What is user agent stylesheet

429

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I'm working on a web page in Google Chrome. It displays correctly with the following styles.

```
table {
    display: table;
    border-collapse: separate;
    border-spacing: 2px;
    border-color: gray;
}
```

It is important to note that I didn't define these styles. On Chrome dev tools, it says **user agent stylesheet** in place of the CSS file name.

Now if I submit a form and some validation error occurs, I get the following stylesheet:

```
table {
    white-space: normal;
    line-height: normal;
    font-weight: normal;
    font-size: medium;
    font-variant: normal;
    font-style: normal;
    color: -webkit-text;
    text-align: -webkit-auto;
}
table {
    display: table;
    border-collapse: separate;
    border-spacing: 2px;
    border-color: gray;
}
```

The `font-size` from these new styles is disturbing my design. Is there any way to force my stylesheets and if possible, completely overwrite Chrome's default stylesheet?

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1　chrome : how to turn off user agent stylesheet settings? – givanse Apr 30 '14 at 5:45

7　Note also that on Chrome (51) you get only those two table entries when you don't have a doctype declaration. Otherwise, you only get the second one. – John Jun 14 '16 at 8:06

　　Clear the chrome cache in more tools -> Clear browsing data – doford Mar 4 '17 at 14:05

2　Related post here. Understanding how user-agent (or browser) style sheet is different from user and author style sheets will help conceptualize things easily. – RBT Nov 9 '17 at 9:00

11 Answers

220

What are the target browsers? Different browsers set different default CSS rules. Try including a **reset.css** or a **normalise.css** (Google for either one or for "reset vs normalise" to see the differences) to remove those defaults. Or setting your own **style.css**

edited Feb 1 at 12:22　　　　　answered Sep 25 '12 at 12:12

	Community ♦		Oliver Millington		
	1	1	**3,841**	4 15 25	

19　I always reset/normalise my CSS before every project, that way you have an "almost" level field across browsers. I have never heard of a negative "side-affect" as such, I'm sure if you have a quick look on Google you will find that it is recommended. – Oliver Millington Sep 25 '12 at 12:21

2　Resetting styles can cause weird results with form fields, particularly around field borders or multi-part elements like type="file". – phyzome Oct 28 '14 at 19:03

7　Even though reset/normalize might help, it doesn't really answer the question, of why the user agent stylesheet is changing? I have the same problem where on they UA styles become different for pre-rendered pages I use for SEO. Any ideas on why it changes? – Yaron Mar 8 '15 at 14:17

5　See what Chrome sets by default to the webpage: trac.webkit.org/browser/trunk/Source/WebCore/css/html.css – Santosh Kumar Jul 7 '15 at 6:44

9　This is not an answer... Adding `<!DOCTYPE>` is correct one by @Sebas – Amit Shah Dec 16 '16 at 7:21 ✎

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edited Aug 30 '16 at 9:40   answered Oct 22 '15 at 14:11

Sebas   **Jesper Mygind**

17.3k   6   37   95   **1,341**   1   10   12

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2   That's a great hint. You saved me some time of research. Worth noted that in my case I had that doctype declaration but I had a script before. It looks like the DOCTYPE must happen first thing in the page to enter into consideration. – Sebas Nov 8 '15 at 18:25

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7   Multi million $ answer... – Amit Shah Dec 16 '16 at 7:20

   Adding <!DOCTYPE> solved a very weird tr/td vertical alignment problem I had. Thanks for this answer. – Ralph Tee Jun 16 '17 at 14:14 ✏️

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1   This is nitpicking, but <!DOCTYPE html> fixed the problem for me. – Steve Zelaznik Feb 20 '18 at 2:29

---

2   I had <!DOCTYPE html> enabled but still had to normalise. – antikbd Nov 6 '18 at 14:06

Regarding the concept "user agent style sheet", consult section [Cascade](#) in the CSS 2.1 spec.

