<u>Wave Goodbye To Website Authoring Misery!</u>

All the theory you'll ever need (in one minute)

The language used to code web pages is called HTML – Hypertext Markup Language. It's really simple and involves tagging your information to tell the user's web browser what the information is. This is how you mark up a paragraph:

<p>Hello Mum.</p>

The angle brackets tell the browser that this is an instruction, not text for display. The "p" tells the browser that it's a paragraph. (It needs to be lowercase). The end of the paragraph is closed by a closing tag – </p> - with the forward slash telling the browser that the paragraph is ending rather than starting.

(Not all tags close like this; some – like the horizontal rule **<hr />** close *themselves* with a space and a slash.)

Note that there is no indication of how big the font is, the colour of the text, the background colour etc. All display instructions are handled by a separate file – a stylesheet – that the webteam maintain.

If you've ever written or seen HTML before, you might be tempted to add <font> tags, or set paragraphs to align text. Please don't; it makes the consistent branding of the site much more difficult, and our publishing mechanism will probably strip out those commands.

Your job is to describe what your content **is,** and what it **means**, *not* what it looks like. And, as an expert author, who better to describe its meaning than you?

Marking up text

The vast majority of stuff you'll mark up will be text. You've already seen how to mark up paragraphs, but you'll need to separate the paragraphs into discrete chunks for easy reading and scanning on the Web.

One way to do this is with headings.

Headings

Headings rock, because they allow the user to scan the page to find content of interest. Blind users can jump from heading to heading on their speech synthesis software, and thus aurally scan. Google pays special attention text in headings.

In HTML, there are 6 levels of headings. (Why six? Why not seven? Who knows.)

These are tagged just as paragraphs are, with an opening and a closing tag,

```
<h1>I'm the most important heading</h1>
<p>I'm a paragraph of text.</p>
<h2>I'm the second most important heading</h2>
```

It's important that every page have one <h1> to "title" the page, and that your sub-headings follow a logical order – that is, you don't follow an <h1> with an <h3> and miss out the <h2>. They might not look any different in your plain jane html, but they'll look very different when the stylesheet is applied.

Bulleted and numbered lists

Bullets rock, too. They're easy on the eye, break up slabs of text, encourage the author to reduce verbiage.

Bulleted lists are called **unordered lists** in html: The tag is <ul>. Each bullet is called a list item <li>.

For some reason, lists can't be inside paragraphs, so sometimes you have to tag sentence fragments as a paragraph:

```
<h2>Farmyard animals</h2>

<p>Examples include:</p>

<ul>
<li>Pigs</li>
<li>Cows</li>
</ul>
```

You can have headings and paragraphs inside lists, however:

```
<ul>
  <li>
  <h2>Pigs</h2>
  <p>Pigs are charming pink beasties.</p>
  </li>
  <li>
  <h2>Cows</h2>
  <p>Cows are lovely. I'll love them for heifer and
heifer.</p>
  </li>
</ul>
```

Numbered lists work exactly the same: the only difference is the list tag is **<ol>** for **ordered** list

Lists inside lists

Sublists are fine, and work as you'd expect except for one gotcha. A sublist's opening tag <ul> or <ol> must be inside an <li> tag of the parent list. So

- Pigs

- Cows
    - Fresian
    - Jersey
- Horses

Is marked up:

```
<ul>
<li>Pigs</li>
<li>Cows
     <ul>
     <li>Fresian</li>
     <li>Jersey</li>
     </ul>

</li>      This closes the "Cows"  <li>
<li>Horses</li>
</ul>
```

Quotations

Quotations from people (e.g., in news stories) or from other documents should be tagged as a blockquote if it's more than a few words.

Like lists, blockquotes can't be inside paragraphs, but can contain paragraphs, lists and headings:

```
<p>The Queen said,<p>
<blockquote>
<p>For my dinner, I'd like:</p>
  <ul>
 <li>Bangers</li>
 <li>Mash</li>
 <li>Salad cream</li>
</ul>
</blockquote>
```

If you have the web address of the original source of the quotation, you should add this to the tag by citing it:

```
<blockquote cite="http://www.royals.gov.uk">
```

Inline textual elements

You'll often need to tag a few words inside a paragraph for a variety of reasons:

Emphasising text

There are two ways to emphasise some words (or whole paragraphs), which are oftent displayed as bold or italic (although we might choose another mechanism, like an icon or a different coloured font).

```
<p>This text is <strong>very important</strong></p>
<p>This text is <em>also very important</em></p>
```

What's the difference? None really. For the sake of consistency, we ask that you use <strong>.

