HTML&CSS

design and build websites

HOW PEOPLE ACCESS THE WEB

Before we look at the code used to build websites it is important to consider the different ways in which people access the web and clarify some terminology.

BROWSERS

People access websites using software called a **web browser**. Popular examples include Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, Chrome, and Opera.

In order to view a web page, users might type a web address into their browser, follow a link from another site, or use a bookmark.

Software manufacturers regularly release new versions of browsers with new features and supporting new additions to languages. It is important, however, to remember that many computer owners will not be running the latest versions of these browsers. Therefore you cannot rely on all visitors to your site being able to use the latest functionality offered in all browsers.

You will learn how to tell which browsers visitors use to access your website in Chapter 19.

WEB SERVERS

When you ask your browser for a web page, the request is sent across the Internet to a special computer known as a **web server** which hosts the website.

Web servers are special computers that are constantly connected to the Internet, and are optimized to send web pages out to people who request them.

Some big companies run their own web servers, but it is more common to use the services of a **web hosting** company who charge a fee to host your site.

DEVICES

People are accessing websites on an increasing range of devices including desktop computers, laptops, tablets, and mobile phones. It is important to remember that various devices have different screen sizes and some have faster connections to the web than others.

SCREEN READERS

Screen readers are programs that read out the contents of a computer screen to a user. They are commonly used by people with visual impairments.

In the same way that many countries have legislations that require public buildings to be accessible to those with disabilities, many laws have also been passed that require websites be accessible to those with disabilities.

Throughout this book you will see several references to screen readers. These notes will help ensure that the sites you create are accessible to people who use such software.

It is interesting to note that technologies similar to those employed by screen readers are also being used in other areas where people are unable read a screen, such as when they are driving or jogging.

HOW WEBSITES ARE CREATED

All websites use HTML and CSS, but content management systems, blogging software, and e-commerce platforms often add a few more technologies into the mix.

WHAT YOU SEE

When you are looking at a website, it is most likely that your browser will be receiving HTML and CSS from the web server that hosts the site. The web browser interprets the HTML and CSS code to create the page that you see.

Most web pages also include extra content such as images, audio, video, or animations and this book will teach you how to prepare them for use on the web and then how to insert them into your web pages.

Some sites also send JavaScript or Flash to your browser, and you will see how to add JavaScript and Flash in your web pages. Both of these technologies are advanced topics that you can go on to learn more about once you have mastered HTML and CSS, if you want to.

HOW IT IS CREATED

Small websites are often written just using HTML and CSS.

Larger websites — in particular those that are updated regularly and use a content management system (CMS), blogging tools, or e-commerce software — often make use of more complex technologies on the web server, but these technologies are actually used to produce HTML and CSS that is then sent to the browser. So, if your site uses these technologies, you will be able to use your new HTML and CSS knowledge to take more control over how your site looks.

Larger, more complex sites like these may use a database to store data, and programming languages such as PHP, ASP.Net, Java, or Ruby on the web server, but you do not need to know these technologies to improve what the user sees. The skills you'll learn in this book should be enough to help you on that road.

HTML 5 & CSS3

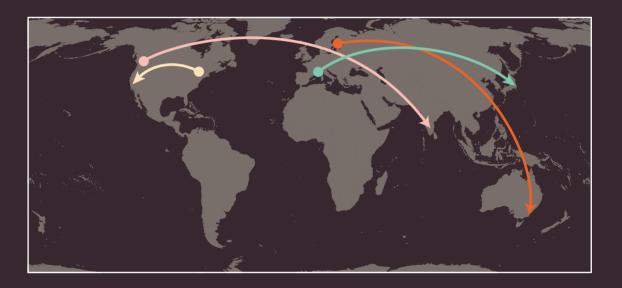
Since the web was first created there have been several versions of HTML and CSS — each intended to be an improvement on the previous version.

At the time of writing this book, HTML5 & CSS3 were still being developed. Although they had not been finalized, many browsers were already supporting some features of these languages and a lot of people were using the latest code on their websites. I have therefore chosen to teach you these latest versions.

Because HTML5 and CSS3 build on previous versions of these languages, learning these means you will also be able to understand the earlier versions of them. I have added clear notes when the code is new and also when it might not work in older browsers.

HOW THE WEB WORKS

When you visit a website, the web server hosting that site could be anywhere in the world. In order for you to find the location of the web server, your browser will first connect to a Domain Name System (DNS) server.



On this page you can see examples that demonstrate how the web server that hosts the website you are visiting can be anywhere in the world. It is the DNS servers that tell your browser how to find the website.

- A user in Barcelona visits sony.jp in Tokyo
- A user in New York visits google.com in San Francisco
- A user in Stockholm visits gantas.com.au in Sydney
- A user in Vancouver visits airindia.in in Bangalore

On the right you can see what happens when a web user in England wants to view the website of the Louvre art gallery in France which is located at www.louvre.fr. Firstly, the browser in Cambridge contacts a DNS server in London. The DNS server then tells the browser the location of the web server hosting the site in Paris.

