Surviving a Website Apocalypse... err... a Formatting Issue:

HTML, CSS, & WYSIWYGs for Non-technical Non-zombies

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By John Rhea

Slides, Resources etc.

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All the info and zombie fighting weapons you'll need

Who's John?

- Founder and Chief Zombie Smacker at The Undead Institute
- Web Designer/Developer for Virginia Humanities
- Adjunct Instructor - Web Technologies for Piedmont Virginia Community College – teaching ITD 110 & 210
- (Taught Film History at NVCC in F09-S10)
- Author of a bunch of web articles, stories, and zombie-themed web development books and courses
- Father of 8
- If I'm awake *and* fully clothed, it's a good day.

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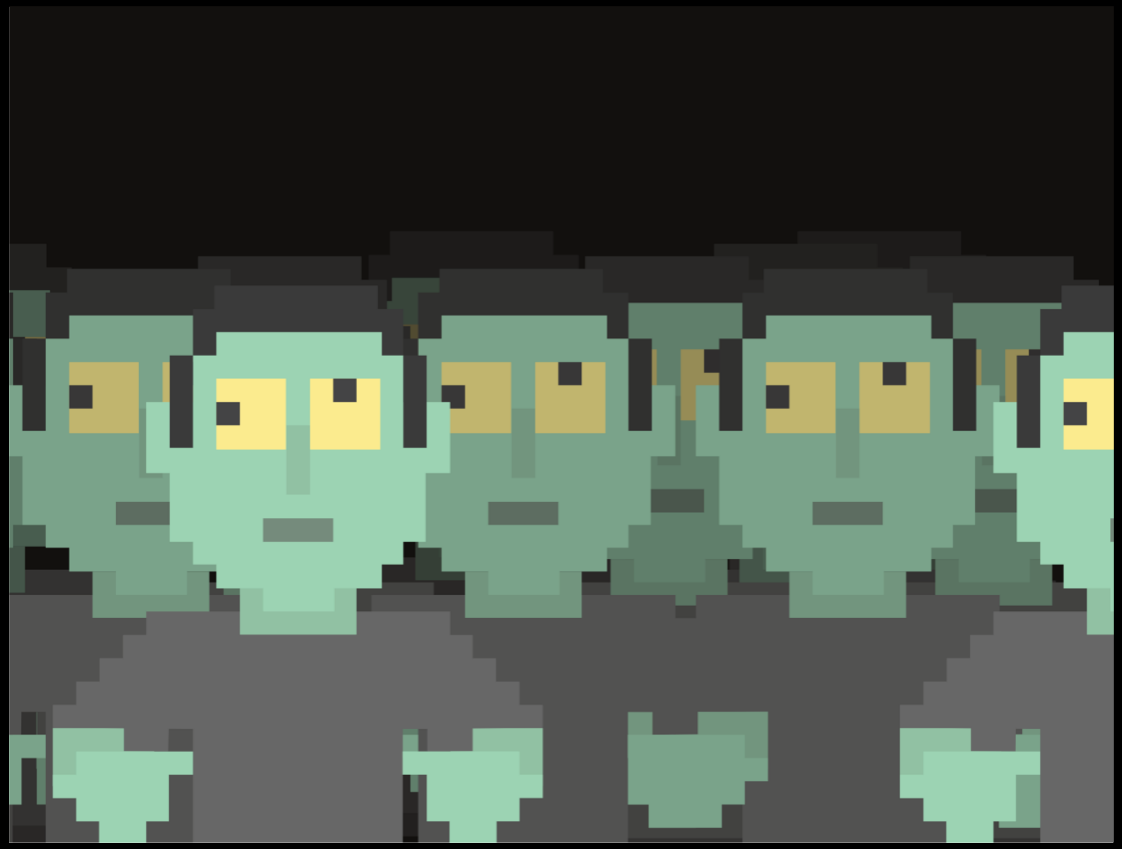
Why Zombies?