Giving extra information

Abbreviations

If you have an abbreviation (or acronym, or an initialism) that you don't define within the text of the page, you need to tag it, and give the full expansion in the tag's title. This will be displayed as a tooltip when the user's mouse hovers over that text.

```
<p>I love <abbr title="Hypertext Markup Language">HTML</abbr>.
Don't you?</p>
```

Definitions

Like an abbreviation, you can define a term using a tooltip.

```
<p>That new graduate recruit in accounts is really <dfn
title="pushy">proactive</dfn>, isn't he?</p>
```

Citations

Citations of books, laws, etc should be wrapped in a <cite> tag:

```
<p>I cried at the end of <cite>Pride and Prejudice</cite>.</p>
```

If your citation is also to be linked, put the <cite> tags inside the anchor tags:

```
<p>I cried at the end of <a
href="http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/ppv1n01.html">
<cite>Pride and Prejudice</cite></a>.</p>
```

Foreign Languages

If you have foreign phrases in the text, you need to tell the browser (a blind user's speech synthesiser will pronounce the word "six" differently if it;'s English or French, for example). Language codes are defined by the two-letter codes, defined in ISO 639-1

```
<p>He had a certain <span lang="fr">Savoir-faire</span>.</p>
```

Images

You should never link to an image that isn't on our website. If you have a image you need to include, please send it to a member of the web team for uploading.

The tag for including an image is an unusual one in that it doesn't need a closing tag. It *must* have **alternate text** that can be read by a blind user's speech synthesiser (as blind people can't see pictures!).

The alternate text must describe the purpose of the image, not what it looks like. (So a logo might be used to show that a document is official, in which case its alternate text would be "official logo", not a description of the image.)

```
<img src="http://www.acme.org.uk/images/logo.jpg"
alt="official logo" />
```

If the image is purely decorative, its alternate text must be blank:

```
<img src="http://www.acme.org.uk/images/decoration.jpg" alt=""
/>
```

Links

Links can be to

- Web pages on on the same site
- Web pages on another site
- To a document that's not a web page (e.g., a PDF or a Word document).
- Named destinations within a web page (e.g., to a particular heading half way down a long page)

External links

External links require the whole URL (web addresss) to be specified:

```
<a href=http://www.xyz.com/abc/def/ghi.html>External site</a>
```

Internal links

Links within the same site don't need the domain name (in fact, it's faster for the user if we don't use it).

So, if the page you want to link to is

http://www.acme.org.uk/complaints/howtocomplain.html

the tag looks like this:

```
<a href="/complaints/howtocomplain.html">Link within the
site</a>.
```

Note the slash before the address; it's very important.

Links to a non-html document

You can link to any kind of document/ picture/ mp3 file, whether on out site or another site; it's merely a matter of changing the file extension.

In this case, we're linking to an mp3 sound file on an external website:

```
<a href="http://www.elvis.com/houndDog.mp3">Listen to Elvis
sing "Hound Dog"</a>
```

As it can't be guaranteed the user has the necessary plug-ins or processing power to view videos/ certain image formats, it's courteous to alert the user of both the filetype and size, when linking to a non-html document. (There are few things more annoying than clicking a link to have the computer hang for ages while it downloads a 10meg file that you can't use):

```
<a title=".vid file, 15 meg" href="Elvis.vid">Watch Elvis!
(.vid file, 15 meg)</a>
```

Here ,I've put the information in the title field of the link (so it appears when the user mouses over it). I've duplicated it in the link text, so it can't be missed.

