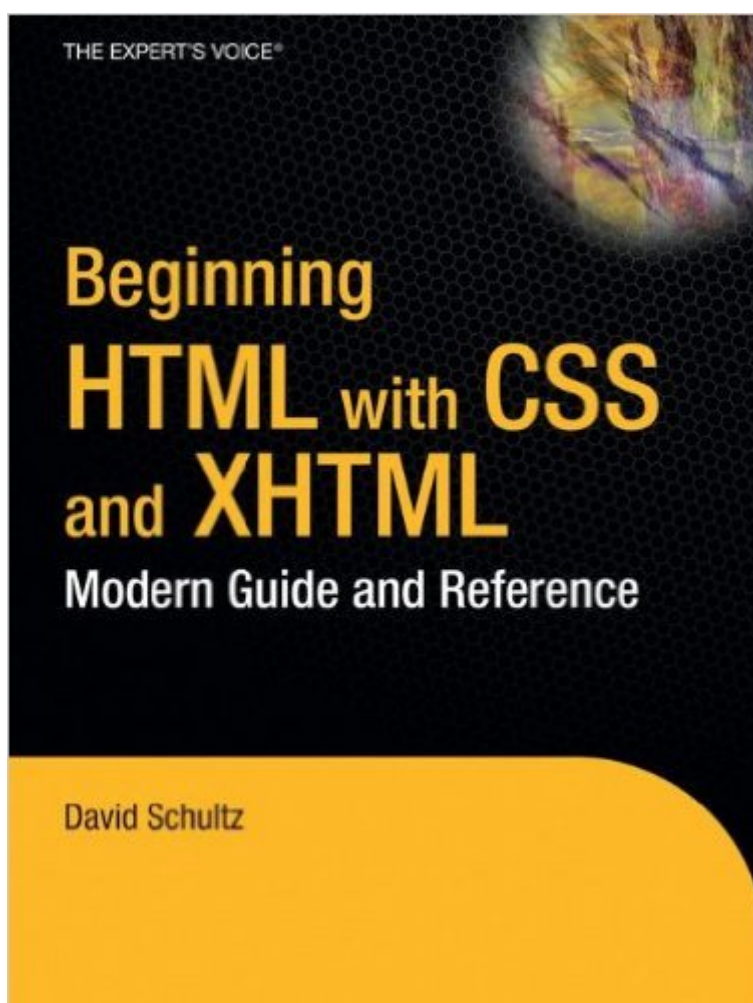# Beginning HTML With CSS And XHTML: Modern Guide And Reference (Beginning: From Novice To Professional)

Synopsis

Why another HTML book? Web development has changed with the advent of web standards, rendering older books obsolete. The code and techniques in this book are strictly standards compliant, so readersâ ™ web pages will work properly in most web browsers, be lean and small in file size, accessible to web users with disabilities, and easily located by search engines such as Google. The book uses practical examples to show how to structure data correctly using (X)HTML, the basics of styling it and laying it out using Cascading Style Sheets (CSS,) and adding dynamic behavior to it using JavaScript â " all as quickly as possible.

Book Information

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Every master was once an apprentice; the beginner must start at the beginning. For the author of an introductory text on a technical subject, the challenge is to adopt the "beginner's mind," which is characterized in Zen practice as "is the mind that is innocent of preconceptions and expectations, judgments and prejudices." The teacher of novices must clear his mind and place himself in the mind of the student who knows little or nothing about a subject. He must be able to transmit complex concepts in clear, non-technical language and provide enough information to make the subject understandable, yet not overwhelm the student with too much information or information that is not pertinent.The first two chapters of "Beginning HTML with CSS and XHTML: Modern Guide and Reference" satisfies the requirements of a beginner's book quite well. The language is clear,

