

Streetwise CSS in a nutshell

HTML

1. Use frameworks or CMS to do the heavy lifting. Avoid writing HTML you don't have to.
2. Make sure your HTML is W3C Valid. (Declare and follow a doctype; run a validator, fix problems.)
3. CSS ideally should be used for 100% of the presentational aspects of the document, HTML for structure. Avoid letting HTML do anything "presentational" (such as text formatting, layout, colors, etc.) that could be done by CSS.
4. HTML should be kept as simple as possible.

CSS

1. Be aware of CSS selectors, properties, values, box model, positioning, and the cascade. Keep a reference handy.
2. Remember that setting position: to relative, absolute, or fixed removes the element from its current "scope" of the HTML layout flow and creates a new scope for that element, which child elements can take advantage of for positioning.
3. Use the techniques we discussed to write efficient CSS:
 - a. Use the #ID E {declaration;} pattern for cleaner HTML.
 - b. Take advantage of "default" values, inheritance, and the Cascade.
 - c. Write well-structured CSS (however you define it). Be consistent
 - d. Use Comments effectively.
 - e. Use a CSS Reset stylesheet for improved "baseline" consistency among browsers.
 - f. Isolate "hacks" to separate .css files and use conditional HTML to link them when necessary.
 - g. Use a separate style sheet for print media, test it with Acrobat Printer.
4. Validate your CSS. Recognize that vendor-specific CSS will be marked as invalid, but that's OK.
5. Avoid cutting edge CSS until it is well supported by most browsers.

Browser

1. Test your site in all browsers you support.
2. Don't worry about supporting outdated browsers, unless you are forced to.
3. Use server stats to drive justification for dropping support for older browsers; determine ROI for the resources needed to support older browsers vs. the share of traffic they represent.
4. Security argument -- older browsers have broken security. Consider serving a notification to the user if an older browser is detected to where they can get information about the problems of using outdated browser and what they should do about it.