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# Network Update

## WWW Page Writing and Design Helpers

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### Introduction

In the news, on television and radio, in the lounge at school we hear more and more about the World Wide Web. Increasingly people are asked if they have a Web page and where it can be found. This explosion of interest has not by-passed the language education field. A little over a year ago at CALICO '95 in Middlebury, fewer than 10% of the sessions dealt with Internet explicitly. A year later at CALICO '96 in Albuquerque, almost one fourth of the sessions dealt with the Internet in some way, and the vast majority of these sessions discussed the World Wide Web. The tidal wave of information accessible on the WWW is affecting our faculty and students in the way they teach and learn.

*"With all the new and emerging possibilities for the WWW such as animation, video, [and] music...more resources are becoming available on the Web to help experienced and new developers to create their own dynamic, interactive pages."*

In our field, as seen in the CALICO symposia, there has been a tremendous surge in the use of the WWW for both personal and educational reasons. As I discussed in the last issue, the number and style of Web-based projects for language education has risen dramatically. The jump in numbers is undeniable and interest among faculty is growing at an increasing rate. More of our faculty wish to use this inexpensive fount of information in their classes. But the question remains: how do we assist the growing number of interested developers to create well designed, functional Web pages?

The sites listed below are just a few of the sites available to assist both the experienced and the new Web page developers in their drive to make new and better sites. With the deluge of software packages on the market a few years ago, we discovered that it is not only the content of the program but

how it is presented which makes it a viable and useful educational tool. How many programs have you seen that look great but only offer drill and practice exercises out of the textbook? And how many software applications have you skimmed over because they were unattractive, poorly written or confusing and discovered later that they were worth closer examination? These same questions can be applied to Web pages. With the tremendous increase of interest in creating language-related and personal Web pages, more people are coming to us for direction. It is our responsibility to help our faculty, staff and students create attractive, and effective Web pages. With the sites below we can help them get on their way.

With all the new and emerging possibilities for the WWW such as animation, video, music, etc., more resources are becoming available on the Web to help experienced and new developers to create their own dynamic, interactive pages. Below is an annotated list of WWW sites available to aid in writing HTML, CGI, and JavaScript as well as sites discussing some basic design features. While I realize there are hundreds of pages available on the Web to assist in writing and designing Web pages, I have only listed a few that I have found helpful and that I have been able to easily access.

## **HyperText Mark- Up Language HTML Guides**

Numerous pages exist to help people learn and keep up with HTML and its new versions. **Beginners Homepage** offers links to many resources, but what I find most appealing are the links to the HTML tutorials. It is a nice starting point for those who are less familiar with writing Web pages but want to learn. This useful page is located at <http://www.entrepreneurs.net/fourleaf/beginners.htm>.

**HTML Quick Reference**, [http://kuhttp.cc.ukans.edu/lynx\\_help/HTML\\_quick.html](http://kuhttp.cc.ukans.edu/lynx_help/HTML_quick.html), is a reference guide to HTML listing the most commonly used elements from Versions 1.0 and 2.0 and giving a brief description of those elements.

**HTML Reference Manual: A Comprehensive List of HTML Elements** was written for employees at Sandia National Laboratories. This site outlines the background and theoretical rationale of HTML in addition to offering a comprehensive list of HTML elements. The URL for this site is [http://www.sandia.gov/sci\\_compute/html\\_ref.html](http://www.sandia.gov/sci_compute/html_ref.html).

**Creating Net Sites** takes the reader through the step-by-step development of a WWW page from basic HTML to adding sound and graphics to enhance the page. See <http://www.netscape.com/home/how-to-create-web-services.html>.

## HTML Tutorials

For those who would like a lesson-by-lesson approach to learning HTML and don't have the time or access to beginning HTML classes, there are a number of on-line tutorials available on the net.

Although **Writing HTML** may be used by anyone who wants to create World Wide Web pages, this tutorial was created specifically for teachers to help them create learning resources that access information on the Internet. The lessons, found at <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/tut/index.html>, cover the basic elements of Web page design.

**HTML Tutorial** provides an introductory-level tutorial for writing HTML. Point your Web browser to: <http://www.cecm.sfu.ca/personal/jens/tutorial/tutorial.html>. **Advanced HTML Tutorial** provides more information on HTML capabilities. The more advanced features of HTML are presented with details of how to include them into your own Web pages: <http://eipo.lib.utexas.edu/~jfay/welcome.html>.