- Not *just* a gimmick
- People are familiar with zombies so apocalyptic analogies make the concepts clearer
- Research has shown that laughing while learning helps the material stick
- Getting braaains should be fun



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It's Okay if it Doesn't All Make Sense Today

- There's a lot of info (some kinda technical) and not a lot of time
- My goals today:
  - Make you laugh with me (not at me)
  - Give you a taste of what can be done
  - Give you resources to learn more later

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Zombie Scribbles

Why Your Magnum Opus Looks Terrible on the Web

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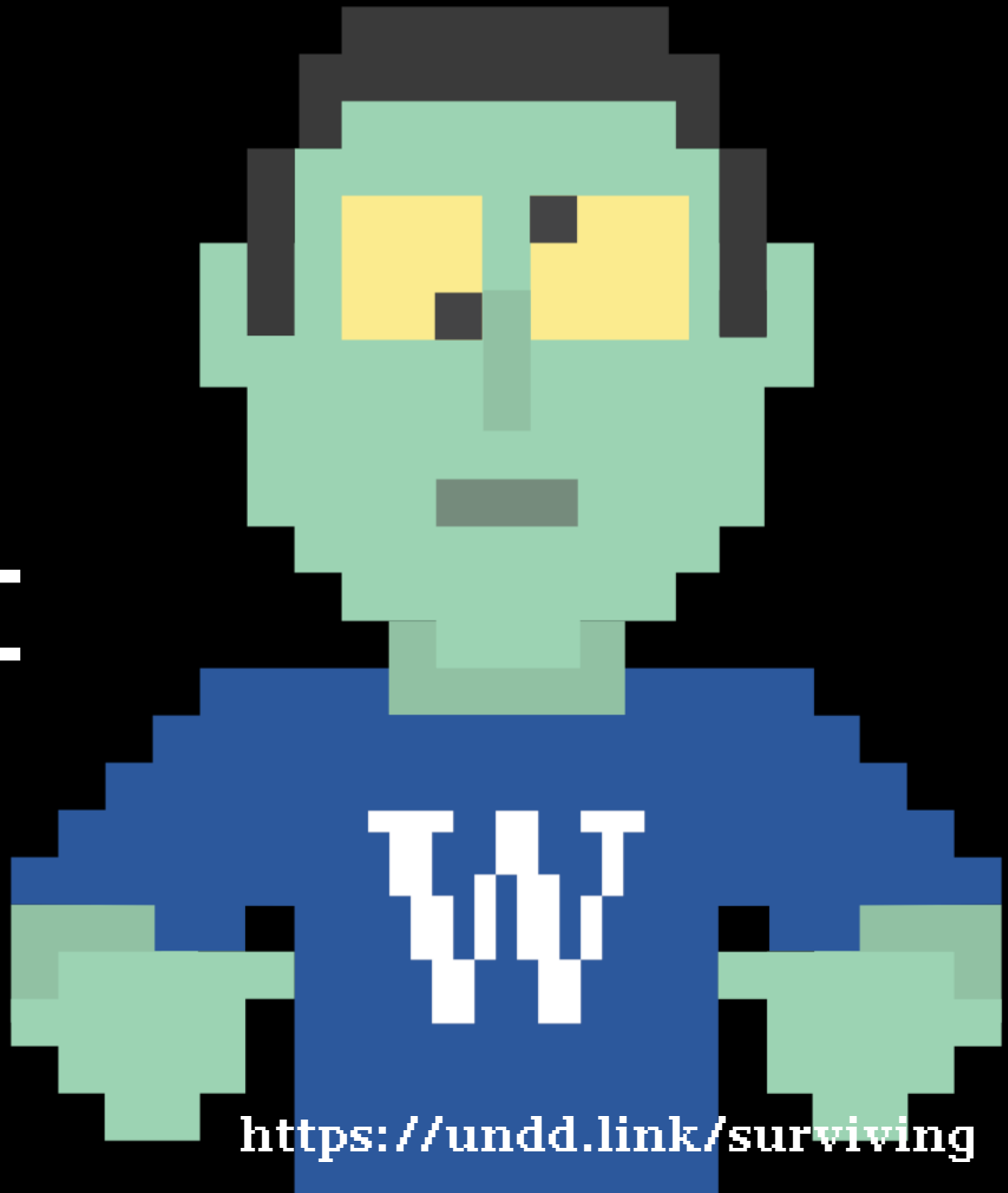
It's Probably Word's Fault

Or Whatever Word Processing Software You're Using



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But first:

Content Management Systems

- They make it easier to add, update, and delete website content
- (Sometimes) geared toward non-technical users.
- Must balance ease of use with number of available options.
- Common CMSs: WordPress, Drupal, Joomla, OMNI CMS/OU Campus, Cascade CMS, Terminalfour, etc.
- Canvas is CMS-ish
- When you edit content in a CMS you're often using a WYSIWYG

WYSIWYGs

- What You See Is What You Get
- No code solution that tries to show you how it will look on front end
- Code may exist in the WYSIWYG that's invisible to you
- Most modern copy/paste options copy more than the text (unless using plain text)

Gettin' WYSI-widdit

Na na na na na na na

Na na na na na na

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That Gobbledygook: Computer Code

- Special instructions meant to be interpreted by the computer
- Usually has a signifier/character that designates what is code and what isn't e.g.

