

## Releasing CSS, by Christopher Schmitt

### Reviewed by John Davey

**Releasing CSS, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love IE7**, is a recent addition to O'Reilly Media's Short Cut library.

O'Reilly Media's Short Cuts are brief and inexpensive PDF publications about technology that focus on relatively narrow subjects. Many of the titles are also time-sensitive as they address topics that are particularly current. Releasing CSS is a good fit for the Short Cut concept. This PDF addresses cascading style sheet (CSS) support in version 7 of Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser. This topic is a matter of immediate interest to web developers as IE7 is currently being rolled out as an upgrade and will be included in the new Vista version of Windows.

Releasing CSS is both a reference and a tutorial. It starts with a concise review of IE support for CSS, a good introduction for beginners and a useful resource for veterans. In the course of explaining the deficiencies of IE6, the author discusses a few relevant CSS selectors and uses graphical depictions of HTML document trees to illustrate how selectors work. The graphics are very effective, and a beginner would learn a lot just from this section. Experienced designers can benefit as well by gaining some new familiarity with CSS selectors, like child and adjacent sibling selectors, that have not been commonly used up to now due to lack of IE support.

Among the other topics covered are PNG alpha transparency, the box model, a long and annotated list of CSS rendering bugs, a list of selectors that IE7 supports, and a discussion of what support is still not provided, such as generated content. The author even points out a new bug, and he then provides a workaround.

There is an explanation of IE hacks that is a nice reference, and a section on ways to deliver pages depending on the browser, a useful technique that advanced designers might want to get familiar with. Along the way, the author addresses side issues like IE6 hacks and workarounds, or a way to do rounded corners. These are a bit off-topic, but they are useful nonetheless. Schmitt also notes the importance of declaring a DOCTYPE, a basic point that is sometimes missed by other writers.

The author puts it all together in a section called Setting up an Intelligent Hacking System that explains the principle and practice of hack management. He then does a demo page to show how to use the newly supported CSS properties by developing a webpage from start to finish.

The final section on the expected adoption rate of IE7 is interesting for planning purposes. The information will be outdated quickly, but links are supplied to websites where actual figures are posted. The publication ends with a listing of sources for IE7 information.

This publication is nicely organized with a table of contents in the margin and links to external sources within the text. Reading Releasing CSS on a laptop was reasonably comfortable, and the live links were useful when I was connected to an access point. Generally, the PDF format works well for this type of work.

Releasing CSS is concise and timely, and the material is well-organized. I expect to use this publication to organize a presentation to my user group on new developments with Internet Explorer 7.

**Releasing CSS How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love IE7**

By Christopher Schmitt

Copyright © 2006 O'Reilly Media, Inc.

November 2006

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/unleashingcss/>

**ISBN 10:** 0-596-52935-X

**ISBN 13:** 9780596529352

**Pages:** 69

---

This article is solely the responsibility of the author and does not necessarily express the views of PACS, its board of directors, or anyone else.