The Web Standards Project

When Tim Berners-Lee invented the World Wide Web in 1989, he envisioned it as an open and accessible community that would hold power in its universality. Yet, the early days of the web were fraught with accessibility issues and unreliable, incompatible browsers.

To push Berners-Lee's vision forward, a group of professional web developers formed the **Web Standard Project (WaSP)** in 1998 intending to disseminate and promote the use of web standards. These standards were recommended by the **World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)**.

The main hurdle for the WaSP: convincing browser developers, including Microsoft and Google, to deviate from their own set of rules and follow the W3C standards. Using grassroots tactics, WaSP would publish critical reports on browser inconsistencies, request members to share their concerns with browser developers, and even encourage the public to use alternative browsers. As a result, web browsers slowly began to implement these web standards due to the pressure from the WaSP.

The second hurdle for the WaSP was educating Internet users—both web designers and website owners alike—about web standards and their importance. Some members of the WaSP published tutorials on how to code standards-based designs, while others worked with popular software tools, such as Adobe Dreamweaver, to ensure that standards were met there as well.

The Web Standard Project's battle for a more accessible and open web contributed to many positive outcomes in the web community. For one, upholding the W3C web standards has become a top priority for web browsers like Microsoft and Google. In fact, Google Chrome used web standards as a prominent feature during its release in 2008. This change has allowed more users to interact with browsers without incident.

Further, the arena of web development and design has entirely shifted to a standards-based approach to design, one that meets both coding and accessibility standards. Nowadays, it is up to the web designer to understand and design for these web standards. This sentiment was echoed in the WaSP's final blog post before announcing its dissolution in 2013, which stated,

> "The sting of the WaSP is no longer necessary. The job's not over, but instead of being the work of a small activist group, it's a job for tens of thousands of developers who care about ensuring the web remains free, open, interoperable, and accessible..."

The Web Standards Project (WaSP)

Visit The Web Standards Project to learn more about current WaSP projects.

Review Checkpoint

To test your understanding of the content presented in this assignment, please click on the Questions icon below. If you have trouble answering any of the questions presented here, you are always free to return to this or any assignment to re-read the material.

1. True or False?

It is the responsibility of the web designer to understand and design for various web standards.

a. True

Correct. This statement is true. The arena of web development and design has entirely shifted to a standards-based approach to design, one that meets both coding and accessibility standards. Nowadays, it is up to the web designer to understand and design for these web standards.

b. False

Incorrect. Try again.

2. How did WaSP convince browser developers to follow the W3C standards?

a. By publishing critical reports on browser inconsistencies

Incorrect. Try again.

b. By encouraging the public to use alternative Internet providers

Incorrect. Try again.

c. By sharing their concerns with browser developers

Incorrect. Try again.

d. A and C

Correct. Using grassroots tactics, WaSP would publish critical reports on browser inconsistencies and request members to share their concerns with browser developers.

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