
SWsoft, Inc.

Creating and Installing Custom Plesk for Windows Skins

Plesk 7.5 for Windows

Revision 1.0



(c) 1999-2005

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Documentation Conventions

Before you start using this guide, it is important to understand the documentation conventions used in it. For information on specialized terms used in the documentation, see the Glossary at the end of this document.

Typographical Conventions

The following kinds of formatting in the text identify special information.

Formatting convention	Type of Information	Example
Special Bold	Items you must select, such as menu options, command buttons, or items in a list.	Go to the QoS tab.
	Titles of chapters, sections, and subsections.	Read the Basic Administration chapter.
<i>Italics</i>	Used to emphasize the importance of a point, to introduce a term or to designate a command line placeholder, which is to be replaced with a real name or value.	These are the so-called <i>shared VPSs</i> . <code>msiexec /i <name of the aforementioned *.msi file or GUID></code>
Monospace	The names of commands, files, and directories.	Install Plesk into the "c:\plesk bin" directory
Preformatted	On-screen computer output in your command-line sessions; logs; source code in XML, C++, or other programming languages.	05:31:49 Success. Admin John Smith was added.

General Conventions

- Chapters in this guide are divided into sections, which, in turn, are subdivided into subsections. For example, **Documentation Conventions** is a section, and **General Conventions** is a subsection.
- When following steps or using examples, be sure to type double-quotes ("), left single-quotes ('), and right single-quotes (') exactly as shown.

Feedback

If you spot a typo in this guide, or if you have thought of a way to make this guide better, we would love to hear from you!

If you have a suggestion for improving the documentation (or any other relevant comments), try to be as specific as possible when formulating it. If you have found an error, please include the chapter/section/subsection name and some of the surrounding text so that we could find it easily.

Please submit a report by e-mail to userdocs@swsoft.com.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

This document is a guide to creating and installing *skins* - custom interface appearance styles - for Plesk. Here you can find the structure of skin directories as well as their contents description, instructions on how to create your own custom skin and how to install it and make useable on your server.

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What Is Skin?

In Plesk, a skin is a set of CSS and image files. The CSS files define the style of the Plesk interface elements; the image files are the Plesk interface icons, logotype images and other pictures, used in CSS files. All these files, placed in corresponding sub-directories, compose the structure of the *skin directory*.

Note: The development and/or modification of a skin require a strong knowledge of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS). It is absolutely necessary due to the fact that the process of creating a custom skin is largely a matter of editing selectors in CSS files.

Skins are an easy and flexible way to diversify your Plesk user interface appearance. Using skins you can change the colors of the interface areas, set new fonts properties, use different images for icons in the interface, etc.

It takes only a few clicks to replace one skin with another. Different skins can be used by different users at one server.

Areas of User Interface

The Plesk user interface can logically be split into three parts: *top area*, *left (navigation) area* and *main area*.

