

</> Why are there so many

Introduction

You've already learnt that a browser is just a really fancy program that understands (HTML tags), **CSS files** and associated media, like images or videos, all written in code. But there are so many to choose from! What makes them different?

Meet the browsers

The most popular browsers used on desktop and laptop computers are Chrome, Firefox, and Safari. On many tablets and phones that run on an Android system, Opera and iPads use Mobile Safari.

HTML & CSS change all the time

HTML and CSS aren't static: new things you can do with them are being added all the time. This is done by agreeing on what is a standard and what isn't. These are called **W3C** (for short), a group of people including coders, browser makers and others (anyone can apply to become a member too). Once it's decided what features are added, browser makers then build browsers that can recognise the new things you can now do.

This is why new versions of browsers come out frequently: so that the browser can display as much as possible as HTML and CSS gradually change. If you are using an old browser, it won't be able to handle the new things, and browser just ignored the lines it didn't know what to do with.

What kinds of things are **added** to HTML? For example, only recently

website makers had to use plugins to allow sounds or videos to be played. On a tablet you often can't install **plugins** it became clear that there was a need for a standard. HTML5 includes the `<audio>` tag in **Internet Explorer 8** for example, the same for video. However, the next version up, **Internet Explorer 9**, won't have a problem with it. The more you can take advantage of improvements to HTML and CSS.

So new features were added to HTML5

Whenever new features are added W3C publishes a specification (specification) that should handle the new code, and what it should do. The browser makers then implement it. Sometimes new features will be implemented before there's an official specification. The community can figure out what is the best way to handle them.

Infinite ways to handle displaying

Now, why are there so many browsers to choose from? It's because making a browser will make a better product and provide a **better experience**.

When you write code, there are always many ways to make what you want. Browser makers take different approaches to writing what's called a layout engine, which is how to display your code visually.

Browsers are never perfect – many mistakes and errors make it into the wild. Because they are written differently, will have different **bugs** (bug is a mistake). A bug will affect how your pages are displayed, so occasionally you may not look quite right in **Internet Explorer**.

So which one's best?

It depends what you mean by best: do you mean the **fastest**, most reliable, or most standards compliant? of HTML (you can check that [here](#)). You should try a few and see how they perform. **Chrome** and its developer tools and **Firefox** with Firebug (developer tool).