumbnail size is controlled automatically to fill the width of the gallery element, so adding more visible thumbnails makes them smaller.

You can control arrows position and color, and whether they show at all via the "Left/right arrows" option. Alternatively (or additionally) you can enable dots, which appear at the bottom of the gallery frame.

The wrap around option enables gallery navigation loop, it restarts from the first image when pressing the right arrow on the last image, and specularly goes to the last image when pressing the left arrow on the first image.

Enabling "Automatic slideshow" will make images advance automatically after the set interval, without user interaction. You can optionally enable pausing the automatic advancement by moving the mouse cursor over the image.

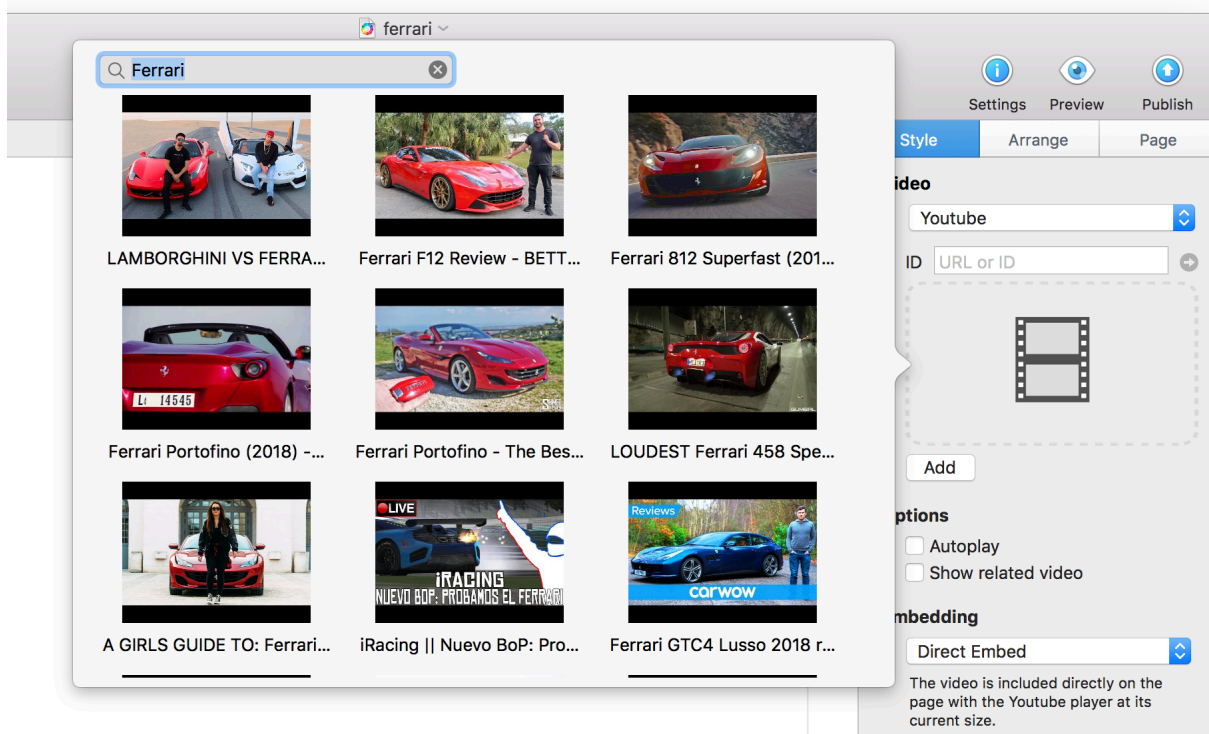
Unlike normal on canvas images, gallery images can be optionally stored only in their original location on your Mac, via the image storage mode setting. While they are always sent to your website when publishing, they will not burden your main project file. On the flip side if the original images are lost or you share the project file, the connection to the images is broken and Sparkle won't be able to publish them.



Video

The video element works in two main ways, based on the video source. Hosting the video on Youtube or Vimeo is convenient and quick, hosting the video yourself gives you more control and is more friendly to visitors with respect to personal data privacy.

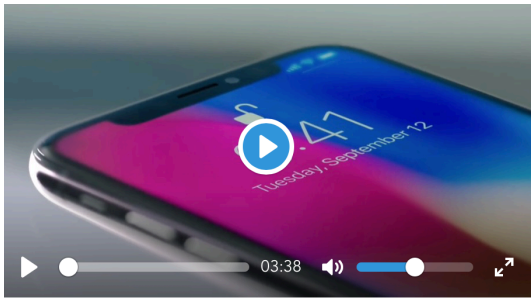
The settings for Youtube and Vimeo videos offer the ability to search for a video by keyword, or enter the video address or ID in the settings inspector directly.



The alternative to Youtube and Vimeo is to publish your own MP4 files. Sparkle checks that the MP4 file has an encoding that's compatible with web browsers (unlike MP3, MP4 is a container format that can host video streams encoded in different ways, not all web compatible).

You can either switch the video source to "From Disk" or "From Network Location" and select the MP4 file disk location or network address, or you can drag and drop the MP4 file from the Finder straight into the Sparkle canvas.

From disk video files can be stored only in their original location on your Mac, via the image storage mode setting. While they are always sent to your website when publishing, they will not burden your main project file.



Additionally you can scrub through the video (in the settings or on the Touch Bar), to set the poster image, which is the image shown before the video starts. This is what Sparkle's video player looks like.

You can customize autoplay, looping and muting, in addition to the initial video volume. You can opt to have video controls or not, and a custom poster image if none of the video frames works.

Regardless of the video source you can embed the video in the page in a few different ways, depending on the desired effect and design constraints.

Direct Embed loads the video player straight into the page. This has the effect of slightly slowing down the page load, but the playback will start faster. The site visitor will have the option to go fullscreen, but the video will otherwise play in the video element frame you have set. On mobile, video will always go fullscreen on playback.

Still + Embed only loads the poster image initially, then loads the video player on click, with the same characteristics of the directly embedded video.

Video

From Disk

Introducing iPhone X.mp4


Replace... Remove

Video Storage

In Original Location

Poster Image

1280x720



119.6s

Options

Autoplay

Loop

Mute

Required for autoplay on modern browsers.

Initial volume

8

Player Controls

On video

Custom Poster Image

Embedding

Direct Embed

Still + Embed

Still + Embed in Lightbox

Still + Link to source site

Still + Embed in Lightbox loads the poster image initially, but on click loads the video in a lightbox. This gives you the option of making the video element smaller in the canvas, because it will always be played at a larger size.

The final option to link to the source site is only available for Youtube and Vimeo videos, its purpose is to avoid encumbering your site with privacy options that you might have to otherwise set.

Finally you can set opacity and animation for the video player.

Use of videos as page background is covered in the Page Setup section.

Audio

You can add an audio player to the page by adding it from the insert menu or “More” button in the toolbar. This will add an audio player placeholder to the page, where you can then pick the .mp3 file to play.

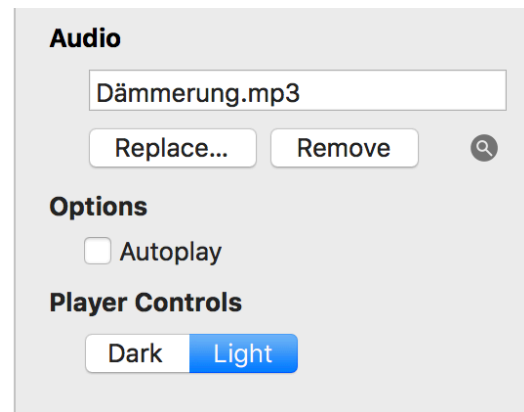
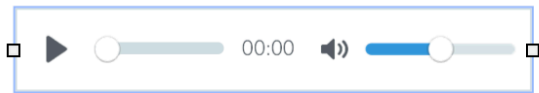
As a shortcut you can drag the mp3 file from the Finder onto the Sparkle canvas, and Sparkle will create the audio player element with that mp3 on the fly.

Sparkle only supports mp3 files, because it is the only audio file format that works reliably across web browsers on all platforms.

Sparkle will export and publish the mp3 file for you along with the other website files.

The autoplay option will start the audio as soon as the page is loaded, though modern browsers will block audio that’s started without user intervention.

You have an option of dark or light player controls to match the page.



Boxes

Boxes are decorative elements that can be used as backgrounds for actual content, and can contain a fill color, a gradient fill or an image.

When configured with an image background, box settings are very similar to those of images, and can be visually indistinguishable from image elements. The difference is images are intended as content, boxes as background/decoration, which makes a difference mainly for accessibility purposes.

Boxes can be stretched to the full browser width, this is so common there's a shortcut "wide box" in the toolbar.

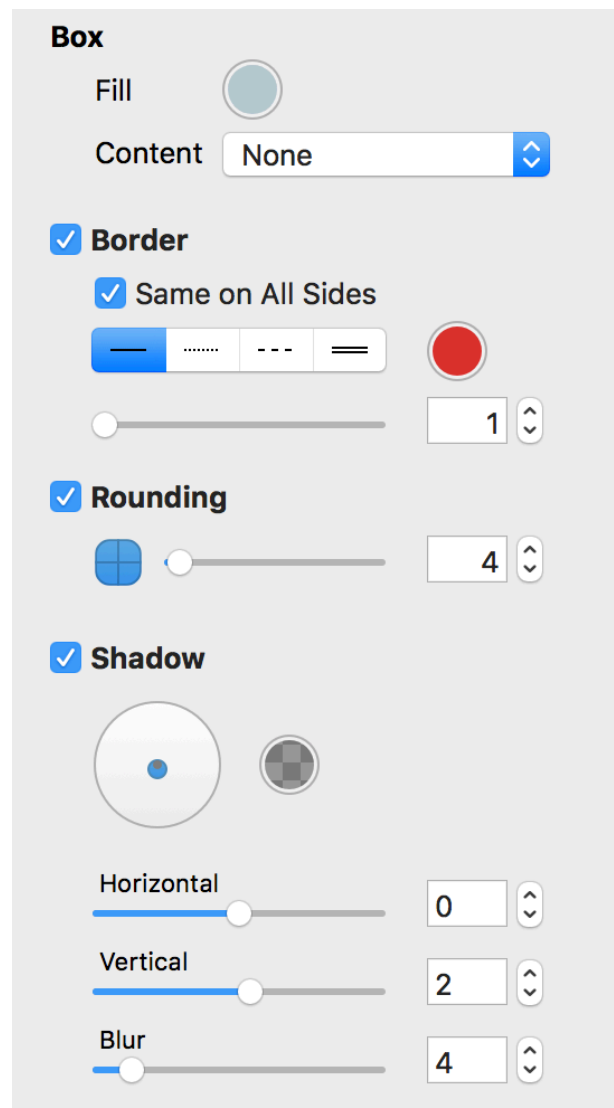
The "Fixed in window" option locks the background so that the visible portion changes when the box moves or you scroll. This can be used for many interesting visual effects such as a quasi parallax effect, as illustrated in many of the sample designs.

Box options

Regardless of box content, you can set an image border. The border is added outside of the box extent. You can either have a single border setting for all sides or a separate setting for each edge, the canvas will show the exact output.

Image corners can be rounded with a specified pixel radius, you can opt for each corner to be rounded or not.

Finally you can add a drop shadow.



Examples

Here are a couple of practical uses for boxes.

To create a header image with a logo on top:

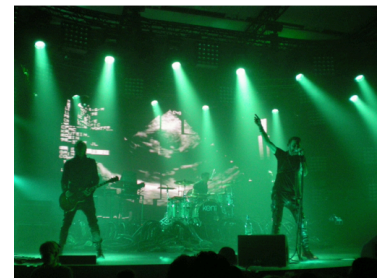
- add a wide box to the canvas
- set a large background image, say a 2500x1000 JPEG image
- enable background stretching to fill
- align the image top-center
- add the image blur property
- use a heavy weight title font

Note how the blurred background makes the foreground text and logo stand out:



To create vertical slices:

- set a base background color or pattern
- add a few wide boxes, as tall as your screen
- add some large background images
- enable background stretching to fill
- set fixed positioning for the images
- add the image blur property to the first one
- use a heavy weight title font

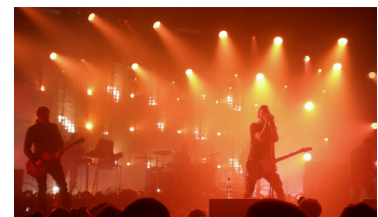


The image at the right is an example of how the layout could end up, and since the wide boxes are very tall and the image positioning is fixed, scrolling through the images results in a full screen experience that's integrated in the site.

