**HTML Homework Assignments: Getting Ready for the Course**

1. **Preparation** 
   1. **Tools & a little efficiency**
      1. **About text editors** HTML pages are **text** files and need to be created with a **text editor**.   
           
         You may **not** use Word, as it inserts all kinds of characters for line feeds, paragraphs, etc.   
           
         For the very first part of this course, you should use Notepad (found under Accessories) or Notepad++ or atom on a PC. If you are using a Mac use atom or choose another text editor from those on <http://web.simmons.edu/~menzin/WebCentricResources.html#XHTML_editors> If you are used to using sublime or other text editor, that is also fine.  
           
         Later in the course, we will use VS Code .  
           
          On the CS Virtual Machine Notepad++ is already installed. If you need the CS VM then you may need to install VS Code, but I hope to avoid the VMs.
      2. **A little efficiency**I keep a blank Notepad file on my Desktop so that I have something to paste code into whenever I need it – and **then save the file in the appropriate folder with an .html ( or .htm) extension.**I also keep a copy of the template for html files on my Desktop. Again, I can open it in Notepad++, edit it and save it in the appropriate folder.
      3. **File names   
         NOTE: File names for web pages must not have any blank spaces in them.** Either use camelCase.html or snake\_case.html for file names. camelCase is more common in JavaScript.  
           
          Valid file names begin with a letter or underscore (but please don’t start with an underscore) and contain letters, numerals, and underscores only in them.  
           
          Valid names: ILoveTheWeb.html I\_love\_the\_web.html  
          Not valid: I love the web.html, 2ReasonsToLoveTheWeb.html
      4. **Seeing the page you just created  
         Once you have saved the page you may open it in the browser or your choice**. (Drag the file to the box for the URL or in Windows you may right click on the file and choose ‘Open with”).  
           
         If you are on a PC and using Notepad++, the Run menu will give you the option of opening a file (which must have been previously saved) in either Chrome or Firefox.
      5. **Other people want to see your pages also**You already have a place for a web site and within a week you will be putting up your web pages. To do this you need a tool to upload pages.  
           
         If you are on a PC then you want Core FTP Lite – the free version is at [Core FTP - download software](http://www.coreftp.com/download.html). If you are on a Mac, you want CyberDuck – free at [Download (cyberduck.io)](https://cyberduck.io/download/)
   2. **Browsers**There are two considerations about browsers: What is a good browser for developers, and what browsers should I test my sites on?  
      1. **Browsers for easy web development**  
         Let's talk first about developing web pages.

Both Chrome and Firefox (FF) have great development tools, and their tools are fairly similar. I tend to use Chrome more often, but preferences will vary. When we get to JavaScript you will download the developer's tools for both. (They are very, very similar, but have slightly different tools for some tasks.)

Firefox, and Chrome (& I believe Opera) also have easy access to the JavaScript Console, which helps in debugging JavaScript.

You should be sure that both Firefox and Chrome are installed on your own machine.

**Testing your page in all the major browsers**  
Next let's talk about testing.

Ideally you want to test on all the browsers which have significant usage. As you will see, the same page will often look slightly different in different browsers. You should be aware of this issue and see how your pages look in different browsers. How much you want to adjust your styling to get a page you like on all the major browsers is up to you.

Okay, so on to the major browsers.  
  
As mentioned above, the same web page will look slightly different in different browsers, so you will want to see what your page looks like in the major browsers. Depending on your time and personality you may even tweak your designs until you are happy with how they look in all the browsers. So, a good web developer will have copies of all the browsers or emulators for them.

In fact, because browsers change from version to version a good developer will test her pages on both current and older versions of the common browsers. (In general people update the browsers on their phones less frequently than those on their computers, so mobile browsers tend to last a long time.) A good developer will also test for accessibility – more on that later.

To get started, however, we will test our pages in the major current browsers.

I never use Internet Explorer (IE), which thank heavens has died a natural death.   
  
