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**Even More Excellent**

**HTML**

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with **XML, XHTML, and JAVASCRIPT**

**Even More Excellent**

# HTML

with XML, XHTML and  
JavaScript

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## EVEN MORE EXCELLENT HTML WITH XML, XHTML, AND JAVASCRIPT

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This book is printed on acid-free paper.

domestic 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 QPD/QPD 0 9 8 7 6

international 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 QPD/QPD 0 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

ISBN-13: 978-0-07-250916-8

ISBN-10: 0-07-250916-3

Publisher: *George Werthman*

Sponsoring editor: *Dan Silverburg*

Developmental editor I: *Sarah Wood*

Manager, Marketing and Sales: *Paul Murphy*

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Senior digital content specialist: *Brian Nacik*

Cover design: *Asylum Studios*

Interior design: *Asylum Studios*

Typeface: *10/12 Times New Roman*

Compositor: *Shepherd Incorporated*

Printer: *Quebecor World Dubuque Inc.*

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in Publication Data

Gottleber, Timothy T.

Even more excellent HTML with XML, XHTML, and Javascript / Timothy T.

Gottleber, Timothy N. Trainor.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-07-250916-3 (alk. paper)—ISBN 0-07-119522-X (international : alk. paper) 1. HTML (Document markup language) 2. XML (Document markup language) 3. XHTML (Document markup language) 4. JavaScript (Computer program language) I. Trainor, Timothy N., 1953— II. Title.

QA76.76.H94 G678 2003

005.7'2—dc21

2002026555

INTERNATIONAL EDITION ISBN 0-07-119522-X

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# ⌘ Preface ⌘

## TO THE STUDENT

*This book* was written for you. You want to learn how to build and maintain Web pages. You have the tool to help you do that in your hands. This book originated as *Excellent HTML* when Tim G. began to design the HTML course he teaches. He couldn't find a book that would work well as a text for the class. There were many technical books and reference manuals available, but none of them written for students, and none were designed to be an aid in learning how to build Web pages. They were, and remain, excellent references once you know what you are doing, but they are not textbooks. This book, along with the associated *Reference Guide*, is designed to do both. It is a result of talking to our students about what they wanted in a text. Even *More Excellent HTML with XML, XHTML, and JavaScript* is a result of all those discussions and our experience with previous editions.

After Tim G. finished the first edition, the W<sup>3</sup>C (World Wide Web Consortium) revised the HTML standard for the

last time and released HTML 4.0. In addition, the world moved away from considering Java applets as the ideal "dynamic" inclusion into Web pages, and JavaScript has come into favor. As the new book began to take shape, Dr. Tim Trainor came on board as coauthor, providing new ideas and vision. The result was a very dynamic team that was responsible for the second iteration of the text, *More Excellent HTML with an introduction to JavaScript*. We also had the opportunity to talk to students about what they wanted or needed to learn in order to create their personal and/or commercial Web pages.

The world of the Web continued to evolve, and XHTML is now the cutting edge. We have completely rewritten the previous book, incorporating XHTML throughout. *Even More Excellent HTML* also has a new chapter on XML to give you a taste of that new paradigm. In addition, we have expanded our coverage of alternate media to include the growing wireless Web.

There are two ways to approach learning how to code the HyperText Markup Language (HTML) used to create Web pages. **The first way is to just jump in and see what you can hack together through trial and error.** HTML isn't that complex, and it isn't that difficult to create some, well at least fair,

pages that way. However, there are three distinct disadvantages to that approach:

- You can learn some awful habits.
- You miss out on some great techniques.
- You can easily create pages that are difficult if not impossible to maintain and update

**The second way to learn HTML is to follow a more structured approach:**

- First, learning how to use simple tags.
- Then moving on to the more complex ones.
- All the while having the support and guidance of a couple of guys who have been there.

It is very useful and productive to see what you can do with just a handful of selected tags before you start using the really “slick” ones like frames or tables.

This book uses the second approach. You will begin building Web pages in Chapter 2, and keep building more and more complex pages as you work through the text. If you have a special need, feel free to look ahead. Remember, however, we created the explorations, and the exercises at the end of each chapter, to give you a chance to gain experience with the new tags you learned in that chapter and refresh your memory on the tags you have already learned. In addition, if you want to be compliant with the very latest XHTML techniques, you can reference the XHTML sections with many of the commands to see how to make your code XHTML-compliant as well.

