History of W3C

In 1994, Tim Berners-Lee founded the World Wide Consortium (W3C) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, with support from CERN, DARPA and the European Commission. The W3C’s vision was to standardize the protocols and technologies used to build the web such that the content would be available to as wide a population of the world as possible.

During the next few years, the W3C published several specifications (called recommendations) including HTML 4.01, the format for PNG images, and Cascading Style Sheets version 1 and 2.

However, the W3C did not (and still do not) enforce their recommendations. Manufacturers only had to conform to the W3C documents if they wished to label their products as W3C-compliant. In practice, this was not a valuable selling point as almost all users of the web did not know, nor probably care, who the W3C were (this is still the case, to a large extent). Consequently, the browser wars of the nineties continued unabated.

It was originally intended that CERN host the European branch of W3C; however, CERN wished to focus on particle physics, not information technology. In April 1995 the “[Institut national de recherche en informatique et en automatique](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institut_national_de_recherche_en_informatique_et_en_automatique)” ([INRIA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/INRIA)) became the European host of W3C, with [Keio University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keio_University) becoming the Japanese branch in September 1996. Starting in 1997, W3C created regional offices around the world; as of September 2009, it has eighteen World Offices covering Australia, the Benelux countries ([Netherlands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Netherlands), [Luxembourg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luxembourg), and [Belgium](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belgium)), [Brazil](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brazil), [China](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China), [Finland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Finland), [Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany), [Austria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austria), [Greece](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greece), Hong Kong, Hungary, [India](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India), Israel, [Italy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Italy), South Korea, [Morocco](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco), South Africa, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom and Ireland.

In October 2012, W3C convened a community of large Web players and publishers to establish a [MediaWiki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MediaWiki) wiki that seeks to documents open Web standards called [WebPlatform](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WebPlatform) and WebPlatform Docs.