CODE–O–PHOBIC?

Time to get over it!

Pam Coca

Basics about me

Pam Coca

Medical-technical writer 15 years

- Medically-oriented arena because I am an ex-nurse
- Doc Manager at *Compressus Inc.*
- Owner of *Write On Communications*

Based in Southern California

- www.pcoca.com
- www.linkedin.com/in/pamcoca/
- @PamCoca
- cocapf@cox.net
- Please mention *Code-o-phobic*

MadCap Groupie

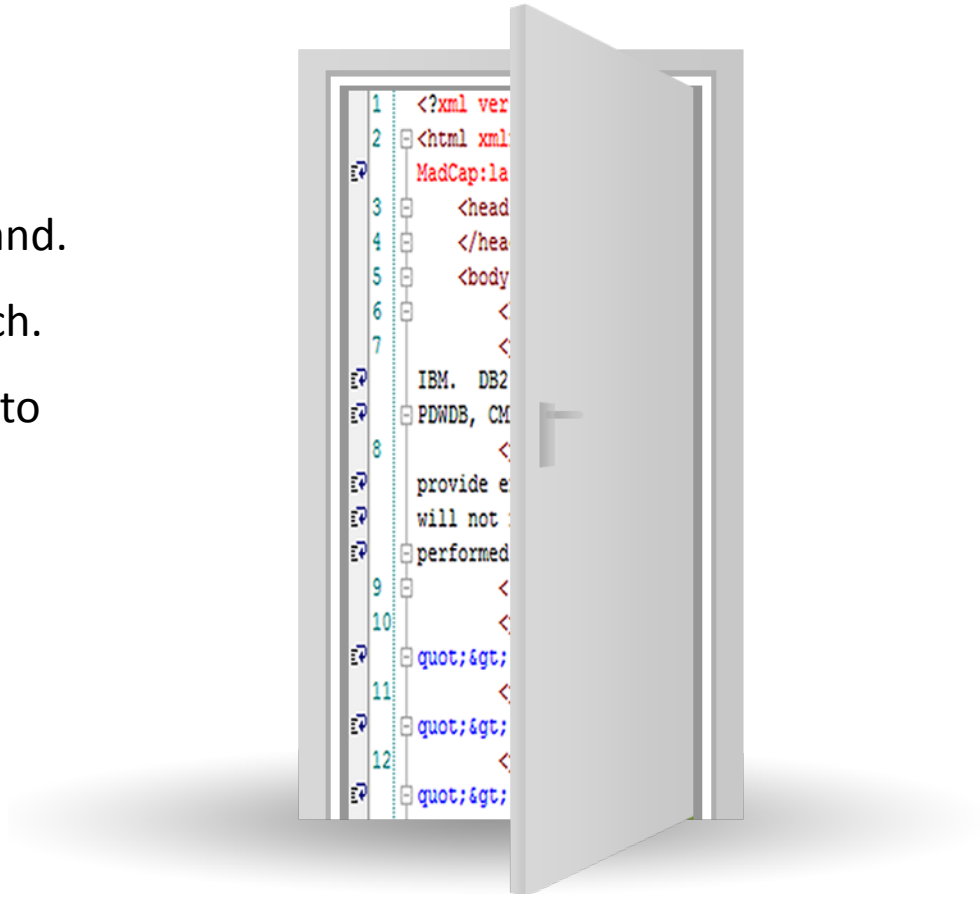
- Certified Flare Developer
- Attended, enjoyed and reviewed MadWorld this past April
- Devoted mother, software geek and prolific writer

Code novice

- <Six months on the “other” side.
- Have always loved jigsaw puzzles—so for me, playing with code is fun!
- When I fix something in the code, I pat myself on the back for days.

Are you code-challenged?

- We fear what we do not understand.
- You don't need to know very much.
- I hope today I can open the door to understanding the basics.



Note: You do not need to be a Flare user for this class. We will do everything both within and without Flare.

What we will cover today

Known

Things you already know

Structure

It's just boxes inside of boxes

Glossary

Just a few new terms to get a handle on

In Flare

We will look behind the curtain and even split the screen vertically and horizontally

Find errors

To fix an issue, you must first find it. We will use common sense to do exactly that

Syntax colors

Give you a better perspective

Autocomplete

Tags that complete themselves

CSS

Makes it pretty

Recap

What we covered today

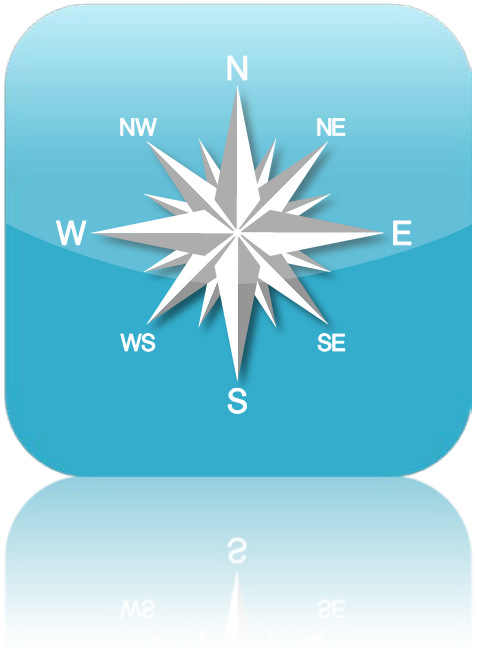
Resources

Things to check out later

Get your bearings

It all begins with an understanding of

- The *importance* of styles
- How to use h1s and h2s and paragraph or body styles
- Topic-based authoring (chunking)