*Welcome to the wonderful world of HTML; it is an exciting place that is changing even as you read this.* And one

final note: You will read this many times throughout the text, but we would like to focus your attention upon it at the very beginning of your study of HTML. Your job is to provide new and exciting content to the community we call the World Wide Web. Concentrate on the content, and let the browsers that load your pages worry about the formatting. Go play on the Web, and if you want to see what our students are doing, come visit us at <http://phred.dcccd.edu> and <http://student.muskegon.cc.mi.us> and take a look at the student pages hosted there. They have done and are doing some wonderful things.

## TO THE INSTRUCTOR

Teaching HTML is challenging and exciting. In part, the first book was developed because Tim G. was frustrated with the texts currently being used to teach HTML. There were reference books and technical manuals available, but nothing designed to be used in the classroom. Our students come to the class with a wide range of computer expertise, from the absolute novice to the professional programmer. The first edition of this text proved to be an easier way to teach HTML and give students what they needed to succeed.

Then the World Wide Web Consortium (W<sup>3</sup>C) revised the HTML standard and released HTML 4.0. In addition, students and instructors around the country began expressing a stronger interest in JavaScript than in Java applets. Here was a chance for Tim G. to take a fresh look at Web-page creation. Dr. Tim Trainor joined the project, bringing his years of HTML teaching experience, his wit, and his wonderful ideas.

The book you hold in your hands has been polished and refined in the crucible of the classroom. It is designed to take the student from an overview of the history and origins of HTML through the design and development of clean, easy-to-maintain Web pages using style sheets, JavaScript, and other dynamic HTML features while enabling the students to create XHTML-compliant code. We have woven the new specifications throughout the text. Unlike many of the texts on the market that address Dynamic HTML and the 4.0 standard and XHTML in just a chapter or two, we have built them into this text from the beginning. The first seven chapters have very few examples of styles and style sheets, because we want the student to learn how to use the inline tags first. Starting in Chapter 8, where we introduce styles, and continuing throughout the rest of the book, the examples use style elements. The chapters about JavaScript and the other features of Dynamic HTML provide the students with a solid grounding in those techniques as well. Finally, we provide a taste of XML in a new chapter, and expand the last chapter to include new features like the wireless Web and producing pages for handheld devices such as PDAs and cell phones.

In writing this book we have not assumed the reader, your student, has an in-depth background with computers, but we have assumed a minimal level of computer literacy. Still, we ourselves have had a couple of students who were completely new to computing and they succeeded, albeit by putting in some serious work.

The text is laid out in the order we teach our own classes. It starts with some simple tags and progresses into the more

sophisticated tags as the students become comfortable with the format and syntax of HTML. Although you don't have to follow any particular order (since most chapters can pretty much stand alone), there are a few back references that give the students grounding and refresh concepts. As each new tag is introduced, there are both examples of the HTML code and screen captures showing what that code generates. This allows the students to play with HTML and compare their results to those shown in the text. Throughout each chapter we have included "Explorations" to allow your student to practice what they have learned. At the end of the chapter, exercises enable the student to create pages using the tags they have learned. The design process (and some of the exercises) build from chapter to chapter. In our experience, this is the best way to teach HTML. Give the students a tag, tell them how it works, and then let them use it. That way they can have actual hands-on experience with the tags and thus tend to learn more quickly.

The physical layout of the content is geared to serve the student as a reference but also to provide an advanced organizer for your lecture. Each new tag is enclosed within a graphical element showing the tag name, type of tag, a list of its attributes, and special notes on the use of that tag. Attributes shown in *italic* have been deprecated and those in **bold** are discussed in detail in the following section. You don't have to have several texts open at the same time as you lecture; all the information is right there for you.

A wealth of ancillary tools come with the text as well:

1. A *Reference Guide* that provides complete list of every HTML

elements with a list of related attributes, properties with associated values, common character codes, four-color chart of browser-safe colors and more. Each of the textbook's graphical elements is cross-referenced in the *Reference Guide* when more detailed explanations or additional examples are needed.

