

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 project-focused and involves collaborating with a team 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.

Lesson overview

This section contains a general overview of topics that you will learn in this lesson.

- Learn about different types of web developers.
- Recognize different types of clients and employers.
- Learn about tools you'll be using regularly.

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, Ruby, and JavaScript 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.

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?

We 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 skill sets 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 contributing to open source projects, like [contributing to The Odin Project](#)! 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.

Yes, it's going to be challenging.

But it's also going to be fun.

And it might even be life-changing.

What are you waiting for?

Assignment

1. Check out the post [“Why Learning to Code is So Damn Hard”](#), which was written by the founder of The Odin Project. This article gives a realistic view of what the journey ahead is like.
2. Read Udacity’s blog post on [front-end, back-end and full stack developers](#).

Knowledge check

The following questions are an opportunity to reflect on key topics in this lesson. If you can’t answer a question, click on it to review the material, but keep in mind you are not expected to memorize or master this knowledge.

- [What kind of web developer will The Odin Project teach you to be?](#)
- [What are the different types of careers you could have?](#)
- [What are some of the tools you’ll be using regularly?](#)