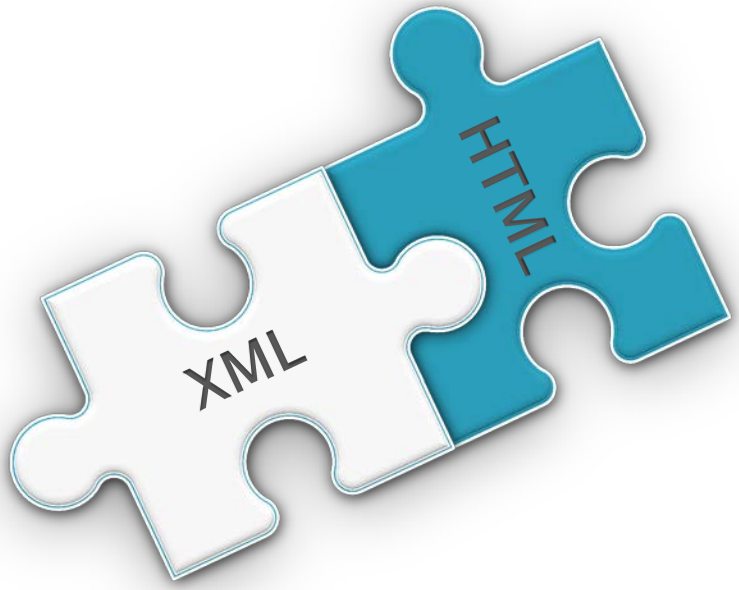


Different formats/same result

HTML & XML are markup language

- Markup instructs the software displaying the text to carry out specific actions, but is not displayed in the browser
- Markup has both *structural* and *semantic* elements
  - Structural elements describe headings and paragraphs
  - Semantic elements provide extra info such as emphasis, quotes or acronyms
- There are many markup languages, but we will focus on two today
  - HTML (hypertext markup language) – common for websites
  - XML (extensible markup language) – code used in Madcap Flare

For our purposes, the basics are the same.



HTML glossary

HTML elements are characters that live inside angled brackets (< >)

Elements

- Divided into sections with opening and closing tags
  - Head element (information about the page)
  - Body element (the page your users will see)

Tags

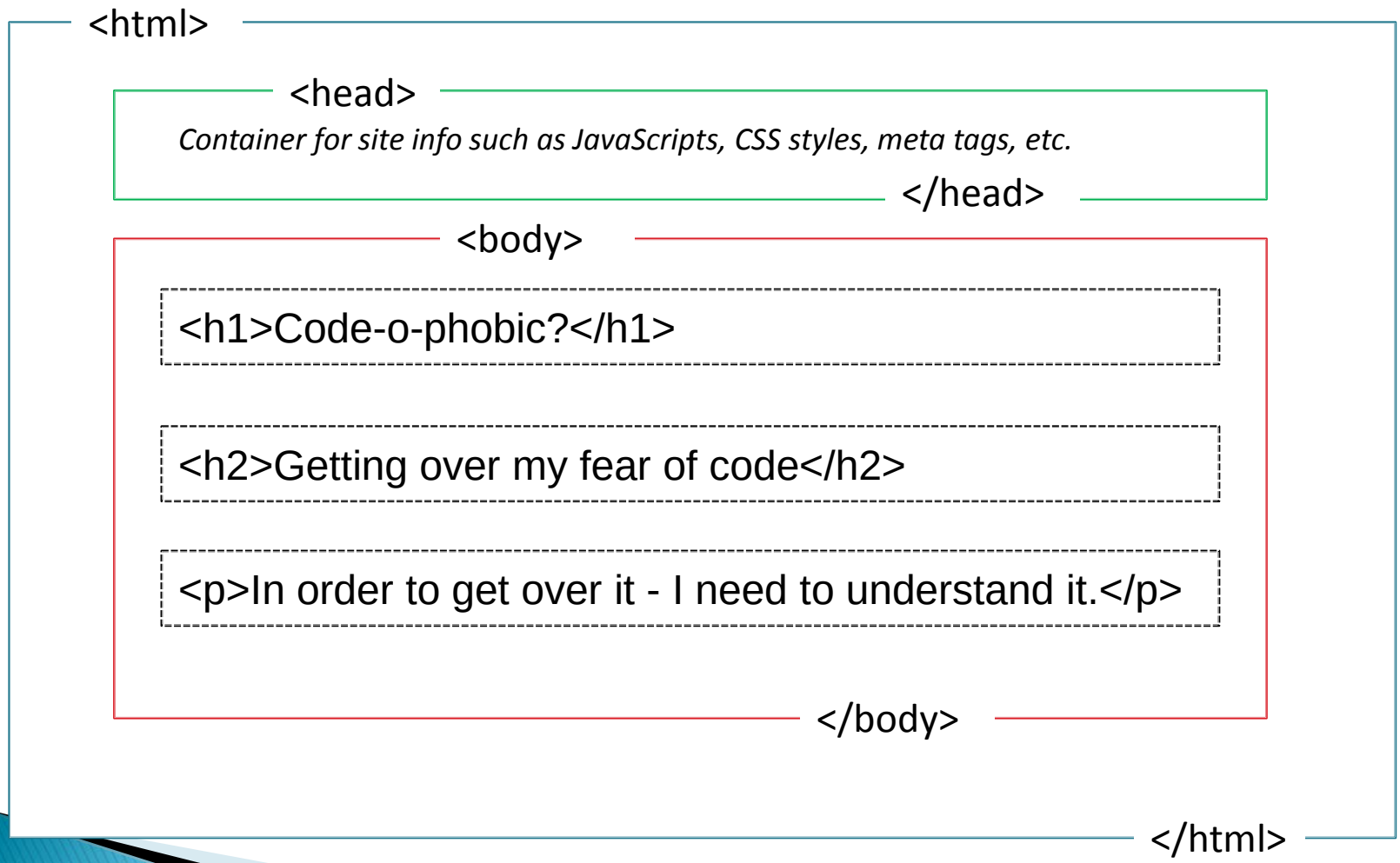
- A tag < > marks the start and finish of an HTML element
  - Opening tag has *info* inside the brackets
  - End tag has same info but with a forward slash </>
  - Empty elements in xhtml need a space before the closing tag

