



HTML, XHTML, and CSS (Visual Quickstart Guide)

Elizabeth Castro

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Need to learn HTML fast? This best-selling reference's visual format and step-by-step, task-based instructions will have you up and running with HTML in no time. In this completely updated edition of our best-selling guide to HTML, Web expert and best-selling author Elizabeth Castro uses crystal-clear instructions and friendly prose to introduce you to all of today's HTML and XHTML essentials. You'll learn how to design, structure, and format your Web site. You'll create and use images, links, styles, lists, tables, frames, and forms, and you'll add sound and movies to your site. Finally, you will test and debug your site, and publish it to the Web. Along the way, you'll find extensive coverage of CSS techniques, current browsers (Opera, Safari, Firefox), creating pages for the mobile Web, and more. Visual QuickStart Guide--the quick and easy way to learn! Easy visual approach uses pictures to guide you through HTML and show you what to do. Concise steps and explanations get you up and running in no time. Page for page, the best content and value around. Companion Web site at www.cookwood.com/html offers examples, a lively question-and-answer area, updates, and more. Need to learn HTML fast? This best-selling reference's visual format and step-by-step, task-based instructions will have you up and running with HTML in no time.

HTML, XHTML, and CSS (Visual Quickstart Guide) Details

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Mike says

A little over a year ago, my job situation changed slightly as I moved from one capacity into that of the local website manager for our company. I wasn't in charge of any actual coding, just putting the Wordpress CMS to work and helping to build images and content for the site. I decided at some point that using Wordpress wasn't going to be good enough; I wanted to know how the gears worked.

Under recommendation from a friend, I picked up a copy of "PHP 6 and MYSQL 5" by Larry Ulman and dug in. Then I realized I was going to need some HTML/CSS first, so I grabbed "HTML, XHTML, and CSS" by Elisabeth Castro. And dove into that one instead.

As a relative newbie to web development via code, I thought the book did a great job of walking me through the basic concepts and giving me the syntax needed to make everything work. It explains the differences between plain HTML and XHTML, the reasons for using the latter, and a good intro to CSS and its benefits over the older forms of style markup.

The problem I had with the book may just be chalked up to my learning style. While she printed plenty of examples and allowed you to download those examples from her site, that didn't really help me. I could have typed out every example, but then I'd be left with a jumble of random pages. In comparison, as I'm starting "PHP 6..." I've found the examples to be more instructional; they provide a good walkthrough and well labeled files that you build upon as you go through the book. I guess I would've rather the book walked me through building a basic site, so that when I reached the end, I had a large completed project I could look at and be proud, while having learned something at the same time.

In regards to reference, I think it's great. I know I'm going to be coming back to it again and again as I track down a variety of HTML and CSS elements, or just need to use the large color board in the back. If you're after a good reference for HTML and CSS basics, check this book out. But if you're looking for something to help you build a basic site while learning to do so, or that helps you build something and pick it apart to see exactly why it works, this one might not be for you.

???????? says

MJ says

There's a reason why this book has gone through six editions-- it's a great introduction to HTML for beginners. Supplemented with MacFarland's CSS book, it was a good textbook choice for an introductory class in web design. Definitely keeping this one on the shelf.

Steve says

This book is very well organized and well-written. This book is essential for someone who is familiar with some HTML or CSS, but wants to learn more when required. The author takes a graceful systematic approach to presentation of HTML, XHTML and CSS concepts and commands. Each element is presented with step-by-step instructions, examples, and useful tips. I searched for a book that could serve as a reference and tutorial, and this one made the most sense to me. The section on the use of CSS to format pages for hand-held devices is useful because of the guidelines it presents. Recommended if you don't employ all XHTML or CSS techniques all the time, and need to be able to come back up to speed quickly.

Bill says

This was the textbook for a class on HTML, CSS, and a little JavaScript that I'm finishing up. The book did a good job of serving that purpose for me. Each topic covered is broken down into only a couple of pages with illustrated examples on every page so it is easy to read about what you want efficiently. Also, the website that supplements the book and contains code for all of the examples in the book was very useful.