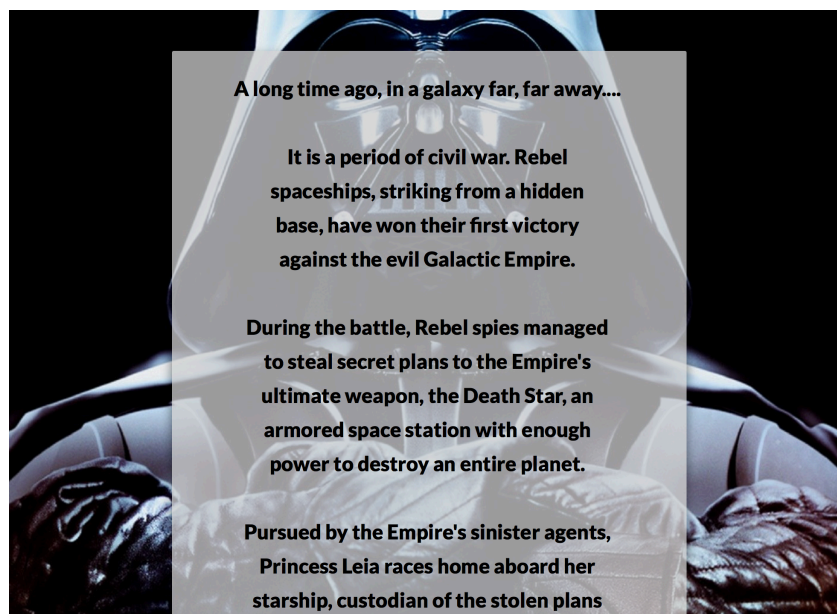
It's also possible to combine boxes.

Here's another example of two boxes with a text element:

- a very tall wide box with the Darth Vader image
- a normal box with a non-opaque color (and a text element on it)



Note that the background image is fixed, so the text will scroll over it.



Maps

Adding a map is quick and easy. After adding the map element from the “More” popup, enter the desired address (Street, City and optionally Country) or coordinates (latitude and longitude).

The built-in Snazzymaps themes offer more than one hundred color combinations that will make your map unique and coherent with your website's look.

On a desktop browser the scroll wheel is often used to scroll a page, and on mobile devices moving the page is done via the touch-swipe gesture. These both affect the map, unless you uncheck the “Scroll wheel/touch to pan” checkbox, so you should uncheck it if for example the map is full width.

Enabling the “Location Marker” will show the exact position with an optional name and description. Enabling “Display label on click”, name and description will be shown only when the marker is clicked by the user.

Google Maps requires an API Key to have a map on your site. Detailed instructions on how to get an API Key from Google are available clicking the “Get Key” button.



Map

duomo firenze

Zoom 18

Map Terrain
 Satellite Labels

Default color scheme

Scroll wheel/touch to pan

Location Marker

Duomo

Marker label body

Display label on click

API Key

Maps Javascript API Key v3

Get Key

An API key is required to view the map.

Privacy

Incorporating a Google map on the page like this triggers browser content blockers or exposes your visitors to third party tracking. Your jurisdiction might require user consent.

Site privacy settings...

Menus

The menu element greatly simplifies adding navigation support to your website.

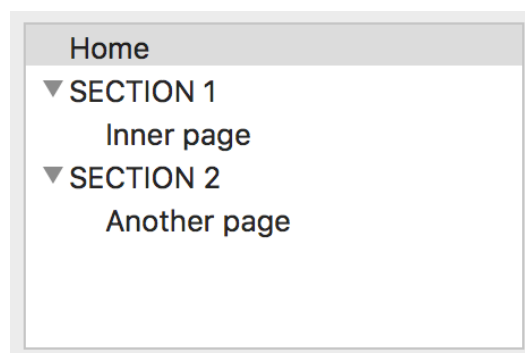
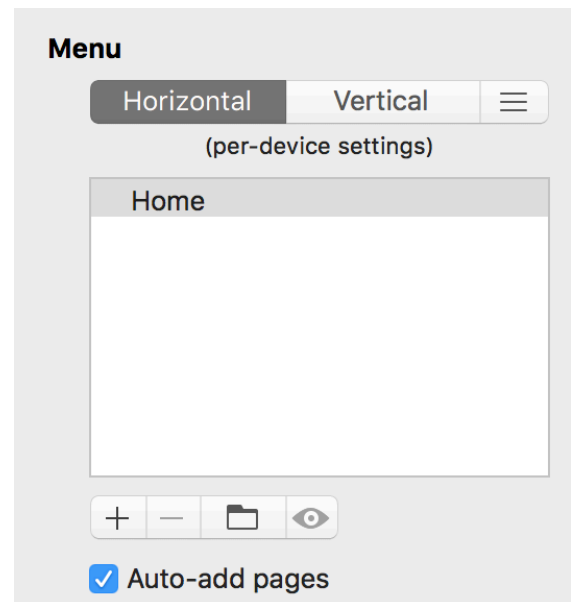
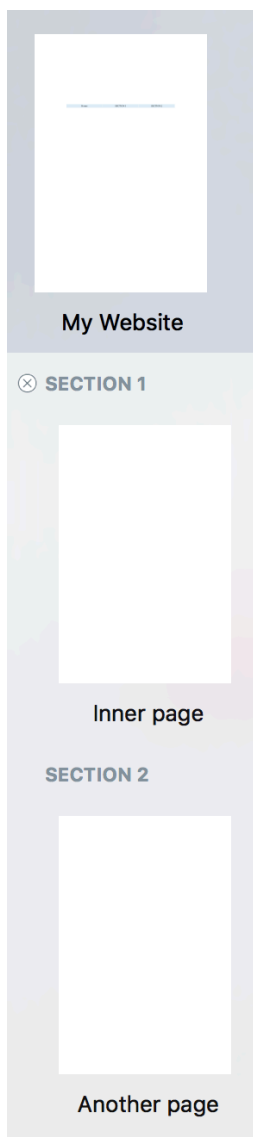
There are two ways to handle the addition of menu items, automatic or manual.

Automatic mode

Automatic mode is controlled by the “Auto-add pages” checkbox. In this mode the menu items reflect the website structure, a page becomes a menu item, a site section becomes a submenu.

The more organized the site structure is, the less effort is required to maintain the menu. Any change to the website structure (adding, removing, moving or renaming pages or sections) is immediately reflected in the menu items.

For example the site outline on the left will automatically become the menu structure on the right, with drop down menus:



Pages and sections you don't want in a menu can be turned off by clicking the “eye” button, which will turn the menu item gray in the settings.

Because in automatic mode items and submenus are managed in connection with the site outline, there are a few restrictions:

- you can't remove items or submenus, you can hide them, though;

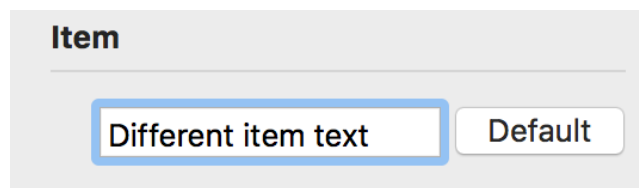
- you can't attach a manually-added submenu to a managed item, but you can manually add a new item and attach a submenu there.

Manual mode

If you need a menu that is unrelated to your pages or is significantly different in structure, you can switch to manual mode by turning off the “Auto-add pages” checkbox, removing the unwanted entries and adding menus and sub-menus as you wish.

In both modes

Sometimes you want menu items to be shorter or just different from the page title. You can do this either editing the menu item text in the next section of the Menu settings, or by single clicking the selected item in the list. This only affects the menu, it doesn't rename the page, and you can have the page title back by clicking “Default”.

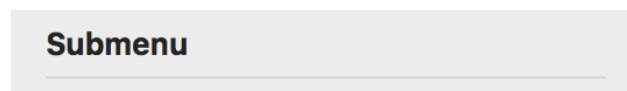
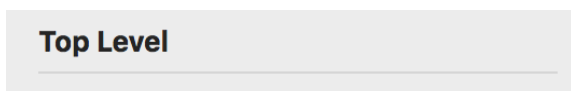


You can change the order of menu items using drag and drop in the menu inspector, including moving a top level page in or out of a sub-menu.

Sparkle supports horizontal or vertical top level menus, via the switch at the top of the inspector. A compact menu is also supported, and via the [Devices feature](#) you can opt to have a different menu layout on different devices.

When the inspector shows “Top Level”, the setting changes affect the entire menu and submenus (unless their “Custom settings” checkbox is set).

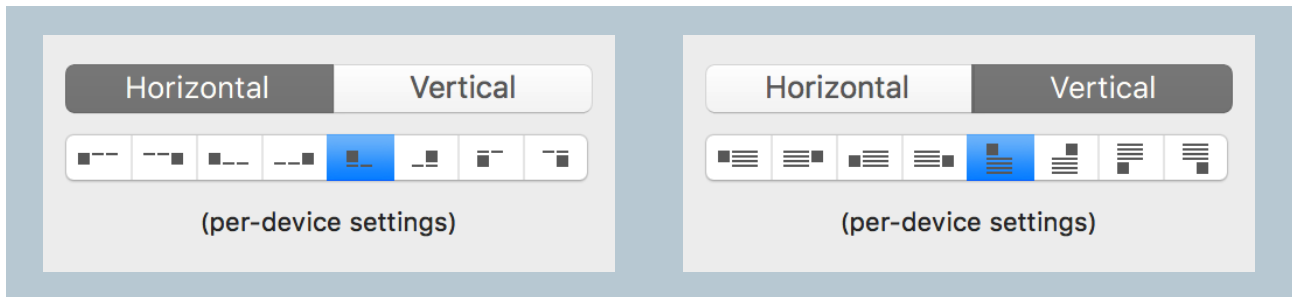
When the inspector shows “Submenu”, the setting changes affect the submenu hanging off of the currently selected item.



By default submenus have the same appearance as top level menus except for size (each submenu has its own width/height that can be specified independently from top level menu). By selecting “Custom Settings” you can fine tune the settings of the submenu's text and background.

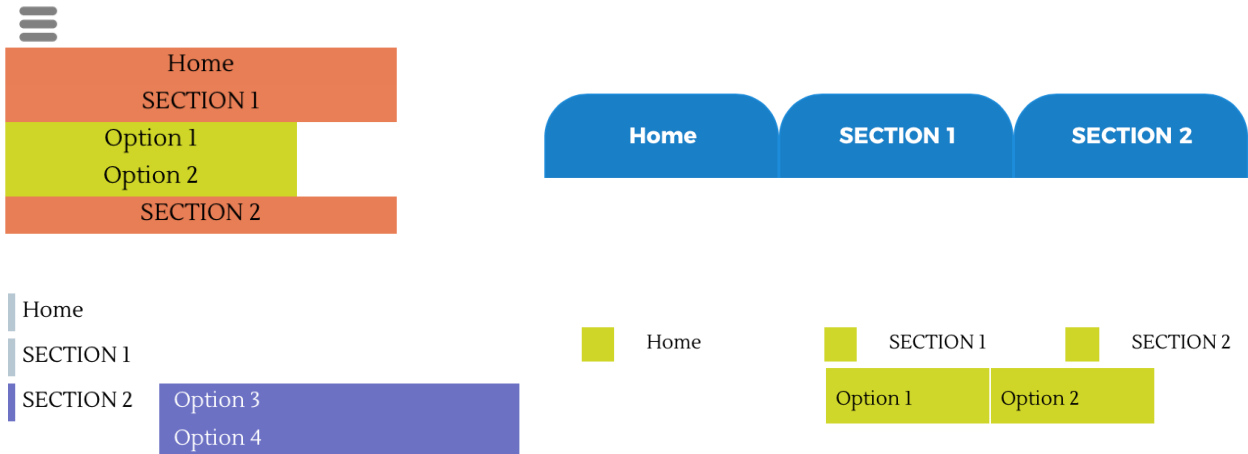
Hover settings control the appearance of menu entries for background, border and text colors when the mouse passes over them. Hover tweaks are available for both top-level menu and submenus.

The submenu pop-out direction and orientation can be customized separately for each submenu in a total of 16 different ways, again customizable separately on each device:



Flexibility

Sparkle’s menu system is very customizable, all the menus below were built with different configuration options of this menu element, so do take advantage of the settings for different layouts and effects!



Limitations

Sparkle doesn’t currently let you use a top level menu item as both a link and a submenu, this is because for compatibility with touch devices, where the concept of “mouse hover” doesn’t exist, a tap can either open a sub-menu or activate a link.

Only 2-levels menus are supported.

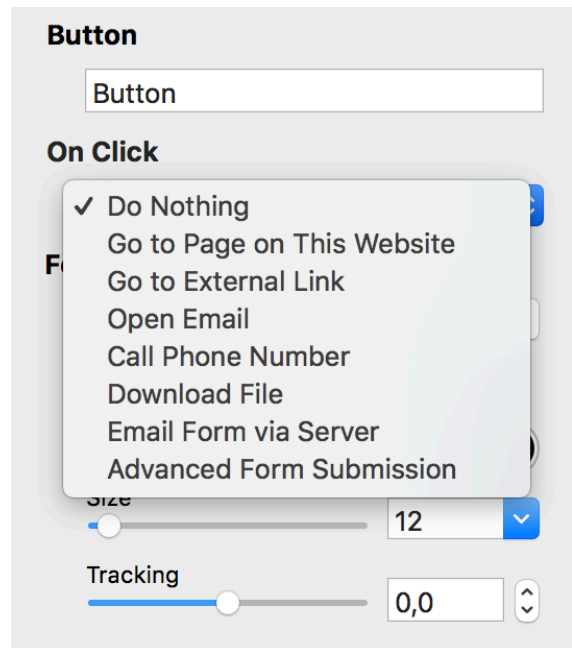
Buttons

Buttons can be used as links, and support all the same link destinations. Check the link documentation.