Attributes

- Define the element
- Are specified in the start tag
- Come in pairs such as name="value"
  - Name/lang (for language)
  - Value/en-us (for US English)
- Value must be in quotes

Elements

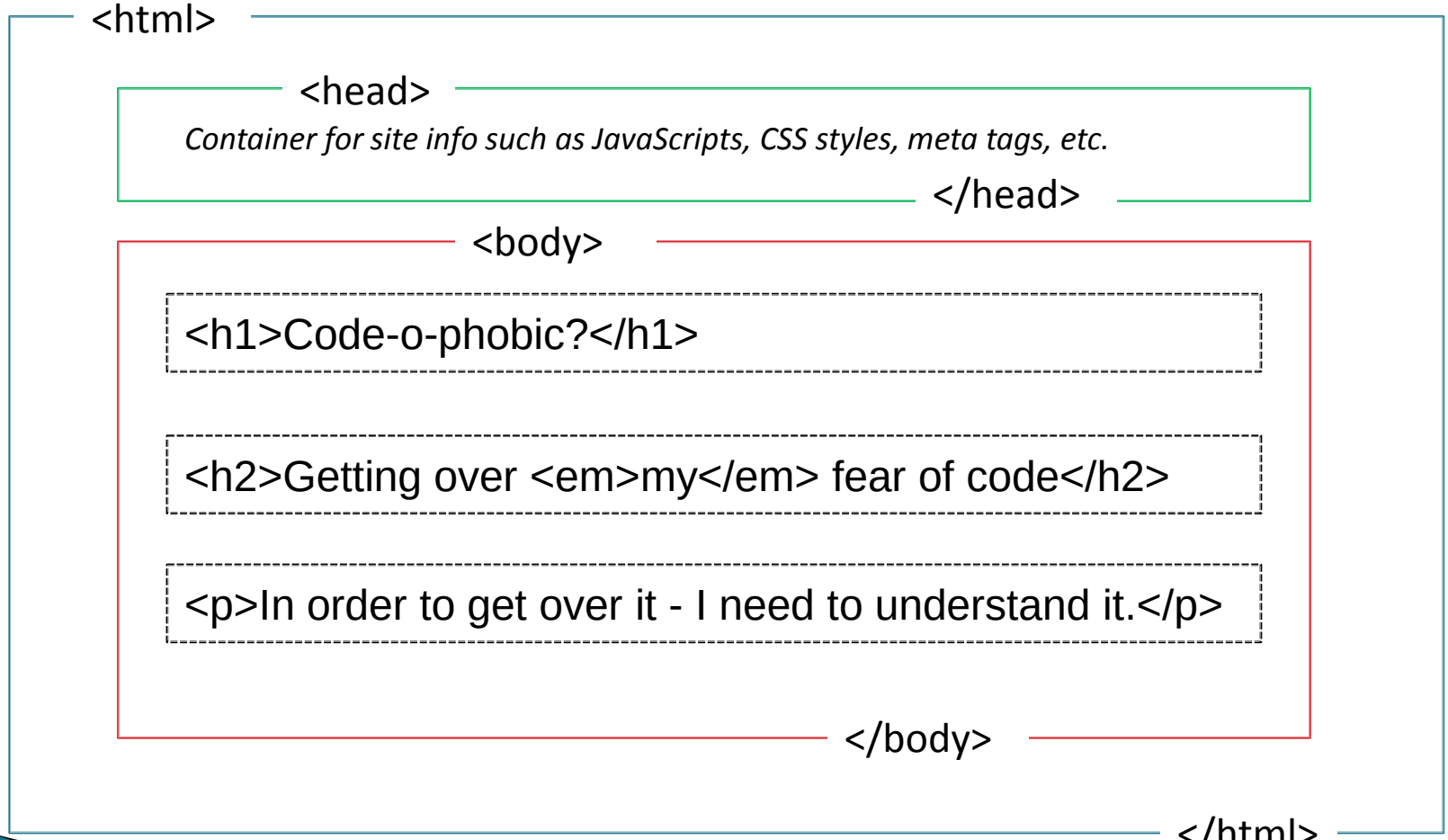
Each **colored square** below **is** an **element** or a container for information...just boxes inside of boxes inside of more boxes. Sometimes called block elements.



Colored lines around boxes are for display only.

Tags

Each element needs an opening and closing tag to designate where it starts and where it ends. Tags can define a region or specific content.



Colored lines around boxes are for display only.