As of mid 2020, Microsoft Edge is essentially the same as Chrome – so there is no reason to test your pages in Edge once you have tested them in Chrome . The Brave browser is another clone of Chrome (allegedly with better privacy.) (On the other hand, if you like dividing parts of your life among different browsers, then the developer's tools and testing in Brave and Edge will be the same as that in Chrome.)

Mac users may also have Safari as a browser. Apple stopped supporting Safari for Windows in 2012 and there are potential malware vulnerabilities with the old versions of Safari for Windows, so I recommend not downloading it if you are running Windows. On the other hand, depending on the whose surveys you read, and on whether the usage is for mobile or desk-top, somewhere between 15% and 25% of all users do use Safari. This means that testing a site on Safari should be done on an Apple device or by using a Safari/iOS emulator [7 Best iOS Emulators For PC (Windows And Mac) To Run iOS Apps (fossbytes.com)](https://fossbytes.com/best-ios-emulators-pc-windows-mac/)  
There are also emulators for iOS and Android phones – and you probably also own one of these phones.

I always test my pages on all the common browsers, so I keep, Firefox, Chrome, Opera and a Safari emulator on my desktop (along with my beloved SeaMonkey.) I also have copies of Edge and Brave on my Desktop, so that I can do personal stuff in one browser and Simmons stuff in a different one.

Right now, Chrome is more popular than any other browser, but this is a moving target, and you can’t afford to ignore other browsers. If you google *browser usage statistics* and the current year you will find several surveys (with different results, depending on the methodology) about what browsers are used how much. Some surveys show as much as 10% of users are using IE worldwide, some versions (IE7 and IE8) of which do not implement all the web standards and cause major problems for web developers, but in the U.S. and Canada, the total IE + Edge usage is probably more like 3%. I am happy to ignore IE.

1. **Learning from others  
   If you want to see the source code for a page** on the web (of course you do), then

* On a Windows machine type **ctl+U**
* On a Mac type **cmd + u**
* Try this on a simple page – that is load the page and then ask to see the source.  
  Try [Table of Contents for Unit 1 of CS 321 (simmons.edu)](http://web.simmons.edu/~menzin/CS321/Unit_1_Basic_HTML5_and_CSS/)
* In Opera you may need to download the Source extension at <https://addons.opera.com/addons/extensions/details/source/0.8.8/>

1. **Organization**This course has a lot of reading and reference material and code examples:

* You have the course website at <http://web.simmons.edu/~menzin/CS321/> or <http://web.simmons.edu/~menzin/CS321/CS321_TOC.html>   
  I highly recommend that you bookmark the latter in your browser.
* There is supplementary reference material in the 2U site, and the prep-checks are there. (See the Syllabus about the prep-checks.)
* Most of my notes are in Word so that you can add your own comments
* There will be a lot of email from me. It is critical that you check your email daily!   
  I also strongly recommend that you make a separate email folder/label for this course and a separate folder on your computer for the files you will create.
* There is reading from the assigned books and the ACM site.
* There is reference material in my Web Centric Resources   
  <http://web.simmons.edu/~menzin/WebCentricResources.html>

This is a large site and I usually use Ctl + f to find the topic I need.

If you organize yourself NOW, you will be able to navigate all this material seamlessly.

1. **Bottom line:** 
   1. **Make sure you can sign into your ACM Student account and get to the Skillsoft resources. You will typically need to click on “Books” to see the material I reference. (Details were in the document "References for CS 321….")**
   2. **Make sure that you have on your desktop both Chrome and Firefox.  
      If you are a Mac user you should also have Safari.**
   3. **Make sure that you have installed a text editor (Notepad++ or atom for Windows or atom for Macs; Macs also come with TextEdit.). When we work on team projects you will want to use VS Code with LiveShare.**
   4. **Make sure that you have installed an ftp utility (FileZilla or WinSCP for Windows; FileZilla or CyberDuck for Macs.)** As of 2022, Simmons requires 2-factor authentication for uploads to web.simmons.edu and these apps support that. (Previously Windows users could also use CoreFTP.)

**We're ready! Let's go!**