

A Brief History of HTML

1993 - Present

The first version of HTML was written by Tim Berners-Lee in 1993. Since then, there have been many different versions of HTML. The most widely used version throughout the 2000's was **HTML 4.01**, which became an official standard in December 1999.

Another version, **XHTML**, was a rewrite of HTML as an XML language. XML is a standard markup language that is used to create other markup languages. Hundreds of XML languages are in use today, including GML (Geography Markup Language), MathML, MusicML, and RSS (Really Simple Syndication). Since each of these languages was written in a common language (XML), their content can easily be shared across applications. This makes XML potentially very powerful, and it's no surprise that the W3C would create an XML version of HTML (again, called XHTML). XHTML became an official standard in 2000, and was updated in 2002. XHTML is very similar to HTML, but has stricter rules. Strict rules are necessary for all XML languages, because without it, interoperability between applications would be impossible. You'll learn more about the differences between HTML and XHTML in [Unit 2](#).

Most pages on the Web today were built using either HTML 4.01 or XHTML 1.0. However, in recent years, the W3C (in collaboration with another organization, the WHATWG), has been working on a brand new version of HTML, **HTML5**. **Currently (2011), HTML5 is still a draft specification, and is not yet an official standard. However, it is already widely supported by browsers and other web-enabled devices, and is the way of the future. Therefore, HTML5 is the primary language taught in this course.**

Examples of types of content that can be included on web pages

The following table shows a list of many of the types of content that can be added to web pages using different versions of HTML. In the early days of the Web, HTML (version 1.2) was very simple, but over time new versions were released that added more and more features. Still, if web designers wanted to add content or features that HTML didn't support, they would have to do so with non-standard proprietary technologies such as Adobe Flash. These technologies would require users to install browser plug-ins, and in some cases meant that certain users would be unable to access the content (for example, iPhones and iPads don't support Flash).

HTML5 has added support for many new features that will make it possible to do more with HTML, without relying on non-standard proprietary technologies.

Type of content	HTML 1.2	HTML 4.01	HTML5	Purpose
Heading	Yes	Yes	Yes	Organize page content by adding headings and subheadings to the top of each section of the page
Paragraph	Yes	Yes	Yes	Identify paragraphs of text
Address	Yes	Yes	Yes	Identify a block of text that contains contact information
Anchor	Yes	Yes	Yes	Link to other web content
List	Yes	Yes	Yes	Organize items into a list
Image	Yes	Yes	Yes	Embed a photograph or drawing into a web page
Table	No	Yes	Yes	Organize data into rows and columns
Style	No	Yes	Yes	Add CSS to control how objects on a web page

				are presented
Script	No	Yes	Yes	Add Javascript to make pages respond to user behaviors (more interactive)
Audio	No	No	Yes	Add audio to a web page with a single tag
Video	No	No	Yes	Add video to a web page with a single tag
Canvas	No	No	Yes	Add an invisible drawing pad to a web page, on which you can add drawings (animations, games, and other interactive features) using Javascript