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## Campus...

is the ultimate way to sell to schools and teachers. Created by our award-winning digital agency that has pioneered digital and inbound marketing to the UK education sector since 2007.

With Campus you can access school data, send marketing campaigns, convert teachers into subscribers, monitor your sales funnel, react in real-time to leads, and ultimately close more sales.

#### This report was created by Jen.

"I'm Jen, Lead Coder at Sprint Education, where I've coded and built hundreds of email campaigns for clients such as BBC, Tesco, University of the Arts London, and Roald Dahl's Children's Charity.

I'm here to help you decipher coding jargon and break down marketing barriers using the powerful Email Module in Campus. "



Jen Elliott
Lead Coder Sprint Education
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# 5 things you should know...

If you're new to HTML email then there are a few key things you should know:

- 1. To build in HTML you must use tables, rows and columns.
- 2. The simpler you keep your email the better. Focus on your message.
- 3. Emails should be 600px in width, which is the size of the average preview pane of an inbox.
- 4. Always assume your images will be blocked by email clients (like Outlook). Ensure you can still get your message across to the recipient without the images.
- 5. Never create an email campaign as one big image. It's likely to be flagged as spam and probably won't even reach the inbox.

# **The Building Blocks**

Every HTML email includes email tags. Here are the most common tags that you will come across.

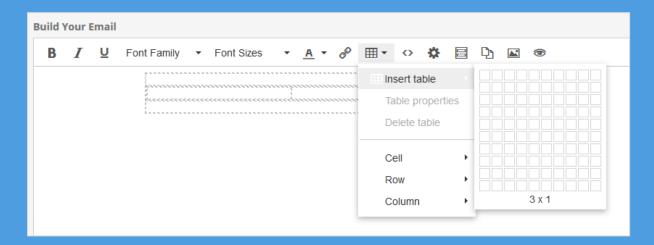
- <html></html> The opening <html> tag and the closing </html> are the first and last tags in an HTML document.
- <head></head> The opening and closing head tags are where you put the title and styling.
- <body></body>This is where you put your content.
- Build your content using tables with rows and columns. We'll go through this later.

# Using Tables for the Layout of Your Email

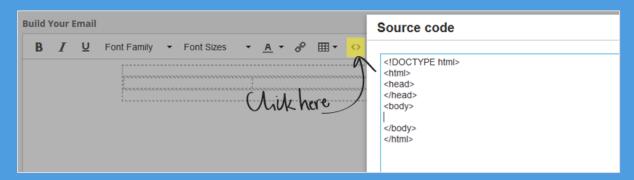
Think of tables as the kind you can create in Microsoft Word. You can create a table with 3 rows and 1 column, or 2 rows and 6 columns; whatever suits your content.

There are two ways you can build tables in Campus:

- 1. Use the WYSIWYG table feature
- 2. Write directly into the source code



Above is a screenshot of the Campus WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) editor with the table feature opened up. Below is a screenshot of the source code and where you would hand code your email.



If you're a beginner, you should use the table feature in the WYSIWYG editor. Throughout this article I will show you how to use the table feature and then I'll show you how you can write straight into the source code.

### The Rules of Tables:

- ✓ **ALWAYS** assign widths to tables, columns and cells everything!
- ✓ **ALWAYS** assign alignments in EVERY cell.
- ✓ **ALWAYS** style the cell you have text sat inside of.
- ✓ **ALWAYS** use tables to create margins and padding.

# **Building the Skeleton of Your Email with Tables**

#### **Step 1 -** Create Our Container Table

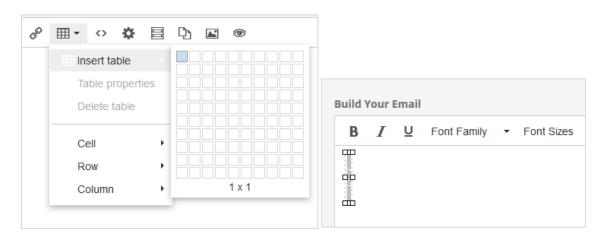
Think of the container table as the fencing around a flock of sheep. If we don't have a fence the sheep are going to go AWOL. Just like if we don't have a container the content will float around our screen because it isn't fixed in place.

