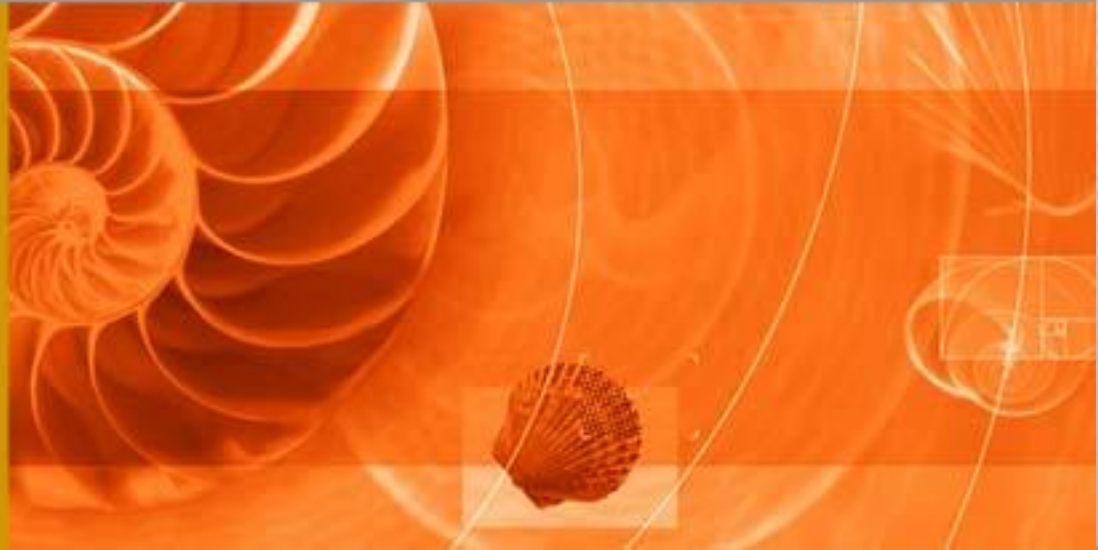


Fundamentals
of **WEB
DESIGN**



CSS Best Practices

Cascading Style Sheets

Use External Style Sheets

- As often as possible, you should use external style sheets, and place as many of the style rules within the external style sheet as you can, while limiting embedded styles and inline styles. This is because browsers download files the first time, then refer to a cached version when needed again. This can drastically reduce download times.
- External style sheets also make it easy to update the style rules across all pages quickly. This can reduce development and maintenance time.

Use Pixels For Fixed Sizing

- CSS offers plenty of extra flexibility over HTML when it comes to sizing fonts and other elements.
- With this flexibility came many sizing scales such as px, pt, em, en, ex, small, medium, large, and many more. The problem is that the implementation of each is not consistent across all browsers.
- The exception is pixels "px" since they represent the actual dots on the display. Thus, 30px will be the same size in all CSS compatible browsers, and will only vary relative to the screen resolution and monitor size, neither of which can you control.

Rely On `<div>`

- Of all the HTML tags, the `<div>` tag seems to perform the most consistently across all browsers.
- Since style rules effect not only the tags they are applied to, but also the tags nested within, the `<div>` tag becomes a very valuable asset.
- For example, it is nearly impossible to get margins and positioning of text wrapping around images to display the same in all browsers. But you can wrap the image within a `<div>` tag, and get very reliable results.

Validate All Pages

- Validated pages will always work more reliably. In fact, many times the CSS anomalies found in different browsers are caused by CSS and/or the XHTML code not being applied correctly.
- In addition, by validating your pages you can find problems more quickly, since the validators give you feedback on the problems found.
- Use the validation logos below to direct you to the validation tools.



Don't Ignore Compatibility

- Unfortunately, many people will be using older browsers for some time to come; and even the best of the current browsers may fail to support 100% of CSS Level 1, a standard created back in late 1996.
- This means that even if you code your pages strictly according to the standard, parts of your design may display incorrectly or not render at all.
- This means it is more important than ever to test your pages in multiple browsers, to ensure the display is consistent as possible in all browsers.

Don't Abandon HTML

- Just because something can be done with CSS, does not always mean it is the best way to do things. You simply have more tools to work with than before, and thus more options.
- There is just no reason to attempt to fix what is not broken, and many things within HTML have proven to work very well over the years.
- For example, tables are, and will continue to be, a very effective way to organize Web content. They are backward compatible and they work well.
- Consider CSS as more of a supplement to HTML to correct HTML's many shortcomings, but not a replacement for HTML in its entirety.

Don't Be Afraid To Use CSS

- On the surface, CSS appears to offer little more than HTML, and it has many compatibility issues to contend with. This too shall pass. We are only beginning to see the flexibility of CSS, and less than 10% of all users are using a CSS non-compatible browser.
- Often is the case that CSS can be applied to pages that improve usability for compatible browsers, with no effect on older ones. This is a natural transition towards the future.
- The future of CSS is now, we have seen in this course that CSS can be very powerful, and we just need to be careful how we apply it. Going forward, CSS will be a great asset and as CSS2 comes to maturity, things will only get better.