

HTML BOOTCAMP : : SECTION 1

WHAT IS HTML?

Why isn't it considered coding?

HTML stands for *Hypertext Mark-up Language*.

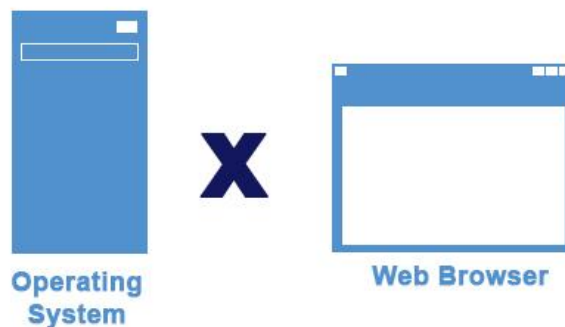
- not scripting, not object-oriented, not programming, no algorithms or logic being designed
- just a markup language whose primary function is the literal marking up of text
- used to describe content all over the internet (Cf: HTTP)

THE PROBLEM WITH HTML AND EMAIL

Since email can be accessed via a number of different methods, the number then of possible platforms that the media can be viewed in and, consequently, break in has to always be taken into consideration.

Designing for the web (just for desktop)

There are a great many use-cases that are just the many combinations of operating systems and web browsers, alone.

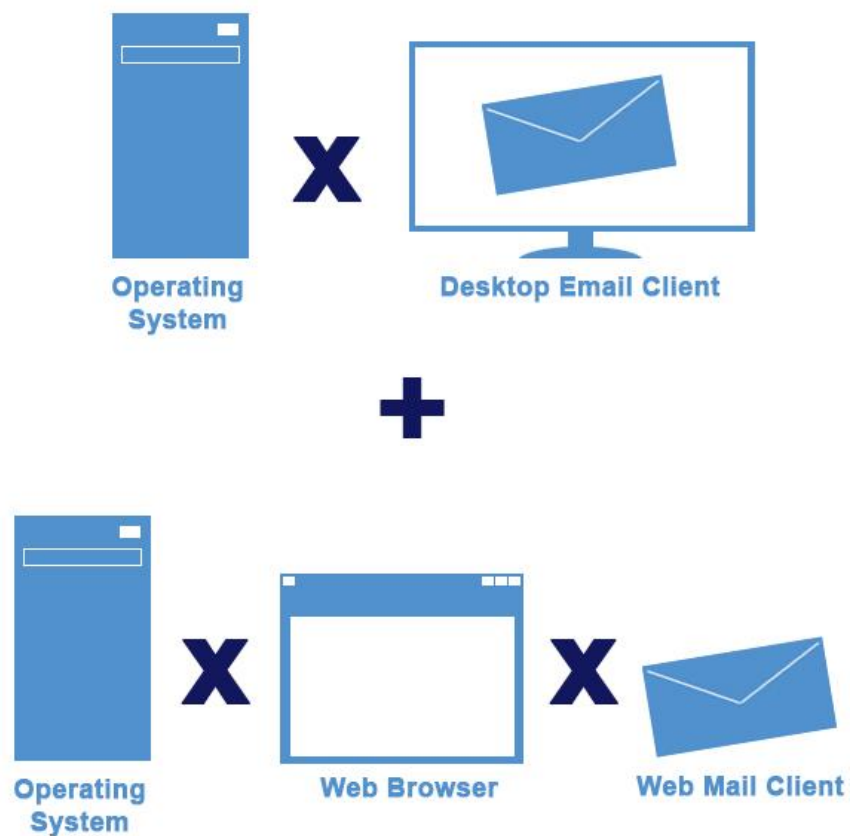


- this does not take into consideration the various desktop resolution sizes (widescreen or otherwise), which produces *even more* combinations
- the various permutations don't all behave identically
- try your best to work with what is an established standard

Designing for email (still just for desktops)

Much like designing for the web, designing for email has its own set of use-cases to worry about (and then some).

- for starters, there's the set of combinations of operating systems paired with the various desktop mail applications
- web mail adds to this number due to how many different web mail applications are available
- this number is further complicated by the different browsers to view said webmail in as well as what platform the computer is running



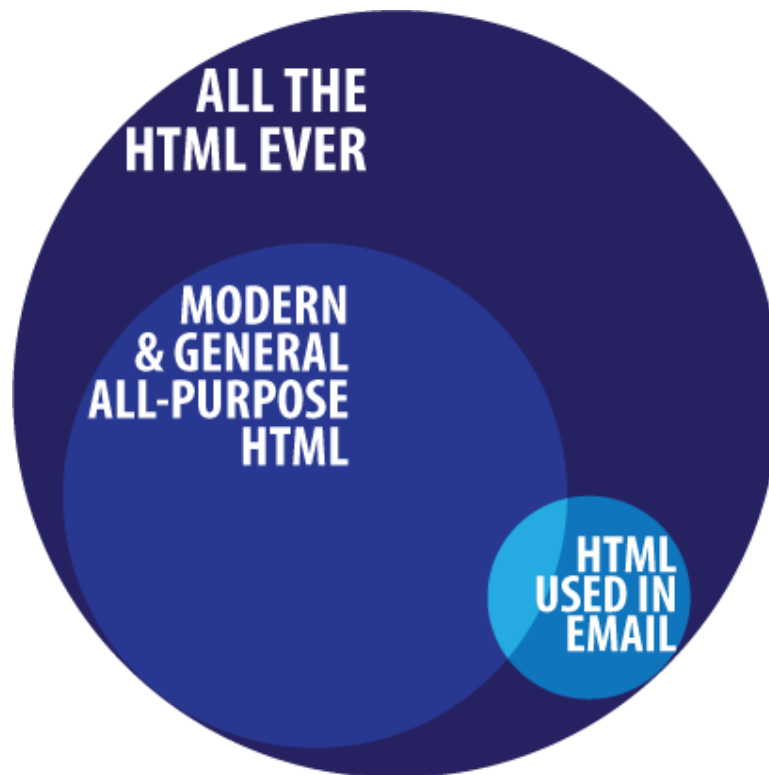
What Does This Mean?