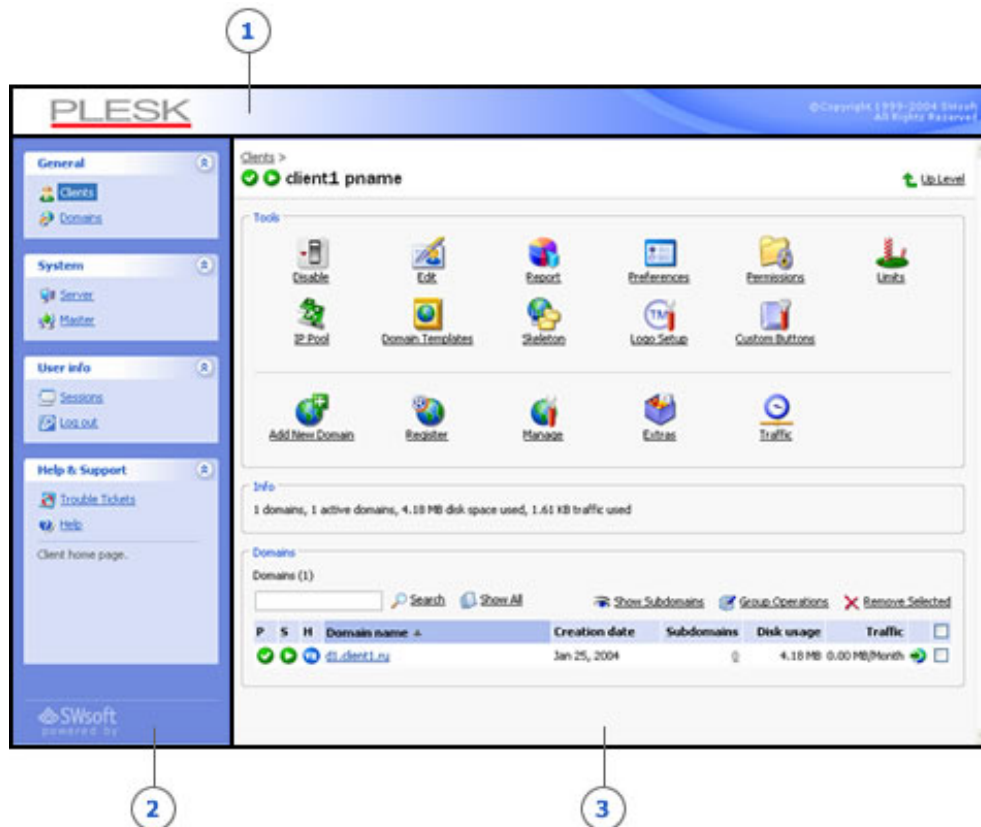


Figure 1: Workspace areas

- 1 *top area* contains the logotype image
- 2 *left (navigation) area* contains navigation items and context help area
- 3 *main area* contains the groups of available operations (based on the current context), input forms, lists, and other similar interface elements

Each such area allows for individual customization of appearance within a skin.

Files That Compose Skin

custom.css and layout.css

Each interface area has the two corresponding CSS files describing its appearance:

- `custom.css` contains selectors for visual properties (color, font, etc.) of the user interface elements
- `layout.css` contains selectors that define the layout of the user interface elements

Note: The option of modifying the `layout.css` file is recommended only for the advanced CSS designers.

The `custom.css` and `layout.css` in the `help\` directory within the skin directory define the appearance of the Help pages.

buttons.css

Additionally the main area uses file `buttons.css`, which defines the appearance of certain buttons in the user interface. For example, in the *XP-skins* it defines what images are used for the icons in the Tools groups.

This file is not a requirement and is not needed if the appearance of multiple buttons is not redefined in the skin. `buttons.css` is addressed from `main\custom.css`, its contents were separated only for the sake of ease of use.

general.css

The file `general.css` contains style settings common for all interface elements. The style specified here will be applied when displaying an interface element unless it was specifically redefined for the corresponding area of the user interface.

tabs.css

The file `tabs.css` contains style settings, which define appearance of tab elements.

info.xml

When you access the **Skin Properties** page within the **Skins repository** in Plesk, it displays the information on skin, such as author's name, creation date, screenshots and descriptions. This information is stored in the `info.xml` file, which is located in the skin directory. The thumbnails and screenshots are stored in the `screenshots\` directory.

Image files

Image files are stored in three directories:

- `icons\` contains image files required for the user interface (state/status icons, list operations, etc.)
- `images\` contains image files used with the specific skin for customizing elements, set of these can be different for different skins. Links to these images are provided in the CSS files
- `screenshots\` contains control panel screenshots and thumbnails.

Structure Of Skin Directory

The skin directories are located in `%plesk_dir%admin\htdocs\skins` (where `%plesk_dir%` is a system variable set by the Plesk installer which designates the Plesk installation directory)

Note: There should be no slash after `%plesk_dir%` because the path in this variable already has one.

