

This chapter lists out various tips and tricks which you should be aware of while writing an XHTML document. These tips and tricks can help you create effective documents.

Tips for Designing XHTML Document

Here are some basic guidelines for designing XHTML documents –

Design for Serving and Engaging Your Audience

When you think of satisfying what your audience wants, you need to design effective and catchy documents to serve the purpose. Your document should be easy for finding required information and giving a familiar environment.

For example, Academicians or medical practitioners are comfortable with journal-like document with long sentences, complex diagrams, specific terminologies, etc., whereas the document accessed by school-going children must be simple and informative.

Reuse Your Document

Reuse your previously created successful documents instead of starting from scratch each time you bag a new project.

Inside the XHTML Document

Here are some tips regarding elements inside the XHTML document –

The XML Declaration

An XML declaration is not required in all XHTML documents but XHTML document authors are strongly encouraged to use XML declarations in all their documents. Such a declaration is required when the character encoding of the document is other than the default UTF-8 or UTF-16.

Empty Elements

They include a space before the trailing / and > of empty elements. For example,
, <hr />, and .

Embedded Style Sheets and Scripts

Use external style sheets if your style sheet uses "<", "&", "[]>", or "—".

Use external scripts if your script uses "<", "&", or "[]>", or "—".

Line Breaks within Attribute Values

Avoid line breaks and multiple whitespace characters within attribute values. These are handled inconsistently by different browsers.

Isindex Element

Do not include more than one *isindex* element in the document head. The *isindex* element is deprecated in favor of the input element.

The lang and xml:lang Attributes

Use both the *lang* and *xml:lang* attributes while specifying the language of an element. The value of the *xml:lang* attribute takes precedence.

Element Identifiers

XHTML 1.0 has deprecated the name attributes of *a*, *applet*, *form*, *frame*, *iframe*, *img*, and *map* elements. They will be removed from XHTML in subsequent versions. Therefore, start using *id* element for element identification.

Using Ampersands in Attribute Values

The ampersand character **"&"** should be presented as an entity reference &.

Example

```
<!-- This is invalid in XHTML -->
http://my.site.dom/cgi-bin/myscript.pl?class=guest&name=user .

<!-- Correct XHTML way of writing this is as follows -->
http://my.site.dom/cgi-bin/myscript.pl?class=guest&name=user
```

Whitespace Characters in HTML and XML

Some characters that are legal in HTML documents are illegal in XML document. For example, in HTML, the form-feed character *U* + 000C is treated as white space, in XHTML, due to XML's definition of characters, it is illegal.

Named Character Reference *&Apos;*

The named character reference ' *theapostrophe*, *U* + 0027 was introduced in XML 1.0 but does not appear in HTML. Web developers should therefore use *'* instead of ' to work as expected in HTML 4 Web Browsers

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