Much like with web design, email designs are **not 100% guaranteed to look identical** across all the combinations of platforms and mail clients available. Because of the many possible configurations, that means that there could exist just as many possible renderings for any one design.

- appeal to a lowest common denominator set of features for consistent support across the aforementioned combinations (or as many of them)
- winds up being code that is no longer widely used on the Internet as better methods and conventions have since been developed and put into use
- only through testing can you ever really be sure that what you're attempting actually works (and is within acceptable tolerances across the many platform combinations).

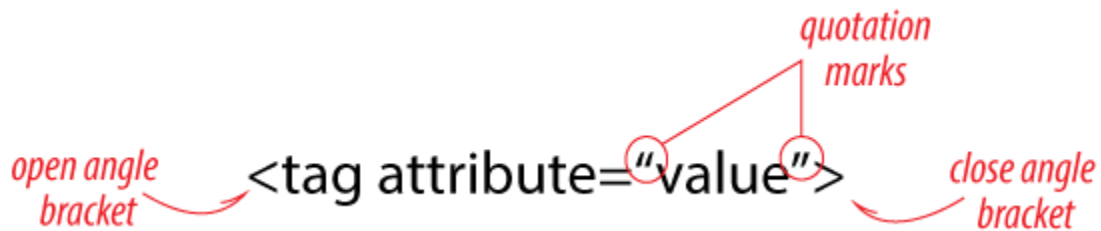
With responsive design, this issue is further compounded by the fact that **mobile email clients** are constantly playing catch up with responsive design support and, thusly, **may not reliably support** responsive HTML from one version to the next.

HTML VENN DIAGRAM



HTML TAGS

The anatomy of an HTML tag



- attributes describe certain elements of the tag, allowing for some margin of customization
- a tag can have many, many attributes to describe it or none at all, expressing its default appearance
- while there are a number of attributes common to most tags, a fair number of them use attributes that are unique to specific tags only
- most tags have attributes already "baked in" as default values and can be overridden either by specifying a different attribute value or by using CSS
- quotation marks are very important as one stray quotation mark or one quotation mark too few can break a page

Stand-alone tags vs. paired tags

Paired tags wrap around content and must be closed to demarcate a region in the content where markup begins and where it ends:

`<tag attribute="value">content</tag>`
the slash closes the tag and doesn't need attributes specified

Some common HTML tags used for content:

stand-alone tags	paired tags
line break: 	paragraph break: <p> </p>
image: 	bold:
horizontal rule: <hr>	italics: <i> </i>
comment: <!-- comment -->	superscript: ; subscript:
	header: <h1> </h1> <h2> </h2> <h3> </h3> <h4> </h4> <h5> </h5> <h6> </h6> <h7> </h7>
	list:
	list item:
	blockquote: <blockquote> </blockquote> anchor: <a>

SPECIAL TAG EXPLANATIONS

STRONG vs BOLD, EM vs I

- both appear to accomplish the same thing but their difference lies in the meanings behind them
- visual (presentation) formatting versus logical (semantic) formatting
- STRONG implies spoken with great emphasis; EM implies a change in tone or stress emphasis
- the I tag is now used specifically for text in an “alternate voice”, such as transliterated foreign words, technical terms, and typographically italicized text; the B tag is for “stylistically offset” text, such as keywords and typographically emboldened text
- Use STRONG and EM and avoid using BOLD and I

**
 vs
**

- stand-alone tags like BR have slashes in them for the sake of XHTML (HTML pages with XML) compliance
- using either is fine but try to use just the one consistently

** vs **

- either unordered (UL) with bullets or ordered (OL) with numbers, letters or roman numerals
- list items (LI) don't care which they are a part of, merely understanding that they are part of an array; handy when having to reorder list items since renumbering is unnecessary
- can be nested much like outlines

Using Comments

- anything placed between “<!--” and “-->” is not rendered by the browser
- comments describing the code is found here since any notation in here won't actually appear on the rendered page, making it useful for organizing the code and making it more navigable
- comments are also areas in the code in which communication with the web server or browser is made, with the instructions themselves not appearing as part of the content but are still interpreted by the web server or browser
- additionally putting actual code inside a comment is a great way of “deleting” entire sections with the option of restoring it instantly (i.e., taking the code out of the comment)

<!--You don't see me.-->

<!--But the server sure does.-->

SUGGESTED READING

HTML Email: The Perils of Copy & Paste (Part I)

<http://blog.netatlantic.com/2011/03/html-email-the-perils-of-copy-n-paste-part-i>

HTML Email: The Perils of Copy & Paste (Part II)

<http://blog.netatlantic.com/2011/03/html-email-the-perils-of-copy-n-paste-part-ii>

Thoughts on HTML Email Design, Segmentation and Best Practices

<http://blog.netatlantic.com/2013/03/thoughts-on-html-email-design-segmentation-and-best-practices>