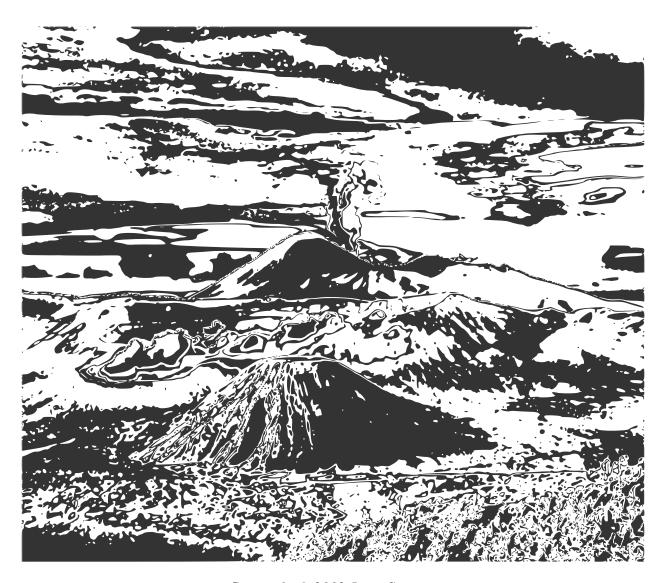
JAVASCRIPT FOR BEGINNERS



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WHAT IS JAVASCRIPT?

JavaScript allows you to create 'dynamic, interactive' web pages: web pages that do things in response to what your readers do, without having a separate page for each possible response. In this tutorial, I'm going to cover some of the very basics of using JavaScript in your web pages. I'm going to assume that you know a little bit about HTML, but nothing about programming or JavaScript. If you aren't familiar with HTML, you'll want to go over the Web Writing Guide at http://www.hoboes.com/NetLife/Web_Writing/ first.

First, JavaScript has nothing to do with Java. Java is a separate programming language. JavaScript is a language for scripting web browsers and web servers, although it is seeing other uses as it becomes popular. Java was created by Sun and is designed for complete software applications, while JavaScript was created separately by Netscape Corporation and was later standardized as the ECMAScript standard. It is designed for modifying (and "scripting") web pages.

WHAT IS THAT COVER?

The cover image is a tracing, done in Inkscape, of Mount Semeru and Mount Bromo on the Isle of Java. Java may mean "beyond", but it might also mean "home". Java was created through volcanic activity and still contains many active volcanoes. Despite these dangers, it is the most populous island in Indonesia. Volcanic activity ensures a rich soil throughout the island.

Whether any of this relates to JavaScript is left to your imagination.

INTERCEPTING CLICKS

JavaScript turns every web page into a collection of objects that you can modify and interact with. JavaScript turns everything that the visitor does into events that you can modify and intercept.

Go to http://www.hoboes.com/NetLife/Web_Scripting/Web_Scripting_Resources/ to download the resource zip archive and uncompress it. Open the file "1941.html" in your favorite text editor. There are several links on that page; some of the links are local (they go to hoboes.com) and some of them are not local (they go to Wikipedia and Amazon). We're going to make the non-local ones open in a new window (or tab, depending on the visitor's preferences).

Look in the HTML's "head" area for a comment that says "put your scripts.js here". Underneath that line, add this:

```
<script type="text/javascript" src="scripts.js"></script>
```

This line tells the browser to look for some scripts in the file "scripts.js". We're going to put our JavaScript code there. The syntax for the <script> tag is very similar to the syntax for the tag.

The <script> tag can go anywhere in your document, but you'll usually put it in the <head> area when you're using it to include a file containing JavaScript. We'll use it for other purposes later in this tutorial.

BLOCK ALL LINKS

Our first version will do nothing—literally. It will block all links on this page. Put this into your scripts.js file:

```
function manageLinks(event) {
  return false;
}
document.onclick=manageLinks;
```

Save scripts.js into the same folder as 1941.html. Reload 1941.html in your browser. Try clicking on some of the links: none of them should work.

If the links do work, you're going to need to track down the error. In Firefox or in Safari, you have an error console that will display any errors in your page, as well as the line those errors occurred on. If you're not already using one of those browsers, you'll need to download the latest version and use it for testing your scripts.

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