I borrowed this book from the public library for use during the class and to see if I thought it was worth buying for future use. While it was good for learning new stuff (especially with the online examples), I probably won't buy a copy. It is not bad for reference purposes, but I've found the online resource at w3schools.com better for that as W3Schools is more complete. To be fair to the book, I assume Castro did not intend it to be as complete as a reference book/site would be at the risk of confusing a reader who is new to the material. However, now that I am not new to the material, I prefer a more complete reference.

Lisa says

I've returned to this book over and over again since the semester it was assigned for quick refreshers on how to do something, color choice codes, or how to change something through coding that I can't do the "easy" way. This is a book I will keep for a long time!

Steve says

I picked this up to learn the basics of coding a website from scratch. I was technical enough to skip over the basics and just reference what I needed, but I'm a neophyte when it comes to CSS properties, so this book became essential. The diagrams and explanations in this book are well done, a useful guide for beginners and

a handy reference when updating a site six months later.

Mk says

This book explains things very clearly. It also has a good index, making it an easy to use long-term reference.

Ronan Conroy says

Since I bought this book, CSS has moved onto version 4, XHTML is arguably dead, and HTML5 is old news. I've moved three times since then, too, and changed jobs a couple times too.

Back in 07 when I grabbed this book and swore I'd read it, I did not like CSS one bit. Doing things the long way was fine for me.

Recently I read a great Javascript book and it covered CSS pretty gracefully, so I figured why not go back and see where some of this all started.

Old as it is, it was still worth a read-through to refresh some basics, get into CSS, and be amused at how ridiculously hair-splittingly pedantic and bitter some of the browser wars and arguments over syntax were back then. Things are better now, aren't they?

Dwight says

This is a very good reference source as are most books from Peachpit Press. I have relied on Elizabeth Castro's "HTML for the World Wide Web" for many years to create web pages. Elizabeth Castro's writing is very good. Not as good as Laura Lemay (from whose "Teach Yourself HTML 3.2 in a Week" I first learned web programming in 1998). While waiting, several hours, for a friend to get off work, I ventured into a bookstore and picked up Lemay's book and could not put it down. After the first chapter I said, "I can do this!" (I had no programming experience). Years later after maintaining dozens of websites and with the advent of CSS and XHTML it is time to update.

In my mind no one makes technical information easier to understand than Lemay. However, Elizabeth Castro is a close second.

Michele says

It was a textbook for me so really, how good could it be?

While Castro's explanations and directions are clear and easy to follow, some of the techniques are already outdated. The best part of the book is actually her website where you get to see the techniques in action.

eq says

I read the 6th edition and it seems that the 6th is very different from the 5th. Overall, I found this a very helpful guide for HTML, XHTML, and CSS. I liked that it incorporated actual code and then a screen shot of what the code would/should look like on your browser.

Castro only discusses simple coding, but she makes it easy to segue into the more advanced coding.

Interestingly, not all of her code was w3 compliant I think for the purpose of simplicity, but overall, I found this to be a very helpful aid.

Michele White says

Good resource for getting you started coding in HTML, XHTML and CSS. We used it to teach ourselves enough code to manage our organization's website and HTML mailings and it did the trick. We now keep it to refresh our memories or help us troubleshoot when issues arise.

Jessie says

I read chapters 1-12 and 15-17, which covered HTML code, laying out a page, CSS stylesheets, forms, tables, and basic editing. Castro explanations of why and how are very easy to understand, with images highlighting the code and showing its effects on the web page for nearly every action. This will be a valuable resource for any future web design ventures.

Adam Eivy says

The book does have some valuable and relevant information but it is hiding behind a lot of cruft, archaic information and bad code examples from other languages.

When I started teaching Web Authoring II at Seattle Central Community College, the previous instructor had setup the class to use this book. I instead switched to CSS Mastery for required reading.
