

HTML - Just the Basics

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Tags

Webpages are made of HTML - tags placed around text to tell the web browser how to display it.

Tags are generally written in pairs - a begin tag:

```
<strong>
```

...and an end tag:

```
</strong>
```

A handful of tags stand alone, like the line break tag:

```
<br />
```

The pair concept is important; it tells the Browser to begin a formatting command, like turning on bold. Without the end tag, the bold will run on to the end of the page.

Tip: If you are troubleshooting a page, and the formatting starts in one spot and runs on way past where you intended, check for a missing end tag.

When you first learn HTML, or when you are tired, you may forget an end tag. One way to combat this is to type both tags first, then click and type the content in the middle of the tags:

```
<p></p>
```

...then:

```
<p>Here is my content.</p>
```

Commonly Used Tags

Heading Tags

Heading tags run from H1 through H6, getting progressively smaller.

The syntax for a heading tag is:

<h1>Heading Text</h1>

Tables

Tables used to be essential to website design because HTML lacked the columns and tabs. As time has gone on, more sophisticated methods have replaced tables for laying out webpages.

Tables let you place content in side-by-side columns.

Note:

Be aware that tables in WordPress can be very challenging, particularly with the theme Twenty Eleven and if you insert images into the table and try to vertically align them. When the browser draws the webpage, it reads a file call the stylesheet, which contains formatting commands. Out of the box, Twenty Eleven's stylesheet adds gray horizontal lines to the rows of a table. If you try to turn borders on by editing the page's HTML , WordPress will ignore the command in favor of what the stylesheet says. Only Russell Labs Computing staff can access and change your site's stylesheet. If you have a specific look you are trying to accomplish with a table, contact Dixie at webeditor@russell.wisc.edu .

Tables are also nested. First, you do the table tag, then the row tag, then the column tag. So, to get this:

row 1 column 1	row 1 column 2
row 2 column 1	row 1 column 2

You code this:

```
<table>
  <tr>
    <td>
      row 1 column 1
    </td>
    <td>
      row 1 column 2
    </td>
  </tr>

  <tr>
    <td>
      row 2 column 1
    </td>
    <td>
      row 2 column 2
    </td>
  </tr>
</table>
```

Tables can have borders turned on, or off (see the Note above):

```
<table border="1">  
<table border="0">
```

Tables can also have padding in the cell around the text - these are good starting numbers:

```
<table cellspacing="0" cellpadding="3">
```

You can set the width of the table - percentage is the easiest method:

```
<table width = "75%">
```

Image Tags

An image tag looks like this:

```

```

The src (source) property is the location of the file. To find the location of a photo to use in the src property, open the page where the photo is used in a browser, then right-click the photo and choose Properties.

There are two ways to specify the location of a file in the source property:

- 1) Absolute - give the entire location as shown above.
- 2) Relative - this is much trickier - this calculates the location of the photo based on the location of the page in the website directory structure.

A relative link would look something like this:

```
/files/2011/10/marsh1_tweaked.jpg
```

For WordPress, use absolute links.

Hyperlinks (Links)

Links can be used for a variety of things:

- To move to another page - opening it in the same window, or another window
- To move to a specific place further down the current page
- To view a file on the webserver, or download a copy
- To launch the email program on the visitor's computer

Links use the anchor tag - A - followed by verify specific info. Punctuation must be exact, or strange things can happen.

Here are some examples of common links:

Link to a webpage on the same website (this is how menus work):

```
<a href="about-us.php" >About Us</a>
```

If we wanted to launch the page in a new window, we would add a bit more text to the anchor tag:

```
<a href="about-us.php" target="_blank">About Us</a>
```

Link to a webpage on another website:

```
<a href="http://www.irs.gov">IRS</a>
```

Important: do not shorten the URL by leaving out the http or www - enter it exactly the way it appears in the URL box in the Browser. Do understand that in some cases, URL's will not have the www, but links to sites other than your own should have the http://.

Link further down the current page:

This type of link has two pieces - the first hyperlink, and an empty, named hyperlink:

```
<a href="#CalmtheMind">Calming the Mind Retreat</a>  
<a name="CalmtheMind"></a>
```

Link to a PDF file on a webserver:

```
http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/f1040.pdf
```

Side Note: sometimes a ? is added to the end of a URL, followed by an odd-looking alphanumeric string:
<http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf?portlet=3>

The ? tells the Browser "pay attention - I'm about to send you programming code" - then programming code is used on the destination page to customize the information sent by the URL.

Email Links:

```
<a href="mailto:jane@janedoeenterprises.com"> jane@janedoeenterprises.com </a>
```

Bulleted Lists

Bulleted lists use the UL tag (for unordered lists). They begin and end with UL tags, and each bullet consists of LI tags (line index):

```
<ul>  
  <li>Age</li>  
  <li>Spouse - yes/no</li>  
  <li>Children - 0, 1, 2, 3, 3+</li>  
</ul>
```

Notice the indents? HTML is often indented to help you follow the nesting of the tags. Once you get used to it, it can help you find a missing end tag faster.

Note: I am not going to cover multiple-level bulleted lists in this document - if you need to do one, email me and I'll explain it further.

Numbered Lists

Numbered lists are very similar to bulleted lists, but use the OL and LI tags:

```
<ol>
  <li>First item</li>
  <li>Second item</li>
</ol>
```

Paragraphs

Use paragraphs like you would in a print document, but understand that control over vertical spacing in a webpage is poor, and probably always will be. The spacing before and after your paragraphs may change depending upon which Browser is used, which version of a particular Browser is used, or which monitor or other display device is used. The morale of the story is this: if you need perfect vertical spacing on the web, you will need to take a picture of the text.

Note: the vertical spacing issue is also very true where bulleted lists are concerned. You have to beat the lists into submission using a technology called CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) - and even then it doesn't work in all instances.

Paragraphs use the P tag:

```
<p>Call or email us today to get a custom quote for your tax and employee benefit needs.</p>
```

You can also add alignment instructions for the paragraph - left, center, or right:

```
<p align = "center">Your text here.</p>
```

Note: Don't try to justify text on the Web. Yes, there are commands for it, but it doesn't work properly, and you wind up with rivers of space randomly running through your paragraphs. Stick to left, center, and right alignment.

Note: the DIV tag gives a similar result to the P tag, but it is used for a more complex formatting reason.

Manual Line Breaks

Sometimes you want to manually break a line - for that use the BR tag:

```
<br>Your text here.</br>
```

Manual line breaks do not have extra vertical space before and after the line.

Non-Breaking Spaces

Sometimes you want space between words. The Web does not have tabs, so you can sometimes try tweaking spacing with non-breaking spaces. This is not a tag per se; it is a standalone:

```
&nbsp;
```

Try to use these sparingly because the results can be unpredictable.

Bold

To turn paragraph text bold, use the STRONG tag:

```
<strong>Your text here.</strong>
```

Italics

To italicize text, use the EM tag:

```
<em>Your text here.</strong>
```

Underline

Please don't underline text on the Web - people will think it's a hyperlink and click it. When nothing happens, they get irritated, and they may leave your site.

Horizontal Rule

You can add a horizontal rule (a gray line) to the text. The width is sized to the column, and they generally have a bunch of space built-in before and after them. This is one of the "single" tags:

```
<hr>
```

If you want to narrow the rule, you can set the width by percentage:

```
<hr width = "75%">
```