The importance of "!important" in CSS

Normally, CSS works by having the most recently-declared rule take precedence. However, this isn’t always the case. Rules can be followed by the expression “!important” to give them precedence over later rules.

This can come up a lot in systems like Plone, where a large amount of CSS has already been written, to which you make your own additions. The existing CSS may use !important rules which will override any rules you declare, no matter where you place them. Needless to say, this can be very confusing, since it goes against what most of us have been taught about CSS.

Most of the time, you’ll be using !important to get your new CSS to override some existing rules that have been declared !important. An example usage would be:

```
p { font-size: 10px !important; }
```

This makes sure that later CSS, including user stylesheets that browsers sometimes apply, does not override this rule. However, many times you’ll want to override a rule that has already been declared !important. To do so, just make your new rule !important as well, and place it somewhere after the rule you want to replace.

Internet Explorer 6 and earlier versions do not recognize the !important rule. If you are trying to override someone else’s !important rules, this does not matter much, since your later rules will override them no matter what. However, if you are trying to create new rules that user stylesheets won’t override, you’re out of luck. IE7 should fully support the rule.

The official W3C word on !important can be found at: http://www.w3.org/TR/REC-CSS2/cascade.html#important-rules

Number 4 out of Ten CSS tricks you may not know mentions the lack of !important support in IE6, and how it can be used to feed it browser-specific code.

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