Additionally, buttons can be used in the context of sending visitor-submitted information to the website server. In web lingo this is called a “form”, these uses of the button are covered in the Forms section.

Buttons support animation, as explained in the animation page.

Buttons are highly customizable, you can set fonts and text style, background color or images, borders, shadow and colors for hover states.



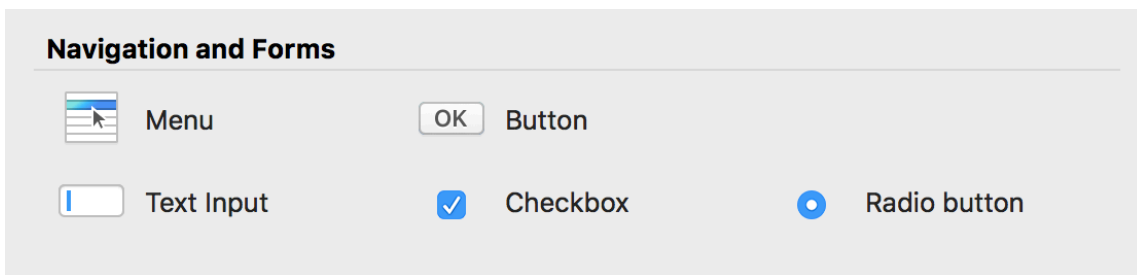
Forms

Visitor-submitted information to the website server is done via so-called forms.

The most common example of forms is the contact form, that sends the submitted information by email.

The controls through which site visitors enter information can be found in the "Navigation and Forms" section of the "More" popup:

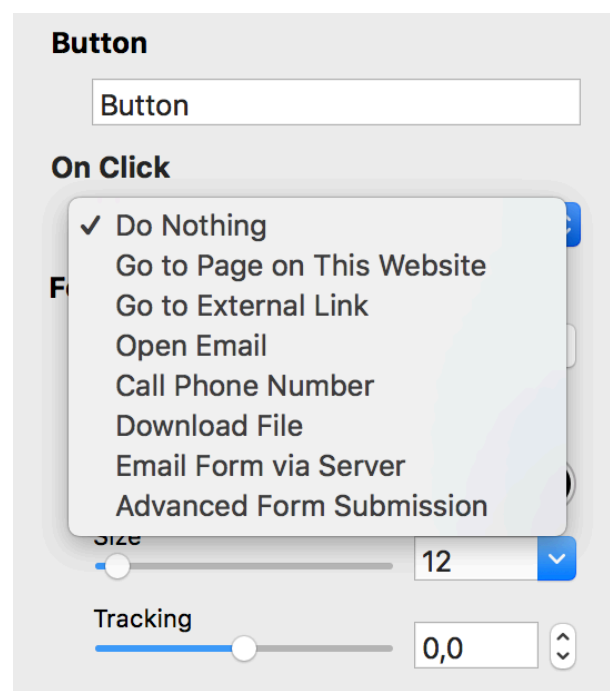
- Text Input field
- Button
- Radio button
- Checkbox



The Text Input is the basic text entry tool. Aside from styling controls it has a few options to control user input. Setting the Required checkbox forces the user to fill something in the text input. The Automatic capitalization, Spelling Checker and Allow browser auto-fill can be useful in specific contexts.

Radio buttons and checkboxes are used to provide user options, radio buttons with the same name are mutually exclusive so they allow the user a single choice, whereas checkboxes are all independent and offer a yes/no answer.

Both Email Form via Server and Advanced Form Submission allow you to collect the input from one or more text input fields, checkboxes and radio buttons. While Advanced Form Submission is aimed at experienced web developers, the Email



Form via Server is ready to use.

Both Form features are disabled in preview and won't work when opened from the Finder, as they require a web server to process the form reception.

Contact form

The Email Form via Server option collects the selected form elements and emails them. The feature is immediately functional by filling in the to and from email addresses and the email subject.

You will also need to designate a "Thank you" page, that will contain the machinery to send the form, and can be used to inform the user of the successful email delivery. As the page contains server side code it will need to have a php extension (the thank you page section will let you do that).

Email is delivered locally on your web host, and routed to the destination mail server from there. Email on the internet is frequently aggressively filtered for spam and viruses, and as such it might occasionally not work properly. The best way to solve issues is to contact the web host.

On Click

Email Form via Server

From: noreply@example.com

To: duncan@wilcox.it

Subject: Mail form

Email via web server

Form elements collected

- Name (Text Input)
- Message (Text Input)

Thank you page

Thank you

Custom SMTP server

If your web host doesn't allow sending email via the web server, you can opt to send email via authenticated SMTP. This means the mail handling generated by Sparkle will contact the SMTP server and authenticate itself using the login settings you specify. This is compatible with third party services such as Amazon SES.

Use custom SMTP server

Server: Server

Port: 25

Username: Username

Password: Password

Contact form sample

For your convenience you can download a sample document with a functional contact form in it, you'll need to change the destination email address to your own.



[contact form.sparkle](#)

Troubleshooting contact forms

If you aren't receiving the contact form email, here are a few common problems:

- you might have incorrectly entered the destination email address; this manifests itself as the thank you page loading correctly with no further indication that something went wrong;
- you might have forgotten to set the thank you page to PHP; this manifests itself as the thank you page loading correctly, but if you notice the page address in Safari might have a .html extension instead of a .php extension;
- the server might not allow PHP execution; this manifests itself as the page source loading, instead of the properly formatted "thank you" page; you need to contact your web host about adding PHP support to your hosting plan;
- your domain's email setup doesn't allow email to be sent from your web server; this needs to be solved by your web host.

If none of the above lead to a solution the final possibility is that the contact form email is being properly sent, but it's then being caught by spam filters.

A helpful measure to prevent your email from being discarded is to use a From email address on your server's domain, it doesn't have to be a functional mailbox, so for example if your domain is example.com you might use nobody@example.com.

Sometimes using a custom SMTP server can improve the quality of outgoing email.

You can use a third party service to check how the email fares in the eyes of spam filters, and work from there on improving the quality.

One such service is mail-tester.com. When you visit the site you get an email address you will place as destination in your form settings, then publish the site and use the contact form. Now going back to mail-tester.com will show what the spam filters see and possibly suggest corrective measures.

Twitter

Sparkle supports single tweet, and a complete timeline.

To display a single tweet just paste the embed code, ID or URL. The easiest way is copying the embed code directly from the twitter website, by clicking on the down-pointing chevron and selecting “Copy Link to Tweet” or “Embed tweet”, then copying the content into Sparkle.

The Twitter Timeline will show a full timeline. Twitter only requires a profile name to create the embedded timeline.


Twitter buttons like Follow or Share a link can be added to your website trough Sparkle's standard Embed element.

Please refer to Twitter documentation for further information:

- [Twitter Tweets](#)
- [Twitter Timeline](#)
- [Twitter Buttons](#)


If you have an ad or content blocker installed in Safari, Twitter gets removed from the page (as it tracks users via cookies), so the Twitter button won't be visible in preview or in the published site. Disabling the blocker or whitelisting preview of your site will show the Twitter button properly.

Twitter

Embed Tweet 

`https://twitter.com/sparkleapp/status/832916874044243968`

Twitter

Embed Profile Timeline 

Profile Name

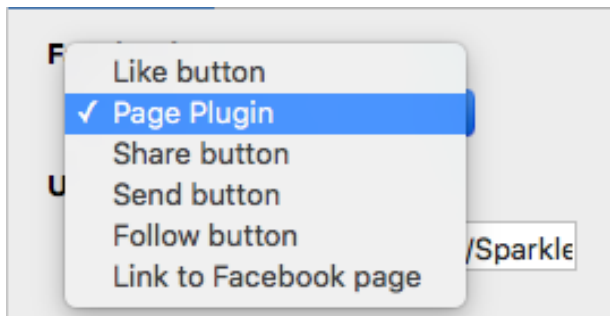
@

Facebook

Sparkle supports the standard Facebook plug-ins.

Please refer to [Facebook documentation](#) for further information.

If you have an ad or content blocker installed in Safari, Facebook gets removed from the page (as it tracks users via cookies), so the Facebook button won't be visible in preview or in the published site. Disabling the blocker or whitelisting preview of your site will show the Facebook button properly.



Facebook

Page Plugin

URL

<https://www.facebook.com/Sparkle>

Options

- Use Small Header
- Hide Cover Photo
- Show Friends' Faces
- Show Posts

Language

English (US)

The Facebook buttons and content will be shown in this language, unless the user is logged in.

Privacy

Incorporating a Facebook button on the page like this triggers browser content blockers or exposes your visitors to third party tracking. Your jurisdiction might require user consent.

[Site privacy settings...](#)

How to...

How to stick a menu to the top of the page

A sticky header is a navigation structure that retains its position at the top of the browser window, as you scroll down a web page, instead of scrolling away. The header can initially be further down the page. It is a commonly used element and, if your website has a lot of content, you should implement at least a basic form of it, such as a navigation bar with a menu.

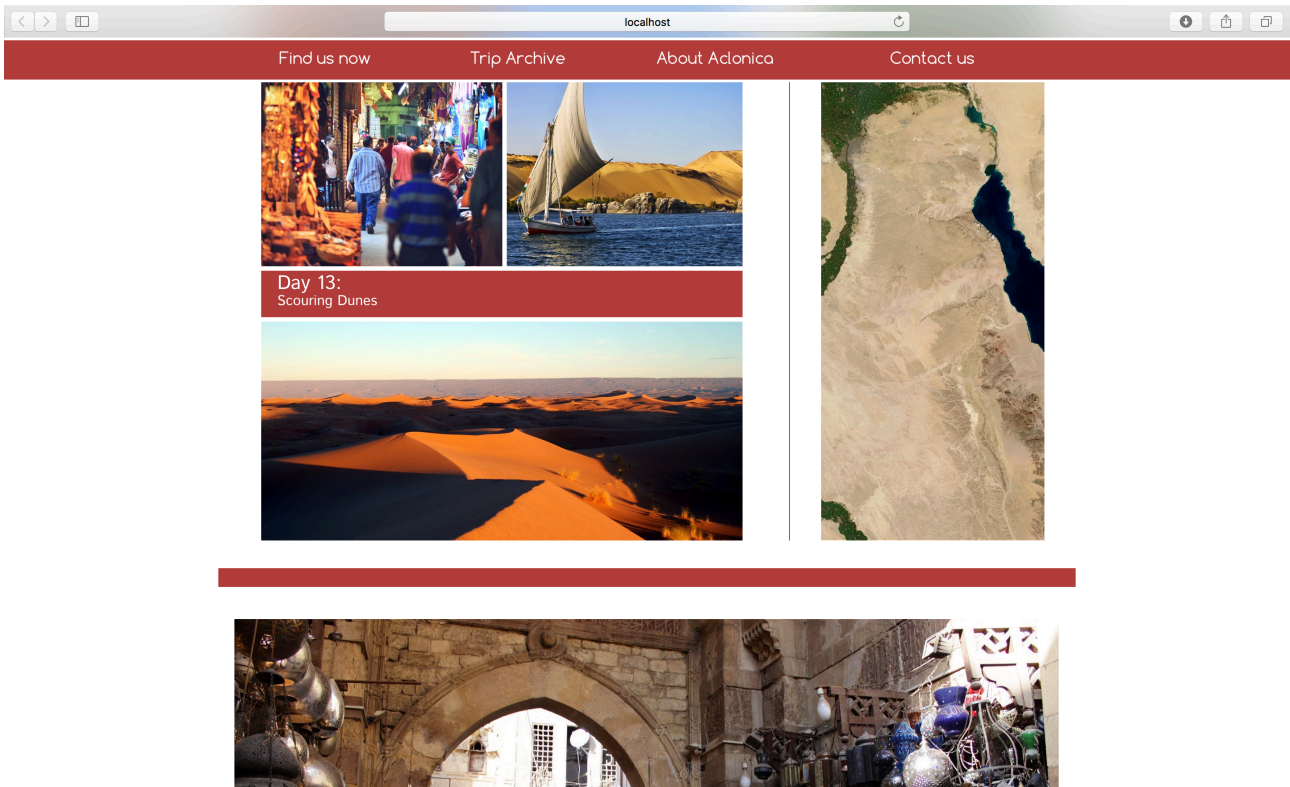
To create a simple header, begin by placing a few text buttons over a wide box. The buttons will be links to pages of your website, or to scroll locations on the same page. A number of 3 to 5 buttons is usually enough to highlight the main features of a website without overloading the bar. A menu element can work in lieu of buttons as well. Select all of the buttons and the wide box, right click to open the menu and select *group*, or select *group* from the *Arrange* menu at the top of the screen. The newly created group offers the stick to top option in the *style* tab.

Enable the *stick to page top* checkbox, now your group will stick to the top of your screen.



Remember to take care of any visual conflicts that might appear from your header movement. In this example a white border on the header's background box

ensures it is differentiated easily when positioned in front of the page content, and is consistent with the white borders used to separate elements in our pages. Consistency is important, and often offers natural solutions, such as in this case.



