



sNews Tips and Tricks

Advanced Content Positioning and Styling Techniques

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1. Introduction

This document describes styling and content positioning techniques in order to help you extend and customize your installation of sNews 1.5. Note that PHP and XHTML code displayed in this document will be marked with yellow, and CSS with green background color.

2. Using sNews with a XHTML template

Using and XHTML template with sNews is simple due to template independancy feature. Following this tutorial you will learn how to use sNews with any template.

Step 1.

Rename index.html to index.php

Assuming your template has index.html file with a valid layout structure, you first need to rename the extension to php in order to be processed correctly.

Step 2.

Start the Session and Include main engine

```
<?php session_start(); include('snews.php'); ?>
```

Paste this line on the very top of your index.php file to start the session and include snews.php file which is our engine assuming that index.php is in the same directory as snews.php.

Step 3.

Call Title Function

```
<?php title(); ?>
```

Paste this line on the beginning of the head area in your index.php file. Title function will dynamically add a page title, meta information and set charset based on the settings in the sNews administration area. Also, Title function sets base directory so you won't have to define the whole path when including stylesheets, images, etc.

Step 4.

Call Center and other Functions

```
<?php center(); ?>
```

At this point your sNews should be functional. Center Function is the most important function because all our dynamically generated main content will be displayed through this function. You should place this function inside the biggest div on your page and put other, smaller functions inside a sidebar div or similar. Now we'll start including other, smaller functions depending on our needs.

To display an unordered list of the pages we created via administration area, use:

```
<ul>

    <?php pages(); ?>

</ul>
```

This function will list all of our pages and display links to Home, Archive, Sitemap and Contact.

Categories function behaves the same way as Pages:

```
<ul>

    <?php categories(); ?>

</ul>
```

Note that the current page or category we're browsing will have active class assigned to it. This means that we can easily style current page or category link. If you created an unordered list called #menu, to style the current link you could use:

```
#menu li a.current { color: #808080; }
```

This CSS code will change only the color of the link we're currently browsing separating it from the rest in the menu.

Breadcrumbs function prints linkable path to the article or page we're browsing in the form: Home – Category – Article. To use breadcrumbs, include:

```
<?php breadcrumbs(); ?>
```

Menu Articles function displays **m** articles starting from **n**th. It displays links as an unordered list. Using menu_articles(3,1) will list 3 new articles starting from the first in descending order.

```
<ul>

    <?php menu_articles(m, n); ?>

</ul>
```

New Comments function displays **m** newly posted comments and trims them to the length **n**. Using new_comments(5,25) will list 5 new comments and trim them to the length of 25 characters.

```
<?php new_comments(m, n); ?>
```

3. Special Styling

sNews doesn't limit the appearance of your site, whole system is designed to serve as a designers backend and is flexible enough to serve content styled any way you desire. By following this tutorial you will learn how to style some common elements and avoid potential mistakes.

3.1. Styling Search Form

sNews search form consists of a simple form, input field and input button. Different browsers tend to apply different padding and/or margin properties so it's the best to either reset them or immediately apply correct ones.

```
*{ padding: 0; margin: 0; }*
```

This is a known method for resetting all default padding and margin properties to zero. This is applied to forms, input fields, headings, paragraphs and everything else. You can use this technique to ensure your form margin will be the same as the one when viewing your page in a different browser, although you can style the form alone by entering margin and padding properties using:

```
form { padding: 0; margin: 0; }
```

To style input elements such as input text or input submit button, use:

```
input.text { padding: 3px; margin: 0; }
```

```
input.searchbutton { padding: 3px; margin: 0; }
```

Setting padding property to 3px will slightly enlarge the input element giving it space to 'breathe'.

3.2. Styling Info Line

You can see the info line below any published article and page if not set otherwise.

Info line contains following links:

- readmore
- comments
- date
- edit

To style your info line, you need to edit snews.php and around the line 241 locate:

```
$tags['infoline'] = '<p class="date">,readmore,comments,date,edit,</p>';
```

Info line tags are loaded into an array and according to the data you enter are displayed below articles and pages if not set otherwise. Notice that you can insert array elements, paragraphs or something else in any order simply by dividing them with comma. Default line will create a paragraph and insert read more, comments, date and edit link. To style this paragraph in your stylesheet, you can use the following:

```
.date { padding: 5px 0; border-top: 1px solid #ccc; }
```

This will set a 5px padding to the top and the bottom and add a grey border on the top to visually divide the info line from the article body.

Let's take a look at another example on how you can style info line:

```
$tags['info'] = '<p class="info">comments,date,readmore,edit,</p>';
```

At this point, we just need to style our paragraph:

```
.info { border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 4px 5px; margin: 5px 0; }
```

Note that you can also insert whitespaces, special characters or images to divide the individual array elements.

3.3. Styling Comments

Styling comments is as easy as styling info line. Edit snews.php and locate line 242.

Comments tag contains the following attributes:

- name
- date
- comment
- edit

4. Manual linking

Because base directory is being set within the title() function we can call internal sNews functions easily. Archives, Sitemap and Contact don't necessary have to be listed along with other pages in the menu, instead we can manually place any link within our page.

Linking examples of built in functions:

```
<a href="rss/" title="RSS Feed" accesskey="r">RSS Feed</a>
```

```
<a href="contact/" title="Contact" accesskey="c">Contact</a>
```

```
<a href="sitemap/" title="Sitemap" accesskey="s">Sitemap</a>
```

```
<a href="archive/" title="Browse Archive" accesskey="a">Archive</a>
```

Manual linking to categories or articles is also simple:

```
<a href="home/my-family/" title="My Family" accesskey="m">My Family</a>
```

5. Using Extra Function

To place the extra function and start using it, in your index.php paste:

```
<?php extra(); ?>
```

Extra function is used to display unlimited extra contents and to behave differently depending on the page or category we're browsing.

The best way to learn how the Extra function works, login and go to your administration area. Add New Extra contents and under customize fieldset select the category or page. Now browse the category or page you've selected and see how the extra function behaves.

Classic example of usage would be to create an „About Us“ page and add extra contents with contact info selected to appear only on that page. This way your whole page could be reorganized dynamically. For more advanced solutions see chapter 6: Using Special Statements for Advance Content Positioning.

6. Using Special Statements for Advanced Content Positioning

We can use statements to display certain elements depending on what we're browsing.

Example #1:

To write something only when viewing article called „biology“, we use:

```
<?php
    if ( get_id('article') == 'biology' ) {
        echo 'Viewing article BIOLOGY';
    }
?>
```

Example #2:

Let's say we want to write something only when viewing a category called „physics“:

```
<?php
    if ( get_id('category') == 'physics' ) {
        echo 'Viewing category PHYSICS';
    }
?>
```

Example #3:

If we want to display a notice depending on our login status, we use:

```
<?php

    if ( isset($_SESSION[db('website').'Logged_In']) ) {

        echo 'Logged In';

    } else {

        echo 'Logged Out';

    }

?>
```

7. Credits and Licence information

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