

## Cascading Style Sheets Make Web Design Easy

When the HTML programming language was originally developed, the various HTML tags that were used were intended only to specify what each piece of content was. In other words, HTML tags like the paragraph tag, or the header tag, were only supposed to tell the web browser that a certain piece of text should be displayed as a paragraph, or that a particular line of text was to be a header. The web browser itself was supposed to take care of the style of the web page itself. However, as the HTML language became more and more complex, and evolved from the original HTML into HTML 4.0 and even more complicated versions of the language such as XHTML, the web browser no longer took care of style by itself. Programmers had many more tags and attributes at their disposal, such as the bgcolor attribute, the font tag, and a plethora of others. As a result, developing a webpage became very complicated, because programmers now had to not only specify what was to be on the web page, but had to indicate background colors, fonts, text sizes, and layouts. A solution to this quandary emerged in the form of what is called Cascading Style Sheets. Cascading style sheets specify how HTML elements are to be displayed. A cascading style sheet is normally an external file saved with a .css file extension and is uploaded with the rest of your web pages. This .css file specifies a layout for a webpage given certain HTML tags and attributes. Then, all the programmer has to do is reference that .css file in the HTML code for the webpage he or she is developing and just layout the webpage properly, and the .css file will automatically format all of your tags and attributes as specified. Specific styles can be applied to everything from paragraphs to email forms and much more. There are many websites where programmers can buy or download for free various .css files that they want to use to handle the layout of their webpage. All you need to do is look for style sheets on any major search engine and you will find tons of links to sites that will show you how to create style sheets or sites where you can just download for free or buy style sheets that you want to use to design your website. Basically, there are two different ways that you can use a cascading style sheet. The first way is by using the style sheet externally. Simply upload the .css file that you have either downloaded from somewhere else or created yourself, and then reference that file in the HTML code for the webpage you are designing by placing some code within the head tag of the webpage. There are many different tutorial websites where you can learn how to create the code to reference an external style sheet. Also, you can actually create your style sheet internally by actually coding the style of certain kinds of tags within the head tag of the webpage itself rather than saving the style sheet as an external file. Also, you can use what is called inline styles, where you specify the style of a specific element within the webpage so that the style will apply to just that particular tag and not all of the tags on the webpage. Whatever you decide to do, as a web designer you should become familiar with cascading style sheets and use them, especially if you do a lot of web design projects. You should accumulate your own library of style sheets, either by creating them on your own or by downloading them from somewhere else. Having these style sheets on hand will make your job as a web designer faster and more efficient. It will enable you to design web pages very quickly without having to focus so much on the design, and then you can show your customer many different sample designs of the web page you have created by just changing a single line of code and using a different .css file each time. Then, your customer can just choose the style that he or she likes best.

## About the Author

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