The structure of the skin directory:

- `custom_skin\` - a custom skin directory
 - `css\` - all CSS files
 - `top\`
 - `custom.css`
 - `layout.css`
 - `left\`
 - `custom.css`
 - `layout.css`
 - `main\`
 - `custom.css`
 - `layout.css`
 - `tabs.css`
 - `help\`
 - `custom.css`
 - `layout.css`
 - `general.css`
 - `icons\` - all of the Plesk interface icons
 - `images\` - all image files, referenced in the CSS files
 - `screenshots\` - screenshots and thumbnails, referenced in the skin description file
 - `info.xml` - the file that stores the skin description

CHAPTER 3

Creating Skin

This chapter provides instructions on how to compose a new skin and prepare a skin package for uploading to the control panel. The first main step in this process is the creation of the skin directory's structure along with all its files, another is the actual customization of the visual appearance (see page 14) of the user interface's elements by editing the properties in the corresponding CSS files of the skin. The last step is preparing a skin package.

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Creation Of Skin Directory

In order to create the skin directory you need to create the structure of directories along with the corresponding CSS files as described in the section Structure Of Skin Directory. When this task is complete, you can proceed to editing the style properties.

In order to speed up and simplify the creation of the skin directory, you can make use of an already existing skin (one of the default ones) installed on your server as a template for your own custom skin.

Create your future skin directory (e.g. `my_skin`) using the Explorer. Copy one of the default skins to this directory. The directory where all skins are located in Plesk is `%plesk_dir%admin\htdocs\skins`. So, you need to go there using the Explorer, copy one of the folders with a skin (e.g. `winxp.blue`) and paste it to your newly created directory.

At this point you will have the complete skin directory structure along with the CSS and image files of the Plesk default skin `winxp.blue` in your skin directory (`my_skin\`).

The skin template is ready to be used. Now you can begin editing the CSS files and adding in the necessary image files within the skin directories creating your unique style of Plesk user interface appearance.

Customizable Properties

Every type of the user interface's element that can be customized is described by the corresponding selectors within the appropriate CSS files of the skin. This section considers the areas of the user interface and gives the listing of these selectors and elements they correspond to, as well as provides simple examples of using these selectors in the CSS files.

General

The properties that are common for all areas of interface are assigned in the file `general.css`.

General properties

UI Element	Selector	CSS code sample
common background, font	<code>body, td, th</code>	<pre>body { font-family: Tahoma, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 11px; font-weight: normal; color: #000000; background-color: #f6f6f6; } td, th { font-family: Tahoma, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 11px; }</pre>
form elements	<code>input, select, textare</code>	<pre>input, select, textarea { font-family: Tahoma, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 11px; }</pre>
link	<code>a</code>	<pre>a:link, a:visited, a:hover { color: #0240a3; }</pre>

Further, for the specific elements, these properties can be redefined as desired.

Top Area

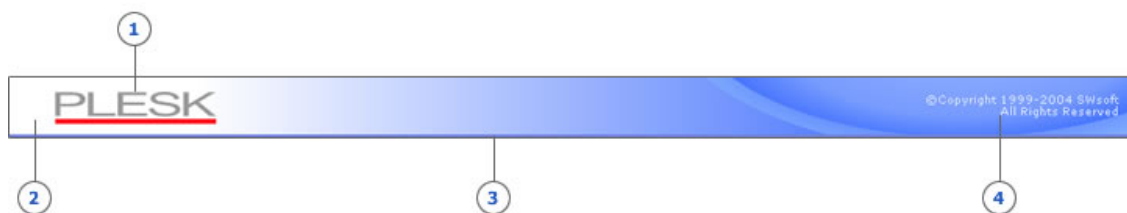


Figure 2: Top area

- 1 *logotype image*
- 2 *background*
- 3 *frame separator line*
- 4 *top right image*

Top area properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1	can be set through the user's interface, but the default image is contained in the skin (images\def_plesk_logo.gif)	-----
2, 3	body	<pre>body { background-color: #ffffff; background-image: url(..\..\images\top_bg.jpg); background-repeat: repeat-x; background-position: left bottom; }</pre>
4	.body	<pre>.body { background-image: url(..\..\images\top_body_bg.jpg); background-repeat: no-repeat; background-position: top right; }</pre>

Left Navigation Area



Figure 3: Left navigation area

- 1 *background*
- 2 *navigation sections header background*
- 3 *navigation sections header*
- 4 *expand/collapse navigation section*
- 5 *navigation section area*
- 6 *navigation item*
- 7 *selected navigation item*
- 8 *logged in user info*
- 9 *context help*
- 10 *'powered by' logotype image*