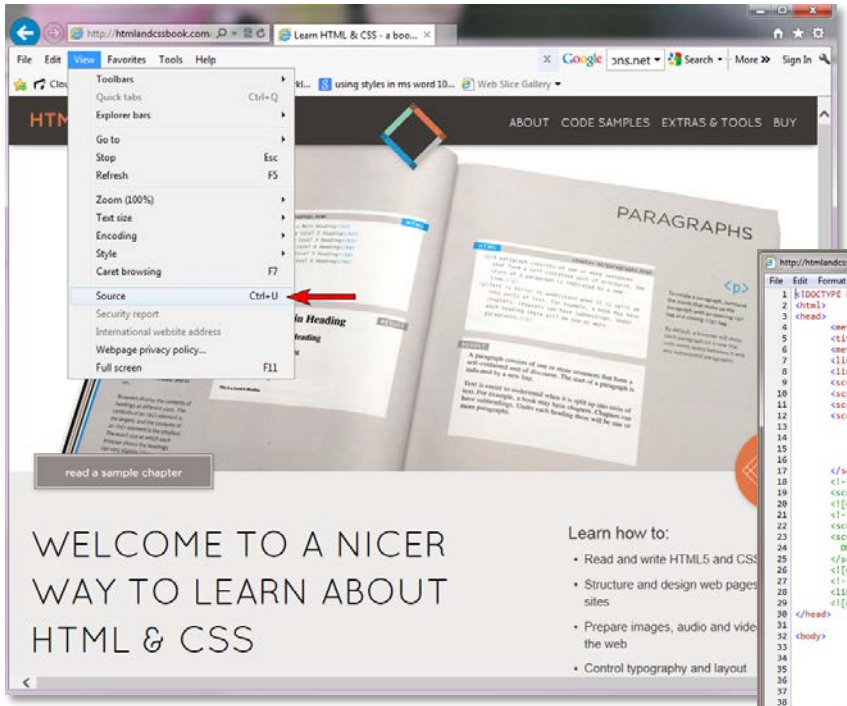
Attributes

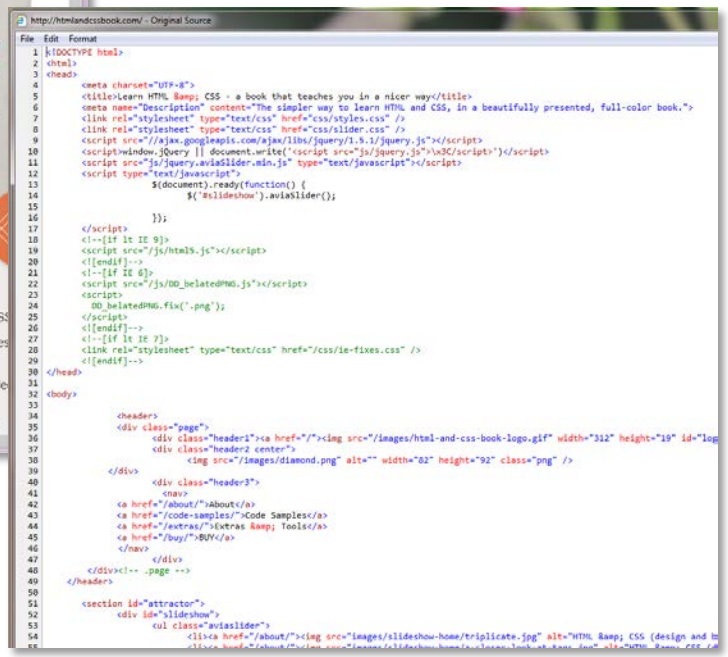
Attributes further define the element.

```
<html>
    <head>
        <title>Code-o-phobia</title>
    </head>
    <body>
        <h1 name="heading">Code-o-phobic?</h1>

        <h2>Getting over my fear of code</h2>

        <p>In order to get over it - I need to understand it.</p>

    </body>
</html>
```

Colored lines around boxes are for display only.

View the source code of a website





- In IE – File>View>Source
- In Firefox – ctrl + u
- Mac users – please Google it for your particular OS

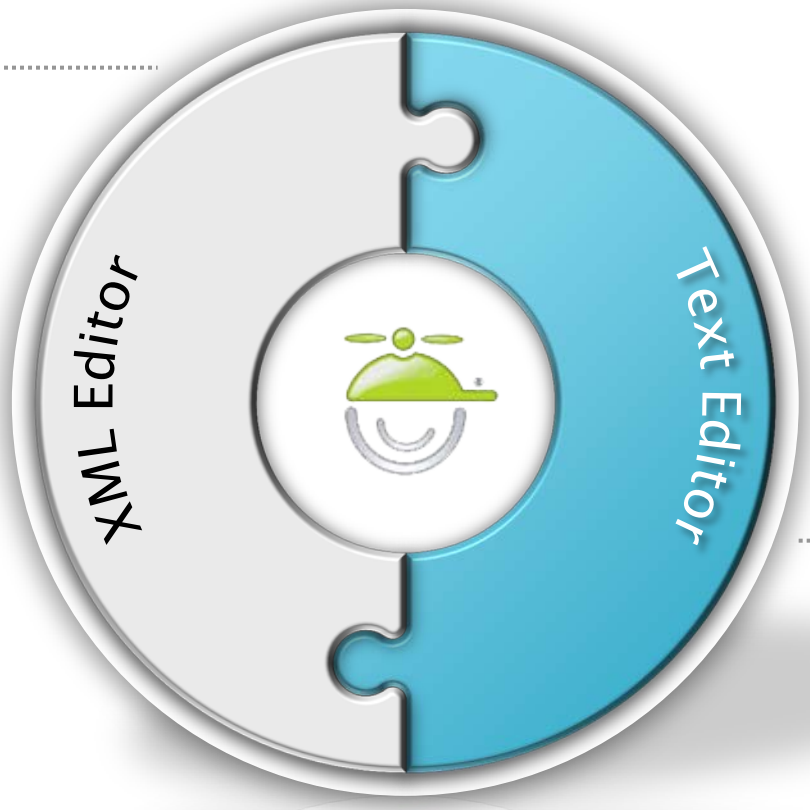
Compare what you see on the web page to what you see in the code to get a real feel for what goes on behind the scenes.

