

The Importance of XHTML compliance

In order to make the internet accessible to all people, standards in programming were introduced.

W3C is an organisation that promotes accessibility in web design by publishing specifications and guidelines and providing tools and software. Many web designers do not follow these standards because it requires more technical skill and because it is more time consuming.



Many of the popular tools used to design and update websites fail to comply with W3C standards and because many website developers choose to use programs like Dreamweaver, Contribute, and Frontpage to design or update websites, the internet is littered with websites that are not XHTML compliant. As a consequence the visually impaired and people who cannot use a mouse to navigate webpages are being denied access to information on the internet.

Comply to standards or risk being sued

In Australia and the U.S. the accessibility of the internet is a requirement of the law. Building a website that is not accessible is a breach of the Disability Discrimination Act and in the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games, a visually impaired man successfully sued the Sydney Olympics Organizing Committee because he could not buy tickets to the Games online. See <http://www.contenu.nu/socog.html> for more details.

Other legal references include http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.html (Australia) and <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm> (U.S)

Europe is also working on a similar standard, see

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/accessibility/index_en.htm

Advantages of compliance

Apart from protection from litigation, there are advantages to complying to web design standards which include

- ensuring that your website is widely accessible to people across the range of computers and browsers means that you will not lose a potential sale because your website did not render properly on the website visitors computer
- compliant sites rank better on search engines, increasing exposure of your website
- changes in technology, such as new versions of browsers are less likely to affect the way your website renders
- the design of your website will look similar for different browsers and computers. Without compliance, your website may look bad and it may not allow visitors to navigate your website

Why compliance is important to the internet?

The internet is about connecting individuals, businesses, governments and the key to its success has always been that it was developed on an open platform. Mobile devices and PDAs are now able to access the internet and regardless of whether you own an IBM compatible machine or a Macintosh computer, you are able to connect to the internet.

The free flow of information has fueled the growth of the internet but without standards, the growth of the internet is hindered. Imagine if you could not access certain sites because it did not support your browser or because of the type of computer that you had, eventually if it happened often enough you would stop using the internet altogether.

XHTML compliancy is a standard that all websites should adopt, especially websites that are in the process of being redesigned or developed. Learning how to edit code for compliancy is not difficult and CuppaWEB is one of the only XHTML compliant content management systems available, to allow our customers to both comply with standards and

easily update their own website.