Introduction To Web Development

Foundations Course

Introduction

What do web developers do? In short, they build and maintain websites.

Web developers often work for clients who are trying to get their product or service onto the web. The work is typically very project focused and involves collaborating with a team that helps to coordinate the client's needs into the end product. The client could be a tech company, an organization, or a government. The work could involve front-end, back-end, or full-stack web development.

Web development could be a good profession for you if you like solving logical problems, building useful things, and experimenting with new technologies. Web developers are in high demand, generally have a good work/life balance, and command comfortable salaries. Google your specific location to get a better sense of your local web development job opportunities.

For more details, Wikipedia describes the breadth of the web development profession in their entry on web design.

Types of Web Developers

Earlier, we mentioned that web development work could be in the front end, the back end, or the full stack. What exactly do these terms mean?

The **front end** is the stuff you see on the website in your browser, including the presentation of content and user interface elements like the navigation bar. Front-end developers use HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and their relevant frameworks to ensure that content is presented effectively and that users have an excellent experience.

The **back end** refers to the guts of the application, which live on the server. The back end stores and serves program data to ensure that the front end has what it needs. This process can become very complicated when a website has millions of users. Back-end developers use programming languages like Java, Python, and Ruby to work with data.

Full-stack developers are comfortable working with both the front and back ends. At The Odin Project, we focus on teaching you full-stack development, covering all aspects of web development.

For more detail, Udacity has a great blog post on this topic: 3 Web Dev Careers Decoded: Front-End vs Back-End vs Full Stack

Types of Careers

Now that you know about the different types of web developers, let's cover what we mentioned earlier about the different types of clients and employers you may work with.

Large tech companies, such as Google, Meta, and Amazon, have very stringent hiring requirements. If you successfully meet these expectations, they offer excellent pay, benefits, and opportunities.

Startups are a bit like the wild west. For a junior developer, it can feel like a trial by fire because of the pace of development. Startups often offer slightly lower

salaries and require longer hours, but they may also offer equity in the company and highly unique environments.

As a freelancer, you could command a strong hourly wage and the freedom to schedule and design your own products. However, you would be responsible for getting your own work (which means less coding time), managing billing from clients (which can be difficult), and being solely responsible. Strong people skills are necessary for this path.

As a consultant for a web consultancy, you would give up some of your freelancing wage potential but be able to focus more on the code and less on the hustle. This option also provides a good work/life balance and pay.

Finally, large, older companies still need web developers. These companies offer a good work/life balance, pay, and benefits but often move slower than a company that is highly focused on tech.

Tools of the Trade

These are some of the basic tools you will use regularly. You may not know what they are now, but you most certainly will going forward.

- **Computer**
- Google
- **Text Editor**
- **Command Line Interface (CLI)**
- Stack Overflow
- Git
- GitHub

Motivation

Learning to code is incredibly rewarding but can also be difficult and frustrating. The strongest assets you can have as a student are a desire to build, a problem-solving mind, and persistence in the face of setbacks.

The web development industry has a long history of successful developers with varying backgrounds, so people tend to care more about what you've actually **built** than how you got there.

Why Odin?

I want you to know that this will not be easy.

There are plenty of other online curriculums for beginners, but they are often taught in an extremely isolated and controlled environment and cover only a specific topic.

The Odin Project takes a realistic view of what you need to know and has you set up and work in your own environment, much like what you'll be doing when you get a job.

It acknowledges that you need a wide variety of skillsets and languages to reach an employable level.

The Odin Project is constantly evolving because of people like you who get further along in the curriculum and pay it forward by incrementally improving our content over time.

Once you start to feel comfortable with the tools, start hacking on open source projects (like The Odin project itself). The more you contribute, the more you will learn about what you can do, and the closer you will get to being hireable. These projects will also look great on your resume!

Conclusion

Hopefully, you've gained a better idea of what a web developer actually does and what your life might look like if you decided to take it on as a career. This has only been a teaser into the world of web development.

In this "Foundations" course, you'll take a journey through the entire spectrum of topics that you will eventually need to know. This course jumps around to a variety of topics that you may be totally unfamiliar with, providing you a small taste of each and then moving on.

The following courses will dive deep into these topics. You will build dozens of scripts, projects, and websites to cement those skills that will get you hired.

Getting all the way there is going to be challenging. In fact, you should check out the post "Why Learning to Code is So Damn Hard" so you have a good idea of what the journey ahead is like. But what worthwhile thing is truly easy?

Yes, it's going to be challenging.

But it's also going to be fun.

And it might even be life changing, too.

What are you waiting for?

Additional Resources

This section contains helpful links to related content. It isn't required, so consider it supplemental.

- Quora: How can I Become a Really Good Web Developer?
- Quora: What makes a great web developer?

- Jared the Nerd: What makes a good web developer?
- FreeCodeCamp: Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me When I Was Learning How To Code
- TechCrunch: Don't Believe Anyone who Tells you Learning to Code is Easy
- Code Quizzes: Deliberate Programming Practice
- Roadmap to becoming a web developer in 2022

View Course

Login to track progress

Next Lesson

Improve this lesson on GitHub

Have a question?

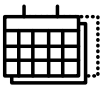
Chat with our friendly Odin community in our Discord chatrooms!

Open Discord

Are you interested in accelerating your web development learning experience?

Get started

Thinkful



5-6 months

Job Guarantee

1-on-1 Mentorship