The Benefits of CSS in Web Development

The use of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) is growing ever popular in the web community today. It is widely used as a means of styling web pages without using any HTML. Serving as a bridge between structure and presentation, CSS is important for many reasons. The most significant ones being that it is easy use, reduces bandwith usage, and separates the site structure from the styling.

Before discussing why CSS is advantageous, it is important to understand the basics of the language. Incorporating CSS to HTML is an extremely easy and organized process. A coder can put any CSS code inside of a <style> tag inside of the head of an HTML document. This is a rough way of going about it, however, it beats inserting individual style attributes inside every tag. Besides these two methods is the preferred method, linking the CSS document. This is similar to writing the code embedded, except the code is linked to the HTML document using a single line of code. The greatest part about that is it is written the same way as embedding CSS code.

Now time to look at how CSS declarations are structured. They consist of a selector and one or more declarations. The declarations consist of a property and a value. It’s simple as that. Here is an example of what a block of CSS code would look like:

.blog\_post { <= Selector

Property => background-color: #8a2; <= Value

Property => overflow: hidden; <= Value

}

The selector can select any tag inside the linked HTML document. With a little bit of creativity, you can even do it without using id’s.

One of the great things about CSS is that it is fairly easy to understand. It was clearly built with people in mind, for it allows a person to understand it as if he/she were reading a sentence. This kind of usability makes CSS very widely available for the public to utilize.

A user-end advantage to using CSS in web development is the reduction of bandwidth usage. As opposed to using Flash or, god forbid, HTML to style a site, using CSS can often be easier and more data efficient, resulting in faster load times. Think of CSS as an axe to a chainsaw. Sure the chainsaw is loud and flashy, but an axe doesn’t require fuel or moving parts to work, all it needs is someone who knows how to use it correctly.

As many uses as CSS has, none are as important as its separation of structure from styling. If any advantage is to be gained from using CSS, it’s organization. Having the content of a page mixed in with all of it’s styling makes for a complicated mess that becomes impossible to understand. However, with CSS, you end up with a well-rounded, organized site layout with its structured content in one area, and its styling and customization in another, and nothing is more beautiful than that.