    Help! A zombie is trying to eat my code!

- HTML and CSS are computer code
- HTML in particular weaves code and content together

HTML Basics

Breaking Down Our Elemental Zombie Weapons

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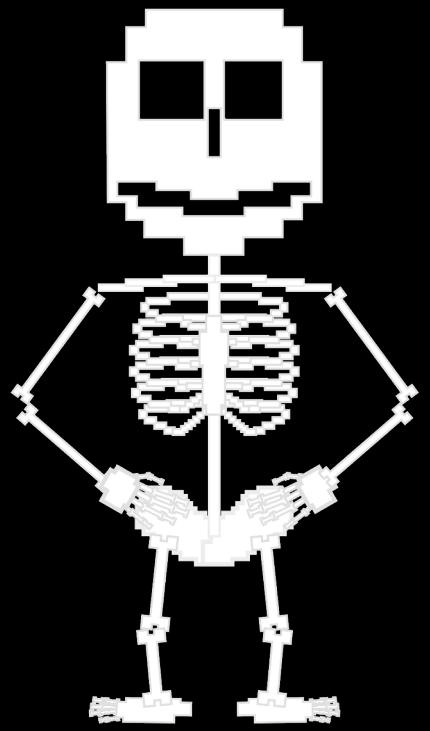
What is HTML?

- HyperText Markup Language (HTML)
- Structure/Skeleton of a web page
- Marks up the content of a web page
- I don't expect you to understand all the code, just recognize patterns.



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Four Parts of an HTML Element

1. Opening Tag `<p>`
2. Attributes `class="undead-horrors"`
3. Content `This paragraph tastes like <i>braaains</i>`
4. Closing Tag `</p>`

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1 Opening Tag

- Starts with <
- Name of the tag e.g. “p” for paragraph
- Closes with >
- For instance: `<p>` or `<b>` or `<div>`

2 Attributes

- One or more name and value pairs applied to an HTML element.
- Does one of three things:
  - Identifies an element or group
  - Modifies behavior
    - change color etc
  - Sets external content
    - an image, a link etc.

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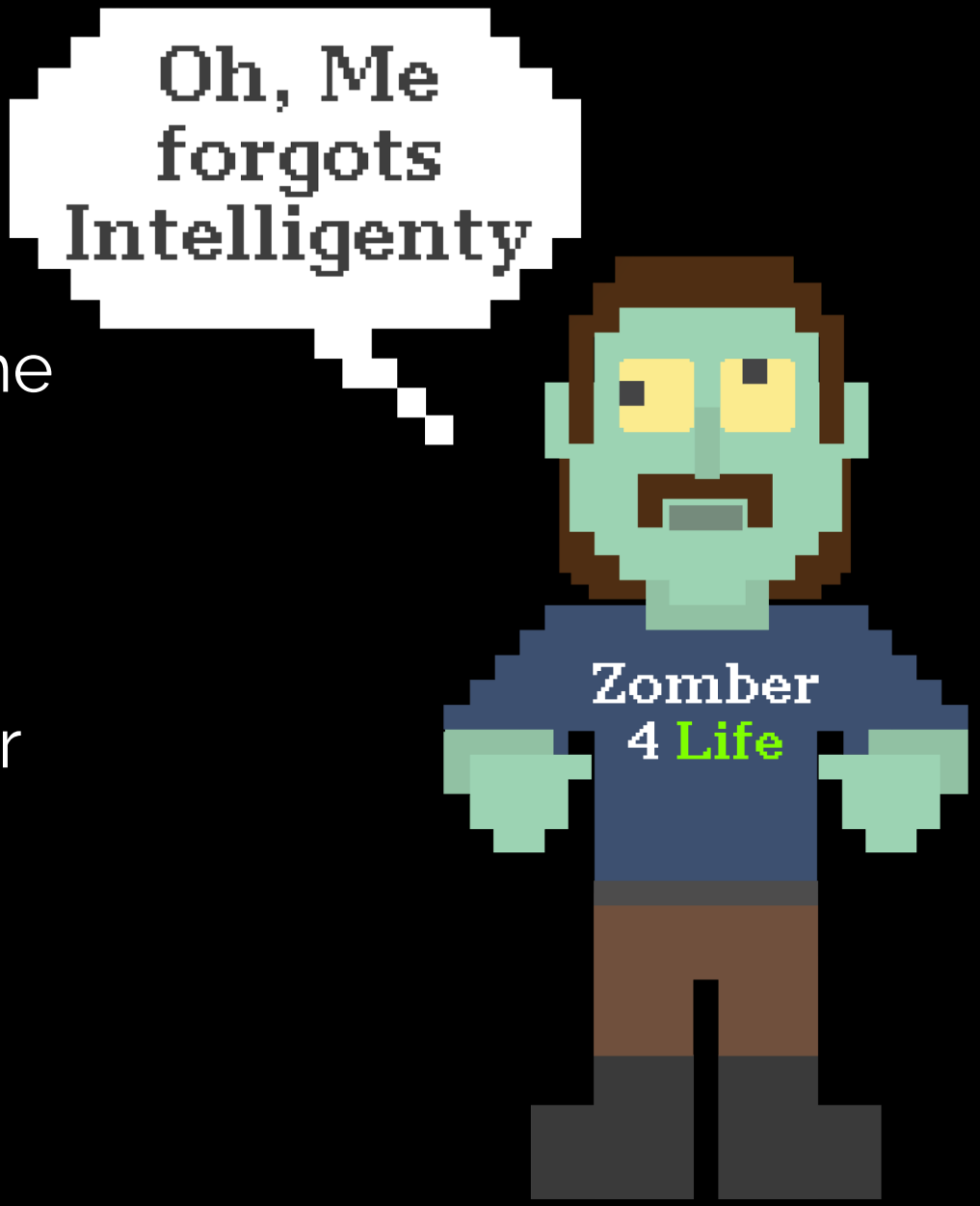
2 Attributes