95

User agent style sheets are overridden by anything that you set in your own style sheet. They are just the rock bottom: in the absence of any style sheets provided by the page or by the user, the browser still has to render the content *somehow*, and the user agent style sheet just describes this.

So if you think you have a problem with a user agent style sheet, then you really have a problem with your markup, or your style sheet, or both (about which you wrote nothing).

edited Apr 30 '14 at 7:11   answered Sep 25 '12 at 16:25

Jukka K. Korpela

156k   25   199   299

@givanse, no, you see user agent style sheet effects when you don't override them, and your sample markup is no exception. It will be parsed as one `li` element containing two `ul` elements with just text content; they are styled by user agent style sheet, but this styling can be overridden. (Whether the markup is invalid depends on context and on HTML version; but this does not affect styling.) – Jukka K. Korpela Apr 30 '14 at 7:14

@givanse, that problem is not relevant to the question "what is a user style sheet". If you think the problem is important, post it as a new question, with

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Marking the document as HTML5 by the proper doctype on the first line, solved my issue.

41

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>...
```

6 Can you please explain how exactly it is supposed to work? How HTML 5 is associated with undefined styles? I'll confirm but do you have any ready fiddle to confirm it? – Kapil Sharma Aug 17 '15 at 9:25 ✎

A user agent style sheet is a "default style sheet" provided by the browser (e.g., Chrome, Firefox, Edge, etc.) in order to present the page in a way that satisfies "general presentation expectations." For example, a default style sheet would provide base styles for things like font size, borders, and spacing between elements. It is common to employ a reset style sheet to deal with inconsistencies amongst browsers.

20

From the spec...

> A user agent's default style sheet should present the elements of the document language in ways that satisfy general presentation expectations for the document language. ~ The Cascade.

For more information about user agents in general...

https://www.w3.org/TR/UAAG20/#def-user-agent

42.3k 20 98 148

Some browsers use their own way to read .css files. So the right way to beat this: If you type the command line directly in the .html source code, this beats the .css file, in that way, you told the browser directly what to do and the browser is at position not to read the commands from the .css file. Remember that the commands writen in the .html file is stronger than the command in the .css.

3

edited Apr 14 '14 at 11:02

answered Mar 8 '14 at 17:50

Community ♦
1 1

rollin_jeksun
41 1

Answering the question in title, what is useragent stylesheet, set of default styles in browser, here is some of them,

Mozilla: https://dxr.mozilla.org/mozilla-central/source/browser/base/content/browser.css

2

Chromium/Chromium: https://cs.chromium.org/chromium/src/third_party/blink/renderer/core/html/resources/html.css?q=html.css&sq=package:chromium&dr

WebKit: https://trac.webkit.org/browser/trunk/Source/WebCore/css/html.css

edited May 28 at 13:18

answered Mar 18 at 6:28

Ebrahim Byagowi
5,056 3 39 56

I had the same problem as one of my was have margin set by the browser, it was quite annoying but then i figured out as most of the people said, its a mark up error.

1

I went back and checked my section and my css link was like below:

```
<link rel="stylesheet" href="ex.css">
```

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Hope it helps for some of u.

edited Oct 2 '18 at 4:12   answered Oct 1 '18 at 21:12

Corina   Appy Sharma
786   4   14   **66**   4

Each browser provides a default stylesheet, called the user agent stylesheet, in case an HTML file does not specify one. Styles that you specify override the defaults. Because you have not specified values for the table element's box, the default styles have been applied

0

answered Apr 20 '18 at 18:19

firstpostcommenter
388   2   4   21

---

put the following code in your CSS file

-5

```
table {
    font-size: inherit;
}
```

edited Feb 8 '16 at 11:56   answered Feb 8 '16 at 10:38

Alexander Elgin   Srikanth
4,697   3   28   44   **11**

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1   This does not really add anything new to this post. There is already an accepted answer, as well as 5 other answers, so please don't post late answers.
    – Kaspar Lee Feb 8 '16 at 10:46

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