sitepoint premium

In this lesson we're going to learn what is a **front end workflow** and how it makes developing websites easier. In the past few years, websites have become more and more complex. I can personally attest to this, as the majority of my work ten years ago consisted in developing simple five page websites.

Fast forward to now, and even a basic website has to have a CMS, responsive functionality and an overall web application feel. With that, the front end of a website, which comprises the code that runs in the client side of the website, are the HTML, CSS, and JavaScript that runs in the browser, has followed this trend.

Developers have seen the need to have a more structured, organized, and automated approach. The rise of CSS preprocessors like Sass and LESS is an example. However, preprocessors for just CSS are not enough. There are preprocessors for HTML and JavaScript. The desire to reload the page automatically in the browser when files change, minify and concatenate CSS and JS, check for unused selectors in CSS and much, much more.

Don't worry if this makes you dizzy. There's good news. One of the main objectives of this course is to show you how to integrate the build tool and preprocessor workflow in your daily work. You'll see that it's not that difficult and at the end of the day, your job will become easier and more enjoyable. Let's see what this is all about. Different kinds of programs have been popping up in the last few years, called Build Tools or Simply Task Runners.

Of course each one has its functionalities, pros and cons. A few examples include Grunt, Gulp, Broccoli, Webpack and Browserify. These last two calling themselves bundlers, as they specialize in bundling together assets that your project needs into the final files that will be published. In this course, we'll be working with Gulp, as it's one of the easiest to set up and use.

We'll have to install Node.js so we have access to NPM, Node Package Manager, where all sorts of JavaScript software can be found. Then, we'll install some plugins and set up everything to work with our project. A project using Gulp or other similar program may have a slightly different folder structure.