- Appear between the opening tag name and the >
- Example:

```
<p class="undead-horrors"> or
<div id="zombie-warning">
```



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3 Content

- Text and/or other HTML elements
- “Inside” the element - between the opening and closing tags
- Example content:

```
This paragraph tastes like braaains
```

or

```
There <b>appears</b> to be a zombie crawling up
  your leg
```

4 Closing Tag

- Mirrors the opening tag except includes a `/` after the `<`
- Example: `</p>` or `</b>` or `</div>`
- Note: Not all HTML elements require a closing tag.

Bringing it All Together (into one Happy Horde)

```
<p>Zombies have <i>no</i> family</p>

<p>Zombies <i>do have a <b>horde</b></i></p>
```

Bringing it All Together (into one Happy Horde)

```
<p>Zombies have <i>no</i> family</p>
```

```
<p>Zombies <i>do have a <b>horde</b></i></p>
```

Identifying Zombie code

- An element that's a child of another element is "nested" within it
- Improper nesting can cause lots of issues

Improper Nesting/Bad Code:

```
<p>I really <strong> not be zomber</p></strong>
```

Proper Nesting/Good Code:

```
<p>I really <strong> not be zomber</strong></p>
```

Identifying Zombie code - 2

- Opening and closing tags must match

Bad code:

```
<p>I be <em>not</i> zombie!</strong>
```

Good code:

```
<p>I be <em>not</em> zombie!</p>
```

Failing Publicly!

