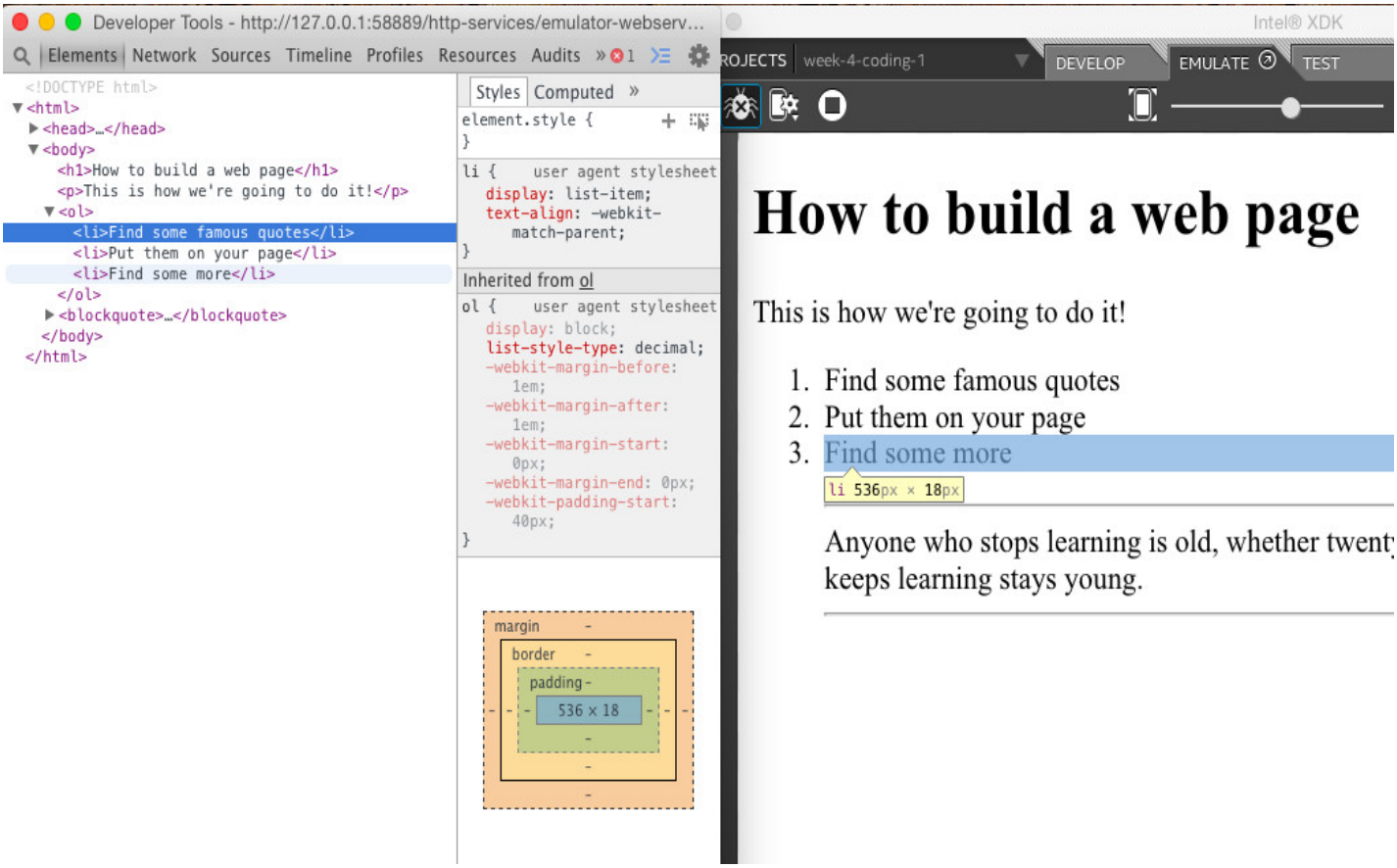
Identifying elements

Remember that Elements are the intangible parts of your Web page, which are described by the text in tags and are rendered on the screen of whatever device you're looking at your Web page with. The two things (the text code and the pixels on the screen) correspond to each other, but it's not always obvious which bit of the screen corresponds to which bit of text.

There are two opposite directions in which you might need to figure out in these two different things that both correspond to an element. You might have some HTML5 code that you've written and want to find out where on the Web page that code shows up. The other direction can be needed as well, i.e. given a particular part of the page, what part of your code produced it?

When we hover over an element in the or tag in the debugger window, the corresponding element on the displayed page is highlighted:



The blue highlighted section on the right shows the rectangle corresponding to the light blue 3rd <li> element that we're hovering on in the left panel. The little box with the arrow gives the dimensions in pixels of that element.

This highlighting not only tells us the correspondence between the two (source code and rendered page), it also shows us the extent of the rendered element. We can see how big it is, whether it goes all the way across the screen or just part of it and so on. In addition to the highlighting there is a small rectangle with an arrow with the dimensions in pixels of the element, giving us exact information about the size of the element.

You probably notice that there is another highlighted element on the left, that is the currently active element, made active by clicking on it. While it's not highlighted in the display window on the right, it's importance is that changes in the "style" panel will affect that element.

It is also possible to go the other direction, i.e. click on a point on the screen and it will highlight the code in the source that corresponds to that element. This is helpful when you want to figure out where something came from and what might be affecting it's styling (size, color, font, any number of other characteristics). To do that in the Intel XDK debugger you need to use the "Magnifying Glass" button in the upper left corner of the debugger window. In other browsers, this essentially corresponds to the "Inspect" function.

When you click on the little magnifying glass, it should turn gray (lighter than normal) then when you go to the emulated window. You may need to click on it once to make it the active window on your machine, then when you hover over any given pixel it will highlight the lowest level (smallest) element. You will stay in this "Magnifying Glass" mode until you click on a pixel, or if you go back and click on the magnifying glass symbol again. When you click on a pixel, it will select the code for that element back in the debugger, opening up any parents if necessary.