

**The CSS Anthology**  
**101 Essential Tips, Tricks and Hacks**  
**by Rachel Andrew**

Positioned between a quick-reference guide and a full text on Cascading Style Sheets theory and practice, The CSS Anthology meets a real need. Author Rachel Andrew presents the “Tips, Tricks and Hacks” in the form of responses to “How Do I...?” questions – for example, “How do I remove underlines from my links?” Readers will find these questions listed in the Contents pages, which are organized into nine sections of increasing levels of complexity. There is also an index, for more general searches. The Table of Contents includes sections covering:

1. Getting Started with CSS
2. Text Styling and Other Basics
3. CSS and Images
4. Navigation
5. Tabular Data
6. Forms and User Interfaces
7. Browser and Device Support
8. CSS Positioning and Layout
9. Experimentation, Browser Specific CSS, and Future Techniques

This is not a work intended to teach CSS to novices. However, the author provides an overview of the basic principles, covering selectors and properties, including tag, pseudo, contextual, class and id selectors, as well as an explanation of why one should use CSS in the first place. This discussion makes up the first chapter, Getting Started with CSS.

For a reference text structured in the “How Do I...?” format to succeed, the author must pose questions that are clear, reasonably universal, and likely to be asked. Andrews has accomplished that, as may be seen from the following examples:

- From Chapter 3, CSS and Images: How do I make a background image that stays still while the text is being scrolled?
- From Chapter 4, Navigation: How do I use CSS to create rollover navigation without images or JavaScript?
- From Chapter 7, Browser and Device Support: Why does my site look different in Internet Explorer 6 than it does in Mozilla?

In each chapter, Andrews presents the relevant series of questions and follows with solutions that include the CSS markup needed to solve the problem. In most cases, this is followed by a discussion section providing more in-depth information, which may include a discussion of standards, the way different browsers handle CSS, further examples of the solution, or warnings about possible downsides of using a particular hack or style. There are numerous illustrations, which are particularly useful in demonstrating the ways in which certain browsers display CSS pages.

Perhaps the most interesting section – although not necessarily the most practical for solving most problems – is Chapter 9, Experimentation, Browser Specific CSS, and Future Techniques. Here, Andrews presents many techniques that achieve advanced effects, some of which will not work in all browsers, notably Internet Explorer. For example, Mozilla-based browsers will support the creation via CSS of boxes with rounded corners, without the use of images. While this will not work in IE, it does not create problems, either, and IE users will see boxes with standard squared corners. Another solution that will work in IE and Mozilla for Windows (but not Macintosh) allows the creation of translucent elements, which permits some very artistic effects without the use of a graphics program.

The CSS Anthology provides a valuable resource in a format that will not bog the user down in detail. Beyond that, working through the many examples is an enjoyable education in a broad range of CSS techniques. I highly recommend it.

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