

Differences between Web Designer, Front End Developer and Back End Developer

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Front End Developer

Front end development refers to developing the parts of a website that a user can see and interact with. It is often called client-side development. The primary languages used are HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. Sites that use only front end development are static sites.

It involves the visual design and layout of the pages, like typography, colors, buttons, and icons. Their job is to ensure that the visual elements of the website run smoothly for the user. It is the responsibility of the front end developer to make sure sites are responsive at different sizes/ devices as well.

Back End Developer

Back end development refers to developing the parts of a website that runs in the background as the user uses the site or ultimately how a site works. These elements are not visual. They are involved in the functionality of the site. If something is happening on a website that a user cannot see, it usually involves back end development or code. It is usually referred to as server-side development. They can ensure that a web site interacts with information stored on databases. Code written by a backend developer is what communicates the database information to the browser. They are focused on site speed and responsiveness. Sites that implement both front and back end development are dynamic sites.

Primary languages are Java, PHP, Ruby on Rails, Python, and .NET.

Web Designer

This is a less commonly used term that may refer to someone who designs just the look of the site without any coding at all. It could be someone who designs in photoshop for example and then passes the design to a developer to execute.

A front end developer can also be considered a web designer because they contribute to the look and feel of a site and in fact a person who is solely involved in the design of the site can also code the front end as well. It can also refer to the UI/UX of the site and a front end developer can be responsible for all of these things. Or a UI/UX designer can be considered a web designer and not do any of the actual coding. So this term is more open ended and less defined.