Note that if the initial placement of the header is not at the top of the screen, it will get attached to it when scrolling, once it comes into contact. Furthermore the attachment will occur once the the first component of your header comes into contact. The structuring, and relative positioning of your header's components will be preserved.

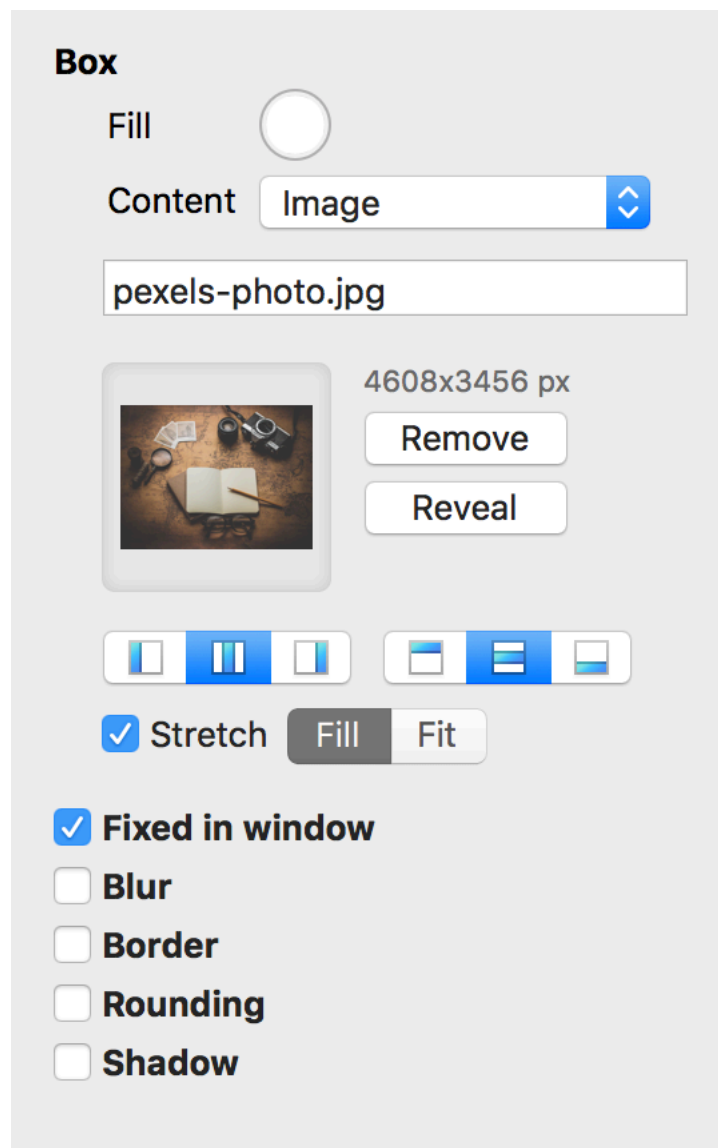
In other words if you want a sticky header to not be attached to the top of the screen, you will have to insert an invisible box between them and add it to the header group.

How to create a parallax-like effect

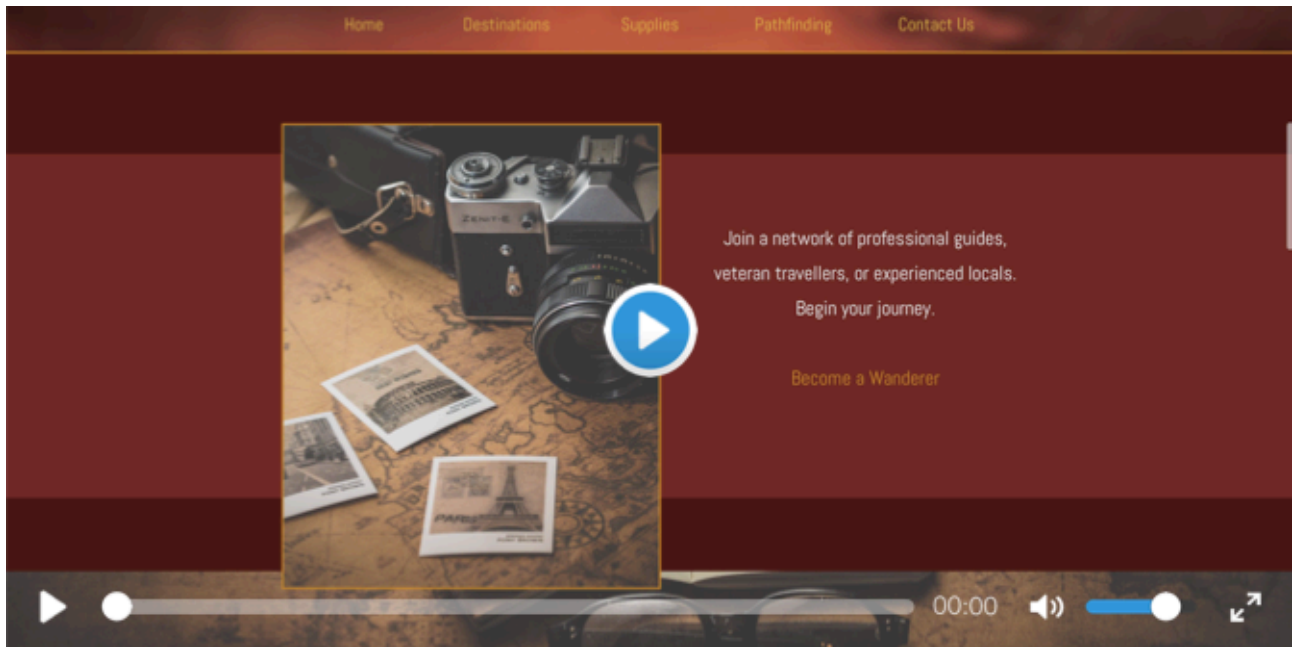
One of the most popular techniques, for its easy implementation and straightforward result, is setting an image as *fixed in window*, creating a quasi parallax effect, and giving the impression of movement.

This effect creates very visually pleasing effects, adds a lot of shine to any design, and is easy to combine with other elements such as text boxes. Apply some on scroll animations and you have beautiful and smooth flowing page.

To begin, create an image that is appropriate for giving the feeling of an environment we are traversing through (in a metaphorical sense too; it could be anything from a classic medieval painting to spontaneous photography). Once you place the image simply click the *fixed in window* option.



The idea is to create a context of a strong visual point, where the viewer focuses their attention. It is a pocket of realism, and the other more “fictional” elements gain more substantial attention, as the context changes from environment/mood to information and back again, therefore maintaining interest.



In this case the context is a travel organization company, focusing on hiking and camping, supplies and networking. Using one scrolling background for the supply and preparation concept, and one for the wonder of nature concept, the fixed interstitial provides context separation.

It's advisable to leave appropriate spacing across fixed background sections for the viewer to complete the transition, we can then take advantage of the renewed attention for new information.

How to add on scroll animations

Sparkle focuses a lot on what could be thought of as the first level of web design: static visual design. The visitor experience depends on the more classic design elements like color, contrast, font and geometric space. Here we will look into Sparkle's animation feature.

The use of the word experience is very specific, because attempting to integrate animations can be both enjoyable and frustrating (hopefully bit more of the former, and less of the latter). The reason is animations can disturb the design balance a lot more than static elements. Given the illusion of life and motion, you can end up with too much, or too little, disconnected parts that don't fit and even hurt their surroundings.

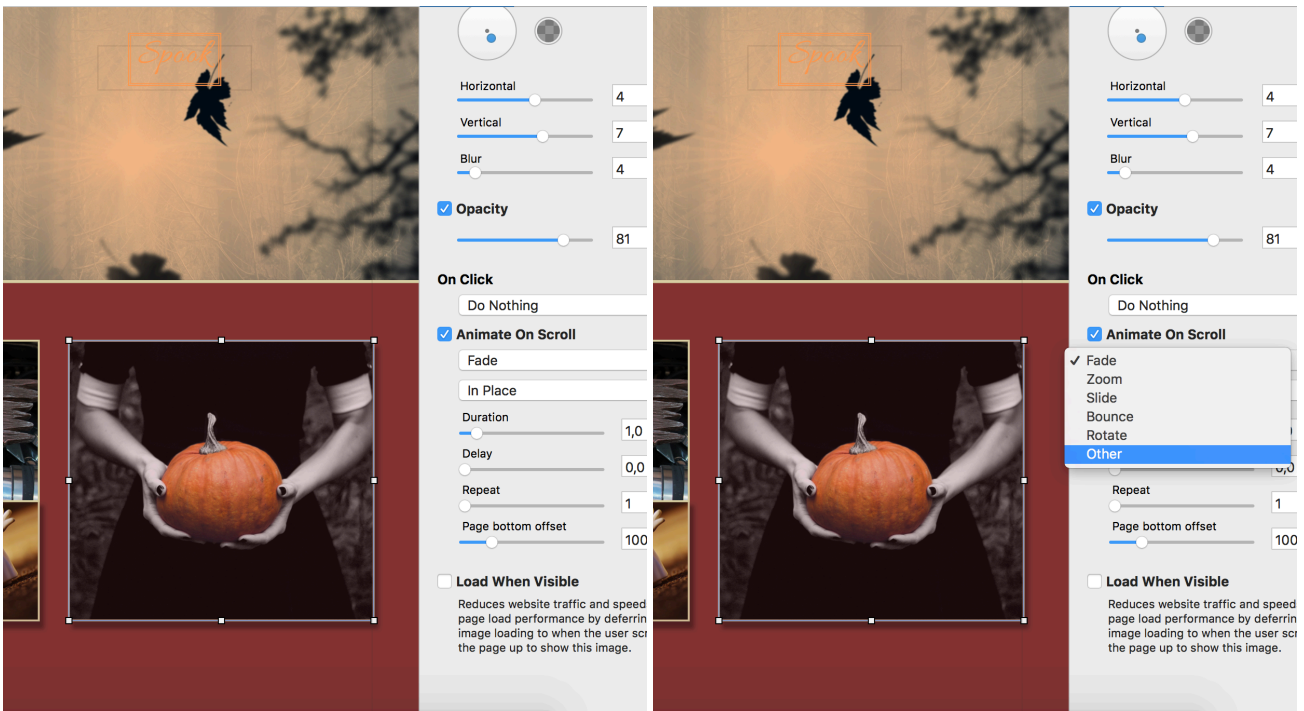
But when done right, these limited life entities make the design feel more like an organic interaction. The storytelling flows and the contents of the page become warm invitations to further exploration.

So lets play.

This is a simple design about Halloween with the intent to capture some of the fun and craziness.



Scroll animations can be applied to images, buttons, text boxes and video elements. You enable animations via a check box in the *style* tab. This will expose two drop down menus, one to select the animation and the other to choose the direction and type of movement. The last choice on the first menu, *other*, exposes a list of unconventional animations, which could work with Halloween. Below animation style choice are timing, repetition and distance controls.



Despite this being less restrictive than, say, a corporate design, we still need to be careful about the animations we choose. Our moving elements: a slab, a ghost dog, a bike decoration, three little ghosts and a pumpkin that looks like its being held by Wednesday Addams.



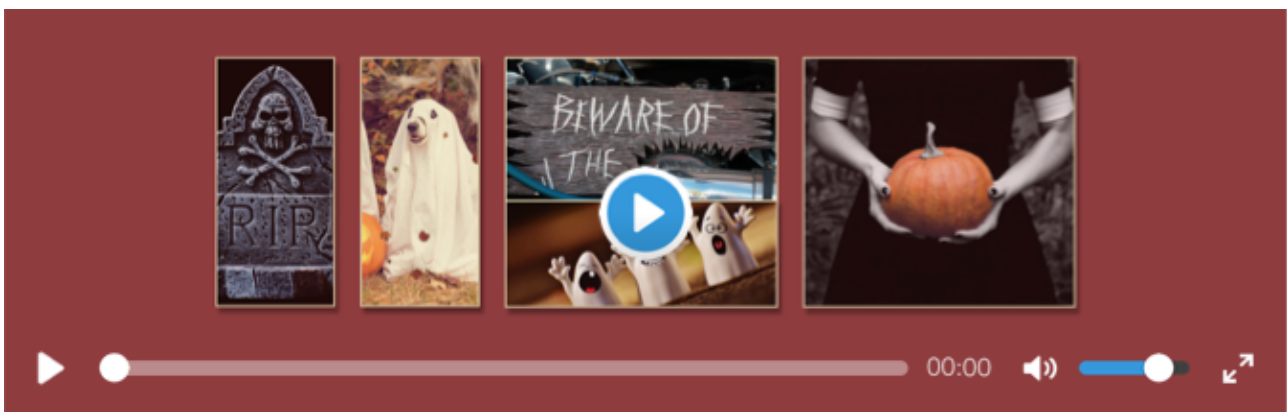
After some experimentation we end up with these choices:

- A *bounce* for the tombstone applies the idea of weight and intimidation (within the context of Halloween).
- A *swing* for the dog as the classic trope of the swinging sign of the decrepit inn present in Halloween related lore goes well with the vertical shape of the image, and the dog is the best place to put it as its completely neutral.
- *Nothing* for bike decoration. There is a lot going around and in the end having a stable element provides a resting place for the eyes and makes the motion around it a lot comfortable. Trying to perceive what is happening with multiple