Flare's Interface

Two sides of the same coin

XML Editor

Displays how your content looks in the real world

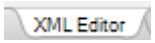


Text Editor

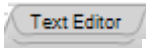
Displays the code behind the content

Lots of options

Flare users have many *view* options

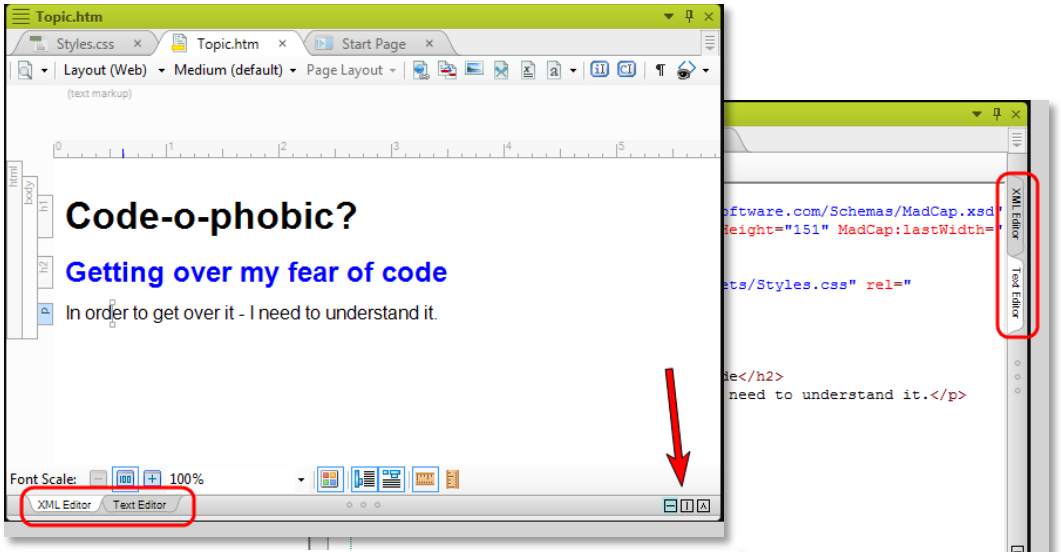


1. XML editor



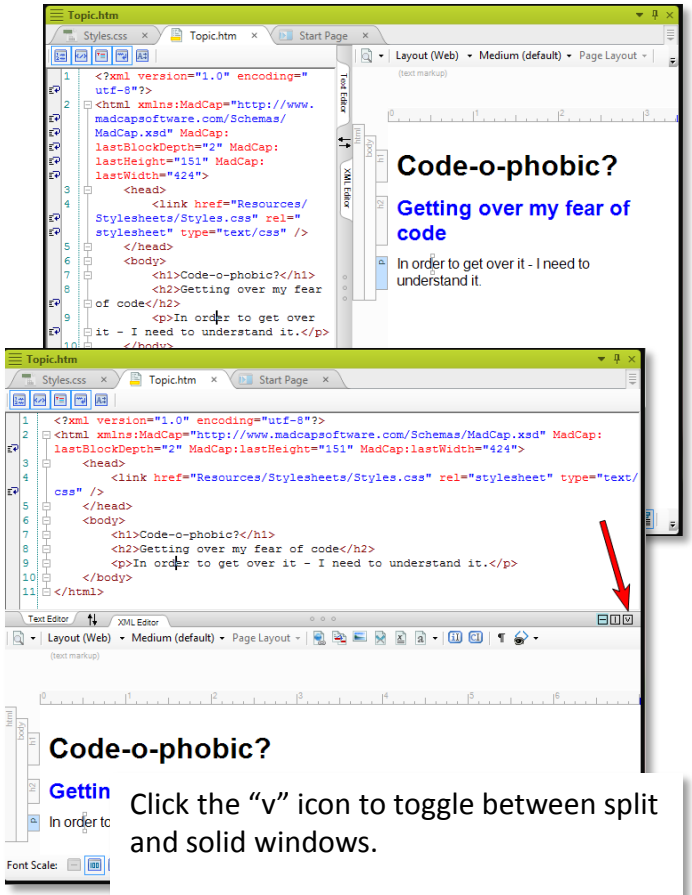
2. Text (code) editor

3. UI and code split vertically or horizontally



Click the horizontal icon to place the tabs at the bottom of the topic window.

Click the vertical icon to place the tabs at the side of the topic window.



Click the "v" icon to toggle between split and solid windows.

The location of the tabs at the time of the selection determines whether the window splits vertically or horizontally.

