Cross-browser testing is the process of determining if your web app or website can be accessed through different browsers, devices, and assistive technologies.

Because each browser reads website code differently, it's up to developers to guarantee that current and previous versions of browsers understand the code correctly. By testing and understanding this process, you can locate browser-specific compatibility faults so you can quickly debug them.

Even if you’ve built an application that functions well on your preferred browser, you still need to test to ensure success for your users. This includes cross-browser testing.

Most common cross-browser issues and how to fix them

Four of the most common cross-browser issues that you might encounter are JavaScript issues, CSS resetting issues, HTML/CSS validation issues, and DOCTYPE errors.

JavaScript issues

As much as browsers change, there are constantly updates and patches for code. In particular, Javascript cross-browser compatibility issues develop when an outdated browser doesn’t recognize a new JavaScript capability.

It could be as simple as using a linter or opening up the dev tools for your browser and finding the cause of the issue. Doing this manually could be time consuming, and a burden for large projects. You’ll need a more holistic approach.

Resetting CSS

For a website or web application to use its own CSS design, it must override the browser’s default layout. The default layout is a user agent stylesheet that makes unstyled websites more readable.  
  
Make sure to reset the CSS so it overrides the default layout. Here’s an example of a generic CSS reset stylesheet.

Validation of HTML/CSS

Different browsers and operating systems work with code differently. The slightest mistake, like forgetting to close a tag, can cause issues in different settings. Some browsers may render the component, while others may not display anything at all.

DOCTYPE error

Modern browsers vary on their exact logic and generally use a combination of DOCTYPE and the Content-Type header to determine how to handle the content on the page.

The DOCTYPE, the document type declaration, defines a set of rules for a particular HTML version. It can be a source of errors because browsers use DOCTYPE to determine whether the page should be handled in quirks mode or standard mode.

Here’s an example of proper formatting to use in your HTML so your browser uses full standards mode.