## HTML Validation

Once a Web page is written, it is important to make sure that there are no mistakes in the HTML code. One common practice is to view an HTML coded text document via a browser while writing the code. You can catch many errors that way. But what about more subtle errors that may not affect your browser but may affect another browser or someone accessing your document via Lynx?

**WebTechs HTML Validation Service** examines one or more URLs and generates a list of errors in the HTML code you submitted. This Web-based service is found at <http://www.webtechs.com/html-val-svc>.

With **WWWeblint** (now a subscription service), you supply the URL of a page on the Web and the program checks your HTML code for you. You can also type or copy in a portion of HTML code in the form provided at <http://www.unipress.com/cgi-bin/WWWeblint> and WebLint will verify the code.

## HTML Editors and Reviews

For faculty and staff who feel they do have the time to do full HTML scripting or for anyone who would like to make the creation of Web pages a simpler process, the market has been bombarded with HTML editors. There are dozens of such software packages available for all platforms with a tremendous range of capabilities and prices. The sites below do not connect to a specific editor but rather to lists of editors for your perusal. There are also two sites listed where you can find reviews of HTML editors to help you or your faculty member choose the editor that best fits your purposes.

Frank's Links to HTML Editors and Tools provides a list of links to HTML software for Macintosh, Windows and Unix: <http://www.mcgeary.com/frank/samples1.htm>.

Mag's Big List of HTML Editors is an extensive list of HTML editors which is continually updated. Each editor listed has a link to more information and usually a place to download the software. The URL for this site is: <http://union.ncsa.uiuc.edu/HyperNews/get/www/html/editors.html>.

Gabriel's HTML Editor List, <http://luff.latrobe.edu.au/~medg/w/editors/listing.html>, offers an alphabetical list of HTML editors with information on platform, pricing, specifications and more.

For reviews of HTML editors, try HTML Editor Reviews Starting Point. This document, available at [http://homepage.interaccess.com/~cdavis/edit\\_rev.html](http://homepage.interaccess.com/~cdavis/edit_rev.html), contains detailed reviews of the HTML editors the author of the page has used. A second source of review material is "Dueling Tools—Internet World Labs Tests 6 HTML Authoring Programs," by Gus Venditto. This article is found at: <http://www.internetworld.com/Apr96/dueling.html>.

## Advanced HTML

After learning the basics of HTML, a desire usually comes to create more complex pages using more advanced HTML functions. For the beginner, there are a few forms-based sites that will create tables, frames and more colorful pages.

### Frames

With frames, you can divide Web pages into multiple, scrollable regions and thus present information in a more flexible fashion. **Frames: An Introduction** is a basic tutorial on creating frames: [http://home.netscape.com/assist/net\\_sites/frames.html](http://home.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/frames.html).

FramesShop is an interactive site which will automatically create up to nine frames for you to add to your page. Basic access is available at: <http://www.missouri.edu/~c588349/frameshop/index.html>. The resources used for frame creation at this site are also available at <http://www.missouri.edu/~c588349/frameshop/frameshop-resources.html>. This useful site at [www.missouri.edu](http://www.missouri.edu) also provides:

#### TableMaker

<http://www.missouri.edu/~c588349/tablemaker.html>

#### Resources for Creating Tables.

<http://www.missouri.edu/~c588349/tablemaker-resources.html>

**ColorMaker**

<http://www.missouri.edu/~c588349/colormaker.html>

**ColorMaker Resources**

<http://www.missouri.edu/~c588349/colormaker-resources.html>

**Design Features**

For resources on various design topics such as color, backgrounds and graphics, the sites below are just a few of the helpful resources I have used in creating pages.

**Color Chart for HTML** offers a clickable imagemap where the user selects a desired color, and information is provided about the color and its hexadecimal number (necessary for writing HTML code regarding this color). This useful tool is located at: <http://w3.metronet.com/kira/colors/>. Similarly, **WWW Color Index** presents numerous squares of color with the corresponding RGB (hexadecimal) code below it: <http://www.infi.net/wwwimages/colorindex2.html>. A frame-based version of this page is also available: <http://www.infi.net/wwwimages/colorindex.html>.