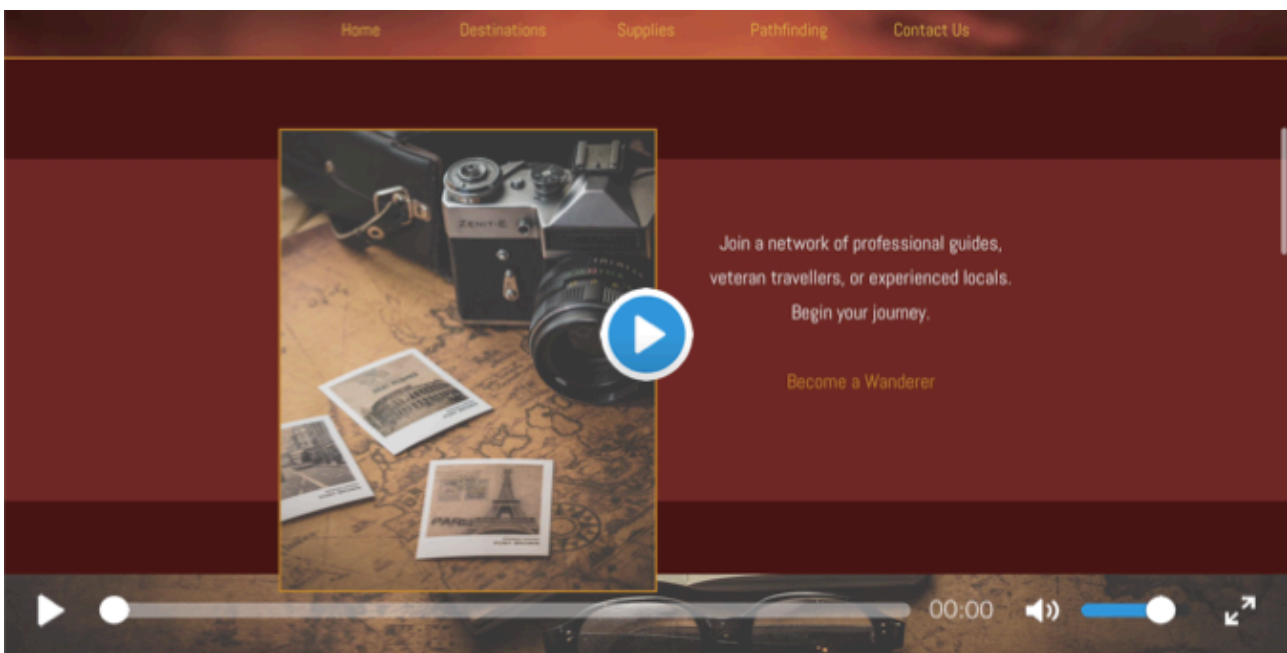
moving parts and no point of stability created confusion and lessened the entertainment of the effect.

- *Rubber band* for the ghosts. They resemble blobs, and so the rubber animation is perfect for them, also adding to the comedic nature of their expressions.
- Lastly *tada* for the held pumpkin. It generates a look! moment, similar to the pictures style which is akin to the girl preparing to offer the pumpkin to the viewer.

The ending result:



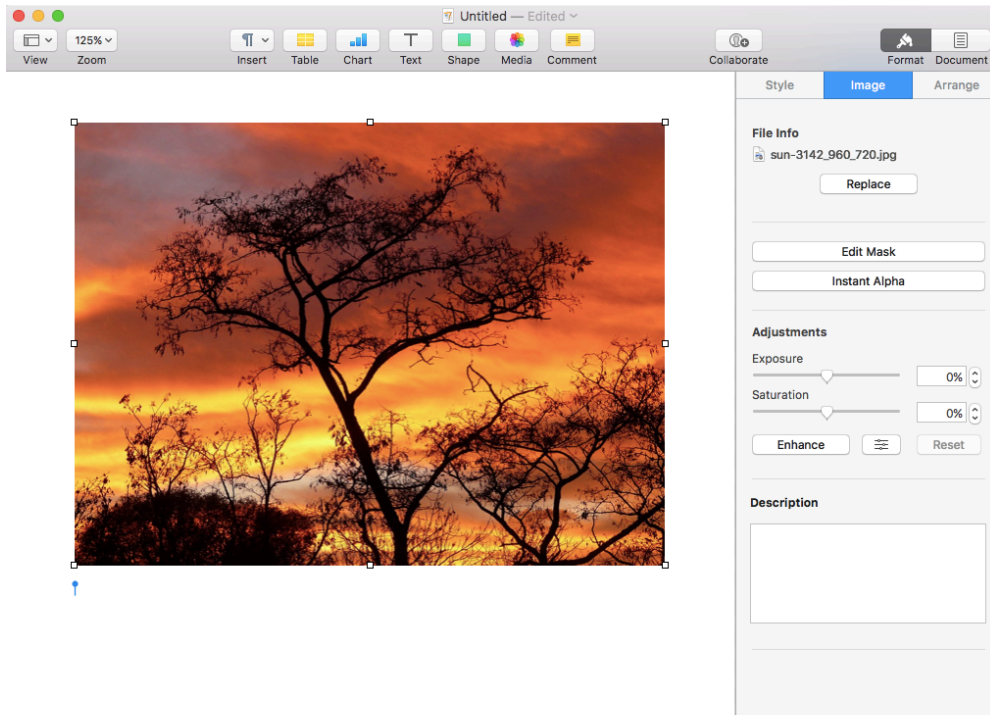
As for a more regular example of the animations, in this design the delay function is used to create a linear discovery and exploration theme, while also communicating the services of the advertised company:



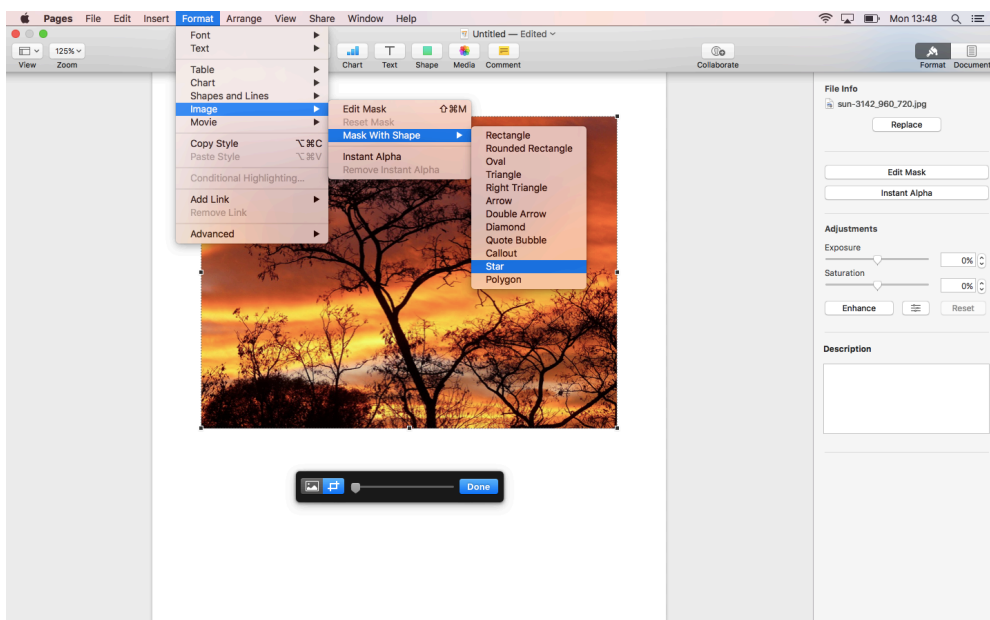
How to mask images with shapes

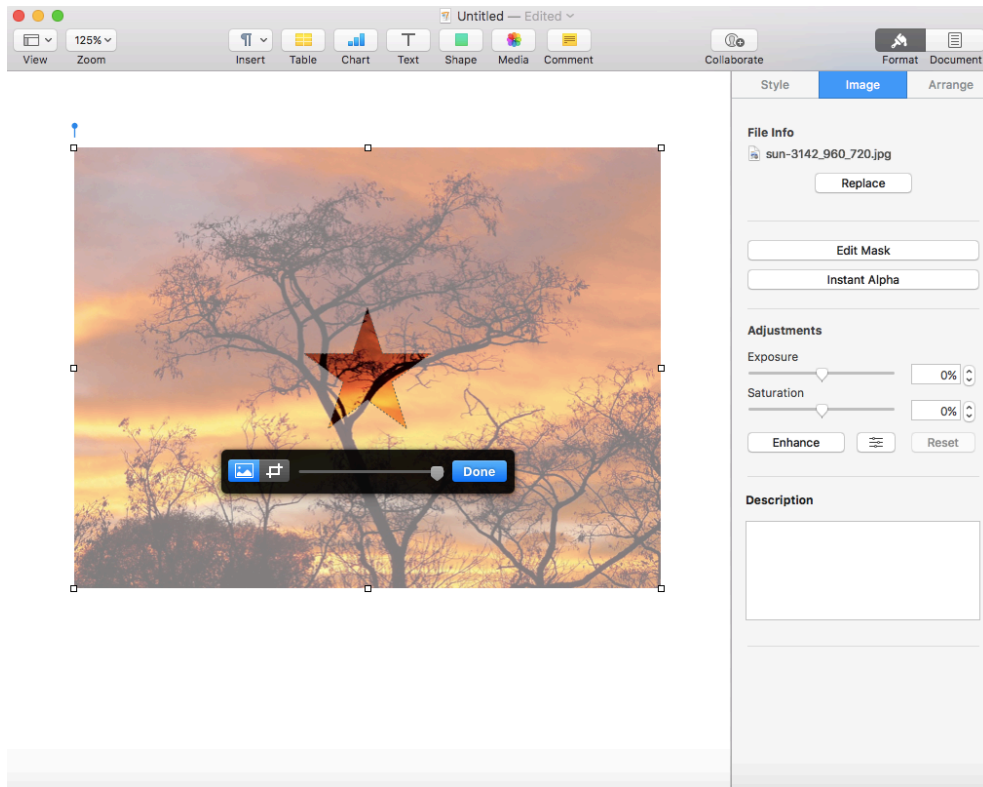
While there is no specific masking tool within Sparkle, it is perfectly possible, and simple, to perform this task in Pages and transfer it to Sparkle, thus maintaining the same effect.

To begin with, let's generate an image to be masked using Apple Pages:

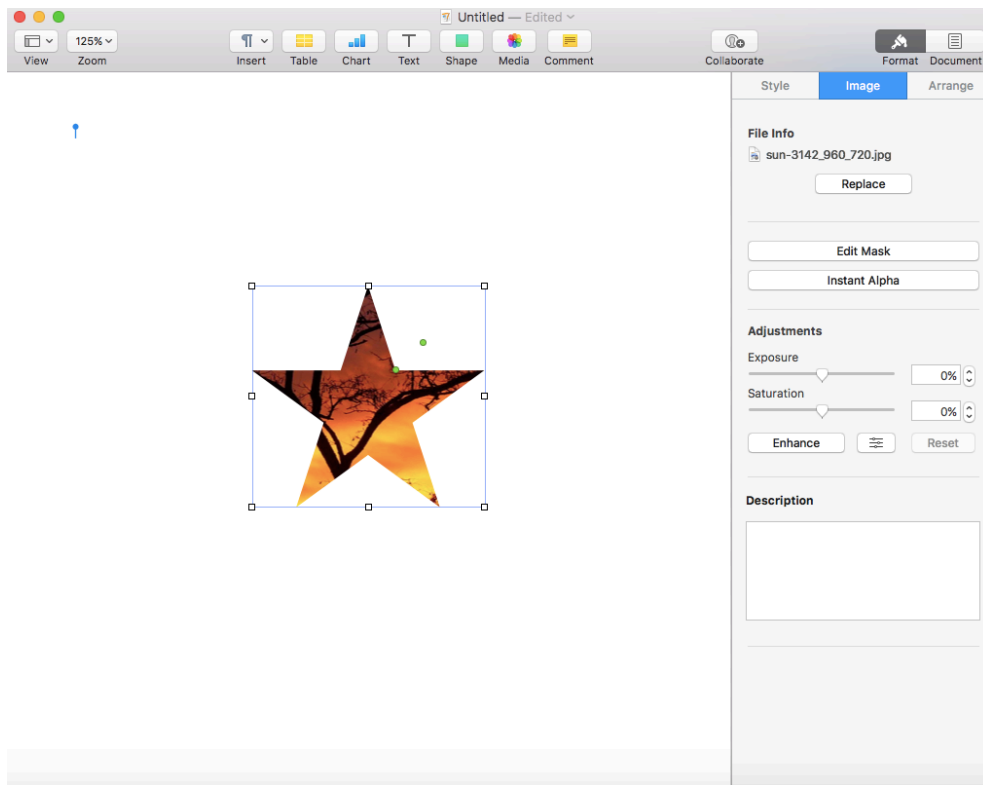


Now let's say I wanted to isolate a central part of the image and make it into a shape. For this I select 'Format', then 'Image', then 'Mask with Shape', and can choose any of the available shapes. In this case I'll choose 'Star'.