Left navigation area properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1.	body	<pre>body { background-color: #6e89dd; }</pre>
2.	.navOpened .navClosed	<pre>.navOpened, .navClosed { background-color: #ffffff; }</pre>
3.	.navOpened .navTitle .titleText .navClosed .navTitle .titleText	<pre>.navOpened .navTitle .titleText, .navClosed .navTitle .titleText { color: #215dc6; }</pre>
3.	Mouse over .navOpened .navTitleOver .titleText .navClosed .navTitleOver .titleText	<pre>.navOpened .navTitleOver .titleText, .navClosed .navTitleOver .titleText { color: #428eff; }</pre>
4.	.navTitle .titleHandle	<pre>.navTitle .titleHandle { background-color: #215dc6; }</pre>
4.	Mouse over .navTitleOver .titleHandle	<pre>.navTitleOver .titleHandle { background-color: #428eff; }</pre>
5.	.tree	<pre>.tree { background-color: #d6dff7; }</pre>

6.	.name	<pre>.name a:link, .name a:visited, .name a:active { color: #215dc6; } .name a:hover { color: #428eff; }</pre>
7.	.nodeActive .name	<pre>.nodeActive .name { background-color: #3878bf; } .nodeActive .name a:link, .nodeActive .name a:hover, .nodeActive .name a:visited, .nodeActive .name a:active { color: white; }</pre>
8.	#userInfo	<pre>#userInfo { color: #555555; }</pre>
9.	#contexthelp	<pre>#contexthelp { color: #555555; border-top: 1px solid #A7B8EB; }</pre>
10.	body	<pre>body { background-image: url(..\..\images\powered_by.gif); background-position: left bottom; background-repeat: no-repeat; }</pre>

Main Area

The main area consists of two smaller areas:

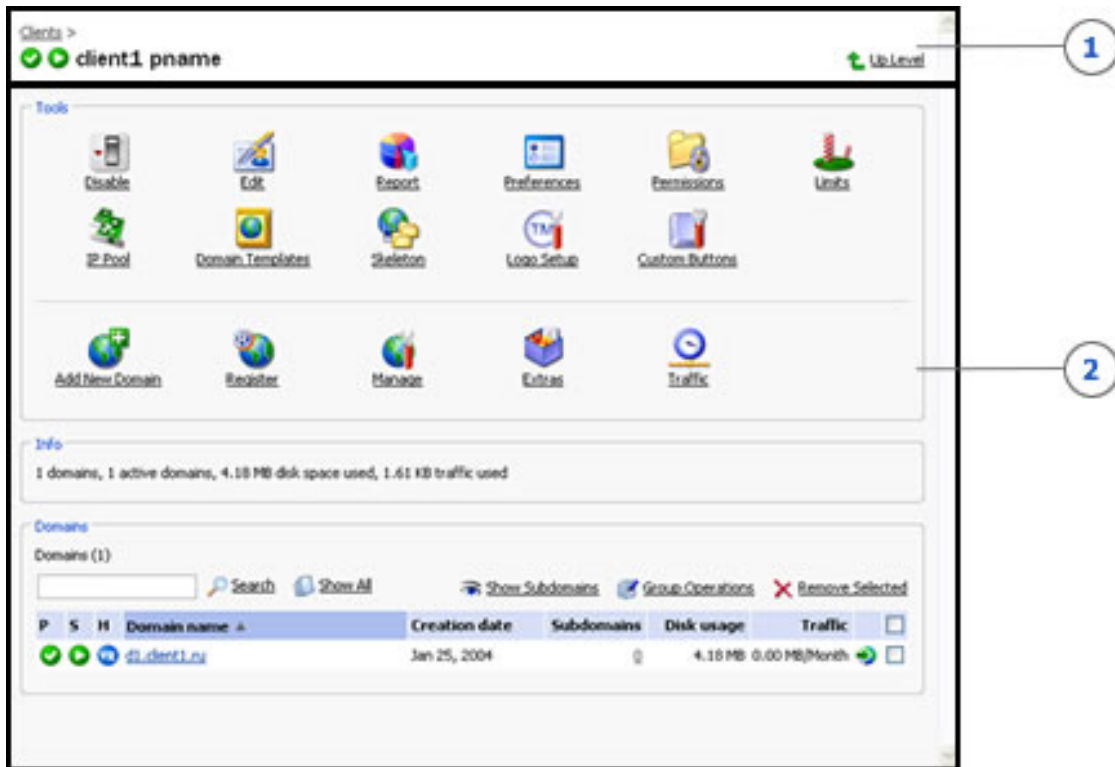


Figure 4: Main area

- 1 screen title - the title of the currently displayed screen
- 2 screen content - the currently available (visible) set of operations, input forms, lists, etc.

Following is the description of sub-areas that compose the main area and of their elements in detail.

Screen Title

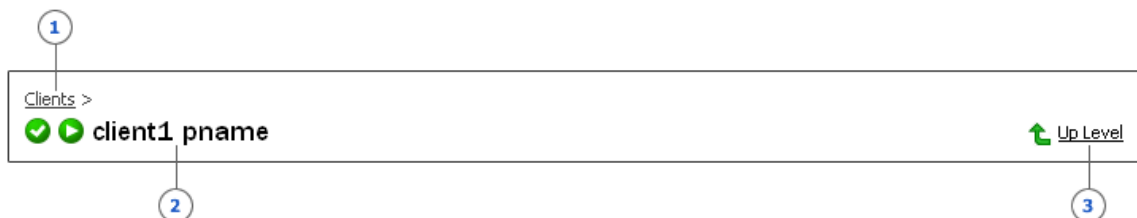


Figure 5: Title area

- 1 path bar
- 2 title

3 'up level' link

Screen title properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1	.pathbar	<pre>.pathbar { background: #ffffff; color: #444444; } .pathbar a:link, .pathbar a:visited, .pathbar a:hover { color: #444444; }</pre>
2	.screenTitle	<pre>.pathbar a:link, .pathbar a:visited, .pathbar a:hover { color: #444444; }</pre>
3	.uplevel .commonButton span icon can be changed using #bid-up-level in buttons.css	<pre>.uplevel .commonButton span { text-decoration: underline; } in buttons.css: #bid-up-level span { background-image: url(..\..\images\btn_uplevel_bg.gif); }</pre>

General Screen Content

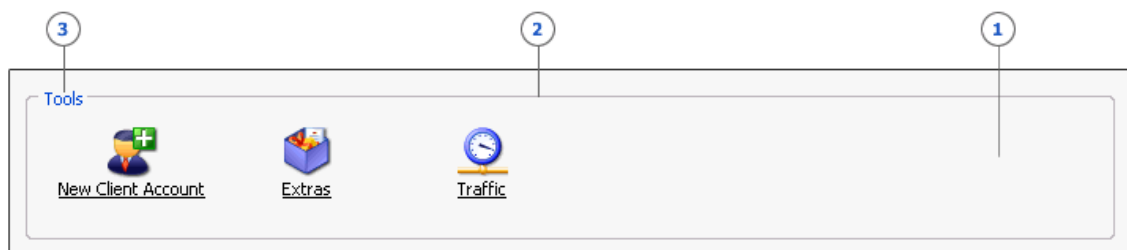


Figure 6: General screen content

1 screen content background

- 2 *fieldset for grouping ui elements*
- 3 *fieldset title*

General screen content properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1.	body	<pre>body { background: #F9F8F8; }</pre>
2.	fieldset	<pre>fieldset { }</pre> <p>Presently not available, using default value.</p>
3.	legend	<pre>legend { color: #0046D5; }</pre>

Tools

The set of operations at the current screen:

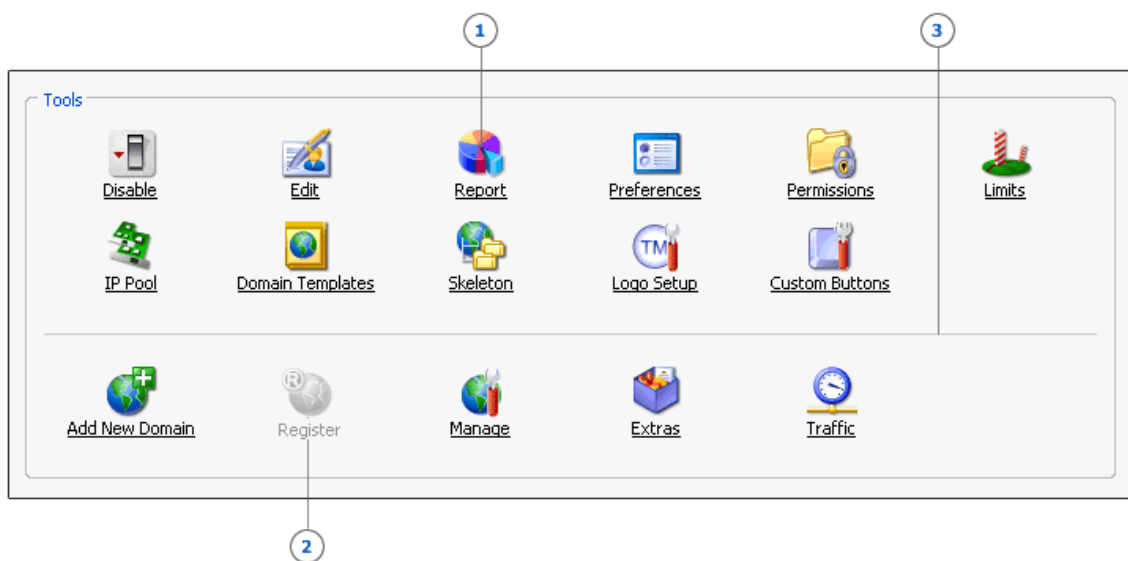


Figure 7: Tools area

- 1 *tool*
- 2 *tool (disabled)*
- 3 *separator*

Tools properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1.	.toolsArea .commonButton icons are customized through id's (e.g. #bid-report) in buttons.css	.toolsArea .commonButton { text-decoration: underline; } in buttons.css: #bid-report { background-image: url(..\..\images\btn_report_bg.gif); }
2.	.toolsArea span.commonButton icons are customized through id's (e.g. #bid-report) in buttons.css	.toolsArea span.commonButton { color: #999999; text-decoration: none; } in buttons.css: #bid-register-disabled { background-image: url(..\..\images\btn_register-disabled_bg.gif); }
1.	hr	hr { color: #cccccc; background-color: #cccccc; height: 1px; }

Lists

The list of objects:

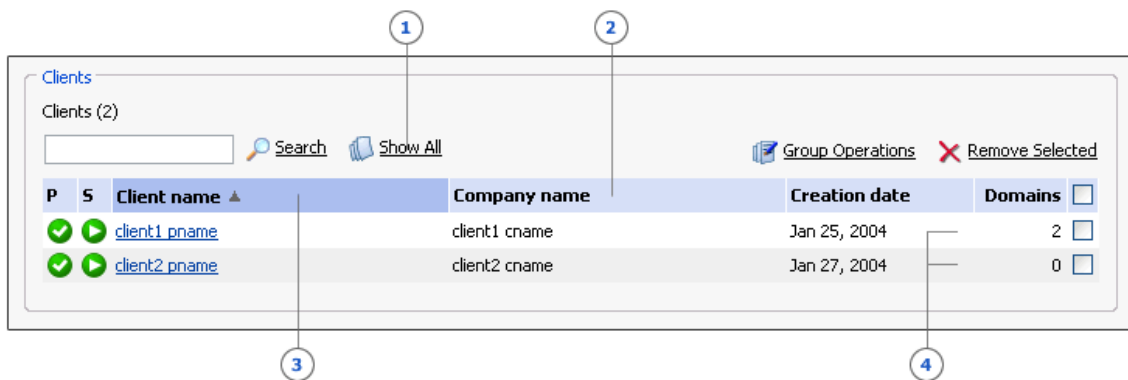


Figure 8: List area

- 1** *operations on lists*
- 2** *table header*
- 3** *table header (list sorted by selected parameter)*
- 4** *table's rows*

