Boulder Information Services
Web application programming,
indexing

Print Avery labels using CSS and HTML

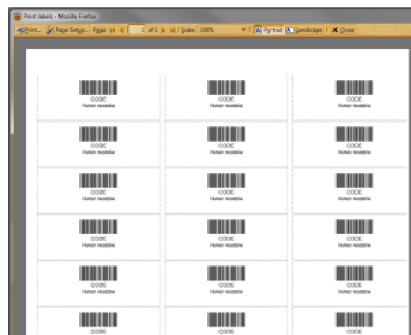Posted on <u>August 25, 2011</u>

A client for whom I provide web services asked me if I could help her print barcode labels from their data.

Now, I've created Avery labels using Office, Illustrator, even Photoshop — but never using web technologies. You just don't have a lot of control printing from your browser using CSS.

Or do you...? After all, we've always been able to specify real-world measurements such as "in" and "cm" using CSS.

I bought Avery 5160 labels because they seemed big enough to allow me to be a little sloppy while still providing many stickers per page.

A quick test proved that I could specify the page margins, label sizes, and gutter widths in inches. And both Firefox and IE allowed me to set the print margins to 0, leaving control of the layout to my CSS. Here's what the print preview looks like from Firefox:

It's not perfect, but it's good enough.

Printing multiple pages turned out to be trickier. First, to prevent pages from breaking halfway across my labels, I inserted an empty div with the style rule "page-break-after" set to "always".

Also, I had used the HTML body to set the margins. But the top of "page 2″ doesn't know anything about the HTML body's top margin. There is some documentation on "paged media" but it felt like uncharted territory. Rather than fight it, I decided to let the browser — rather than the CSS — set the top margin. I had to convey that in some friendly instructions on my client's launch page:

> *Before printing labels, use your browser's print preview options to set the top print margin to 1/2 inch and all other print margins to 0 (zero).*

> *Try printing a test page on plain paper first. Hold it up to the light behind a sheet of labels to make sure the bar codes line up with the stickers.*

It worked great in Firefox and Internet Explorer — good enough for my client.

Once the concept was proven, I built a controller page that lets my client print a test sheet, blocks of real data, individual data points, and even "blank" labels to push the data past previously peeled stickers so that nothing is wasted.

Here's a one-page example of the HTML and CSS used to create Avery 5160 labels. (HTML corrected thanks to Halty.)

```
<!doctype html>
<html lang="en">
<head>
    <meta charset="utf-8">
    <title>HTML & CSS Avery Labels (5160) by MM at Boulder Information Services</title>
    <link href="labels.css" rel="stylesheet" type="text/css" >
    <style>
    body {
        width: 8.5in;
        margin: 0in .1875in;
        }
    .label{
        /* Avery 5160 labels -- CSS and HTML by MM at Boulder Information Services */
        width: 2.025in; /* plus .6 inches from padding */
        height: .875in; /* plus .125 inches from padding */
        padding: .125in .3in 0;
        margin-right: .125in; /* the gutter */

        float: left;

        text-align: center;
        overflow: hidden;

        outline: 1px dotted; /* outline doesn't occupy space like border does */
        }
    .page-break  {
        clear: left;
        display:block;
        page-break-after:always;
        }
    </style>

</head>
<body>

<div class="label"><img src="http://boulderinformationservices.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/barcode_sam
<div class="label"><img src="http://boulderinformationservices.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/barcode_sam
<div class="label"><img src="http://boulderinformationservices.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/barcode_sam
<div class="label"><img src="http://boulderinformationservices.files.wordpress.com/2011/08/barcode_sam
<div class="label">(Repeat 30 times)</div>
<div class="page-break"></div>

</body>
```

```
</html>
```

This entry was posted in Uncategorized. Bookmark the permalink.

15 Responses to *Print Avery labels using CSS and HTML*

Halty *says:*
September 13, 2011 at 3:08 am

Very cool. I love it. You need to assign the label class to the divs of the images in your sample, though.

