

HTML Mastery: Semantics, Standards, and Styling

Paul Haine



HTML Mastery: Semantics, Standards, and Styling

Copyright © 2006 by Paul Haine

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner and the publisher.

ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-59059-765-1

ISBN-10 (pbk): 1-59059-765-6

Printed and bound in the United States of America 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Trademarked names may appear in this book. Rather than use a trademark symbol with every occurrence of a trademarked name, we use the names only in an editorial fashion and to the benefit of the trademark owner, with no intention of infringement of the trademark.

Distributed to the book trade worldwide by Springer-Verlag New York, Inc., 233 Spring Street, 6th Floor, New York, NY 10013. Phone 1-800-SPRINGER, fax 201-348-4505, e-mail orders-ny@springer-sbm.com, or visit www.springeronline.com.

For information on translations, please contact Apress directly at 2560 Ninth Street, Suite 219, Berkeley, CA 94710. Phone 510-549-5930, fax 510-549-5939, e-mail info@apress.com, or visit www.apress.com.

The information in this book is distributed on an "as is" basis, without warranty. Although every precaution has been taken in the preparation of this work, neither the author(s) nor Apress shall have any liability to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in this work.

The source code for this book is freely available to readers at www.friendsofed.com in the Downloads section.

Credits

Lead Editor **Assistant Production Director**
Chris Mills Kari Brooks-Copony

Technical Reviewer **Production Editor**
Ian Lloyd Ellie Fountain

Editorial Board **Composer**
Steve Anglin, Ewan Buckingham, Gary Cornell, Jason
Gilmore, Jonathan Gennick, Jonathan Hassell, James
Huddleston, Chris Mills, Matthew Moodie, Dominic
Shakeshaft, Jim Sumser, Keir Thomas, Matt Wade Lynn L'Heureux

Project Manager **Proofreader**
Elizabeth Seymour Linda Seifert

Copy Edit Manager **Indexer**
Nicole Flores Julie Grady

Copy Editors **Interior and Cover Designer**
Nicole Flores, Ami Knox Kurt Krames

Manufacturing Director
Tom Debolski

CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Getting Started	3
(X)HTML terminology	4
Elements and tags	4
Attributes	5
Other terms you should know	5
Divs and spans	6
Block and inline elements	7
id and class attributes	8
XHTML vs. HTML	9
Differences between XHTML and HTML	9
Myths and misconceptions about XHTML and HTML	10
XHTML has a greater/fewer number of elements than HTML	10
XHTML has better error-checking/is stricter/is more robust than HTML	11
XHTML is more semantic/structural than HTML	11
XHTML is leaner/lighter than HTML	11
XHTML is required for web standards compliance	12
What's all this noise about MIME types?	12
Deciding between HTML and XHTML	13
Anatomy of an XHTML document	14
Doctype declaration	14
Available doctypes	15
Purposes of doctypes	16
The <html>, <head>, and <body> elements	16
The XML declaration	17
Anatomy of an HTML document	17
Summary	18

CONTENTS

Chapter 2: Using the Right Tag for the Right Job 21

Document markup	22
Paragraphs, line breaks, and headings	22
Contact information	24
Quotes	24
Block quotes	25
Inline quotes	27
Lists	28
Unordered and ordered lists	29
The definition (is this)	31
Links	32
Relationship issues	34
Targeting links	37
Accessible linking	39
Marking up changes to your document	40
Presentational elements	41
Font style elements	42
The <hr>, <pre>, <sup>, and <sub> elements	43
Phrase elements	46
Emphasis	46
Citations and definitions	46
Coding	47
Abbreviations	49
Images and other media	50
Inline images	50
CSS background images	51
Image maps	51
Being objective	55
Summary	56

Chapter 3: Table Mastery 59

Table basics	61
Adding structure	64
Adding even more structure	66
Associating data with headers	68
Abbreviating headers	71
Almost-standards mode	71
Table markup summary	72
Styling tables	72
Presentational attributes	73
Spaced out	74
Border conflicts	75
Styling columns	76
Striping table rows	78
Scrollable tables	80

Scripting tables	81
Conditional comments	81
Hovering with scripts	82
Table sorting	83
Summary	85
Chapter 4: Form Mastery	87
Form markup	88
The form container	88
Input	90
text	91
password	91
file	91
checkbox	92
radio	92
hidden	93
reset	93
submit	94
button	94
Other input types	94
Other forms of input	96
Menus	97
Added structure	100
Form usability	102
Use the right tag for the right job	102
Keep it short and simple	103
Don't make me think, don't make me work, and don't try to trick me	103
Remember that the Internet is global	104
Styling forms	104
Layout	105
Form controls styling	108
CSS as an aid to usability	109
Scripting forms	111
Validation	111
Forms as navigation	112
Manipulation of disabled controls	113
Form event handlers	113
Summary	115

CONTENTS

Chapter 5: Purpose-Built Semantics: Microformats and Other Stories 117

Metadata	118
Microformats	121
hCard	123
hCalendar	129
“rel-” microformats	133
VoteLinks	135
XOXO	136
XFN	138
hReview	141
The Semantic Web	145
The Dublin Core Metadata Initiative	147
Structured Blogging	149
Other implementations	152
Web 2.0	152
Summary	154

Chapter 6: Recognizing Semantics 157

Avoiding divitis	158
Styling the body	160
Rounded-corner menus	165
News excerpts	167
Footers	169
Avoiding span-mania	170
Intentional spans	173
Avoiding classitis	175
Semantic navigation	177
The importance of validity	181
Summary	183

Chapter 7: Looking Ahead: XHTML 2.0 and Web Applications 1.0 185

XHTML 2.0	186
Other new tags and attributes in XHTML 2.0	187
XForms	188
Preparing for XHTML 2.0	189
Web Applications 1.0	190
New tags and attributes in Web Applications 1.0	190
Web Forms 2.0	191
Preparing for Web Applications 1.0	191
Summary	191

Appendix A: XHTML As XML	193
Serving XHTML as XML	194
Things to watch out for	196
XHTML 1.1	197
Modularization	198
Ruby	199
Simple Ruby markup	200
Complex Ruby markup	201
Summary	201
Appendix B: Frames, and How to Avoid Them	205
(X)HTML frames	207
Targeting links within frames	208
Inline frames	209
Alternatives to frames	209
Frame-like behavior with CSS	210
Future frames: XFrames	212
Summary	214
Index	217