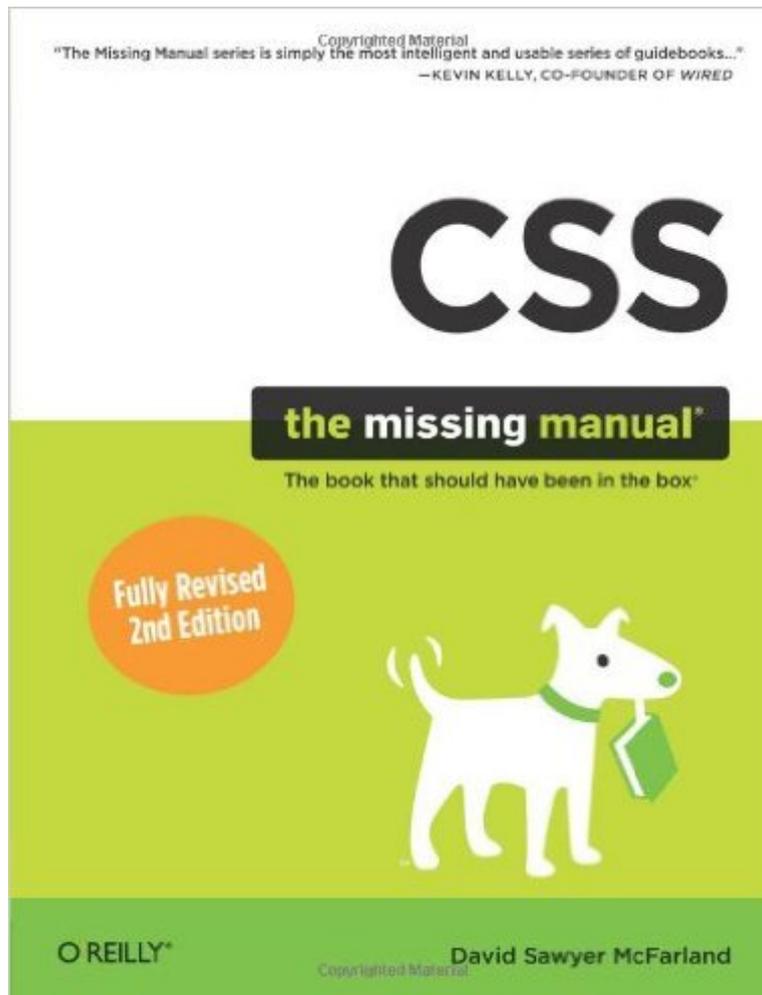


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# CSS: The Missing Manual (Missing Manuals)



## Synopsis

Cascading Style Sheets can turn humdrum websites into highly-functional, professional-looking destinations, but many designers merely treat CSS as window-dressing to spruce up their site's appearance. You can tap into the real power of this tool with *CSS: The Missing Manual*. This second edition combines crystal-clear explanations, real-world examples, and dozens of step-by-step tutorials to show you how to design sites with CSS that work consistently across browsers. Witty and entertaining, this second edition gives you up-to-the-minute pro techniques. You'll learn how to: Create HTML that's simpler, uses less code, is search-engine friendly, and works well with CSS Style text by changing fonts, colors, font sizes, and adding borders Turn simple HTML links into complex and attractive navigation bars -- complete with rollover effects Create effective photo galleries and special effects, including drop shadows Get up to speed on CSS 3 properties that work in the latest browser versions Build complex layouts using CSS, including multi-column designs Style web pages for printing With *CSS: The Missing Manual, Second Edition*, you'll find all-new online tutorial pages, expanded CSS 3 coverage, and broad support for Firefox, Safari, and other major web browsers, including Internet Explorer 8. Learn how to use CSS effectively to build new websites, or refurbish old sites that are due for an upgrade.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

There is certainly no shortage of books about CSS. For more than a decade now, HTML, CSS and

JavaScript have been the core client-side technologies required of competent website authors. Sure, many people get by using WYSIWYG editors (e.g., Dreamweaver) and/or a CMS (Drupal, Joomla, yui, etc.) to produce websites. But, for true design competence and flexibility, serious professionals need to master these three "languages." Typically, one learns (X)HTML first, followed by CSS and then JavaScript, in that order. At least that has been my path. Over the last decade or so, as the benefits of the separation of structure and presentation have been accepted by the design community, CSS has become increasingly important. HTML documents that just a few years ago would have been implemented with nested tables and spacer gifs in the HTML markup now have their presentational aspects created in separate CSS files. Almost everybody acknowledges that is a good thing, and I agree. Unfortunately, many very good books on CSS over the last decade (and still on the market) devote a lot of space trying to convince developers WHY CSS styling is preferable to the old-time methods, thus minimizing the pages they can devote to HOW one actually uses CSS. There was clearly a need for that emphasis in the past, but let me suggest that the war has been won and it's time to move on. This second edition of McFarland's book is, everything considered, the best book I've yet read on CSS, and I've read quite a few. At over 500 pages, it is thorough in its coverage and doesn't waste space rehashing the styling wars that have dominated the literature of the last decade. Explanations of topics are cogent and well illustrated.

Here's my situation. I'm a professional technical writer who uses a single-sourcing tool called MadCap Flare to write, format, and produce content for printed manuals and online help systems. Flare itself isn't so hard to use. But it relies completely on CSS to format its output. For many years now, I've been using style sheets (in Word and FrameMaker), but I've only had a rudimentary knowledge of CSS. My use of Flare mandated that I get up to speed with CSS, otherwise I'd never be able to control Flare's output to the degree that I needed to. To start out, I did a couple of web tutorials on CSS. Then I read Hakon Wium Lie's book, which is a terrific reference resource, but not the best "learning" book. Nor does it clearly illustrate the full potential of CSS (which is ironic, since Lie helped define CSS specification). But it did get me moving down the right path and improve my Flare output. Wanting more, I read a couple of other books. But they were geared more toward advanced techniques for users who already understand CSS's capabilities. I needed to step back a bit and find the right book directed at intermediate users. Based on the reader reviews, I decided to give McFarland's *CSS: The Missing Manual* a try. And I'm really glad I did. For beginners, McFarland assumes you know a little bit of HTML, but that's about all. He guides you through CSS and its awesome capabilities with an easy, conversational writing style and clear examples that explain the

interaction between CSS and HTML. The book teaches you gradually, and in a very logical order. You are always building on stuff you already learned in earlier chapters. Best of all, he provides tutorials so you can apply your new knowledge right away with practical, real-world examples.

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