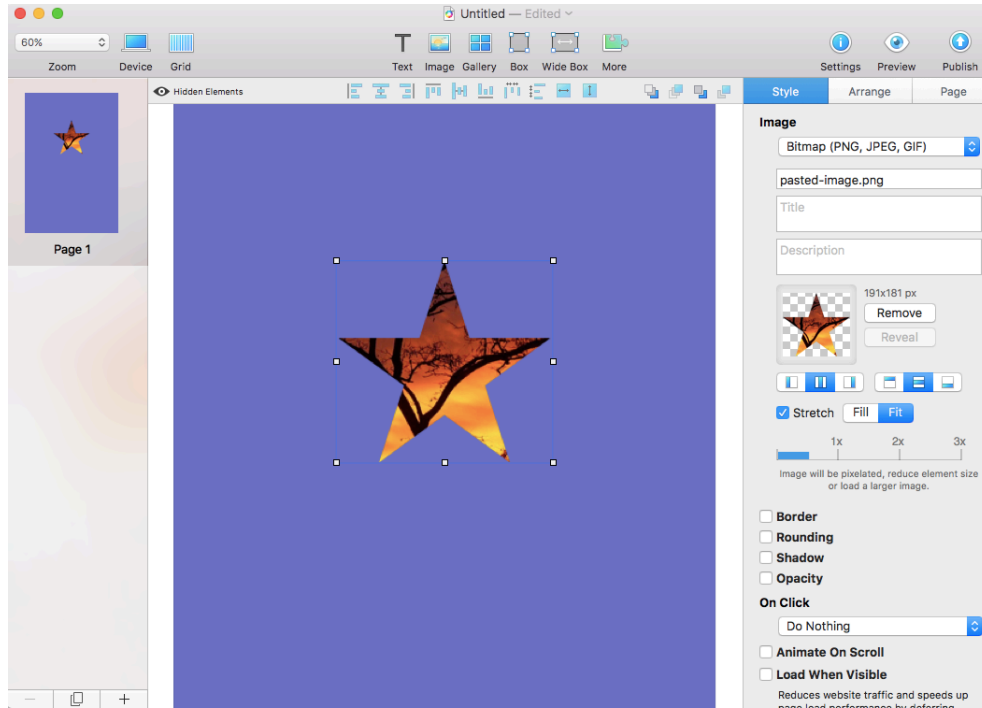




I can now select the part of the image I want to isolate and then click on 'Done' when I am finished.

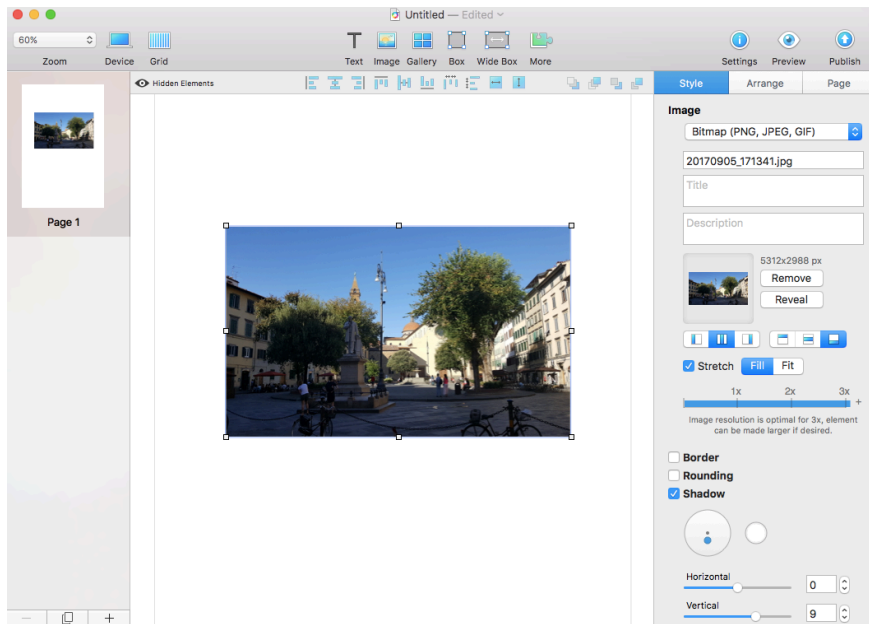


Now all I have to do is copy and paste this masked image on to my Sparkle document. Any masked image you transfer will maintain the same transparency as in the Pages document. Hence, in this example, the purple background I have set wraps around the transparent parts surrounding the star shape.

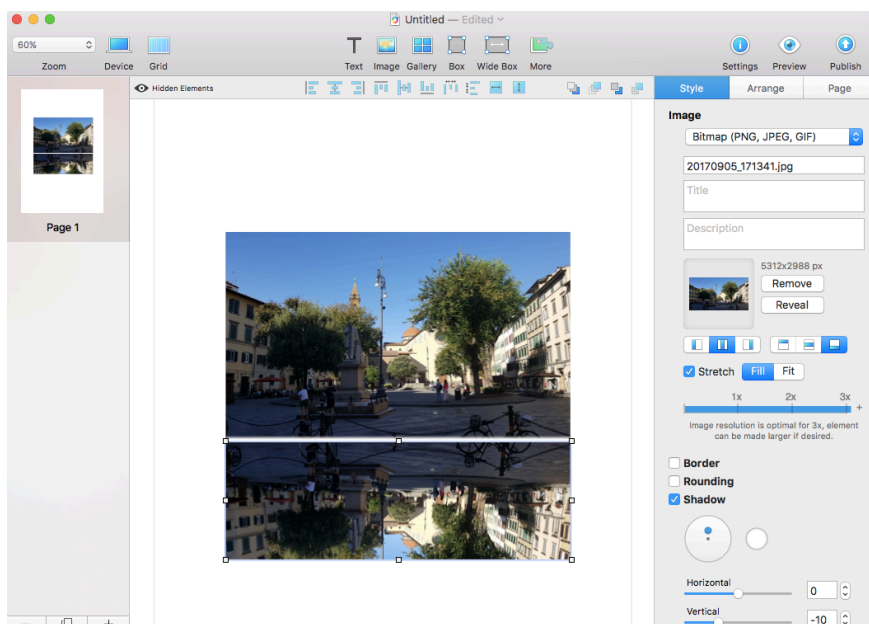


How to create images with reflection

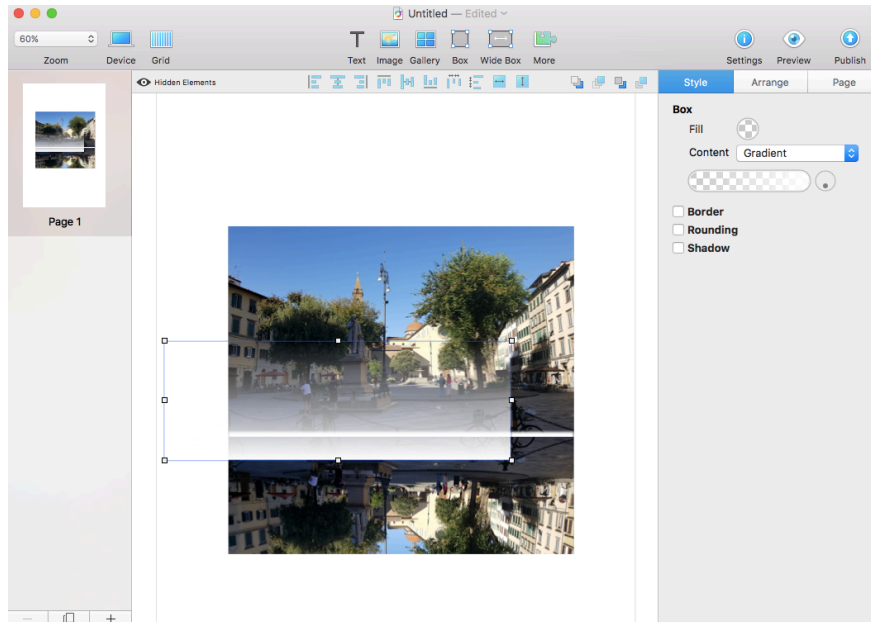
There is no direct 'reflection' option for images in Sparkle, but, following this tutorial, you can re-create the same effect manually. To begin with, add an image to your page by selecting 'image' and then 'add' on the inspector, or else copy and paste. Then, make the image bottom-aligned using the icon furthest to the right of the six alignment icons.



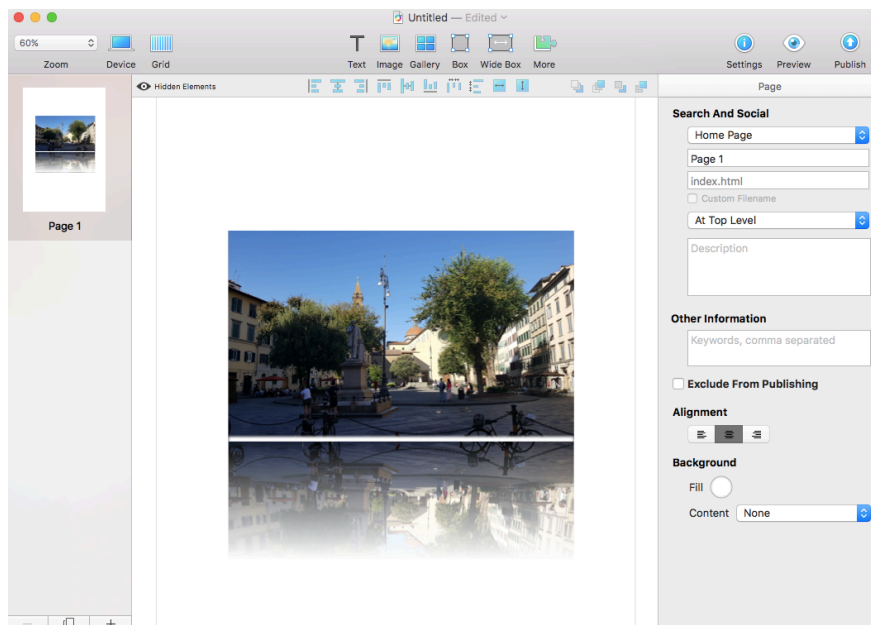
Now duplicate this image: copying and pasting it will place it automatically on top of the original, which is ideal for this tutorial. Drag the top handle of the image below the bottom one, inverting the duplicated image vertically and bringing it directly below the original. For a reflection effect, it is better to reduce the height of the image to approximately half of the original.



At this point, overlay a box onto the bottom image (select 'box' from the toolbar) and give this box a 'gradient' content, with the top part transparent (shown as a black-and-white cube grid) and the bottom part white (as this matches the background of our page).



Finally, adjust the bottom image and box distance from the top image, and make sure the box is aligned with the bottom image. In this example there is a little spacing to separate the images, producing a slight “height” effect, but they can be joined closer together. For further info see the ‘images’ section.



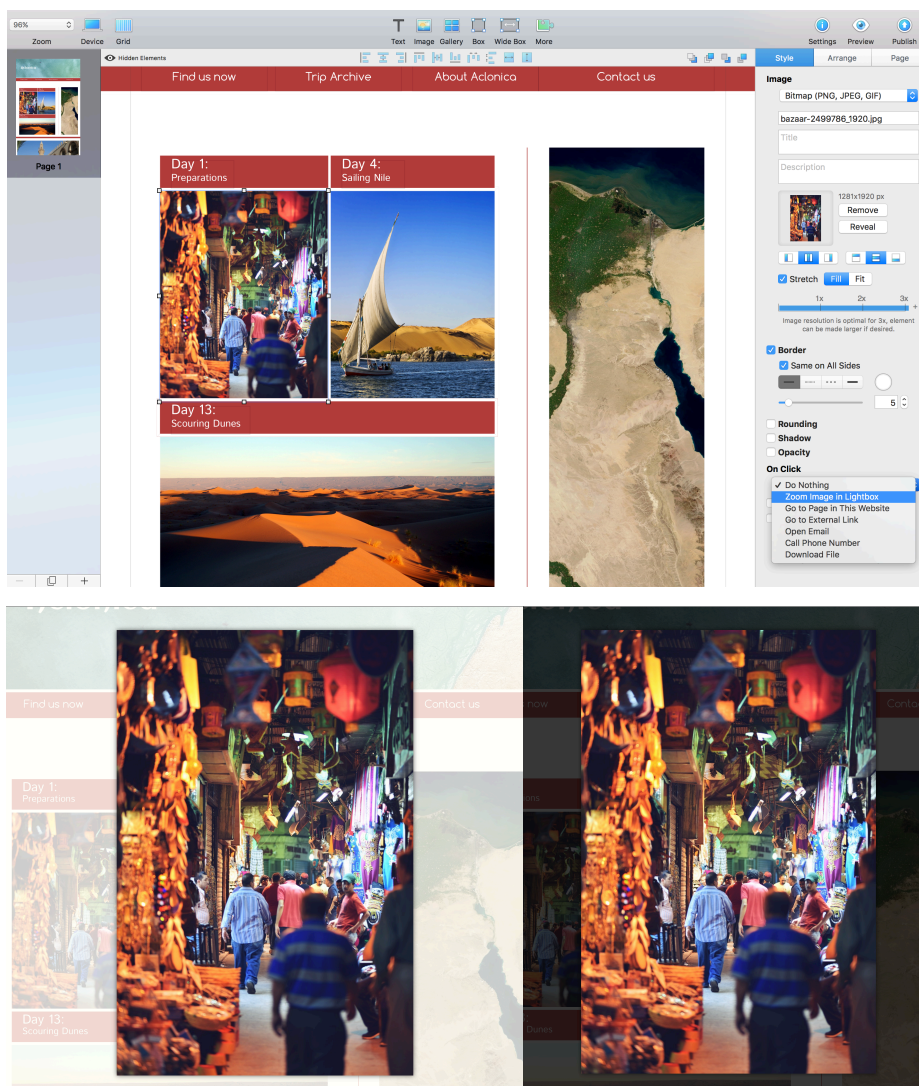
How to zoom an image in a lightbox

A lightbox is the technique applying light or shadow overlay on a page when zooming in on an image, to achieve better contrast and allow the viewer to focus on it without being distracted by the surrounding elements.

