CSS shorthand reference

This short article covers the various bits of CSS shorthand you'll encounter in your day to day work.

Border

`border` allows you to set border width, style and, color all in one single property. So for example:

```
border: 1px solid black;
```

is equivalent to the following three rules:

```
border-width: 1px;
border-style: solid;
border-color: black;
```

You can also break these down further into even more specific rules, for a single border of the element it is applied to, like so:

```
border-left: 1px solid black;
border-right: 1px solid black;
border-top: 1px solid black;
border-bottom: 1px solid black;
```

or even:

```
border-left-width: 2px;
border-left-style: solid;
border-left-color: black;
```

You will very rarely want to go this granular; you will probably use simply `border` or `border-left/right-top-bottom` in most cases. The more granular options will likely be used only if you want to override an earlier border declaration.

Margin, padding, outline

Shorthand for `margin`, `padding`, and `outline` all works in the same way. Consider the following `margin` rule:

```
div.foo {
   margin-top: 1em;
   margin-right: 1.5em;
   margin-bottom: 2em;
   margin-left: 2.5em;
}
```

Such a rule could also be written as:

```
div.foo {
   margin: 1em 1.5em 2em 2.5em;
}
```

These types of property can take less than four values too, as follows:

1. Same value applied to all four sides — `margin: 2px;`
2. First value applied to the top and bottom, second to the left and right — `margin: 2px 5px;`.
3. First and third values applied to the top and bottom respectively, second value applied to the left and right — `margin: 2px 5px 1px;`.

Font

You can specify the font size, weight, style, family, and line height using one line of shorthand. Consider the following CSS:

```
font-weight: bold;
font-style: italic;
font-variant: small-caps;
font-size: 1.5em;
line-height: 200%;
font-family: Georgia, "Times New Roman", serif;
```

You could specify all of this using the following line:

```
font: bold italic small-caps 1.5em/200% Georgia, "Times New Roman", serif;
```

Note that it doesn't really matter about the order of many of these, although you should make sure that `font-size/line-height` and `font-family` come in the positions shown, plus both `font-size` and `font-family` should be specified. If not, this shorthand may not work in some browsers.

Note also that if `font-weight`, `font-style` or `font-variant` are not specified, their values default to `normal`.

Background

In CSS 2, you can specify background color, background image, image repeat and image position with one line of CSS. Take the following:

```
background-color: #000;
background-image: url(image.gif);
background-repeat: no-repeat;
background-position: top left;
background-attachment: fixed;
```

This can all be represented using the following shorthand:

```
background: #000 url(image.gif) no-repeat top left fixed;
```

Note that if any of the values are left out, the following defaults are assumed:

```
background-color: transparent;
background-image: none;
background-repeat: repeat;
background-position: top left;
background-attachment: scroll;
```

Enhancements in CSS3

CSS3 introduces three new properties: `background-size` ☒, `background-origin` ☒, and `background-clip` ☒. You can include them in the `background` shorthand like so:

```
background: #000 url(image.gif); no-repeat top left / 50% 20% border-box content-box;
```

Notice the slash between `top left` and `50% 20%`; it separates the values for `background-position` and `background-size` since these two properties share some value units (lengths and percentage); without it we cannot distinguish which values are for which.

So if you want to include the `background-size` value in the shorthand syntax, you need to:

- Explicitly include `background-position` values even if these are the same as the defaults (see above).
- Write `background-position` values *before* `background-size` values.
- Put a slash in between these two pairs of values.

Similarly, `background-origin` and `background-clip` share the same keyword as their values. These two also needs to be written in order: `background-origin` coming in first, and `background-clip` second.

If you only specify one `box` value (`border-box`, `padding-box`, or `content-box`), then the value applies to `background-origin` and `background-clip`.

Note: CSS3 gradients are a special, advanced value of `background-image` — aside from the syntactical difference, gradient values appear in exactly the same place in the shorthand

as other `background-image` values, and work in the same way. For more on CSS3 gradients, you can read CSS3 linear gradients 🔗 and CSS3 radial gradients 🔗 over at dev.opera.com.

List

You can specify the list bullet type, position, and image on a single line. Take the following CSS:

```
list-style-type: circle;
list-style-position: inside;
list-style-image: url(bullet.gif);
```

This is the equivalent of:

```
list-style: circle inside url(bullet.gif);
```

Note that if any of the values are left out, the following defaults are assumed:

```
list-style-type: circle;
list-style-position: outside;
list-style-image: none;
```

Color

When specifying hexadecimal color values, you can use shorthand if both hex values are the same for each color channel. For example, `#000` is equivalent to the longhand `#000000`. Let's look at a more complicated example too: `#6c9` is the same as `#66cc99`.