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Designing Websites For All Screen Resolutions

Tutorial on Designing for 800 x 600, 1024 x 768, 1280 x 1024 and higher

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Designing web sites to fit all resolutions is a very important web design principle. Try out the Enthesis site in all resolutions higher than 800 x 600 and you will find that it is designed to fit the page exactly. Therefore, visitors who have higher resolution can see more content in one page which reduces scrolling. Most web sites are designed for only one resolution. They may look perfect in a 800 x 600 resolution but if viewed in a 1024 x 768 resolution look a little empty. You'll find a lot of wasted space around making the web site look quite small.

From our research we have found that majority of our viewers are on the 1024x768 resolutions and higher. As time goes by more and more people are going to switch to higher resolutions as seen by our site statistics. It is therefore very important to design web sites for all resolutions. That is one of the principles we follow while designing web sites for our clients. With that bit of background information, lets get started on how to design a web site for all screen resolutions.

Step 1: Decide on the lowest Screen Resolution

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Before you start you need to decide on your lowest screen resolution. Your web site will have to be designed keeping the lowest resolution in mind. Through our research we have found that less than 0.5% are on the 640 x 480 resolution So we ignore that completely. The next important resolution is the 800 x 600 resolution. Some of our visitors use this resolution so we use this as our lowest screen resolution. This means that our web site has to fit all resolutions equal to or higher than 800 x 600.

Step 2: Design Your Web Site On This Resolution

Once you decide on your lowest screen resolution you need to design your web site for that resolution This means that all your graphics will be designed for this resolution. Design your web site and export the images as you would normally do.

Step 3: While converting your design to HTML make sure all your tables are measured in terms of percentages

Important: This is the trick to developing web sites for all resolutions. You need to **work in terms of percentages and not pixels.** If you work in pixels you are giving an absolute measurement to a table, whereas working in percentages gives a relative measurement. The table will be a given percentage of the screen resolution.

I hope you have understanding this clearly. I'd like to explain this with an example. If you were to design a site for a 800 x 600 resolution, you would probably make a table with width 800 px and height 600 px. Now if you were to design a web site for all resolutions you need to make a table with width and height 100%, so that whatever the screen resolution may be the web page will scale to fit the page. It will be 100% of the screen resolution or whatever percentage you choose to give it.

The first step is to make a table with 100% height and 100% width. You could make it 95% if you want some white space around it.

Step 4: Within the table measure cells in terms of pixels except for the cell for the content

This a another very important step. You need to give a fixed measurement to all your cells except for the content cell. You can leave this cell blank.

Simple Web Site Demonstration

Check this out at 640 x 480, 800 x 600 and 1024 x 768 resolutions

Notes:

- The width and height are 100%
- The first and last columns are given fixed measurements of 120 px and 10 px respectively
- The middle column (content column) is given no measurement so that it will scale to fit the page.
- The same logic is used for rows (for the height). All the rows have a fixed height except for the content row which will scale to fit the page.

Example 2 - Only the Header

Check this out in 640 x 480, 800 x 600 and 1024 x 768 resolutions

G	O	D				W	I	T	H	I	N

HTML Code

```
<table width="100%" border="0" cellspacing="0" cellpadding="0">

<tr width="9%"> (Each cell is 9%)
```

Step 5: Insert images and content

Once you have designed your tables in terms of percentages you need to insert your images and content. The usual layouts will probably have a logo which can come on the top left corner and your navigation buttons in the top right or left navigation bar.

For more complex layouts you will need to use background fills to design your web sites. Remember since you are designing web sites to fit all resolutions you need to position your images accordingly (for your header). The easiest principle I follow (if possible) is to use the top left and right corners for fixed images and let the middle tile according to the size of the page.

Step 6: Test your site in all the resolutions

The last step is to test your site in all the resolutions that are available on your computer. To do this you need to:

1. Right click on your Desktop and click on **Properties**
2. Click on the tab **Settings**
3. Under Desktop area click shift the scale to 800 x 600, 1024x768 or higher if possible
4. Once you have chosen the resolution you want check the site in, click on the **Test** button
5. If you can see the bitmap clearly you can click on **Apply**

Check your site in all the resolutions and if it is working fine you're successfully designed and developed a web site for all resolutions. Congratulations!

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