Lists properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1.	.buttons .commonButton span icons are customized through id's (e.g. #bid-report) in buttons.css	<pre>.buttons .commonButton span { text-decoration: underline; } in buttons.css: #bid-show-all span { background-image: url(..\..\images\btn_show-all_bg.gif); }</pre>
2.	th	<pre>th { text-align: left; background: #D6DFF7; border-right: 1px solid #ffffff; border-bottom: 1px solid #ffffff; } th a:link, th a:visited { color: #000000; text-decoration: none; } th a:hover { text-decoration: underline; }</pre>
3.	.sort	<pre>.sort { background-color: #ABBEEF; }</pre>
4.	.oddrowbg - for odd rows .evenrowbg - for even rows	<pre>.evenrowbg { background-color: #F0F0F0; } .oddrowbg { background-color: #ffffff; }</pre>

Dialog Forms

The image shows a 'Client form' dialog box with the following fields and controls:

- Company name**: Text input field.
- Contact name ***: Text input field with a red asterisk indicating it is required.
- Login ***: Text input field with a red asterisk.
- Password ***: Text input field with a red asterisk.
- Confirm Password ***: Text input field with a red asterisk.
- Phone**: Text input field.
- Fax**: Text input field.
- E-mail**: Text input field.
- Address**: Text input field.
- City**: Text input field.
- State/Province**: Text input field.
- Postal/ZIP code**: Text input field.
- Country**: Dropdown menu with 'United States' selected.
- Interface language**: Dropdown menu with 'English' selected.
- Select template**: Dropdown menu with 'Create client without template' selected.
- Proceed to client's IP pool configuring**: Checkmark box that is checked.
- * Required fields**: Footnote at the bottom left.
- OK** and **Cancel**: Buttons at the bottom right.

Numbered callouts in the image:

- 1**: Points to the 'Company name' label.
- 2**: Points to the asterisk on 'Contact name'.
- 3**: Points to the '* Required fields' footnote.
- 4**: Points to the 'OK' button.

Figure 9: Form area

- 1 *parameter name*
- 2 *'required' indicator*
- 3 *footnote*
- 4 *button*

Dialog forms properties

N	Selector	CSS code sample
1.	.name	<pre>.name { font-weight: bold; color: #555555; }</pre>
2.	.required	<pre>.required { color: #cc0000; }</pre>
3.	.footnote	<pre>.footnote { color: #666666; }</pre>
4.	<p>.commonButton .buttons .commonButton span</p> <p>icons are customized through id's (e.g. #bid-report) in buttons.css</p>	<pre>.commonButton button { font-family: Tahoma, Verdana, Arial, Helvetica, sans-serif; font-size: 11px; color: #000000; background-color: transparent; background-image: url(..\..\images\btn_bg.gif); border: 0 solid white; background-repeat: no-repeat; } in buttons.css: #bid-ok button { background-image: url(..\..\images\btn_ok_bg.gif); padding-left: 8px; }</pre>

Tabs

Properties of certain system objects can be grouped by means of tabs:



Figure 10: Screen tabs



Figure 11: Tabs

- 1 tab item
- 2 active tab
- 3 last tab
- 4 tabs panel

Properties of tabs are defined in the `tabs.css` file.

General properties

UI Element	Selector	CSS code sample
1. Tab item	<code>#tabs a, #tabs li</code>	<pre>#tabs a { display: block; background:url("../..\icons\tabs\right.gif") no-repeat right top; padding:5px 9px 4px 4px; vertical-align: baseline; text-decoration: none; color: #000000; } #tabs li { float:left; background:url("../..\icons\tabs\left.gif") no-repeat left top; margin:0; padding:0 0 0 2px; border-bottom: solid 1px #776655; }</pre>
2. Active tab	<code>#tabs #current</code>	<pre>#tabs #current { border-width: 0; } #tabs #current { background- image:url("../..\icons\tabs\left_on.gif"); margin-left: -3px; } #tabs #current a { background- image:url("../..\icons\tabs\right_on.gif"); padding:3px 9px 7px 6px; vertical-align: baseline; }</pre>