a.k.a. Live Coding

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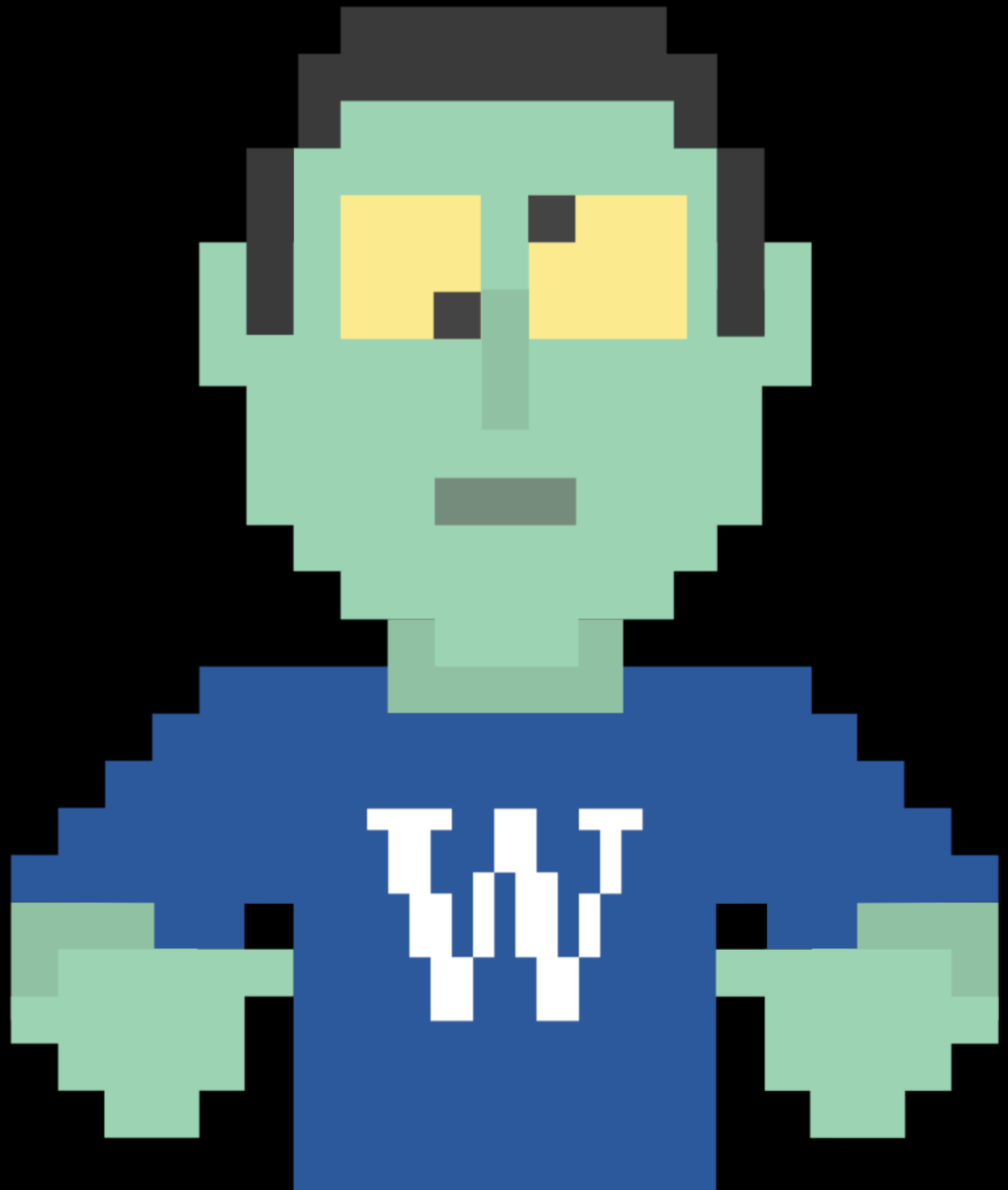

Punching Code from Word in its Zombie Face

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Helpful Zombies?

- Word tries to “help” you by keeping the exact font, spacing, orientation to the sun, giving you:

 I wi ll g ladly   …

And so much more…

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Strategies for Cleaning up Code

- Paste and hope
- Paste into a plain text editor (Notepad, Text Edit etc) then into the website
  - Kills all formatting you had
- Paste into a color coded code editor and remove excess code.

Color coding codey code

- Color coded code can help you spot errors and separate code from content
- Notepad++ (Windows only)
- Phoenix Code (Windows and Mac)
- VS Code (Windows and Mac)
- Just about any other coding tool that supports HTML/CSS

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WYSIWYG Accessibility Concerns

- Empty headings and links
  - Screen Reader users scan audibly just like visual users scan visually
- Empty Image Alt text
  - Screen readers and search engines can't understand visual content without alt text
  - If image is purely decorative leave alt attribute empty: alt=""

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Danger, Will Robinson!

- What I'm about to teach you, when not used well, can make your site look *worse*
- It can also make Communications/Marketing/Anyone who looks at your site mad at you.
- Use the following sparingly and only when absolutely necessary
- Just because you want everything to be fuchsia and chartreuse, doesn't mean you should
- You could also cause an equity issue if you don't use good accessibility practices
- Thus raise your right hand and repeat after me:

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The I-Won't-Get-John-In-Trouble-With-My-Bad-Behavior Oath:

I, **state your name**,
do solemnly swear to use these powers for good
And, to the best of my ability, keep my pages accessible .
I will ***not*** go entirely rogue and do whatever the zombie I want.
I, **state your name**, further swear
not to throw John under the bus
should my activities be discovered
and I get a firm talking to.
Lastly, I **state your name** swear
to give John a good review on his session
And loan him $100
without expecting repayment.