Our container will stretch across the full width of the email. It will be **1 row x 1 column**.

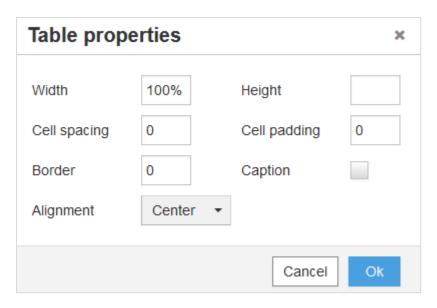
Row 1

#### **Use the WYSIWYG editor**

- Go to the WYSIWYG editor and click on the table icon in the toolbar
- Go to 'Insert Table' and just like in Word you can select the rows and columns by using the grid. We need a 1 x 1 table.



Now, your table will concertina up and look really small (as above screenshot), this is simply because we haven't given the table a width. So to do this we want to place our cursor in our table and then click on the table icon again but this time select 'Table Properties'.

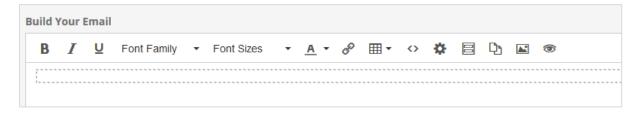


#### We need to add in:

- ✓ Width = 100%
- ✓ Cell spacing = '0'
- ✓ Cell padding = '0'
- ✓ Border = '0'
- ✓ Alignment = 'Center'

#### **Results**

This is what will appear in the editor:



#### Use the source code

As an alternative to this you can create your table straight in the source code editor. Go ahead and click on this icon in the WYSIWYG editor toolbar. Make sure you paste this code between the opening <br/>
body> tag and the closing </body>.

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<htead>
</head>
</bedy>

&nbsp;

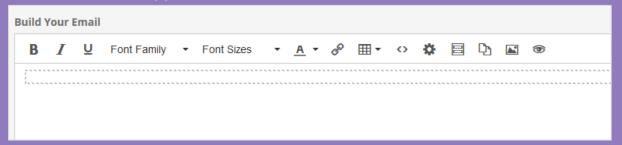
2/table>

2/table>

2/table>
```

#### Results

This is what will appear in the editor:



#### **Step 2** - Create Our Main Table

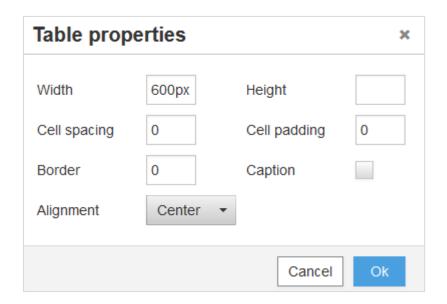
Now we are ready to create our main table inside our container. This is where your content will sit. This table will need a row for the header, a row for our main content, and a row for the footer. We need 3 rows within this table,  $1 \times 3$ .



#### **Use the WYSIWYG editor**

To insert our main table we need to place our cursor inside our container table and then click on the table icon again. This time insert a table of one column and 3 rows.

Again, this table will squish up until we add in the width. Let's put our cursor in the table and head on over to the table icon and then select 'Table Properties'.



We need to add in:

```
✓ Width = 600px
✓ Cell spacing = '0'
✓ Cell padding = '0'
✓ Border = '0'
✓ Alignment = 'Center'
```

#### Use the source code

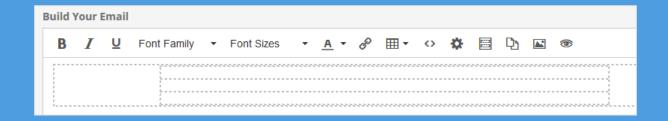
The code below will insert a table of 3 rows and one column.

We need to 'nest' this table inside our container. So, click on the source code icon again and this time we are going to paste the above code between our cell tags, . We can paste over the (this is just code for a space in HTML).

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
</head>
<body>
 
   
   
 </body>
</html>
```

#### Results

This is what we should get in the Campus WYSIWYG editor:



Top stuff! We've now built the structure of a basic HTML email! We have one middle cell we can put all our content into, and a header and footer. But hey, wait a sec, what if...I wanted to put some text alongside an image? How would I do that? Well...this moves us into the realms of nested tables.

