

01 HTML Info

1 History of the World Wide Web

The Internet has been around for a while but the World Wide Web WWW is relatively new. It is based upon hypertext – The concept of documents being linked to one another in relevant places. The ideas behind hypertext were around in the early 80s but began to form into reality in 1989. At that time, Tim Berners-Lee (pictured right) from the European Laboratory for Particle Physics wrote a paper titled ¹"Information Management: A Proposal". In the following year he began working on a hypertext browser/editor.



In 1993, NSCA (National Center for Super Computing) released a new web browser called Mosaic developed by Marc Andreessen. Unlike other browsers, this one made it possible to add colour and graphics in to html documents. Marc left NSCA in 1994 to form Netscape Communications and developed the Navigator browser based on Mosaic. The advanced features of this browser quickly made it extremely popular and it became by far the most widely used web browser.

In that same year, the first World Wide Web Consortium² meeting was held in Cambridge. Since then this consortium has been instrumental in setting standards for the World Wide Web and html, and is currently directed by Tim Berners-Lee.

Microsoft released the first version of their Internet Explorer browser (also based on Mosaic) in 1995 to coincide with the release on Windows 95. Since that time there has been constant competition between Netscape and Microsoft to produce the best web browser and opinion is divided as to which really is the best. Currently (in 2005) the latest versions are Netscape Navigator 7 and Internet Explorer 6. Unfortunately, the competition between the two has led to each including incompatible features in their browsers, which has been a cause of frustrations for many a webmaster.

Other browsers include Opera – a popular Russian made browser, Mozilla – an open source browser based on Navigator and Firefox – and increasingly popular browser made by the Mozilla foundation.

Did You Know?

When Tim Berners-Lee decided to call his new hypertext system the World Wide Web, other names he had considered were Information Mesh, Mine of Information, and Information Mine.

¹ Available at <http://www.w3.org/History/1989/proposal.html>

² <http://www.w3c.org>

2 What Is HTML

HTML (HyperText Markup Language) is the language used to write web pages, which can then be displayed using a web browser program. In its basic form, html is little more than a way of arranging text and linking documents together by putting certain text tags among the rest of the text. The web browser then reads these tags, which tell it how to display the document. HTML is primarily concerned with specifying how a page is structured.

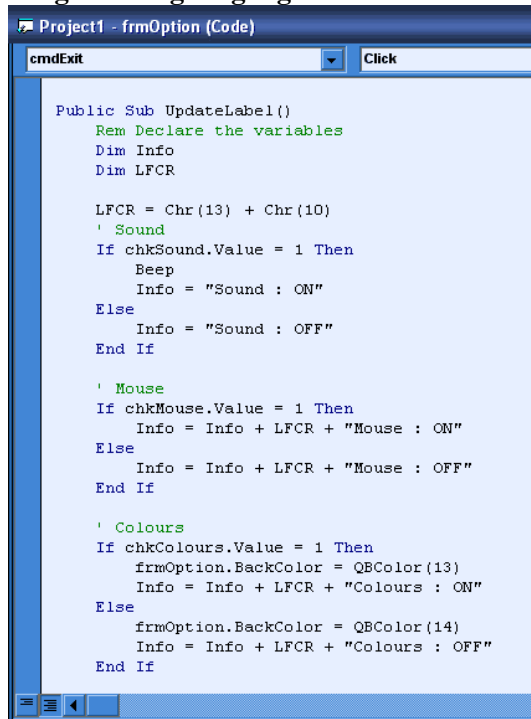
2.1 Markup Languages vs. Programming Languages

If HTML is a markup language then you may wonder what is meant by that. Most people who have used computers understand that programming languages are a set of instructions that describe what a computer needs to do under given conditions.

Markup languages on the other hand, contain a set of instructions about a document which tell the computer how to display that document. E.g. If you were given a sheet of paper and asked to type it up, there may be additional notes on the page telling you how to display the document (headings, style of text etc).

E.g.

Programming language



```

Project1 - frmOption (Code)
cmdExit Click

Public Sub UpdateLabel()
    Rem Declare the variables
    Dim Info
    Dim LFCR

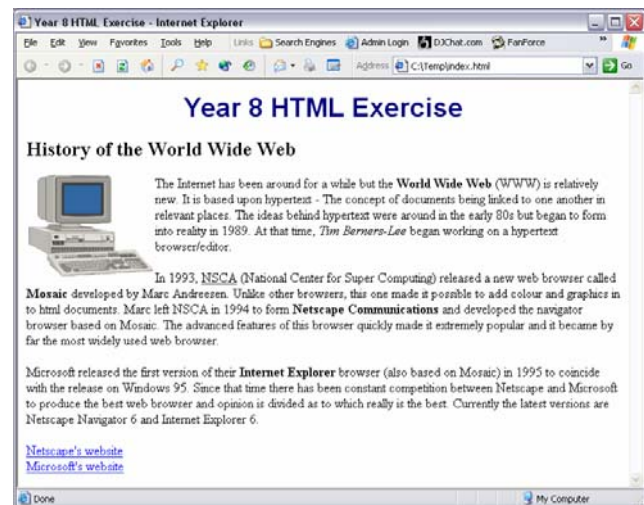
    LFCR = Chr(13) + Chr(10)
    ' Sound
    If chkSound.Value = 1 Then
        Beep
        Info = "Sound : ON"
    Else
        Info = "Sound : OFF"
    End If

    ' Mouse
    If chkMouse.Value = 1 Then
        Info = Info + LFCR + "Mouse : ON"
    Else
        Info = Info + LFCR + "Mouse : OFF"
    End If

    ' Colours
    If chkColours.Value = 1 Then
        frmOption.BackColor = QBColor(13)
        Info = Info + LFCR + "Colours : ON"
    Else
        frmOption.BackColor = QBColor(14)
        Info = Info + LFCR + "Colours : OFF"
    End If
  
```

Tells the computer what to do.

Markup language



Tells a computer how a document should look. E.g. positioning of pictures, style of text and placement of headings.

2.2 HTML Standards and the W3C

As the WWW has grown in popularity, developers and end users have put increasingly complex demands on HTML. Anyone who's browsed the web lately knows that it's now used for more than just linking neatly arranged text documents together. HTML has been extended to accommodate things it was never originally designed for such as electronic commerce and multimedia.

As was mentioned in the previous section, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) was formed to ensure that some standards were established for the WWW. Their website states, "The W3C was founded in October 1994 to lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing common protocols that promote its evolution and ensure its interoperability."

Its members consist of various companies and organisations including many of the world's major computer companies.

Some of the responsibilities of W3C are to:

- Provide information about the WWW for users and developers
- Provide the html standards that are generally accepted throughout the WWW
- Demonstrate how to use new standards and technologies

In 1998 the specifications for HTML 4.0 were finalised, incorporating some of the innovative ideas of both Netscape and Microsoft. This specification was more recently revised to HTML version 4.1. Anyone who is serious about designing websites in accordance with the latest standards should become familiar with the material provided by the W3C at <http://www.w3c.org/MarkUp/>.