Behind the content

XML

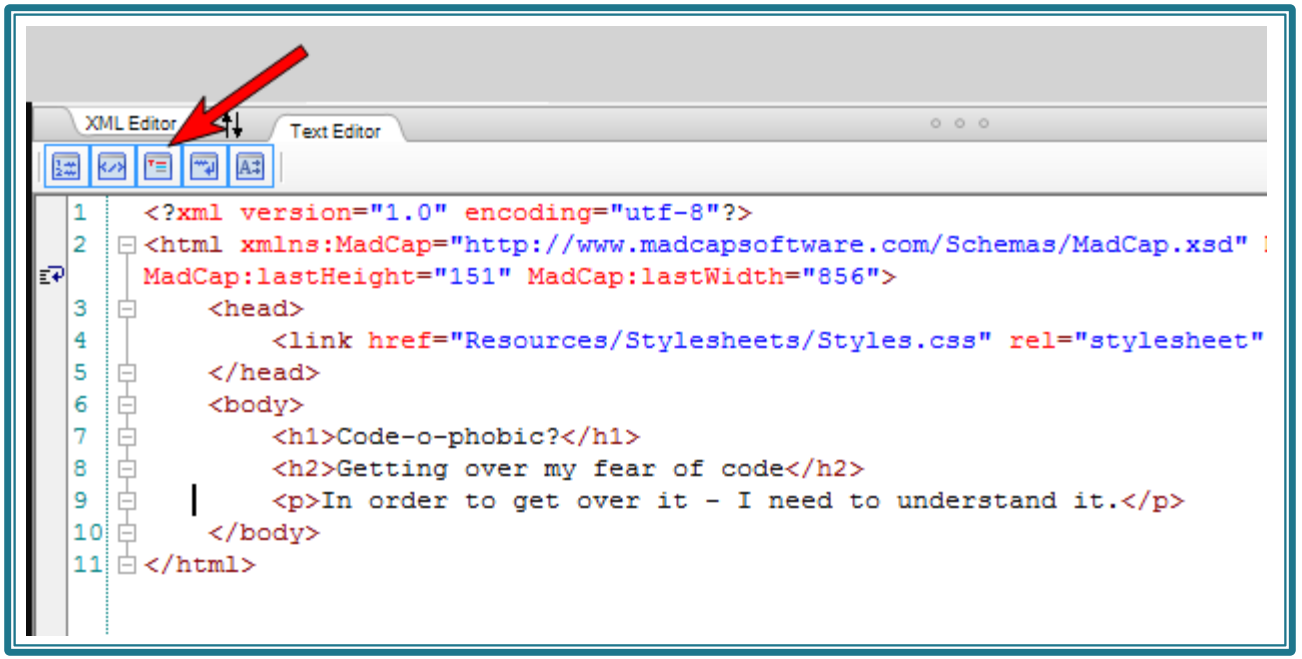
Text

Note: Whatever is highlighted in one editor is highlighted in the other editor.

Syntax coloring

Feature that displays categories of terms in different colors

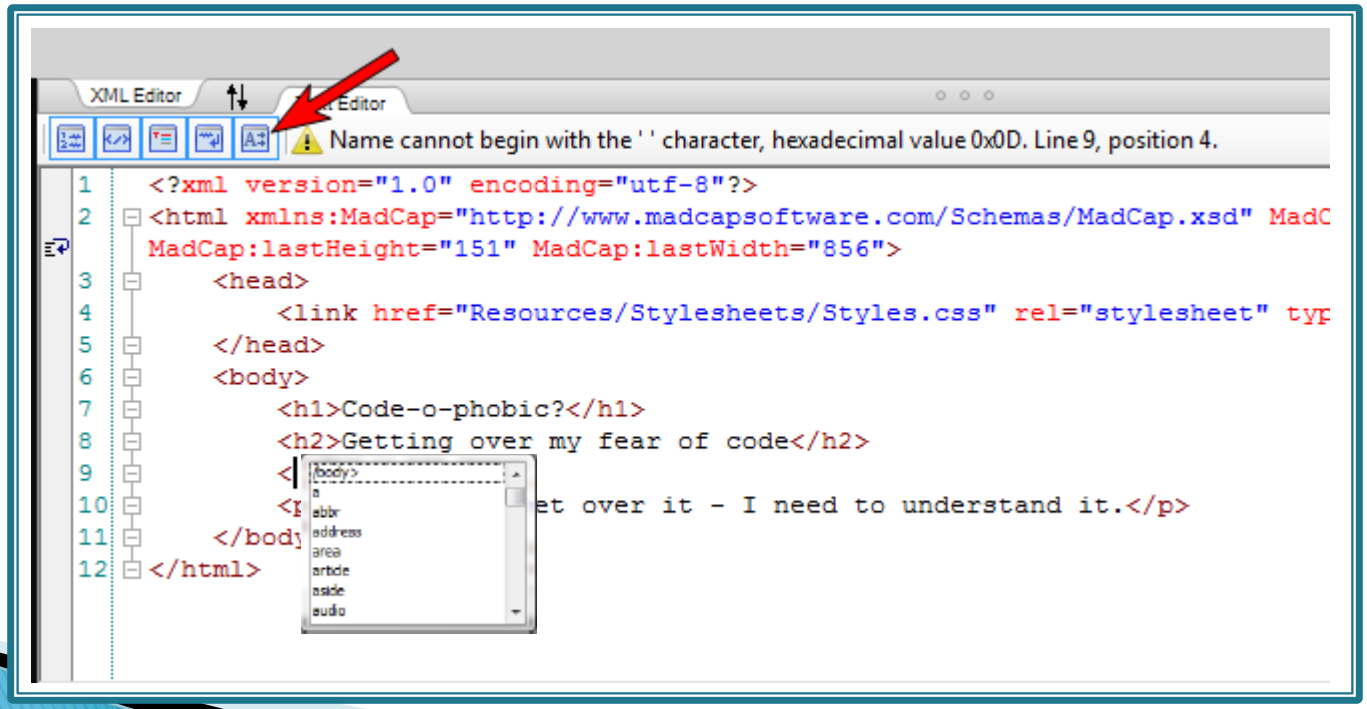
- Available in both the CSS and the text editor of Flare, as well as many code editors
- Eases code identification
- Helps identify errors
- Can be toggled on (see below) and off (black only) by clicking the center icon on the top bar of the Text Editor



Autocomplete

Feature that helps you place the correct element in the code

- Available in CSS, Flare's text editor, Notepad++, Dreamweaver, etc.
- In Flare, it can be toggled on and off by clicking the fifth icon on the top bar of the Text Editor (look for the letter "A" for Autocomplete).
- Type an open tag to start a new line of code to display a box with selections.
- Double-click the one you want and type your content between the two tags.



Why go into the code?

