

**Book:** CSS: The Missing Manual  
**Author:** David Sawyer McFarland  
Reviewed by Ruth Kalinka

CSS: The Missing Manual is a useful CSS resource for intermediate to advanced web designers who have experience with HTML and CSS. The writing is friendly and informative, the content is well-organized, and the book's formatting makes it very easy to use chronologically or as a reference manual. Each topic is covered with examples of code and screen shots to demonstrate the concepts presented. This series of books also uses a special durable and flexible "lay-flat" binding that makes it easy to have the book stay open without cracking the spine or using heavy objects to hold it down.

In addition to the book, companion tutorial files (both the basic file resources and completed projects for each chapter) are available for download so that readers get hands-on experience applying the lessons in a web environment.

Before receiving this book, I had previously compared this Missing Manual to other available CSS resources at my local bookstore. Besides looking for the right content, I am a designer and can be particular about the design and approachability of a book. This O'Reilly book (and its lay-flat binding) really stood out. O'Reilly has an undisputed reputation in the world of technological reference manuals and I am delighted that the company is designing books for people like me, in addition to the no-frills manuals which have made the company famous.

Even before reading the book from the beginning to write a review, I found it to be helpful and easy-to-use as a quick reference for applying various properties and values while working on recent projects. The index and the organization of the book made it extremely easy to get the information I needed.

The book progresses gradually through important topics and, having experience with HTML and CSS, I was pleased with the attention given to usability and good coding practices, which I find lacking in some manuals. I also found that while there were sections I already knew pretty well, I was able to learn new things and fill in some gaps in my knowledge by reading those chapters anyway.

I would highly recommend this book as a valuable instructional and reference manual for intermediate to advanced web designers.

The book is organized as follows and the complete Table of Contents, including subsections of each chapter, can be viewed online here: <http://www.sawmac.com/missing/css/toc.php>

### **Part One: CSS Basics**

1. Rethinking HTML for CSS
2. Creating Styles and Style Sheets
3. Selector Basics: Identifying What to Style
4. Saving Time With Inheritance
5. Managing Multiple Styles: The Cascade

### **Part Two: Applied CSS**

6. Formatting Text
7. Margins, Padding, and Borders
8. Adding Graphics to Web Pages
9. Sprucing Up Your Site's Navigation
10. Formatting Tables and Forms

### **Part Three: CSS Page Layout**

11. Building Float-Based Layouts
12. Positioning Elements on a Web Page

### **Part Four: Advanced CSS**

13. CSS for the Printed Page

## 14. Improving Your CSS Habits

### **Part Five: Appendices**

- A. CSS Property Reference
- B. CSS in Dreamweaver 8
- C. CSS Resources

**Additional Reviews:** <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/csstm/index.html#rr>

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