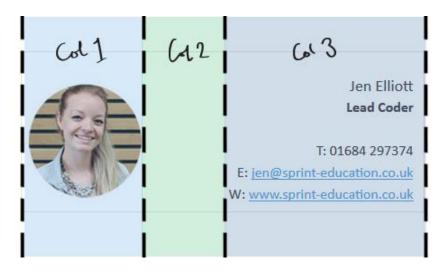
#### **Step 3** - Nesting Tables

Let's take a look at an example. You might use something like this in the footer of your email.



As you can see we have text sat alongside our image. So we'll need to create a table inside our main table (confusing I know) to create this structure. This is essentially what nesting means – tables within tables. I am going to put this table inside the middle row of our main table – row 2.

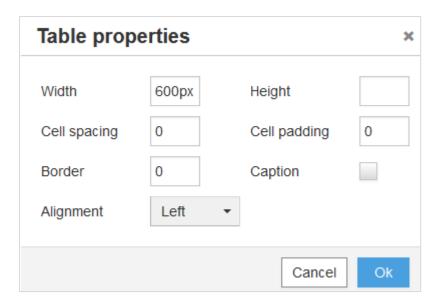
Let's take a closer look at the kind of table I will need to build. Try and see your content in a modular way and think about how you would build a table around it.



If you guessed 1 row and 3 columns then spot on!

#### **Use the WYSIWYG editor**

Place your cursor in the middle row (row 2), then go to the table icon and 'insert table'. This time we want **3 x 1** with 600px width, Cell spacing 0, Cell padding 0, Border 0 and Alignment Left.



#### Use the source code

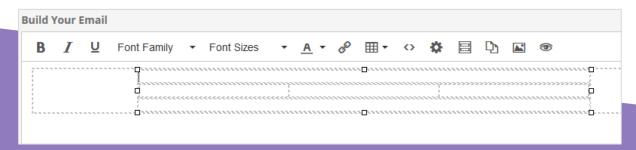
If you want to code this directly into the source code then here is the code you'll need:

To add this into our source code we need to find the middle row which starts with a tag and pop this code between the openingand closing cell tags - pasting over the .

