**A Brief History of (Web) Style**

* CSS was first proposed in 1994
* Work quickly advanced, and by late 1996, CSS1 was finished
* While the newly established CSS Working Group moved forward with CSS2, browsers struggled to implement CSS1 in an interoperable way.
* Before all that happened, though, the CSS Working Group had finalized the CSS2 specification in early 1998.
* Once CSS2 was finished, work immediately began on CSS3, as well as a clarified version of CSS2 called CSS2.1. In keeping with the spirit of the times, CSS3 was constructed as a series of (theoretically) standalone modules instead of a single monolithic specification. This approach reflected the then-active XHTML specification, which was split into modules for similar reasons. The rationale for modularizing CSS3 was that each module could be worked on at its own pace, and particularly critical (or popular) modules could be advanced along the W3C’s progress track without being held up by others.

**Replaced and Nonreplaced Elements**

* Elements are the basis of document structure. In HTML, the most common elements are easily recognizable, such as p, table, span, a, and div. In CSS, elements generally take two forms: replaced and nonreplaced.
* Replaced elements are those where the element’s content is replaced by something that is not directly represented by document content. Probably the most familiar HTML example is the img element, which is replaced by an image file external to the document itself.
* Most of HTML elements are nonreplaced elements. This means that their content is presented by the user agent (generally a browser) inside a box generated by the element itself. For example, <span>hi there</span> is a nonreplaced element, and the text “hi there” will be displayed by the user agent.

**Element Display Roles**

* In addition to replaced and nonreplaced elements, CSS uses two other basic types of elements: block-level and inline-level.
* Block-level elements generate an element box that (by default) fills its parent element’s content area and cannot have other elements at its sides.
* Inline-level elements generate an element box within a line of text and do not break up the flow of that line.
* Note that while the names “block” and “inline” share a great deal in common with block- and inline-level elements in HTML, there is an important difference. In HTML, block-level elements cannot descend from inline-level elements. In CSS, there is no restriction on how display roles can be nested within each other.