Web Development Standards - Best Practices

For better or for worse, everyone developing web sites at UCLA abides by different rules. For those of us who build for public consumption, what are the best practices — considerate of time and maintenance limitations — to get a little closer to building better, lasting sites? How does the audience to your site play into adjusting the standards, from playing it old school to going cutting edge? Where does the CMS solution play a role in separating content editors from designers and programmers?

PROGRAMMING

- XHTML/HTML Strict, Transitional
  - W3C Validator
- DOCTYPE
  - Fix Your Site With the Right DOCTYPE!
  - Style Guide
- META
  - Dynamic leads vs. low-maintenance tags
- CSS
  - 1.0 or Beyond
  - CSS Validator
  - Using H's, or Disabling (ie. May 1st Reboot)
- Forms
  - Label
  - Validation / Error checking (JavaScript, PHP)
- Images
  - ALT vs. Title
- Accessibility
  - Section 508 / WAI
- Embedding
  - Flash Detection
- JavaScript
  - Including NOSCRIPT
- Special Characters
- RSS Feeds
  - Validation

DESIGN

- Page Layout
  - YUI CSS Grid
- Typography
  - 62.5% resets 1em to 10px
  - Print Friendly
- Width / Screen Resolutions
  - 800×600 vs. 1024×768+ (or users with resolutions > 744 vs. > 968, the widths minus the worst-case scenario browser chrome width of 56px)
  - 960px Width
  - Strict vs. Elastic
- Graphics
  - Photoshop: Save for Web
  - PNG and IE
- Browser Testing
  - The Top 70%: IE 6, Firefox 1.X
  - The Middle 20%: IE 7, Firefox 2
  - The Bottom 10%: Safari, IE 5.5 / 5.0, Mozilla, Netscape, Opera, Camino…
  - Backwards compatibility until…

STRATEGY

- Search Engine Optimization
  - Basics of SEO
- Friendly URLs
  - ModRewrite
- Heatmaps
  - Five Days – etre.com
- Search
  - Options outside the Portal

Additional Resources

- Zeldman: Designing With Web Standards
- Developing with Web Standards
- Web Page Development: Best Practices
- PLUG-IN – Web Developer extension for Firefox/Mozilla
- Stats
  - Google Analytics – free for multiple domains/users up to 5m pageviews/month
  - CrazyEgg Heatmaps

Revision #8
Created 2006-07-19 13:08:16 UTC by Proctor, Aaron
Updated 2007-04-06 15:20:36 UTC by Proctor, Aaron