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<head>
</head>
>
 Row 1
   
  Row 2
   
  Row 3
   
 </body>
</html>
```

#### **Results**

This is what will appear:



Now we have our 3 column layout nested inside our main table, we can add in an image.

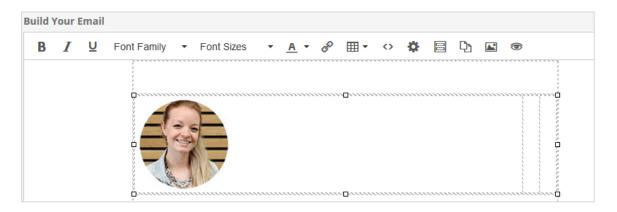
#### Step 4 - Adding an Image

- ✓ Place your cursor in the cell you want the image in (cell 1).
- ✓ Click on the 'insert an image' icon
- ✓ Select 'upload a new image' from the dropdown menu.
- Click on the browse button and find the image you want.
- Click on the blue 'insert image' button.

**IMPORTANT:** Always size your images to fit the space in your layout before inserting them - NEVER scale up or down in the WYSIWYG editor and hope for the best as some email clients will revert to the original image dimensions which will play havoc with your email.

#### **Step 5** - Hard Coding Widths

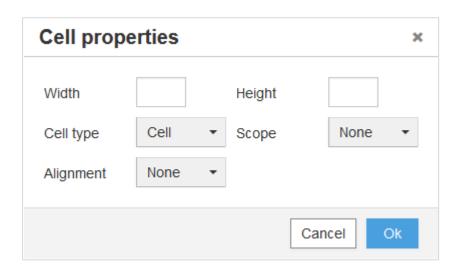
Now you may have noticed that after inserting the image our nice equal sized columns have shifted over to the right? Don't panic, this is only because we haven't fixed their widths in. This is important to remember, as well as specifying the width of a table; you must also specify the width of a cell.



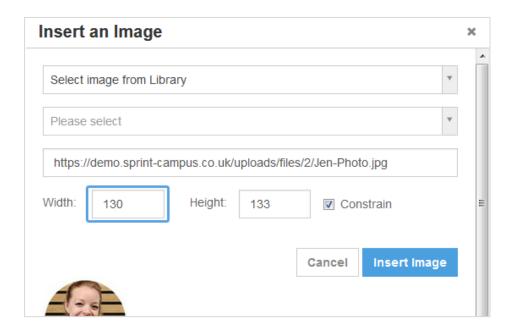
**Never** assume that an email client will figure out the widths and do it for you. It won't.

So let's hard code those widths in. Click in the cell we want to assign a width to, then click on the table icon, go to 'cell' -> 'cell properties'.

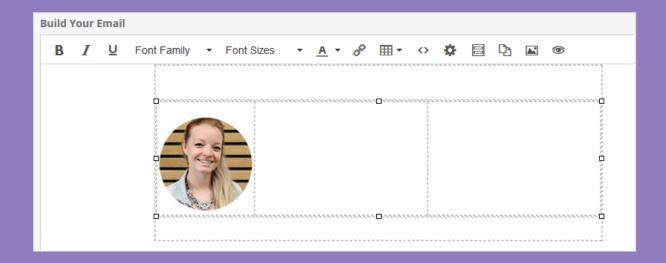
Once there you'll see this screen pop up:



All you need to do is make the width the same size as our image sat inside. If you want to find out the size of the image, click on the 'insert an image' icon and you'll see the width there:



So as you can see, it's 130px. Let's pop that into cell properties, in the width box. Hey presto!



We are going to use the middle cell as a margin or padding cell between the text and the image. Let's give that a width of 100px.

Now we need to work out the width of the third cell, we can do that by taking the overall width of the table, 600px and taking away the widths of cell 1 and 2 and seeing what we have left i.e 600 - 130 - 100 = 370px. Make sure this is hard coded in too.

Now we are ready to add in our text.

#### Step 6 - Pasting in Text

The text I want to add into my email is currently in a Notepad document. This is because text which is copied from here won't have any styling associated with it. By styling I mean a selected font, font-size, font colour, and line-height.

When we paste the text from Notepad into our email it will look normal and unstyled. Some word processors, particularly Microsoft Word, will apply all sorts of rogue code and styles to your text – so when we bring them over to your email and paste in, all this cumbersome code comes with it!