Links within pages

Links within a page are accomplished in two stages:

1. Adding an identifier to the place you want to link to. You can link to a heading, paragraph, image, list etc.

    If, for example, you want to link to a particular heading, you need to add an id to it:

    ```
    <h3 id="Hello">Hello Mum</h3>
    ```

    The id must
    -   Begin with a letter, not a number
    -   Have no spaces
    -   Be unique on that page

    This **should** work perfectly, but it doesn't in Microsoft Internet Explorer, so we need to add a non-standard bit of html to force it to be nice for people who use the keyboard rather than a mouse to navigate:

    ```
    <h3 id="Hello" tabindex="-1">Hello Mum</h3>
    ```

    (ultra-geeky reference: http://juicystudio.com/article/ie-keyboard-navigation.php)

2. Then you have to write the link that goes to it. If you're linking within the same page, you just need to use the # mark (to show that it's a link inside a page) and then the identifier:

```
<a href="#Hello">See the "hello" paragraph.</a>.
```

To link to an identifier within another page, just add the identifier to the page's address like so

```
<a href="/complaints/howtocomplain.html#Hello">Link within
the page</a>.
```

Writing link text

- Link text needs to make sense and describe what it links to. (This helps blind users, and helps Google understand what the relationships between pages are.)

  Good: Read our Complaints Handling Plan.
  Bad: For our Complaints Handling Plan, click here.

- Where possible, link with the same link text shouldn't go to different destinations. This isn't always possible; for example, on a news page, it makes sense to have a "Read more" link against each story, even though the destination of the read more link is different for every story.

  In this case, you need to make the link text unique in every case (probably by using the story title, and then hiding the extraneous bit with a bit of markup [highlighted]:

  ```
  <a href="/kylie.html">Read more <span class="hidden">:
  Kylie Minogue opens new web team offices</span></a>
  ```

  ```
  <a href="/Clooney.html">Read more <span class="hidden">:
  George Clooney joins web team</span></a>
  ```

  This lets Google and blind people know what the link means, but on-screen, it's just two "read more" links.

Pretty layout

Intro paragraphs

Often, an article/ story has an introductory paragraph that summarises what's about to come. (In newspapers, it's bold/ larger/ in a different colour).

You can mark up such a beast using `class="intro"`:

```
<p class="intro">Complaining about our service is simple and
takes just half a dozen 95-page forms to be completed in
triplicate.</p>
```

If you want to group together tags (say, your intro consists of a short para, a list, and another short para, you can group them with the <div> tag, and give that a class of intro:

```
<div class="intro">
 <p>Today we look at:</p>
  <ul>
    <li>pigs</li>
    <li>horses</li>
  </ul>
 <p>because they're lovely.</p>
</div>
```

Seperators

There's an html tag called "horizontal rule". It's going to be renamed soon to "separator", as that's what it's for.

It's written like this: **<hr />**

Us it sparingly to demarcate different articles – but while you do so, ask yourself whether the different articles you're separating wouldn't actually be better off on two separate pages if they're so different.

Line breaks and blank lines

It's very rare that you'll need to force a linebreak. It generally happens in addresses, where it's incorrect to have each line as a different paragraph.

The tag to use is a break tag: **
**

For example,

```
<p>Mr Benn<br />52 Festive Road,<br />Putney,<br />
London,<br />UK</p>
```

It's also acceptable to use it where convention requires an otherwise-meaningless new line, in letter-writing for example:

```
<p>Dear John, <br />I am leaving you forever, because of your
repulsive feet.</p>
<p>I've taken the Tammy Wynette records; you can keep the
children. </p>
<p>Yours sincerely <br />Mary.</p>
```

Using two break tags together to force a new line is illegal, and probably indicates that you need a new paragraph, which you should surround with <p> … </p> tags.

Attention Grabbers

A paragraph, or div containing anything you want can be displayed in a manner to attract attention (for example, "Don't forget to date your form" might be displayed with a exclamation mark icon next to it):

```
<p class="nb">
```

or

```
<div class="nb">
```

All the text inside the attention grabber should be surrounded by <strong> tags, to show that it's emphasised for people who can't see the styles.

Sidebars

Surround the text you want to be pulled out into sidebar with `<div class="sidebar">`

Tables

Tables should only be used for tabular data (eg, stuff that should be in a spreadsheet. It shouldn't be a layout tool).

If you need one, the web editors can set one up for you, using the accessible table builder:

http://www.accessify.com/tools-and-wizards/accessibility-tools/table-builder/

Don't get too stressed!

Don't get too stressed out by closing tags/ nesting tags etc. The web team will tidy it up if there are any small errors.

Thanks for reading!