27 Physical Style Tags and Content-Based Style Tags

**Physical Style Tags and Content-Based (or Logical) Style Tags**

There are a group of tags, used to mark-up text styles, which split into two types: physical and content-based style tags. Physical style tags include B (bold), I (italic), SUP (superscript), SUB (subscript), and many more; these tags act physically on text exactly as they claim. Content-based style tags include STRONG (strong), EM (emphasis), CITE (cite/citation), etc; these tags represent what something MEANS, rather than what something looks like.

Whereas physical style tags impart a specific appearance to text that they mark-up, content-based style tags impart information regarding what that text is supposed to BE, or what it is used for. The fact that content-based style tags impart appearance characteristics to text is completely secondary.

All of these tags are used to mark text, usually within a paragraph, but occasionally on their own. They ALL must close.

**Physical Style Tags**

Physical style tags are quite straightforward; they do exactly what they claim. B, I, SUP, SUB, and TT are fairly common. BIG and SMALL are rarely used, as they may not operate correctly in Netscape 4.x browsers. Here is the list of physical style tags, seen in action:

Tag: **B**  
Description: Makes text bold.

Example:

<p>Hi there, <b>bold</b> boy.</p>

Displayed:

Hi there, **bold** boy.

Tag: **I**  
Description: Makes text italic.

Example:

<p>Slant <i>this way,</i> my little flower.</p>

Displayed:

Slant *this way,* my little flower.

Tag: **SUP**Description: Makes text superscript.

Example:

<p>Einstein Says: E = Mc<sup>2</sup></p>

Displayed:

Einstein Says: E = Mc2

Tag: **SUB**Description: Makes text subscript.

Example:

<p>The chemical formula for Sulfuric Acid is H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub></p>

Displayed:

The chemical formula for Sulfuric Acid is H2SO4

Tag: **TT**Description: Makes text "teletype", aka the default monospace font (ordinarily, Courier 10pt, but this is dependant entirely on the user's browser settings).

Example:

<p>Mr. CodeHead says: <tt>var myGoober = 10 \* myRadius;</tt></p>

Displayed:

Mr. CodeHead says: var myGoober = 10 \* myRadius;

Less Common Physical Styles:

Tag: **BIG**  
Description: Makes text bigger.

Example:

<p>See how much <big>bigger</big> I am?</p>

Displayed:

See how much bigger I am?

Tag: **SMALL**Description: Makes text smaller.

Example:

<p>This text is much <small>smaller</small> than anything else.</p>

Displayed:

This text is much smaller than anything else.

**Content-Based Style Tags**

Content-based style tags are more concerned with what a particular piece of text means or represents, rather than what it looks like. Content-based style tags are probably going to disappear, over time, in favor of custom XML tags; XML tags are much more flexible and expansible in terms of the content they can potentially mark up. Of the content-based tags, only three are in occasional use today: EM (emphasis), STRONG (strong), and CITE (cite/citation).

Tag: **EM**Description: Adds emphasis to a piece of text, usually rendered using italics.

Example:

<p>I <em>really</em> want to do something with my life.</p>

Displayed:

I *really* want to do something with my life.

Tag: **STRONG**Description: Makes text stronger, very emphatic; is usually rendered in bold text.

Example:

<p>I <em>really</em> want to do <strong>something</strong> with my life.</p>

Displayed:

I *really* want to do **something** with my life.

Tag: **CITE**Description: Marks a citation (indicated in italics), giving credit to a work or author.

The CITE tag is supposed to mark a citation for a book, magazine, or article title, and may include an A (anchor) tag surrounding the CITE, linking to that particular resource (if it is located online).

Example (without anchor):

<p>I love <cite>Pride and Prejudice</cite>, by Jane Austen.</p>

Displayed:

I love *Pride and Prejudice*, by Jane Austen.

Example (with anchor):

<p>I love <a href="http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/pridprej.html"><cite>Pride and Prejudice</cite></a>, by Jane Austen.</p>

Displayed:

I love [*Pride and Prejudice*](http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/pridprej.html), by Jane Austen.

Theoretically, instances of a CITE tag within a document could be extracted to create a bibliography of works from your web site, including links; this task could be performed by a web browser automatically, were this feature ever implemented by anybody (which it hasn't been).

Another use of the CITE tag is a modification of its true purpose, marking a creator of a particular web page, and/or the date when that page was last updated. Warning: the CITE tag does NOT put a special line break or carriage return preceding or following itself, so you'll need to watch your formatting carefully.

Example:

<cite>

Creator: Steve Rubin<br>

Last Updated: October 31, 2006

</cite>

Displayed:

*Creator: Steve Rubin  
Last Updated: October 31, 2006*

If you want to give an address on a web page in place of or in addition to your citation, use the ADDRESS tag (this is not a content-based style, but I think I should mention it anyway).

Tag: **ADDRESS**Description: Marks a mailing address, including email contact, if applicable.

<address>

<a href="mailto:webmaster@blug.com">Webmaster</a><br>

1234 Main St.<br>

Brickbath, MI<br>

</address>

Displayed:

[*Webmaster*](mailto:%77%65b%6d%61st%65r@%62%6c%75%67%2e%63o%6d) *1234 Main St.  
Brickbath, MI*