To check if this has happened to you, you'll need to look in your source code for something similar to the code below:

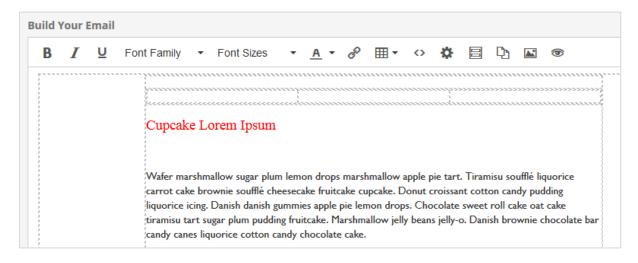
This is not HTML code, and shouldn't be in your email. It will cause all sorts of problems with how your email displays and will slow down the processing of your email and the loading time of your images.

# There are a couple of things you can do to prevent this from happening and to make your life easier:

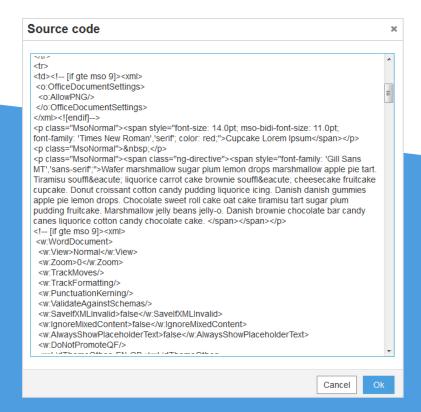
- **1.** Paste all your text into Notepad and then from there into the email editor.
- 2. Never paste directly from Microsoft Word.
- **3.** Never use a normal 'CTRL and V' paste in the editor. Use paste special instead: **CTRL** + **SHIFT** + **V**. This strips out any styling.
- **4.** Check your source code for any rogue tags regularly.
- **5.** Learn to distinguish between 'styled' and 'unstyled' text in the WYSIWYG editor. Look at the below examples. Styled text will be a different font and larger, maybe with a line height. Unstyled text will look all the same and uniform. If you're still unsure, take a look at the source code you're sure to find any problems there.

To help you distinguish between styled and unstyled text take a look at these examples:

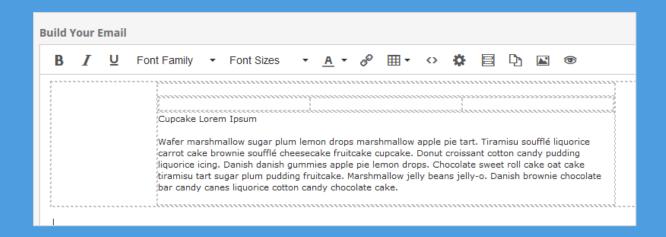
#### **Styled text**



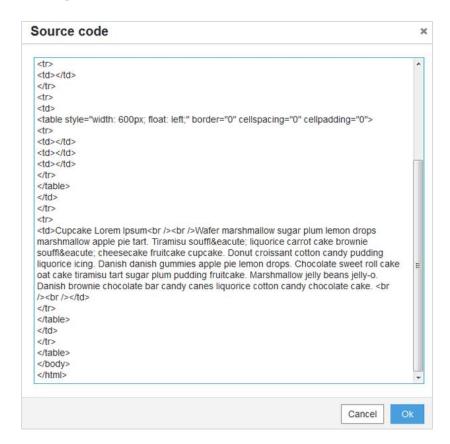
#### **Styled Source Code**



#### **Unstyled text**



#### **Unstyled Source Code**



#### **Step 7** - Spacing out Text

Once you have pasted your text into the editor you'll need to space it out into paragraphs. To do this place your cursor in the correct place and hit **SHIFT** + **ENTER** twice to produce two line-breaks.

**DO NOT USE JUST ENTER!** When you hit ENTER it adds in inconsistent spacing which will look odd. Only use line-breaks in your source code they look like this:

#### $\langle br/ \rangle$

Once your text is pasted correctly into the editor and spaced out using line-breaks you can then think about adding styles.

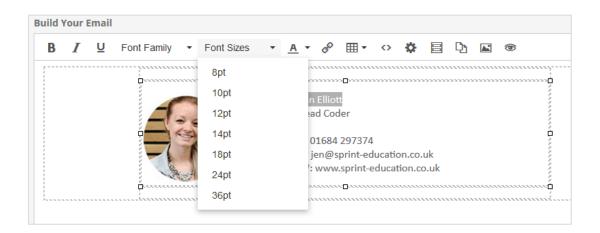
#### Step 8 - Styling Text

#### **Use the WYSIWYG editor**

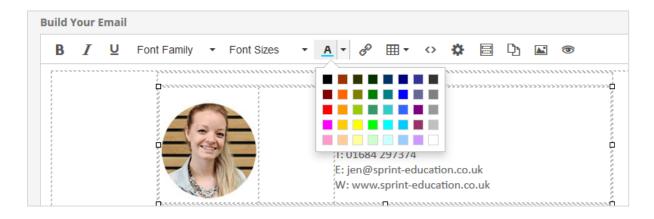
Here is what you need to do:

- ✓ Highlight the text you want to change.
- ✓ Select the 'Font Family' icon to choose a font.
- ✓ Select the 'Font Sizes' icon to choose a font size.

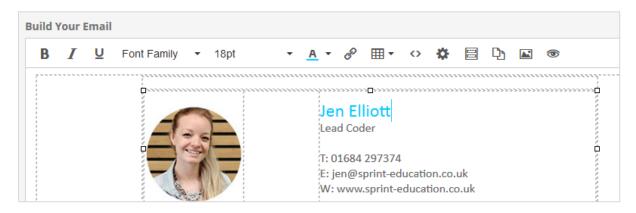
Please note that these sizes are in points not pixels and will be a little larger.



To select a colour, highlight the text again and select the 'text color' icon.



Here is what you'll see:



#### Use the source code

Instead of styling a table or a row, we ALWAYS style the cell that the text sits in. Remember that the tag for a cell is <.