concise, and devoid of jargon. The remainder of the book is quite uneven, probably due to the publisher's decision to employ two authors for the book. Craig Cook (the author of chapters 1, 2, 4, 5, 8 and 11) is more than capable of communicating technical information using plain language. His prose is concise and accurate, yet he maintains a gentle, witty tone that is ideal for making the neophyte feel at ease with new material. David Schultz is much less adept at maintaining the `beginner's mind.' His prose is often convoluted and awkward, making it difficult to decipher the terms he attempts to explain.Chapter 4 is an excellent overview of the basic structure of a semantically structured web document. For someone looking for an introduction to HTML and CSS fundamentals, the book is worth buying for this chapter alone. It would also serve a more experienced hand as a concise guide to the proper use of HTML elements.Chapters 3, 6, and 7 all have a common weakness: the author fails to provide clear definitions and explanations for terms. An example, from p. 164: "charoff: Specifies in pixels or as a percentage how far the alignment should be adjusted to the first character to align on. This requires the use of the align attribute with the value set as char." Contrast this definition with one penned by Cook, p.211: "disabled='disabled': When present, disables the control so that it cannot receive focus and its value cannot be modified. Many browsers will display disabled controls a `grayed-out' state. The value of a disabled control is not submitted."It appears that Mr. Cook devoted a considerable amount of thought to writing his definitions, while Mr. Schultz was content to restate the official specifications. Cook takes the time to carefully explain a term, giving examples of how it is used in the real world. His definitions & explanations indicate a deep and nuanced understanding of the subject material.Chapter 10 presents an introduction to JavaScript. Appearing out of place in a book on beginning HTML and CSS, one chapter on JavaScript is simply inadequate to explain even the rudiments of this powerful (but often misused) tool. This space could have been better used in covering CSS positioning in more detail and providing more visual examples.Chapter 11 is a solid walkthrough in putting together a basic website, from the design process through to final markup. This chapter pulls together what has been presented in the rest of the book and would certainly enable a beginner to create an attractive & functional website from scratch.Finally, the book provides four appendices. The usefulness of these appendices varies widely. Appendix A is an XHTML 1.o Strict reference: it would be useful but for a complete lack of examples. Appendix B covers color names and hex values: does anyone actually use these? HTML colors are notoriously hideous and their use should be avoided. Appendix C covers special characters: this is a good reference to have. Appendix D covers CSS browser support: again, a useful reference.But why is there no glossary? A glossary of terms is ESSENTIAL in a beginner's book. Please, leave out the

scary HTML colors and give us a glossary!Despite its shortcomings, "Beginning HTML with CSS and XHTML: Modern Guide and Reference" is a useful book for a person needing to understand the fundamental concepts and application of HTML and CSS. The publishers would have served their readers better by providing a consistent authorial voice throughout the book, including more thorough coverage of CSS positioning and layout, and providing more high-quality graphical examples. This book is a good bet for the beginner who wants to learn the fundamentals of HTML and CSS to create well-structured and usable websites.

I ordered this book along with Head First HTML with CSS & XHTML. I was worried based on reviews that this might be a little over my head. My only program experience is with VBA macro writing. I wanted Head First's book to protect myself from getting lost.What I found is there was no problem understanding this well-presented and clear text. In fact, I much prefer it to the "dummy downed" Head First book. Had I to do it over, this would have been my only purchase.

Beginning HTML with CSS and XHTML: Modern Guide and Reference by David Schultz and Craig Cook is an excellent beginners introduction to HTML and CSS. Through each of the eleven chapters the authors walk through the basics and foundation of HTML. For those who are just treading in the waters of HTML and CSS, this book will help you understand the tools available to you as you craft your markup. You will learn about the tags available, their available attributes and purposes, and how to finely tune these into a semantic layout that ultimately gives your content more meaning.Chapter 1 is our quick history lesson and introduction to HTML. They give background and insight into the goals and purposes of HTML, and how these were shifted during the browser wars and the battle for browser dominance and market share. They introduce the different versions of HTML available, and what they mean for your markup and the rendering inside of the browser. As CSS is discussed, there is also a discussion on keeping a clean separation of content and presentation. Chapter 1 lets us see the big picture and evolution of HTML.Chapter 2 builds the foundation for the rest of the chapters. This chapter discusses the basics of XHTML and CSS. The building blocks discussed here will be addressed in each and every subsequent chapter of the book. Things such as tags, elements, attributes, and formatting. We are also given a snapshot view of what comprises an XHTML document, the doctype, the HTML element, and the document tree. All of this plays into understanding the fundamentals of CSS, cascade, and inheritance. We now have our history lesson and basic constructs in place, it's time to take a look at the rest of the pieces to the puzzle.Chapters 3 and 4 cover a large territory. From constructing a

