What are the different target attribute types, and how do they work?

You may have seen the target attribute on anchor elements, or links. This important attribute tells the browser where to open the URL for the anchor element:

<a href="https://freecodecamp.org" target="\_blank">Visit freeCodeCamp</a>

There are four important possible values for this attribute. Note that each value is preceded by an underscore.

The first value is \_self, which is the default value. This opens the link in the current browsing context. In most cases, this will be the current tab or window.

The second value is \_blank, which opens the link in a new browsing context. Typically, this will open in a new tab. But some users might configure their browsers to open a new window instead.

The third value is \_parent, which opens the link in the parent of the current context. For example, if your website has an iframe, a \_parent value in that iframe would open in your website's tab/window, not in the embedded frame.

The fourth value is \_top, which opens the link in the top-most browsing context - think "the parent of the parent". This is similar to \_parent, but the link will always open in the full browser tab/window, even for nested embedded frames.

There is a fifth value, called \_unfencedTop, which is currently used for the experimental FencedFrame API. At the time of this video, you probably won't have a reason to use this one yet.

Selecting the right target value to control where your users end up is an important consideration when creating a website.