The **Backgrounds Archive** is a collection of background graphics created by the author of the site as well as others' contributions. At this site, you can also learn how to make seamless backgrounds on your own: <http://the-tech.mit.edu/KPT/bgs.html>. Netscape's **Background Sampler** provides Web page designers more than 50 backgrounds to link to or copy for use in their pages: [http://home.netscape.com/assist/net\\_sites/bg/backgrounds.html](http://home.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/bg/backgrounds.html). **Julianne's Backgrounds** also provides a similar service, presenting background images created by the author of the page can be used by anyone, but the designer must be referenced on the page it appears. Julianne's archive is located at: <http://www.sfsu.edu/~jtolson/textures/textures.htm>. And finally **Texture Land**, <http://www.meat.com/textures/>, has 196 textures that can use in Web pages, free for individual use (personal Web pages) and also for use by non-profit companies and organizations.

**WWW Page Presentation**

Have you ever tried to access a site that takes a very long time to download because of the number or size of the graphics? Have you arrived at a screen that is almost unreadable because of a background color or graphic? Have you been frustrated to get a message

which says "This page would best be viewed in..." and when viewed in that browser the information was less clear or obscured by frames, animation or sound? Have you gotten an error message over and over again because you may not have the correct "plug-in" device? These are all issues of Web page design and style.

While writing Web pages can be easily learned, we need to help our faculty and staff to create well designed pages which are easily accessible and don't take too long to download. After looking at all the possibilities that the Web offers—from basic text and graphics pages to interactive pages, from forms and frames to the addition of sound, video, and animation—it is important to consider the style and screen design of a Web page to present information clearly and effectively.

### **Resources**

**Composing Good HTML** considers HTML stylistics: <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~tilt/cgh/>. **Bob Allison's Web Masters Home Page** provides a collection of information and resources for anyone who wants to create a Web page. These resources can be viewed at: [http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/ masters1.html](http://gagme.wwa.com/~boba/masters1.html). And **WEB WONK: Net Tips for Writers and Designers** assists Web page developers of all levels to design better pages and to communicate more effectively on the net: <http://www.dsiegel.com/tips/index.html>.

Several Web-based resources approach page layout and HTML style from a "do's and don'ts" standpoint. The popular **Top Ten Cover Page—Do's and Don'ts**, <http://www.winternet.com/~jmg/topten.html>, is not for the weak of humor. In an abrasive manner, the author of this site presents two lists to help Web page authors improve their pages and see common page design errors. The points for the most part are good; the presentation is sarcastic. "Top Ten Mistakes in Web Design" is an article by Jakob Nielsen at and for the SunSoft Corporation. This piece presents 10 common mistakes in creating a Web page: <http://www.sun.com/960416/columns/alertbox/index.html>.

### **Other Important Sites**

Several sites are excellent resources for a range of Web-related topics. **Yahoo** has probably the most extensive list of resources for Web page development:

[http://www.yahoo.com/Computers\\_and\\_Internet/  
Internet/World\\_Wide\\_Web/](http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Internet/World_Wide_Web/)

[http://www.yahoo.com/Computers\\_and\\_Internet/  
Software/Data\\_Formats/HTML/](http://www.yahoo.com/Computers_and_Internet/Software/Data_Formats/HTML/)

As one might expect Netscape offers a wide range of services to new and experienced Web page authors ranging from interactive Web page creation to JavaScript tutorials and more. Further information on these services is available at the URLs [http://home.netscape.com/assist/net\\_sites/](http://home.netscape.com/assist/net_sites/) and <http://home.netscape.com/home/how-to-create-web-services.html>.

There are many references to [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org) on the Web. To this date I have never been able to access even one of their Web pages. For reference, the following are commonly cited:

**Official HTML Specification**

<http://www.w3.org/hypertext/WWW/MarkUp/MarkUp.html>

**CERN's Style Guide**

<http://www.w3.org/hypertext/WWW/Provider/Style/Overview/html>

Last, HyperNews lists resources for learning, designing, and writing HTML code: <http://union.ncsa.uiuc.edu/HyperNews/get/www/html.html>. ■

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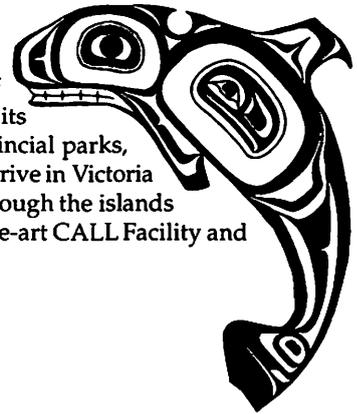
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— Rudyard Kipling

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