

2011



**USER GUIDE**

Modifying User Interface with CSS

Code On Time applications rely exclusively on Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to provide all presentation elements of generated web applications with colors, fonts, backgrounds, borders, paddings, margins, and other embellishments.

Here is a typical screen that you will find in an application generated with the default theme.

The screenshot shows a web application interface titled "MyCompany". The top navigation bar includes links for History, Permalink, Welcome admin, Today is Wednesday, January 12, 2011, My Account, Logout, and Help. Below the navigation is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Categories > Products. A left sidebar contains sections for About (describing product management), See Also (links to Home, Customers, Employees, Customer Demographics, Region, Reports, and Membership), and a "Products" icon. The main content area displays a table of products with columns for Product Name, Supplier Company Name, Category Name, Quantity Per Unit, Unit Price, Units In Stock, Units On Order, Reorder Level, and Discontinued. The table lists items like Chai, Chang, Aniseed Syrup, etc. At the bottom of the table are navigation links for « Previous, Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Next » and a refresh link.

Product Name	Supplier Company Name	Category Name	Quantity Per Unit	Unit Price	Units In Stock	Units On Order	Reorder Level	Discontinued
Chai	Exotic Liquids	Beverages	10 boxes x 20 bags	\$18.00	39	0	10	No
Chang	Exotic Liquids	Beverages	24 - 12 oz bottles	\$19.00	17	40	25	No
Aniseed Syrup	Exotic Liquids	Condiments	12 - 550 ml bottles	\$10.00	13	70	25	No
Chef Anton's Cajun Seasoning	New Orleans Cajun Delights***	Condiments	48 - 6 oz jars	\$22.00	53	0	0	No
Chef Anton's Gumbo Mix	Tokyo Traders	Confections	36 boxes	\$21.35	0	0	0	Yes
Grandma's Boysenberry Spread	Grandma Kelly's Homestead	Condiments	12 - 8 oz jars	\$25.00	120	0	25	No
Uncle Bob's Organic Dried Pears	Grandma Kelly's Homestead	Produce	12 - 1 lb pkgs.	\$30.00	15	0	10	No
Northwoods Cranberry Sauce	Grandma Kelly's Homestead	Condiments	12 - 12 oz jars	\$40.00	6	0	0	No
Mishi Kobe Niku	Tokyo Traders	Meat/Poultry	18 - 500 g pkgs.	\$97.00	29	0	0	Yes
Ikura	Tokyo Traders	Seafood	12 - 200 ml jars	\$31.00	31	0	0	No

If you load your application in *Internet Explorer* browser, press F12 to bring up the *Developer Toolbar* and select *Disable / CSSoption* on the toolbar then the page will looks similar to the following screen shot.

This screenshot shows the same web application in Internet Explorer with the developer tools (F12) open. The page appears mostly normal, but there are some styling artifacts and missing styles. The table data remains the same as in the first screenshot.

As you can see the page is “black on white” with a few blue links and lacks any style. This allows for total customization of the user interface. You may choose to follow the route of complete user interface customization from scratch or add incremental enhancements to the existing themes provided by Code On Time.

Here is how you can proceed with minor enhancements.

Activate *Developer Toolbar* window and select *Disable/CSS* one more time to enable the stylesheets in the browser window.

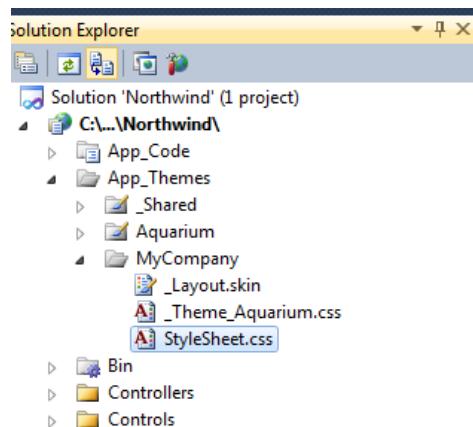
Click on the “arrow” icon of the Developer Toolbar and inspect any column in a data row of the grid view. If the selection rectangle does not show up when you move the mouse pointer over the page then click the “arrow” again to turn the selection mode off and hit “refresh” icon. Try selecting the UI element on the page again. This is needed if you have activated the toolbar and then interacted with the page in the browser. The toolbar will not be aware of the changes produced by AJAX scripts.

The screen shot shows a thin blue box around the cell in the first row of the *Products* grid in *Category Name* column. The *Developer Toolbar* on top of the browser shows the HTML corresponding to the selection. Three CSS classes *Cell*, *CategoryID*, and *StringType* are assigned to the table cell.

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Internet Explorer window displaying the 'Products' page of a web application. The URL is <http://localhost:47686/Northwind/Pages/Products.aspx>. The page title is 'Products'. The main content area shows a grid of products with columns: Product Name, Supplier Company Name, Category Name, Quantity Per Unit, Unit Price, Units In Stock, Units On Order, Reorder Level, and Discontinued. The first product listed is 'Chai' from 'Exotic Liquids' in the 'Beverages' category. A thin blue selection box highlights the 'Beverages' category cell in the first row. Below the grid, the 'Developer Tools' window is open, showing the 'HTML' tab with the selected element being the 'Category Name' cell. The 'Style' tab displays the applied CSS rules: 'inherited - body', 'BODY', 'inherited - table', and 'TABLE.DataView TR TD'. The 'Layout' tab shows the table structure, and the 'Attributes' tab shows the element's attributes. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Local intranet | Protected Mode: Off' and '100%'. The developer toolbar at the top has the 'Disable/CSS' button highlighted.

We will change the presentation of *CategoryID* field column to occupy 200 pixels horizontally.

Open your project in Visual Studio or Visual Web Developer. Select the folder `~/App_Themes/MyCompany` and add the new CSS stylesheet item to your project. "MyCompany" is the default namespace of Code On Time projects. If you have changed the namespace of your project then choose the corresponding folder in the *Solution Explorer*.



Enter the following CSS rule into the stylesheet.

```
.Cell.CategoryID  
{  
    width: 200px;  
}
```

Run the project and refresh the contents of the browser window. The third column *Category Name* of the grid view is now substantially wider.

A screenshot of a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar shows 'Products - Windows Internet Explorer' and the URL 'http://localhost:47686/Northwind/Pages/Products.aspx'. The page title is 'Products'. The header includes links for Home, Customers, Employees, Categories (which is selected), Customer Demographics, Region, Reports, and Membership. A 'Site Actions' dropdown is also present. The main content area shows a grid of product data. The columns are: Product Name, Supplier Company Name, Category Name, Quantity Per Unit, Unit Price, Units In Stock, Units On Order, Reorder Level, and Discontinued. The 'Category Name' column is notably wider than the others. The grid contains 10 rows of product information. At the bottom of the grid, there are navigation links for '« Previous | Page: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | Next »' and a message 'Items per page: 10, 15, 20, 25 | Showing 1-10 of 77 items | Refresh'. The footer of the page includes a copyright notice '© 2010 MyCompany. All rights reserved.' and a status bar at the bottom right showing 'Local intranet | Protected Mode: Off | 100%'.

Use similar techniques to alter other elements of the user interface in your Code On Time applications.

Notice that sometimes your own CSS rules will come into conflict with the rules of core theme. Use the word “!important” right after the value of the CSS property as shown in the following example.

```
.Cell.CategoryID  
{  
    width: 200px !important;  
}
```