

Carnival of HTML



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June 10, 2010

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Introduction

What is HTML?

HTML is HyperText Markup Language. Hypertext because it is more than text, and markup language because it is a language for marking pieces of text. HTML is the language of web browsers. Using HTML, you describe how your document is structured so that web browsers can display it appropriately. Unlike normal desktop publishing, with HTML you only work in generalities, if you know what you're doing. Rather than specifying exactly what your document looks like, you specify which parts of the document are important, and in what way they're important. The reader's browser then takes that information and creates a web page, regardless of whether that browser is a graphical browser on Windows, a text-based browser on Unix, or a voice reader for the blind.

When writing HTML, you surround various parts of the text with descriptions of what added meaning you want the text to convey. For example, if you want a word to be emphasized, you surround that word with the 'emphasis' HTML code. Almost all HTML 'markup' is done by surrounding the words with the code that affects it. The beginning tag is always a word, such as "em", surrounded by the greater than and less than symbol: ``. The ending tag is the same thing, but with a slash added: ``.

There are two forms of HTML: HTML and XHTML. I'll be using XHTML here, but will try to point out the differences with HTML, and why you would use one or the other.

The web site

You can find the latest version of this tutorial, as well as the resources archive, at http://www.hoboes.com/NetLife/Web_Writing/.

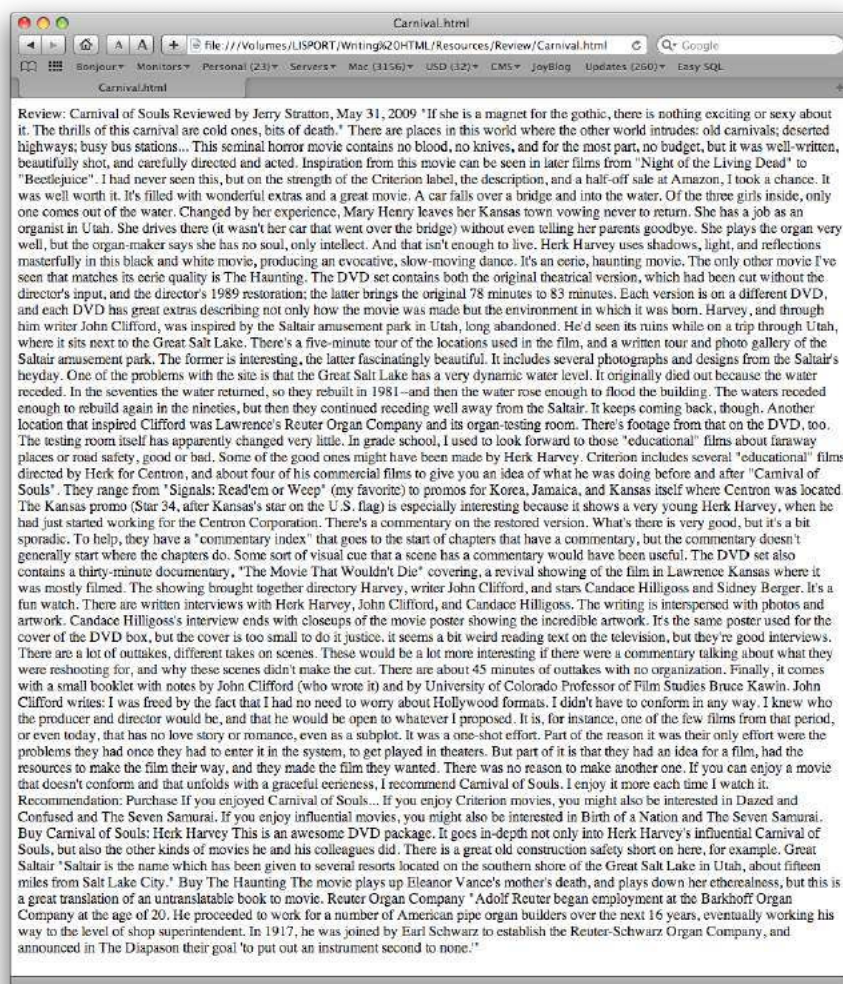
What is that cover?

It's from the 1900 Mardi Gras. It has nothing to do with HTML; in fact, it is everything that HTML should not be: crowded, gaudy, and incomprehensible.

The basic web page

Copy the file “Carnival.txt” in the Resources folder to “Carnival.html” and put it in the Workshop folder along with all of the images (we’ll get to those later). Open Carnival.html in a text editor, such as Smultron on Mac OS X. It’s a reasonably formatted text file, but it certainly isn’t what you’d expect to view on the web nowadays.

Go ahead and view it in your browser. It should look like a mass of text, with no text standing out from any other text.



Over the course of this tutorial we’re going to make parts of the text stand out: headlines, paragraphs, links, emphasis, and lists. We’ll do this by telling the browser what each of these bits of text mean, structurally.

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