

Code 004.5

HTML, CSS AND PHOTOSHOP - CREATIVE INTEGRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL WEB DESIGN PROJECTS

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Abstract

The paper introduces creative integration of HTML, CSS and Photoshop for professional web design projects. It consists of using Adobe Photoshop for creating visually attracting layout designs, HTML to define objects and CSS to style the objects.

Introduction

Any Web page is a combination of just three types of code: HTML, CSS, and JavaScript [1]. Those three technologies are what the browser combines to deliver the content to the screen - text, images, video, sound or animation. HTML defines objects - with each HTML tag a new unique object (header, paragraph, table, image, etc) on the page appeared. CSS styles the objects - integrated into the HTML tags CSS style them individually or as a group and give each object a unique name called an ID. JavaScript changes the objects - it allows to make style and other changes to any object created with an HTML tag - show an object, hide an object, or change the color of an object. JavaScript is not an object of consideration of this paper. Interface Design - it is essential part of the whole web design process as it is very important for usability. If the visitors cannot find all content needed, or if they are confused by layout, they would probably leave the site. Adobe Photoshop is professional tool for most web designers [2] - from creating a website template to objects and components such as content boxes and buttons. The end results produced are great and visually attracting layout designs.

1. Layout design with PhotoShop

The first step with any design is to sketch out the plans on paper. It helps to develop a hierarchy and gives an insight into the best positions for key elements of the layout. The second step is to create (using Photoshop) an image that indicates the general layout you would like to use for the site. Once the design is ready the next step is slicing the PSD layout. Each image that will be needed in the Website template should be sliced. Many features can be recreated with CSS; so the graphic designer should have at least an elementary understanding of HTML and CSS. He should be familiar with HTML tags and the most common CSS properties.

The following items are needed (everything else can be recreated with simple CSS)(Figure 1):

- Navigation icons (1);
- Girl image (2);
- All of the headings and their respective icons (3);
- Background gradients (4);



Figure 1 - The PSD layout design – slicing plan

2. HTML coding

The HTML coding includes analyzing the design and translate the structure to HTML mark-up. The layout, created in PhotoShop will be converted to a complete HTML/CSS website. The first step is to mentally format the layout from an HTML point of view (Figure 2). The layout is divided into three sections: Header, Main Content, Footer. Most of the web sites in general keeps similar structure - with these three components.



Figure 2 - Format the layout from an HTML point of view

When the design is visualized from a HTML point of view, the next step is to create a “container” division with the three components. That way, if necessary, the entire website can be positioned simply by altering one div:

```
<div id='container'>
  <div id='header'>
    header content
  </div>
  <div id='main'>
    <div id='primaryContent'></div>
  </div>
  <div id='footer'>
    footer content
  </div>
</div>
```

Once the basic structure is ready the header is the next step. It consist of list of navigation links in the upper right corner of the screen. The most appropriate way to create the navigation is to use an unordered list.

```
<div id='container'>
  <div id='header'>
    <ul id='nav'>
      <li id='li_home'><a href='index.html'>HOME</a></li>
      <li id='li_work'><a href='history.html'>HISTORY</a></li>
      <li id='li_about'><a href='nature.html'>NATURE</a></li>
      <li id='li_contact'><a href='turism.htm'>TURISM</a></li>
    </ul>
  </div>
</div>
```

The Bulgarian girl picture and the slogan are the next part of the layout. This section should be wrapped within its own div as well:

```
</ul>

<div id='slogan'>
  <img src='#' alt='Bulgarian girl' />
  <p> Welcome to Bulgaria, a country of ancient civilizations, charming old museum
    towns, remarkable historic places.
  <a href='about.html'>Find out more.</a></p>
</div><!-- end slogan-->
</div><!-- end header-->
```

References:

1. Teague J.: Speaking in Styles, Fundamentals of CSS for Web Designers, New Riders. – 2009. – P.14–25.
2. www.adobe.com.