Why	When
To learn	Now
To look for an issue	Last weekend for me
To fix a problem	▪ Sometimes we will be able to fix it ▪ Sometimes we won't ▪ At least we will have tried

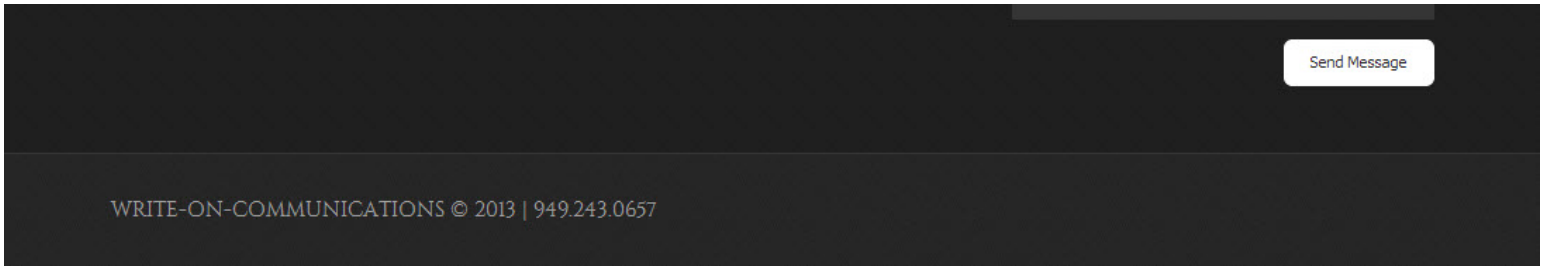
Let's track one down now…

First things first…

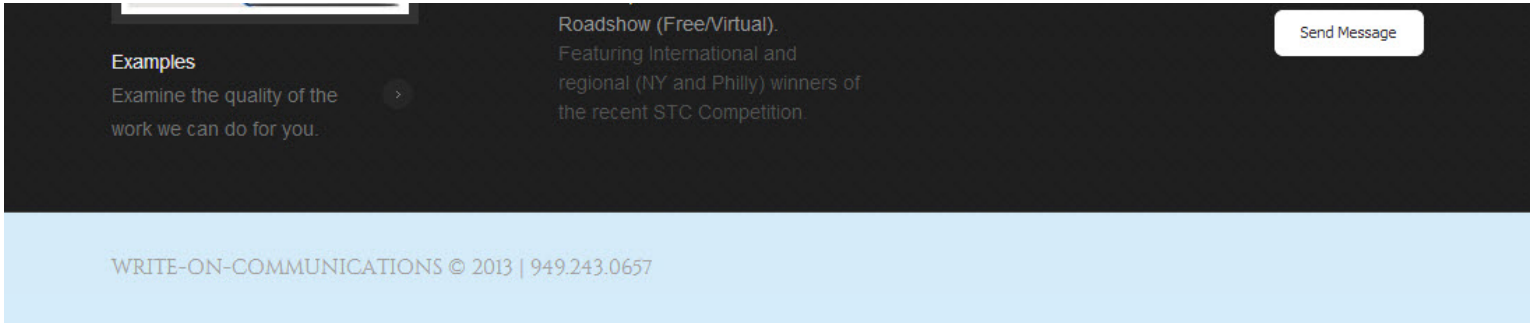
Always back up your files.

Track down an issue

This is how the footer of my website is supposed to look on every page:



But, this is how it looked on my index page:



Obviously my footer had a problem.

Compare the code

Bottom of page with footer issue:

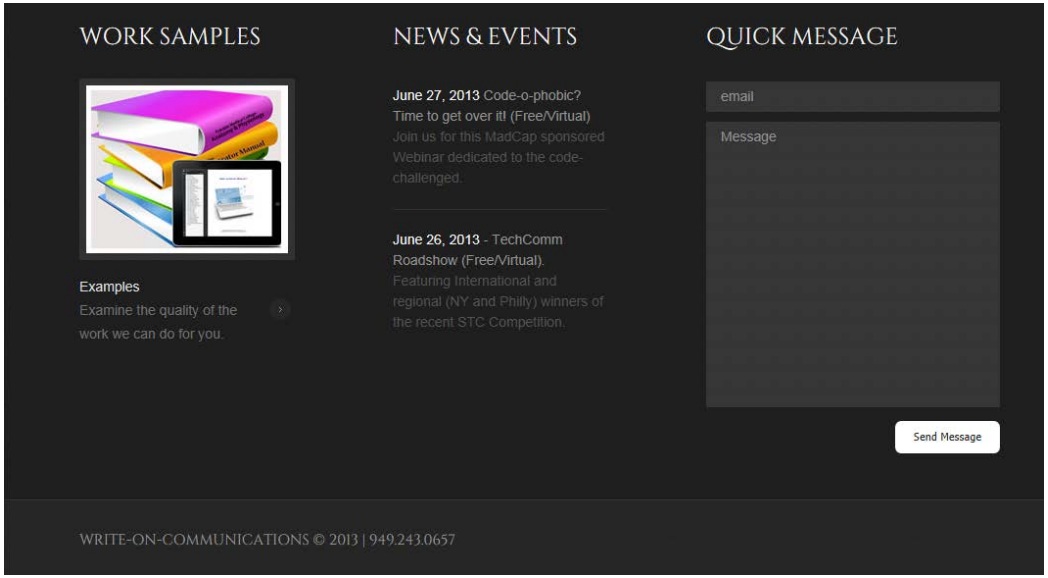
```
250            </div></fieldset></form>
251          </div>
252        </div>
253      </div>
254    </div>
255  </div>
256  <div class="clear"></div>
257      </div>
258    </div>
259  </div>
260
261  <!--==============================footer
262  <footer>
263    <div class="container_12">
264      <div class="grid_12">
265      <div class="copy">Write-on-Communica
266
267      </div>
268    </div>
269  </footer>
270  </div>
271  </body>
272  </html>
```

Bottom of one of the pages that was ok:

```
250            </div></fieldset></form>
251          </div>
252        </div>
253      </div>
254    </div>
255
256  <!--==============================footer
257  <footer>
258    <div class="container_12">
259      <div class="grid_12">
260      <div class="copy">Write-on-Communica
261
262      </div>
263    </div>
264  </footer>
265  </div>
266  </body>
267  </html>
```

At line 250 and above, everything is fine.
Line totals are different (272 lines versus 267 lines).
Footer with issue has five extra lines of code.
Extra lines are unnecessary DIVs (DIV tags are divisions within the html structure).
Deleting the extraneous tags fixed the footer.