```
            style="width: 130px;"><img src="https://demo.sprint-campus.co.uk/uploads/files/2/Jen-Photo1.jpg" alt="" />

        ctd style="width: 100px;">

        style="width: 370px;">Jen Elliott <br />Lead Coder <br />> coder <br />> coder <br />> coder <br />> coder <br /> coder
```

As you can see above, the text sits in the third cell and this is where we want to add our styling. To style a cell we need to add in a few CSS properties. These are:

- ✓ To choose a font we use: 'font-family'.
- ✓ To choose a font size we use: 'font-size'.
- ✓ To choose a colour we use: 'color' N.B. Spelled the American way.
- ✓ To choose a line height we use: 'line-height'.

After every listed property we use a ';' to move onto the next property. Think of it as a full stop. To start our code we use the 'style' property, we insert this after the opening .

For example:

We then use an = sign and open up quotation marks; your CSS properties must sit in between the opening and closing quotation marks — otherwise the code will be invalid. Now I'm going to use the CSS properties and add in an entry for each.

For each CSS property I have added in my selections:

- For **font-family:** Calibri, Arial, sans-serif; (I have chosen 3 fonts, so if a recipient doesn't have the first one installed on their computer, it will use the next font and so on).
- For **font-size:** 16px (Make sure you add the px after the size).

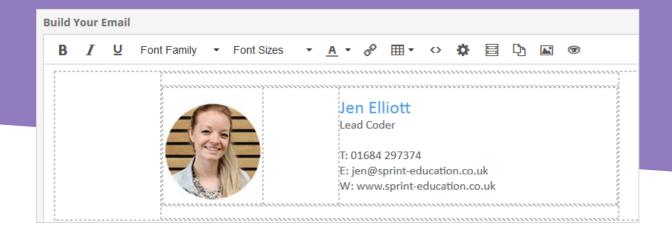
- For **color:** #666 (You need to choose a hex value, if you don't know about hex values take a look here: <a href="http://www.color-hex.com/">http://www.color-hex.com/</a>).
- For **line-height:** 20px; (Make sure you add the px after the size you select).

Now this is all well and good if you want to style the text in the same way, but what if you wanted to have just the name a bit larger and a different colour?

To do this you need to use a different tag called a <span>. Span tags work by isolating off the text and then wrapping new styles around them. To make the name bigger and a different colour, you need to do the following in your source code:

<span style="font-size: 24px; color: #57a2e3;">Jen
Elliott

Which will look like this:



#### **Step 9** - Adding Hyperlinks

A hyperlink is a piece of text or an image you can click on, and jump to another document like a webpage.

There are two types of links you'll use in your email:

- 1. Email addresses which use the prefix mailto:
- 2. Web addresses which use the prefix http://

#### **Use the WYSIWYG editor**

To insert a link using the WYSIWYG editor you'll need to highlight the text you want to hyperlink – pay particular attention when doing this so there are no blank spaces at the start or end – then click on the 'insert/edit link' icon.



In the URL box you'll need to add a mailto: prefix for an email address and then the email address i.e. mailto:jen@sprint-education.co.uk.

For a weblink you'll need to add http://before the web address i.e. http://www.sprint-education.co.uk. You'll need to also click on the 'target' dropdown and select 'new window'. This means that when a recipient clicks on this link a new window will open up in their browser. You should never do this for mailto: email addresses.

#### Use the source code

In the source code links will appear as the <a href> tag. This is how the tag will appear:

```
<a href="mailto:jen@sprint-education.co.uk">jen@sprint-
education.co.uk</a>
```

Here is how a web address will appear:

```
<a href="http://www.sprint-education.co.uk">www.sprint-
education.co.uk</a>
```

#### **Step 10** - Styling Hyperlinks

#### Use the source code

Your hyperlinks will always default to a bright blue colour. If you want to change this you'll need to go directly into the source code and find the link (<a href>). You cannot do this using the WYSIWYG editor.

