



Website Design 2

Introduction

Websites and their pages can be created on stand alone PCs (ie PCs that are not connected to the Internet) using a wide variety of tools. Part 2 of this course looks at the basic structure of a web page and uses Notepad as a basic html editor to create a basic text based web page.

Structure of a web page

All web pages have the same basic structure but when looking at the source code (**Browser: View > Source**) for different websites (web pages) it is may not be apparent that they have the same structure.

Declarations

Each page has a declaration to tell the browser about itself. It can be as simple as `<html>` this declares that the page is html.

Head

The next section is the head, which uses the word `<head>` and will contain items such as the page title. The use of the head section of the web page will become clearer as the design process becomes more complex and the web pages contain more functionality.

Body

The body or `<body>` contains the main content for the page; text, graphics, pictures etc in the example there will just be normal and bold text.

And that is all you need to create a page that a browser can display. However there is one more task, the html tags need to be closed so the following will need to be added to the page `</body> </head> </html>`.

Create a web page

Many tools can be used to create web pages (later examples will use Dreamweaver). Using Notepad as the html editor, enter the following text.

```
<html>
<head>
<title>TITLE</title>
</head>
<body>
This is text for the web page
</body>
</html>
```

Save the file as one.html not one.txt. The html extension will let the browser know the file is html. To view the page in a browser select the file, use the right hand mouse button, select **Open** and the page will be displayed in the web browser. If you prefer



open the browser first and then select **File > Open** and display the page (or browse for the file one.html).

The Internet Browser (Internet Explorer) has applied default settings so it looks very plain. To add some bold embellishment to the text change the relevant line in the example from 'This is text for the web page' to 'This is text for the web page'. Save the file (CTRL S) If the browser is refreshed (ie told to read the file again) the text will now display the content as '**This is text for** the web page'.

What has the browser done? The browser has seen the page is html via <html>, the head contains a TITLE (ignore this for now it will be explained as part of a later topic), the body <body> has some text (<p> indicated the start of a paragraph) and this needs to be set to bold (this is what the tag does), the text characters are displayed in bold until the browser reaches at which point the browser stops displaying in bold and reverts back to normal.

The closing tags are </p>, </body> and </html>. In this simple example they are not strictly necessary and the page will work without them, but web pages really need precise coding and it is good practice to start using standards as soon as possible.

Standards

Web pages will work with the extension htm or html, but the modern approach is to use the extension; html, so always use html. The html tags will work if you enter either or to switch on bold. However more advanced xhtml, which is based on xml, needs the tags to be in lower case and only lower case is acceptable. So start by using only lower case tags. All xhtml tags opened tags eg need a closing tag so always ensure they are both present. To make viewing the code easier use formatting as below. Nb Dreamweaver has a command to format the code automatically and Dreamweaver also uses colour; formatting and colour makes the code easier to read. For example:

```
<html>
  <head>
    <title>TITLE</title>
  </head>
  <body>
    <p><b>This is text for </b>the web page</p>
  </body>
</html>
```

Summary

You should understand the basic structure of a web page in terms of the declarations and how html tags are used (ie translated) by the browser. There has been a brief introduction to standards and the importance of adherence to standards for all aspects of web site design cannot be emphasised too much. Using standards is one of the keys to effective and efficient web design and adopting xhtml standards from the start will save work in the future, even if today you are just using html.

About the author

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