Reply

David Faltermier *says:*
November 8, 2011 at 10:53 pm

Very cool, indeed. Wouldn't have thought to control the pagination as you did.

Reply

Guy Brossy *says:*
February 13, 2012 at 8:19 pm

Hummm....I pasted your style from above and set the text with in the DIV from a database in a loop. I get your labels boxes, but the boxes expand (and therefore end up different widths) depending on the data. I am using an address block instead of uniform-sized barcode images and if the Name, or City, State & Zip are longer than a certain length, the box that your style steet draws expands in width. I have even included "max-width: 2.025in;" but it doesn't stop the width expansion.

Any ideas?

Reply

Guy Brossy *says:*
February 13, 2012 at 8:48 pm

Nevermind! Wow ... I noticed your comments were not in a format for our javascript pages, for a couple of your style lines are remmed out unintentionally. When I fixed them, the labels worked perfectly!

Thanks.

Reply

Bryan Plasters *says:*
February 22, 2012 at 6:34 pm

Worked fantastically!

Reply

Tim *says:*

March 6, 2012 at 3:30 am

Great code! Thanks for sharing. I am going to use this with Foxpro for DOS. I will use Foxpro to write a text file in HTML code and automatically insert names, addresses, etc from a Foxpro database. I can modify the above CSS for fonts, etc. Then I will open the file with my FireFox browser and print labels with a modern Okidata laser printer. This is an ideal way to get around the DOS printer problem and still use quite viable Foxpro and DOS programs. Thanks!

Reply

Jonas Ferreira (@jferreira) *says:*
April 15, 2012 at 3:47 pm

Perfect. Now imagine the following situation:
I print labels for the participants of an event, who signed up in advance do I print normally be using a text editor or by means of your code.

Now, on the day of the event will be held inscriptions, and there is a label printer and the model will be used Avery 5160, with several labels per page, but will print just one label at a time, then the question is: Is there a way to specify in which row and column will leave the label? So that I can reuse several times the same page with unused labels.

Reply

> **Martin Mapes** *says:*
> April 15, 2012 at 8:30 pm
>
> For my client, I let them choose a certain *number* of blank labels to include before the first "real" label was printed. It would be harder to specify row and column but it could be done.
>
> Reply
>
>> **Peng** *says:*
>> January 2, 2013 at 7:05 am
>>
>> Would you be willing to share how this is done?

> **Martin Mapes** *says:*
> January 2, 2013 at 4:10 pm
>
> Peng, I simply inserted label DIVs without any IMG tags. For example, if you want to print the label on the second row, second column. You need to insert 4 blank label DIVs to nudge everything down.
>
> Reply

Norman D *says:*
June 28, 2012 at 10:29 pm

Thanks for the post – very helpful – I added barcodes with some jquery magic – and now you have a barcoding solution..
http://barcode-coder.com/en/barcode-jquery-plugin-201.html
$("#bcTarget").barcode("PRODUCT-CODE", "code39",{barWidth:1, barHeight:40, showHRI: false});
PRODUCT-CODE

Reply

claytordDavid *says:*

August 1, 2012 at 2:46 pm

This is identical to a project I had with a client printing mailing labels! I set up a form to collect names and addresses and now can spit them onto this form and just have the clients print. Beautiful solution

Reply

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robin badart *says:*

September 20, 2012 at 7:30 pm

is there a 'labels.css' file that goes along with this html example? (link href). where does that come from?

Reply

Martin Mapes *says:*

January 2, 2013 at 4:07 pm

Oops. I accidentally left the link to the external CSS in the example after I copied it all in-line. It's irrelevant

Reply

RLIN *says:*

March 5, 2013 at 5:51 pm

This is great, however, it does not work right after putting CSS setup to a file instead of in-line.

Boulder Information Services

The Twenty Ten Theme.   *Blog at WordPress.com.*