```
<a href="mailto:jen@sprint-education.co.uk">jen@sprint-
education.co.uk</a>
```

First find the <a> tag and then insert between the 'a' and the 'href':

```
style="color:#9933CC;"
```

You can pick whatever hex value you like. Here is what you should end up with in your source code:

```
<a style="color:#9933CC;" href="mailto:jen@sprint-
education.co.uk">jen@sprint-education.co.uk</a>
```

You can also remove the underline by adding this after the semi-colon and before the quotation mark:

```
text-decoration: none;

<a style="color:#9933CC; text-decoration: none;"
href="mailto:jen@sprint-education.co.uk">jen@sprint-education.co.uk">jen@sprint-education.co.uk</a>
```

This will make the links purple and remove the underline.

#### **Step 11** - Custom Variables

Custom variables are a great way to engage your audience. Campus allows you to personalise your emails, you can even add your own custom fields to personalise your emails. Check out the Campus Knowledge Base article on how to do this here.

http://support.sprint-campus.co.uk/knowledgebase/contact-and-organisation-custom-fields/

#### **Use the WYSIWYG editor**

To insert a custom variable place your cursor in the text where you want the variable to appear.

- ✓ Then go to the 'insert a custom variable' icon
- ✓ Select from the dropdown the type of variable you want.
- ✓ Select the variable you want to use, and click 'insert field'.

  A custom variable is recognised by square brackets i.e. [[name]]

#### **Step 12 -** System Fields and Required Fields

#### Inserting a system field

The system field dropdown will add in a 'view online' link. This works by offering the recipient an option for viewing your email in a web browser. Email clients can block images completely and in this instance it is a good idea to give the recipient another way of viewing the email.

If your email is particularly image-heavy then you should always include this link. However, if you have a plain text email, it isn't necessary – as the recipient will be able to read all of the text without images displayed.

The view online link should be positioned at the top of the email - so it can be seen easily.

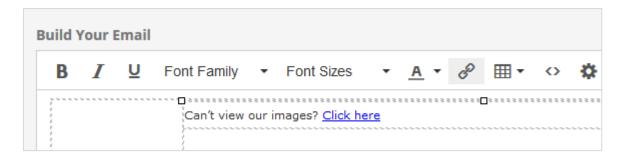
Instead of inserting the [[view\_online]] system field into your text you should always embed the link in some text. Like this:

#### Can't view our images? Click here

Then we hyperlink the 'click here' with our system field.

#### Use the WYSIWYG editor

- ✓ Highlight the text to insert the link
- ✓ Click on the 'insert/edit link' icon.
- ✓ Enter the system field into the URL box: [[view\_online]].
- Click OK.



By doing this, we hide the link that will be inserted into your email once your email goes live. The view online field only works at the point of send – so it won't work on any tests you send out.

#### Inserting a required field

The unsubscribe link should feature at the bottom of your email – you **MUST** include an unsubscribe link in every email you send.

Similarly, you should always embed the unsubscribe field in text i.e. 'If you would like to unsubscribe click here'.

#### Use the WYSIWYG editor

- ✓ Highlight the text to insert the link.
- ✓ Click on the 'insert/edit link' icon.
- ✓ Enter the required field into the URL box: [[unsubscribe]].
- Click OK.



Here's what you **SHOULD NEVER** do with your system and required fields:





This is what will happen if you've done this and you launch your email:



The full URL of the link will appear because you haven't hidden the link in a piece of text. This is why we embed the links – if we don't do this the recipient will be able to see the full link once it launches.

### Test, Test, and Test Some More...

HTML and CSS mark-up language is always evolving. From one day to the next what you think will always work, may just turn on its end from one email client to the next.

There are a variety of companies available that will generate what your emails looks like in all of the major clients. These often charge for the service; however a free option is to create a few email accounts which you can test to on various devices.

For more help email us at: support@sprint-campus.co.uk.

Good luck and happy coding!

**Jen Elliott** 

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