

# **A brief history of HTML**

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Extended to:  
XHTML  
eXtensible Hyper Text Markup Language

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Basically, markup can either tell a program how to process text, or it can describe what text does.

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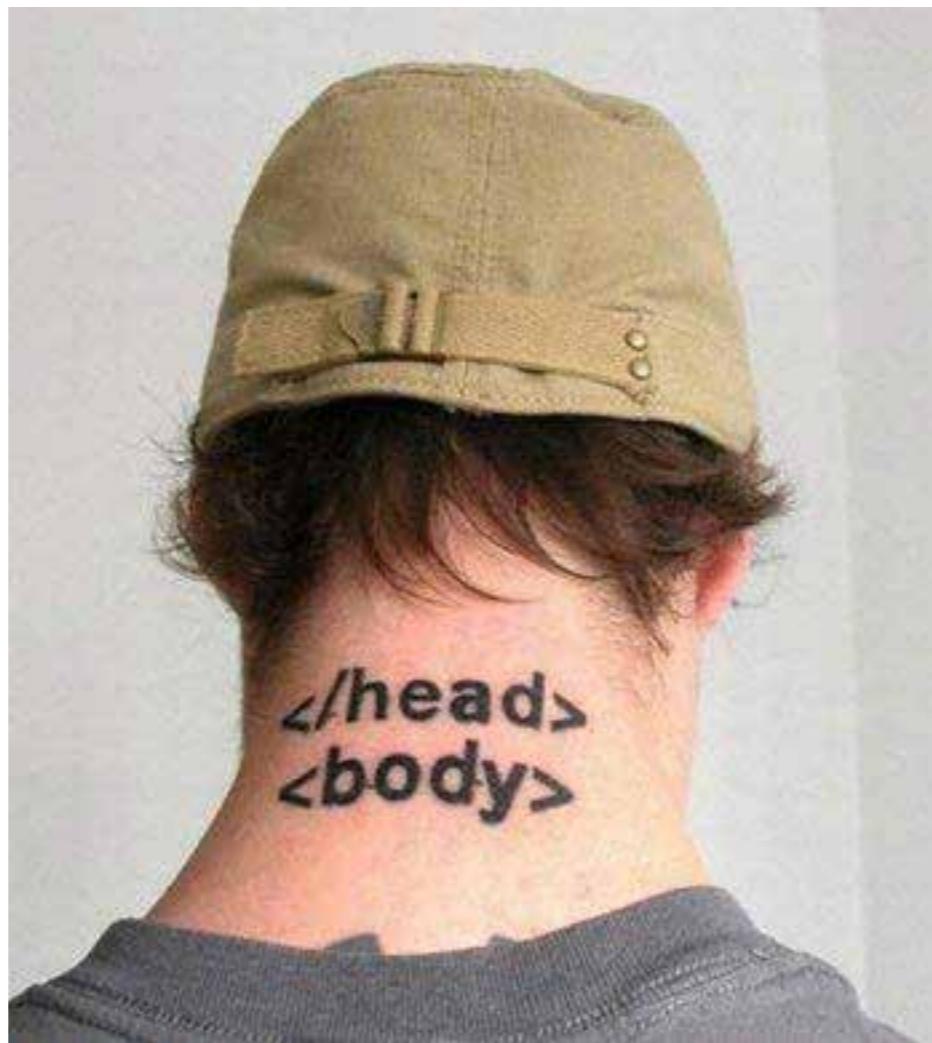
<html>

HTML tags generally come in pairs, like so:

<html> </html>

<head> </head>

<body> </body>



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Those functions are properly the realm of stylesheets and scripts, about which more later.

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**Tim Berners-Lee, a contractor at CERN, wrote a hypertext program in 1980 to make it easier for researchers to share documents. In 1989, he wrote a proposal to use a similar system on the Internet, and wrote the original HTML specification and server software in late 1990.**

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The Internet Engineering Task Force combined Berners-Lee's spec with a competing HTML+ spec, from Dave Raggett, in 1993 to form a draft HTML specification. Raggett's draft included already-implemented features, including tables and fill-in forms.

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The IETF fell apart under the weight of competing interests after that, and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is the current maintainer of the HTML specifications.

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(You'll recall that this goes against the principle that HTML should only specify how a document behaves, not how it's rendered. Browser vendors sought to create extensions to control the style of documents in an effort to gain market share.)

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**HTML 4.01** is the most current accepted HTML version, published in 1999 and corrected in 2001.

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XHTML is designed to be well-formed, so it provides a better foundation for learning HTML than HTML 4.x or HTML5.

There are, however, problems with the XHTML syntax — specifically XHTML 2.0 — about which more later.

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**HTML5 is a response to the XHTML and HTML feature mix current on the Web. In particular, it's an attempt to define a language that can be written in either HTML or XHTML syntax.**

**It has new multimedia and graphical features, as well as elements intended to enhance semantic understanding of document content.**

**And now,  
hamburger text markup language.**