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What is CSS?

- Cascading Style Sheets (CSS)
- If HTML is the skeleton, CSS is the flesh and clothes
- Set spacing, all kinds of things

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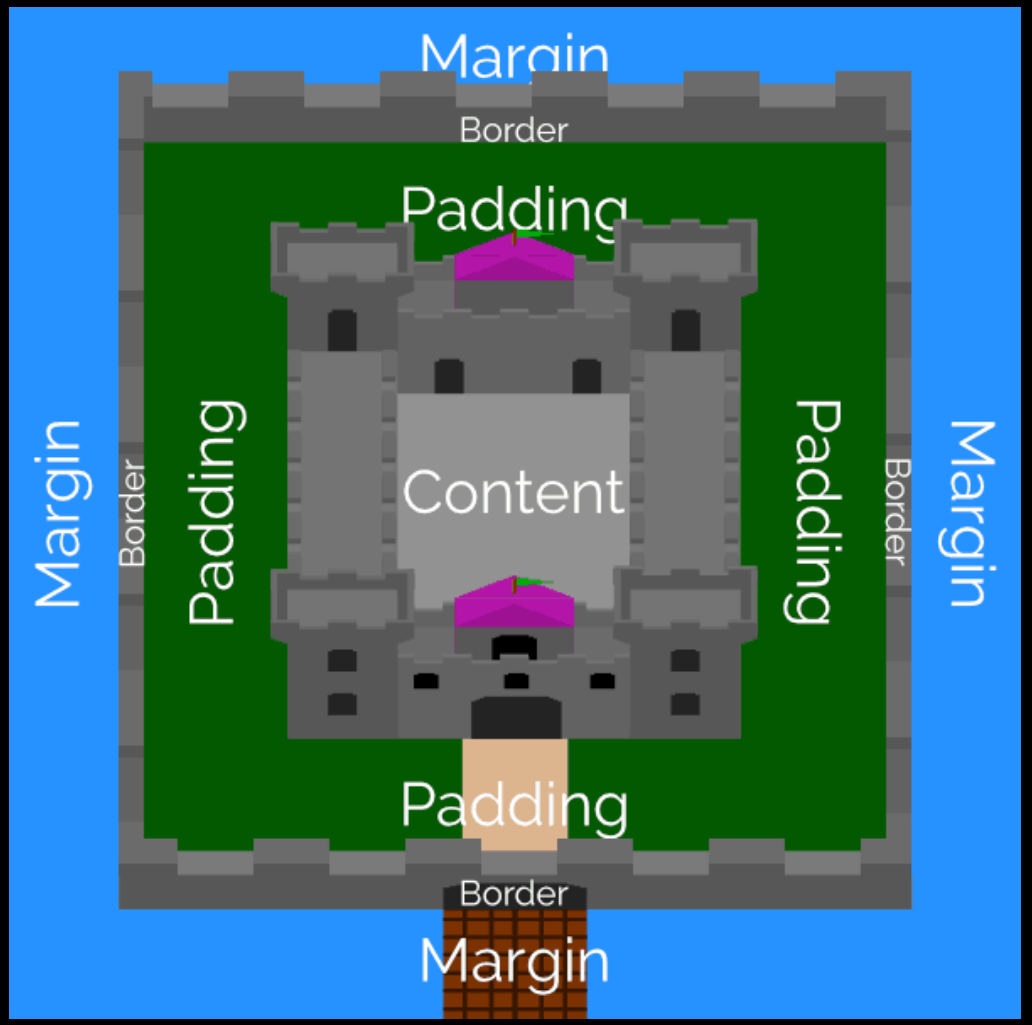
Style Attribute

- There are many ways to add style to HTML pages
- Allows you to write CSS affecting a particular element

These words will be red

These words will be red

Spacing



- Add spacing between elements with margin
- margin-top: 10px;
- margin-right: 20px;
- margin-bottom: 15px;
- margin-left: 5px;

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Float

- Send an image/figure/element to the side and have other content flow around it with float: right; or float: left;
- Add space on the content side and bottom to let the image breath using margin
- If you don't want something like a heading to flow around it, set clear: both; on the element you don't want flowing

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Font-size

- Change the size of the font with font-size
- Use percentages to make it larger/smaller than nearby text:
  - font-size: 120%; or font-size: 80%;
- If it should be a heading, make it a heading. Don't just change the size.
- By the same token, if you just want it larger, don't use a heading.

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Catch You Later, Zombigator

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