3. Last tab	#tabs last	<pre>#tabs .last a { background- image:url("../..\icons\tabs\right_last.gif"); }</pre>
4. Tabs panel	#screenTabs, #tabs, #tabs ul	<pre>#screenTabs { float:left; width: 100%; min-height: 1px; height: 1px; background:#ffffff url("../..\icons\tabs\bg.gif") repeat-x bottom; } td > #screenTabs { height: auto; } #tabs { float:left; width:600px; line-height:normal; white-space: nowrap; background:#ffffff url("../..\icons\tabs\bg.gif") repeat-x bottom; } #tabs ul { margin:0; padding: 0px 10px 10px 10px; list-style:none; }</pre>

Help

The Help pages properties that can be customized:

Help properties

UI Element	Selector	CSS code sample
Header level 1	h1	<pre>h1 { font-size: 16px; }</pre>
Header level 2	h2	<pre>h2 { font-size: 14px; }</pre>

Skin Description

Once you are done with preparing CSS and image files, you can create a description file for it. You can choose to edit the file you copied from a standard Plesk skin, or create a new `info.xml` file.

Following is the source code that you can use for your description file:

```
<?xml version="1.0" encoding="UTF-8"?>
<!DOCTYPE PLESKSKIN SYSTEM "pleskskin.dtd">
<PLESKSKIN>
  <INFO>
    <PLESKVERSION>7.1.x</PLESKVERSION>
    <VERSION>1.0.0</VERSION>
    <DATE>2004-08-05</DATE>
    <NAME>
      <LOCALESTRING language="en">Your skin name</LOCALESTRING>
    </NAME>
    <DESCRIPTION>
      <LOCALESTRING language="en">Your skin description
here</LOCALESTRING>
    </DESCRIPTION>
    <AUTHOR>Your name here</AUTHOR>
  </INFO>
  <SCREENSHOTS>
    <SCREENSHOT>
      <NAME>
        <LOCALESTRING language="en"> Screen title, e.g. Server
Administration page </LOCALESTRING>
      </NAME>
      <DESCRIPTION>
        <LOCALESTRING language="en">This is how the control panel's
server management
section looks like with my skin</LOCALESTRING>
      </DESCRIPTION>
      <SRC>screenshots\screenshot1.gif</SRC>
      <THUMB>screenshots\screenshot1_thumb.gif</THUMB>
    </SCREENSHOT>
  </SCREENSHOTS>
</PLESKSKIN>
```

Be sure to place your screenshots and thumbnails to the `screenshots\` directory of the skin. You can include as many screenshots as you wish.

Note: Inside each `<NAME>` or `<DESCRIPTION>` element you can have several entries in different languages. This can be useful, for instance, when the Administrator's control panel language is set to German - the corresponding entries in German will be displayed, if supplied.

To include an entry in German, use the `<LOCALESTRING>` tag with attribute `language="de"`:

```
<DESCRIPTION>
  <LOCALESTRING language="en">Your control panel skin description
here</LOCALESTRING>
```

```
<LOCALESTRING language="de">Dies ist die Beschreibung Ihres  
Control Panel Skins</LOCALESTRING>  
</DESCRIPTION>
```

For other languages, use the respective two-character language codes.

Preparing Skin Package for Uploading To Control Panel

Once the skin contents are prepared, you need to create a skin package in order to be able to install your skin into the control panel. It is recommended that you use your favorite archiver software to pack all the skin files and directories in a *.zip or *.tar.gz archive, and then simply upload the created archive file to the control panel's skins repository.

CHAPTER 4

Installing Skin

To install a skin to the control panel, you need to upload a skin package to the control panel's skins repository. To do this, follow these steps:

- 1 Log in to Plesk control panel as Administrator.
- 2 Click **Server** in the navigation pane.
- 3 Click the **Skins** icon in the Control Panel group.
- 4 Click **Add New Skin**.
- 5 Specify the skin package file location and click **OK**.

Once the skin package is in the repository, you can apply it to the control panel. To do this, on the **Server Administration** page click **Preferences**, select your skin, and click **OK**.

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