**4 XHTML Validation**

XHTML Validation

**A. Why Validation Is Important:**  
  
**The Main Reasons are:**

1. Validation helps to ensure your web page looks right, no matter what web browser is being used.
2. Search engines can view and understand the page content. Some errors may prevent your content from being read by the search engines.
3. Pages are more accessible to people with disabilities.

For a thorough explanation of the reasons, visit [W3C's Why Validate? page](http://validator.w3.org/docs/why.html) or this [page](http://www.websitecleanup.com/html_validation_errors.php) from websitecleanup.com.  
  
**Common Errors and Their Fixes:**

1. Required attribute "ALT" not specified. To make pages usable for people with images turned off and the sight-impaired (who may be using screen-reader software), you can set a bit of text to display in place of or describe each image. The search engines like this text, too, because it gives your pictures meaning. These errors are easily fixed by setting the appropriate text for each picture.
2. Cannot generate system identifier for general entity "XXXX" or Found '&' within 'href'. You should use '&amp;' instead of just plain ampersands within web page links.
3. No document type declaration; implying "<!DOCTYPE HTML SYSTEM>".
4. There is no attribute "XXXXX". An attribute is something you add to a tag to change its look or behavior. This error happens when you try to use an attribute that isn't allowed for a particular type of tag, and is usually solved by using CSS to make the setting. For example, the attribute, bordercolor, should NOT be used within a table tag for XHTML. Instead you should use CSS.
5. Required attribute "TYPE" not specified. These errors usually happen when a file is "pulled in" for use on a web page. The most common types are style sheet files, and Javascript files (web page programming to do stuff like make sure you entered data into a form correctly, or to calculate a mortgage payment). This error is easily fixed by specifying what kind of file is being used.
6. End tag for element "XX" which is not open. These errors are due to sloppy editing, usually. A web page uses tags to do stuff to the text in between the tags. For example, bold text looks like this - <b>bold</b> - in HTML. If the beginning or ending tag </b> is missing, that's a problem. It's fixed by inserting the missing tag so everything matches up nicely.

**B. Some Quirky Validation Errors:**

1. An & by itself will generate a validation error message. You can fix this by using the special character of &amp;
2. A list should be enclosed as a block element, e.g., by using the <div> tag and </div> tag. Otherwise the validator will flag the list tags as errors.
3. A form element must always include the action attribte.
4. Note that some scripts won't validate for XHTML unless you include

/\* <![CDATA[ \*/ right after the script statement and /\*]]>\*/ right before the closing script statement.

<script type="text/javascript">  
**/\* <![CDATA[ \*/**  
*// content of your Javascript goes here*  
**/\*]]>**\*/  
</script>  
  
XHTML is subject to the same syntactical rules as XML. Because of this, an XHTML processor treats the characters < and & as markup, even if they reside inside a <script> block.  
  
see:  
  
<http://javascript.about.com/library/blxhtml.htm>

**C. Important Notes about the Validation Process:**  
  
1. For use in Firefox, I strongly suggest downloading the add-on, Web Developer for Firefox. This add-on contains a link for HTML Validation as well as CSS Validation and other useful links.  
  
2. Some XHTML errors will cause the validator to generate several error messages. If you fix a specific error then many of the error messages may disappear.  
  
3. Fixing validation errors usually takes a good deal of perseverance and patience.  
  
4. After you fix validation errors on your computer then upload the new changes and click the Revalidate button for validating the new version of your page. When you finally receive the page containing the message:  
  
This document was successfully checked as XHTML 1.0 Transitional!   
  
You then copy and paste the Validation code to the bottom of your page and upload it.   
  
<p>  
<a href="http://validator.w3.org/check?uri=referer"><img  
src="http://www.w3.org/Icons/valid-xhtml10-blue" border="0"  
alt="Valid XHTML 1.0 Transitional" height="31" width="88" /></a>  
</p>  
  
Notes:   
  
1. You should insert border="0" to the above img statement in order to suppress the blue border.  
  
2. You know you have a link problem, if you click on your validation icon and you get:  
**Sorry! This document can not be checked.** Error

500 No Host option provided

3. For validating CSS errors, you should use jigsaw.  
  
When your page passes CSS validation by receiving the message:  
  
Congratulations! No Error Found.   
  
then you can simply add in the following code to your page:  
  
<p>  
<a href="http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/check/referer">  
<img style="border:0;width:88px;height:31px"  
src="http://jigsaw.w3.org/css-validator/images/vcss-blue"  
alt="Valid CSS!" />  
</a>  
</p>  
  
4. For *very difficult* to fix errors, i suggest that you contact your TA.