To add a lightbox effect, you must use the image element, and not a box, as the box does not offer on click actions. Now open the On Click dropdown menu and select Zoom Image in Lightbox.

You have a few additional options for the overlay. You can adjust the size of the zoomed image, a dark or light overlay as well as the opacity of the effect.

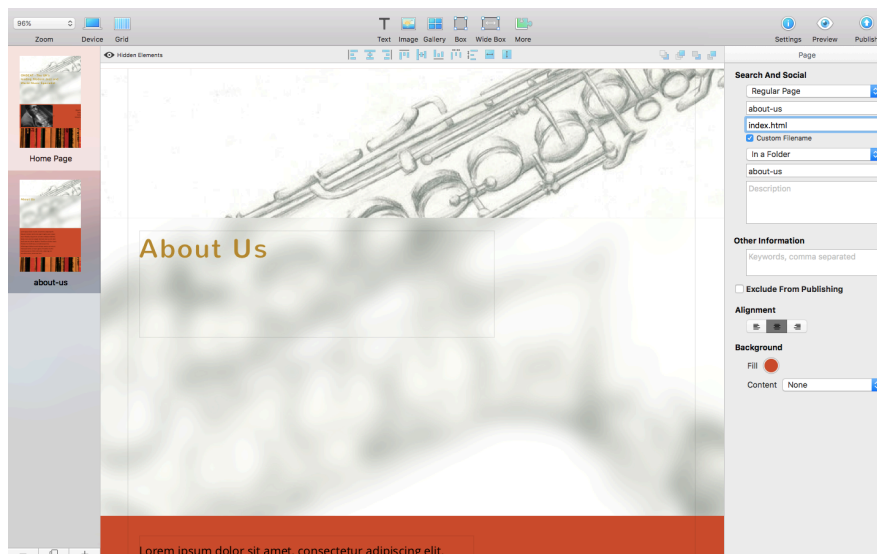
Keep in mind that your choice of lightbox mood and image color palette work together. You might want to utilize the black background for a darker, grittier feeling, or to contrast a beautiful wedding dress picture. This is one of those cases where tweaking one element of the visual structure can alter the mood significantly so don't hesitate to experiment with the colors in an appropriate editing software.



How to create clean navigation URLs

In Sparkle each page address will be displayed in the browser by default with a '.html' suffix that can appear clumsy, smooth links between website pages can be a nice improvement, so this tutorial will be about how to remove the html extension, making the URLs 'clean'.

In this example I have just begun working on the 'About Us' page in my website, onbeat.com (a fictional address). Normally this page would end up being named 'about-us.html'. To make it a clean URL I need to place the page in a folder, which I do by selecting 'In a Folder' (as opposed to 'At Top Level') in the Page Inspector. I must then create a name for this folder, which I entitle 'about-us' — this will be part of the final page URL. Crucially, this page must act as the home page of the about-us folder, so I will name the page 'index.html' to give it home page status. It will have to be of type 'Regular page', as there can only be one Home Page in the whole website. 'index.html' can later be omitted from the page address, as it is automatically added by web servers.



The effect of all this is that, once my website is published, the address of the 'About Us' page will simply be onbeat.com/about-us without the .html part, which appears smoother and more professional.

If you repeat this action, placing each new page in its own folder and giving it the custom index.html filename, you can make every page have a clean URL.

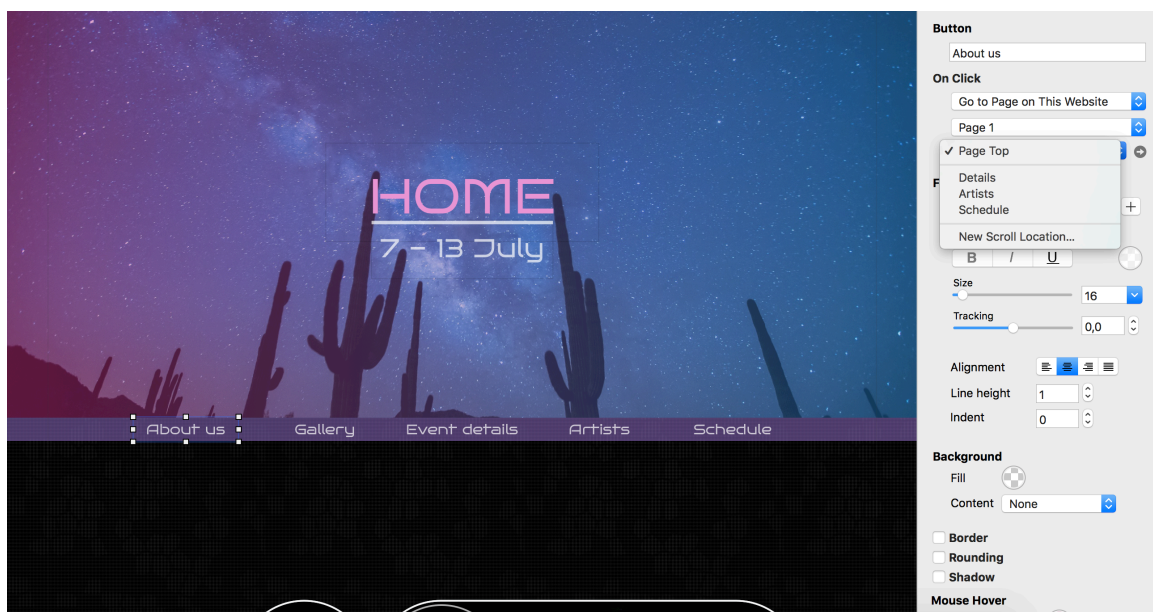
While search engines will indifferently index a page with or without clean URLs, when sharing an address via email, social media or in a web forum, it will have a more professional appearance.

How to set up scroll locations in a page

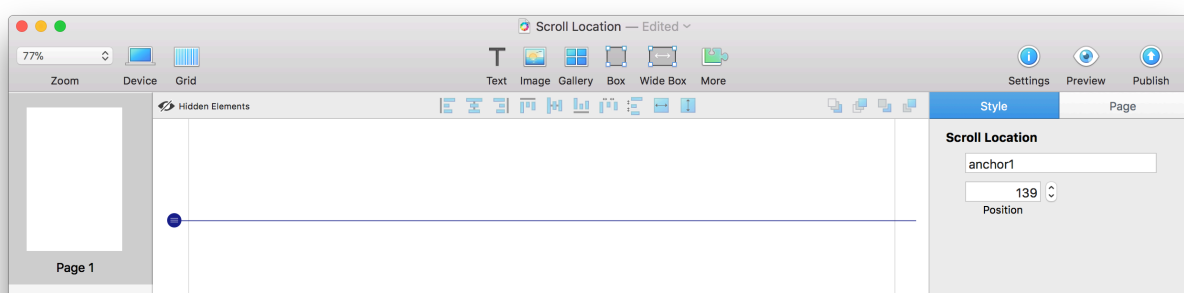
When constructing a website with many sections and a lot information, navigation tools become twice as important. One such tool is the *scroll location*, which can turn even an information overloaded page into an advantageous situation for a visiting viewer.

When a single page contains too much information, and cannot be further divided due to contextual limitations, scroll locations allow the user to instantly move to specific points in the page and access the desired content. This example is a page about a fictional 7 day event with a lot of bands and extra activities. Although a preview design, its the ideal example of information overload the viewer might experience.

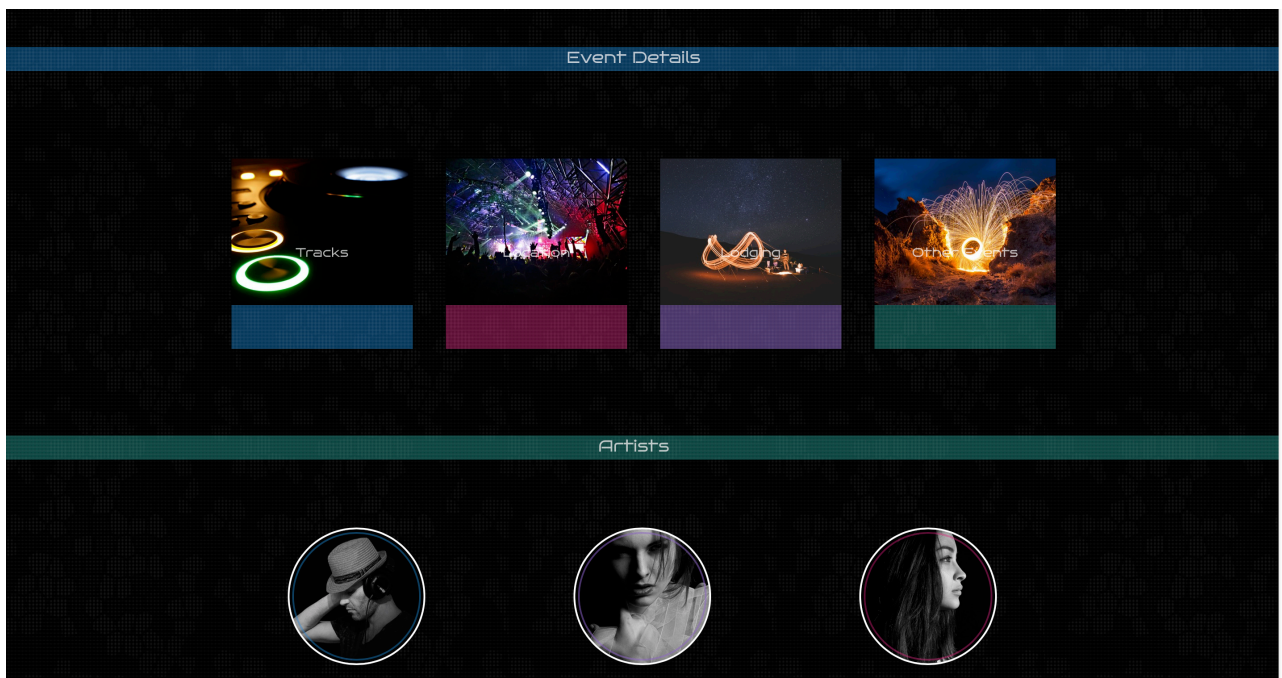
Select a button you wish to turn into a scroll transition, and the on click option go *to page on this website*. In the second dropdown menu that appears under it, you can select scroll locations. Since you have none made yet, select *new scroll location*.



This will create a horizontal line which can be dragged on the vertical axis, and establishes where the top of the viewer screen is placed by the transition.



