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FrontPage 98: The Complete Reference

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the point where popular web servers are noticeably slower at peak times of the day and on weekends, even with wide-bandwidth connections.

Web Browsers

All web browsers interpret and display HTML-encoded files. HTML 3.2 is the current accepted standard, and HTML 4.0 is being developed. The manufacturers of web browsers, principally Microsoft and Netscape, have (as usual) created their own extensions outside the HTML standard. This has been good for the Web to the extent that advances in browser capabilities have been made faster, but the compatibility of browsers has suffered. Some of the extensions offered by Microsoft and Netscape are compatible with each other, while others will only work with their own browser. Today, visible differences between the major browsers are minor. The largest differences are for support of technologies such as Java and ActiveX (see Chapter 16), and scripting languages such as JavaScript and VBScript (see Chapter 13).

The next battleground between Microsoft and Netscape is the area of push technologies. *Push* is the process of automatically downloading web content to a browser. The user first subscribes to a channel, then, when he or she opens an Internet connection, the browser checks the channels the user has subscribed to for new content. When new content is found, it is downloaded to the browser. Microsoft's standard, the Channel Definition Format (CDF), is (of course) incompatible with Netscape's Netcaster format. PointCast, <http://www.pointcast.com>, is the current leader in pushing content and supports the CDF standard. You will learn more about push technology and how to use it to push your own content, in Chapter 16.

Figure 1-7 shows a web page that uses some of the HTML tags introduced by Microsoft and Netscape displayed by use of Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0. Figure 1-8 shows the same page displayed with Netscape Navigator 4.0, Figure 1-9 shows the page displayed with NCSA Mosaic 3.0, Figure 1-10 shows the page in the FrontPage 98 Editor's Preview window, and Figure 1-11 shows the page in the FrontPage 98 Editor's Normal window. As you can see, each browser, using its default settings, displays the HTML file slightly differently. The greatest differences are apparent in Mosaic 3.0.

This page, an essay by Moms Online (<http://www.momsonline.com>) columnists Merion Jones and Ruth Gordon, relies heavily on tables (see Chapter 8) for placement of the various design elements. At the top of the page is a *navigation bar*, which is a series of text graphics (starting with one labeled "Home") placed in a single-row table with a blue background. Both Internet Explorer 4.0 and Netscape 4.0 display the table and graphics correctly, though Internet Explorer 4.0 also allows you to set top and side margins, while Netscape Navigator and NCSA Mosaic do not. Mosaic also does not support colored backgrounds in tables, so each navigation graphic stands alone against the page's background. (Even though Figures 1-7 through 1-9 aren't in color, you can see that the navigation bars in Figures 1-7 and 1-8 are contained in a continuous area that is a different color than the rest of the page, whereas in Figure 1-9, you can see the parts of the page between the elements of the navigation bar.)

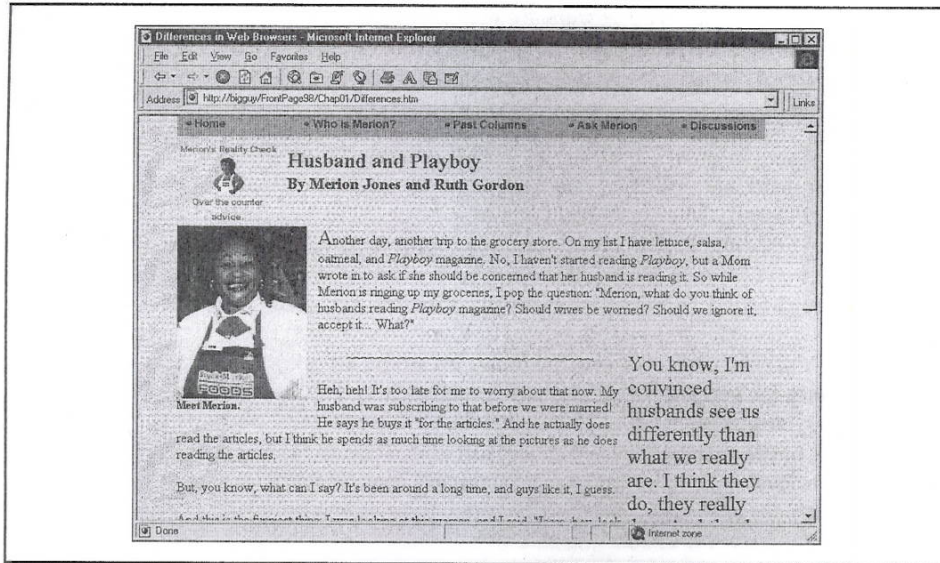


Figure 1-7. A web page displayed with Internet Explorer 4.0

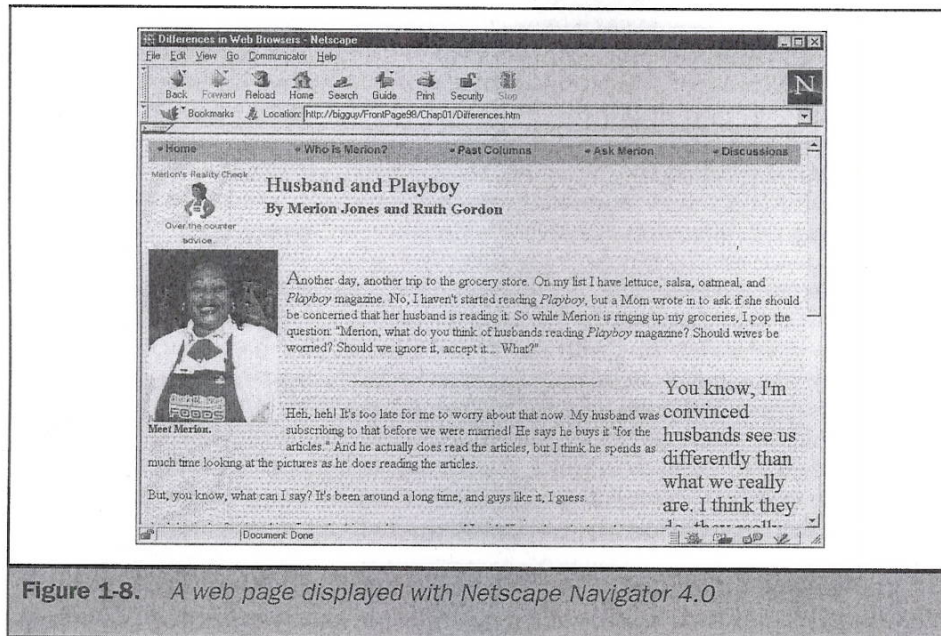


Figure 1-8. A web page displayed with Netscape Navigator 4.0

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