useable head section, to walking step by step through many of the available HTML elements available to you as you put your content together. With discussion of each element, you are given detailed instructions of how and when it should be used, with an exhaustive list of its available attributes. CSS is briefly discussed, but will be re-introduced in a later chapter after we have our content constructed.Chapter 5 is all about images. This chapter gives a brief primer on how digital images work, and what are the formats you can use within your content. Images can serve different purposes: icons, decoration, background, or context. Each of these are discussed with information on how to place them accordingly with CSS or the img tag.Chapter 6 is all about linking. You are introduced to the a tag, its available attributes, and how you can create different types of links. Textual links, anchor links, and linking an image are all discussed.Chapter 7 is all about tables. Despite what you may hear from others, tables have a very good semantic use in regards to tabular data (who would have thought?). However, tables are also misunderstood in relation to the tags and attributes. It is important to build tables with accessibility in mind, and this chapter goes over some of the elements that haven't received as much exposure. These include, but are not limited to: caption, colgroup, and tbody. This chapter will give you the information necessary to build a powerful and semantically rich table.Chapter 8 discusses all of the little details to building a usable and accessible form. Just as with tables, there are some elements that are often forgotten about when building forms. This chapter does a great job of covering all of the necessary components for a form, and how to structure them. Form elements are rendered with the underlying operating system, so the end of this chapter discusses CSS and some of the ways you can spruce up the look of your forms. This is to be used with caution, as forms are rendered differently in each browser.Chapters 9 and 10 discuss the other 2 pieces of the trinity of the front end: CSS and JavaScript. These chapters are meant to be brief primers, and will most likely whet your appetite to learn more about each aspect. They are also placed here to give you a good foundation as the final chapter will roll everything up into a case study.Chapter 11 is the end of the journey. What good would the book be if you couldn't put what you have learned into practice? This chapter creates the fictional Spaghetti & Cruft website (you have to read the book to find out the meaning of the name). This chapter starts with the design process, moves to the building process, and then polishes it off by adding enhancements with CSS and JavaScript. The humorous name aside, this chapter is one of the most valuable chapters of the entire book. This final chapter brings the book to a close, and with it leaves you a solid foundation as you continue your journey of building other sites.ConclusionMany would argue that they don't need to learn HTML, that is what a WYSIWYG is for. This book shows you the value of understanding the history, the basics, and the semantics of

HTML. It is important to note that nothing found in this book is earth-shattering, however, if you are a beginner and new to HTML, this book will give you the proper start you need to begin developing right away. If you are moving away from the reliance of a WYSIWYG, you may be surprised at many of the elements available to you that are covered in this book.

As a hard-core software engineer who builds browser-based applications for a living, I often find myself appalled at my lack of knowledge of the inner workings of the code that my software dynamically creates, HTML.This book gave me a better understanding of some of the areas I was really interested in, like web-standards compliance, XHTML and the proper use of doc-types.Highly recommended for both beginners (my teenage kids are using it to jazz-up their myspace pages!) and old-hacks like me.

Found this book to be a concise guide to learning html, css, and xhtml conforming to the latest standards. I had dabbled with web pages before, and though I could eventually hack something together, I knew it wasn't the way the pros did it. This book provided a good conceptual framework on how to separate presentation from content, the key reason to use CSS.

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