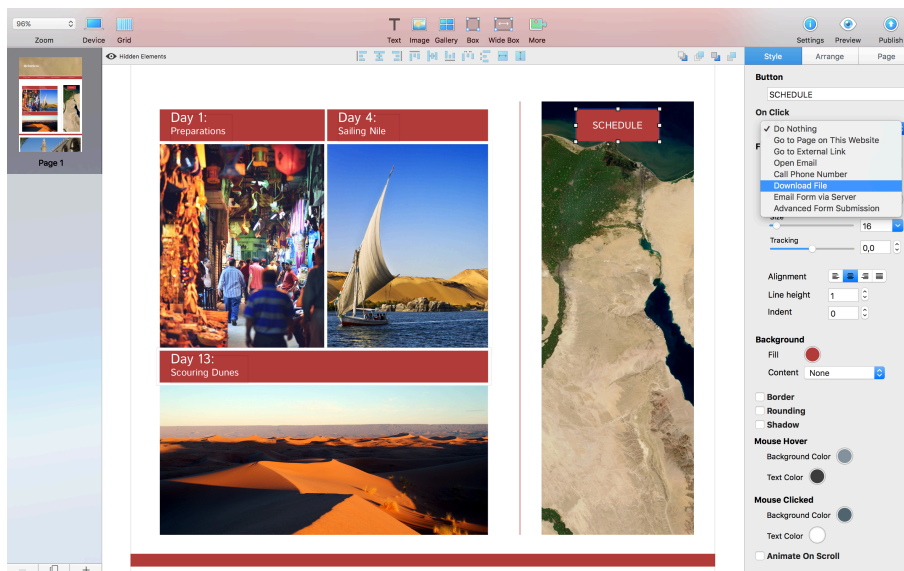
The thin blue line is the scroll location. The positioning of the page content before and after the section you are visiting, will affect whether you should go for a strict, field of view (where the very top of the viewer's perspective is precisely the point where the section he wants to visit begins) or leave some space before it, for a less strict sentiment. If elements of the previous section interfere with the field of view the result can look awkward. The proper positioning of the scroll location would leave breathing room and is clean:



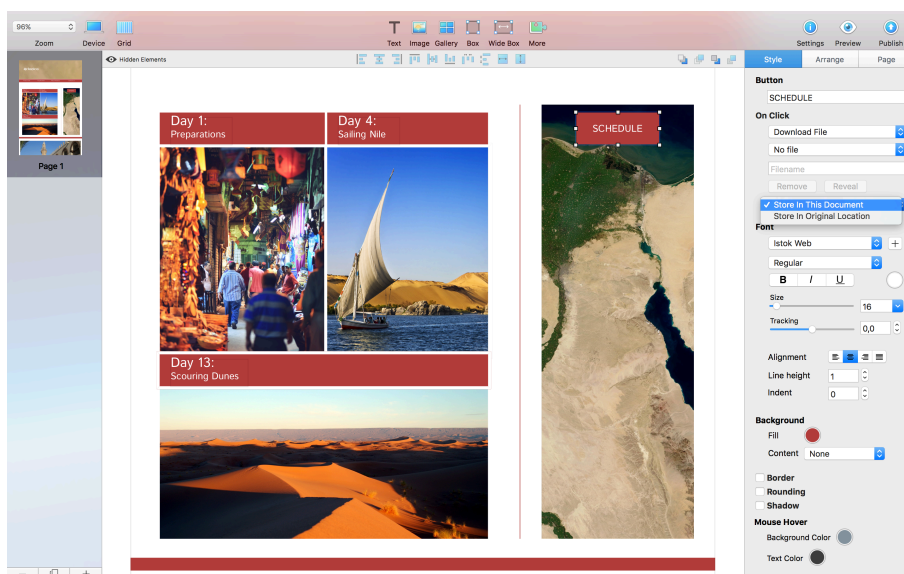
In this example the artists below can be cropped, but since the top and major part of their portraits is visible, the result is creating interest and pulling attention into the next section.

How to add a downloadable file

A downloadable file is one of the options of On Click interactions, applicable to any element that has an On Click settings (text, images, menus, buttons). Let's add a downloadable file to a button. After placing the button expand the *On Click* dropdown menu and select *Download File*.



You can then select the file from your Mac, and leave the file out of your project file, in the original Finder location, or copy the file into your project file, to ensure it never accidentally gets lost.



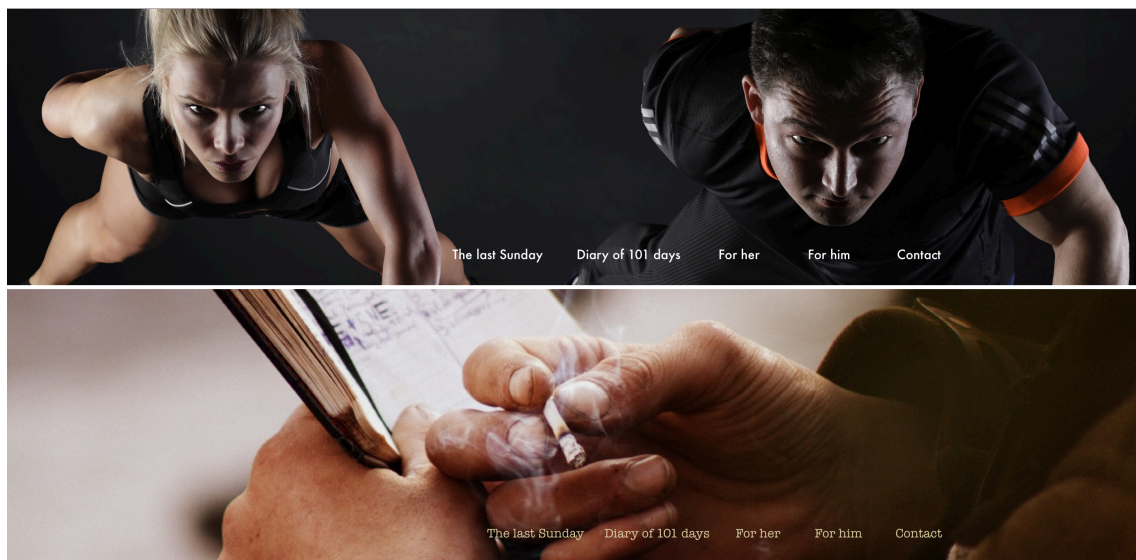
Some file types can be displayed by the browser directly, for example a PDF or a movie file, in those cases the user will need to perform an extra action to get the file into their downloads folder.

How to create an effective hero image

A hero image is essentially a large banner image, often used in conjunction with overlaying graphics, to act as an introductory experience and mood-setter for the site.

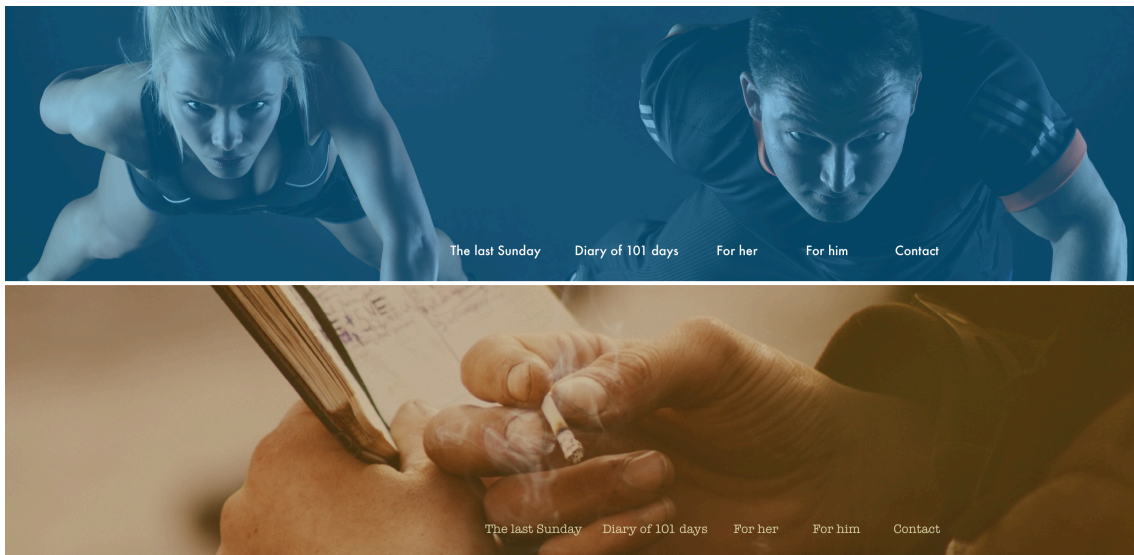
“Hero image” is a bit of an umbrella term for combinations of background pattern, image, video or animation with tints or blurring effects. While the visual set the mood and drive the eye, relevant information and actionable items are placed in the surrounding area. More than just an exercise in graphics, a hero is an excellent way to begin your website, exploring your creativity through it, with the ultimate goal of making an impactful and lasting impression.

Image choice clearly depends on the context. For example a website about exercise and intense training would focus on body pose, movement and tension of the moment. A melancholic personal blog would focus on colors and details that build the mood, like a cigarette burning away, in the dirty and calloused hands of an absent minded loner.



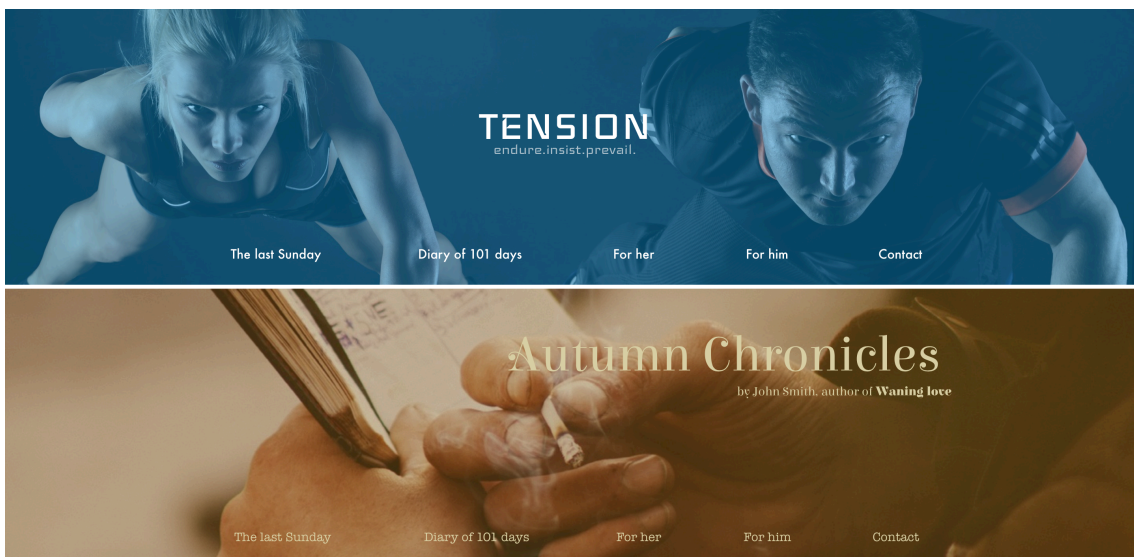
The words used are the same to better illustrate the difference in the emotional stimulation of the viewer. Similarly to the image the font type and color contrast work towards the desired effect. From here on out the pictures would diverge even more.

Lets add some overlay effects. The most commonly used effect is a color tint over the image, but behind any text:



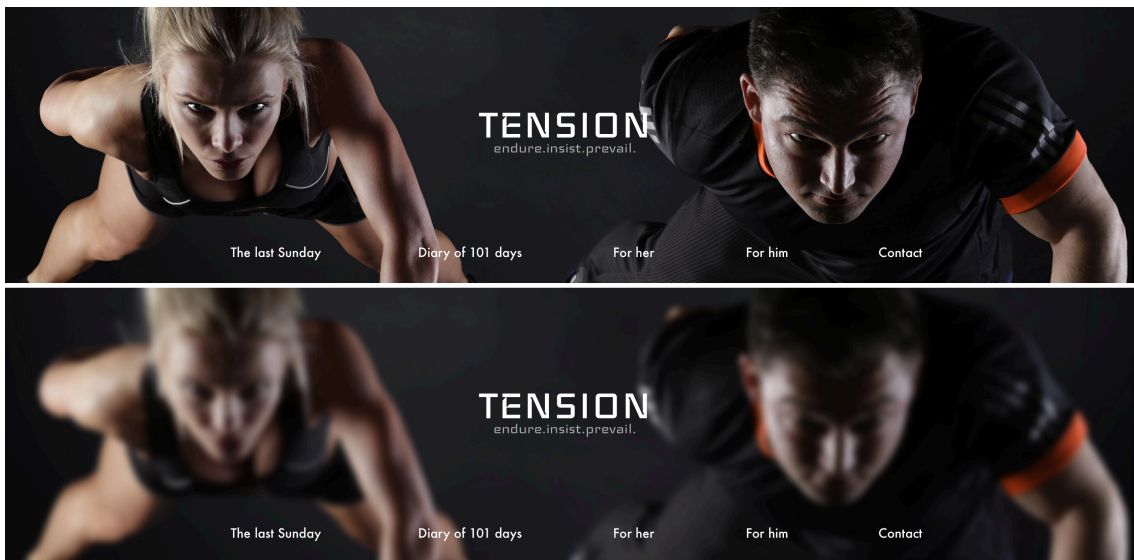
We can see right away that the images take on a supernatural quality. They are no longer talking about a realistic situation, but an idealization of their original concepts.

While interesting, there is however something wrong with the design. Since both images lost their realism as well as their visual clarity (mostly due to shadows and strong, moody colors), their being the center of the viewer attention causes a visual discomfort.



Although far from complete, the visual results are much improved. Our eyes are already drawn to the titles and header in a natural way. Of course there is no way we would have a hero image without at least a header, but it is important to realize how each component is a building block that gives birth to possibilities, and each tier introducing new elements resets the playing field.

Another popular effect for hero images is blurring:



Here you can immediately notice a big problem. The models in the image are looking straight at the viewer, but because of the blurring this intense emotional effect now ranges from awkward to comedic, rendering the effect inappropriate for this image.

If we were to set aside this problem however, we can notice several advantages. The image already had most areas covered in very dark colors, making white bold letters an obvious choice. However some parts, like the word *Diary* over the woman's elbow and the N from tension meeting the white stripes of the mans shirt, while not reducing the clarity of the text, felt awkward. All the text is centered on the frame, so moving it is not a welcome option. Thanks to the blurring this is no longer the case.

To end the chapter, remember that the hero image is the first impression of your page: it deserves a lot of your attention and time. Be spontaneous and experiment a lot to discover all kinds of creative ideas.

Here a quick test with a gradient overlay.