2. A Web site that contains the JavaScript and most of the HTML examples from the book as well as instructor notes, suggestions, and a sample syllabus.
3. A CD included with the book that contains
  - Most of the HTML examples from the text.
  - All the JavaScripts used in the book, with a simple HTML page to drive each.
  - A selection of buttons, backgrounds, and lines for use on Web pages.
  - CuteFTP, a handy file transfer protocol tool to move data across the Web.
  - WinZip, a useful tool for compressing HTML and images before shipping them across the Web.
  - CSE HTML Validator, a really powerful HTML validation and editing program that will check for both required and recommended HTML syntax.

You and your students can access the HTML examples by pointing your browser at `D:/html/index.html`—this assumes that D: is your CD-ROM drive. The HTML index gives access to the different chapter indices, each of which pro-

vides the HTML examples for the figures in that chapter. In some cases, two or more HTML examples are very similar. They are included for completeness and to keep in step with the text. You can run the HTML code from any browser that supports the HTML 4.0 standard. Actually, you can use a browser that supports the 3.2 standard, but some of the new, dynamic features won't appear unless you use one of the more recent incarnations of the browsers like Navigator 6+, Internet Explorer 6+, or Opera 6+.

Some of the software on the CD is made up of demo versions of the products. *They are full-featured software, but they expire after 30 days.* For that reason, you may wish to wait to have the students install them until a couple of weeks into the semester. We don't let our students use the features of the page-development tools until the final project. Up to that point, they use only CSE HTML Validator or the Unix editors (Tim G.) or Notepad (Tim T.) as an ASCII editor. That requires them to learn how the HTML code is actually built. It also requires them to learn the syntax and order of the various tags. If they begin by using all the features of an HTML development tool, they become dependent upon that tool and then encounter difficulty if they need to modify their code on the server. (The first time Tim G. taught HTML, he allowed the students to use all the features of the HTML editors, and his students had many problems later, because they didn't learn the codes, but only how to invoke the tools to create the codes.) We both restrict how much our students are allowed to do with the HTML editors, and things have gone much more smoothly. For example, creating the correct path to an image can be tricky. If the students have

to hand-build the path, they learn how HTML renders the address. If all they have to do is click on the target icon and then browse for the correct filename; they won't necessarily learn how to create the correct path. There are other editing tools available for download from the Web. Explore—You might find others that you really like.

The most important thing about this or any text is that it should free you to focus on your teaching. Enjoy it, enjoy your students, and have fun!

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Creating a book is a time-consuming process. First and foremost, I want to thank Patti and Richard for working around a husband and father who seemed chained to his computer, and for the support they provided throughout the whole process. Thanks, you two: I owe you, once again!

Next, I thank my students; they suffered through this process, too, working the exercises, listening to the lectures, and most importantly for this book, commenting on the content. Working with Tim Trainor was and is an absolute delight. His insights, ideas, friendship, and general harassment made this project great fun. (Besides, he always removed my parenthetical notes.) Thanks Tim!

A word of thanks to Buddy Mondlock, Patty Larkin, Mannheim Steamroller, Richard Wagner, Edvard Grieg, LVB, and J. S. Bach for the music that kept me sane.

Finally, thanks to Wendy the Pooh who kept reminding me of the important things in life like playing tug, wrestling with the puppy, and especially playing chase-the-laser.

*Tim Gottleber—*

I'd like to thank Tim Gottleber again for inviting me onto the team. The time and effort spent in writing this book was a labor of love. Luckily, my soulmate, Diane, understands this and not only puts up with my long hours in front of the word processor, she provided many valuable suggestions that make the final product better. I'd also like to thank fellow Jayhawk Mike Merrill for the invaluable suggestions of Blues musicians he thought I should use in my Hall of Frames list. Finally, my students need to be acknowledged for the extra work they put in when reading rough drafts of this text.

*Tim Trainor—*

We both want to thank the folks at McGraw-Hill Higher Education who were instrumental in making this book happen: Dan Silverburg, Sarah Wood, and Christine Vaughan, who provided the professional support to bring this project to fruition. This book would not have been possible without them. A special thanks to Maggie Jarpey, way up North, who again did yeoman's duty, making grammatical and logical sense out of our scribbles. The English language is safe as long as we have people like Maggie keeping watch and fixing mistakes.