Applause please…

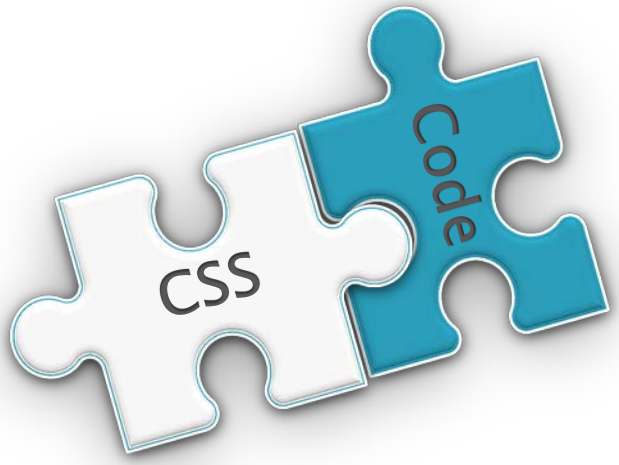


This footer now matches all the other footers on my site!

Stylesheets make it pretty

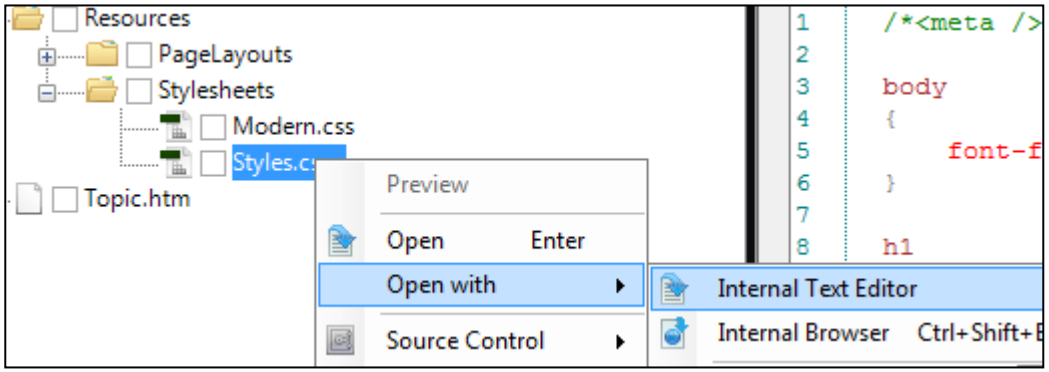
Cascading style sheets (CSS) work with the code to make everything look pretty to the end-user.

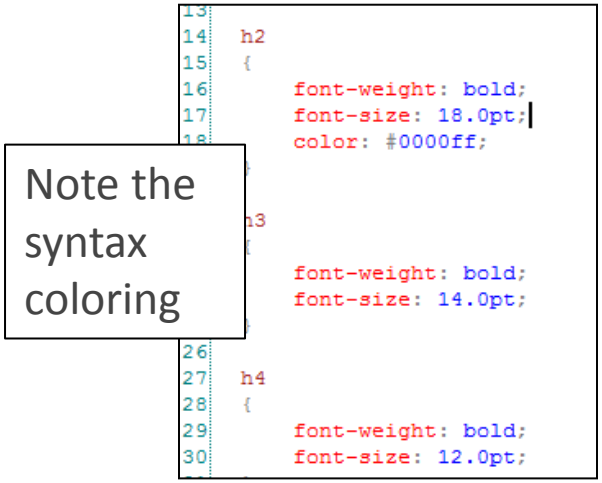
- A stylesheet formats the content (defining color, font, tables, image placement, borders, etc.)
- One external css (stylesheet) can be used to format hundreds of documents
- The stylesheet to use is identified in the *head* element of the html/xml code
- Called cascading because the styles cascade downward like a waterfall (inheriting from the parent) until something tells it to be different
    - Example: If you made the body purple then everything that inherits from the body will also be purple unless told otherwise



Flare's CSS

To display a stylesheet in the Text Editor, right-click the CSS file in the *Content Explorer* and select **Open with>Internal Text Editor**.

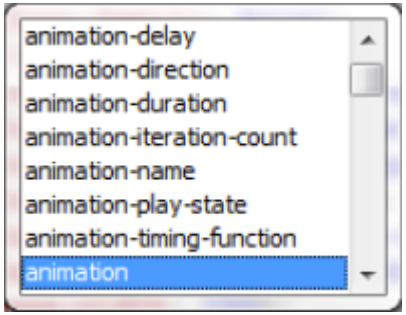




Note the syntax coloring

Autocomplete also works in the CSS in Flare.

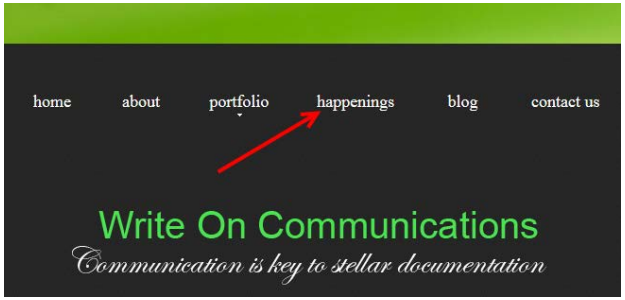
Inside brackets, press CTRL+SPACEBAR to display a selection box of CSS properties. Then double-click to add that property.



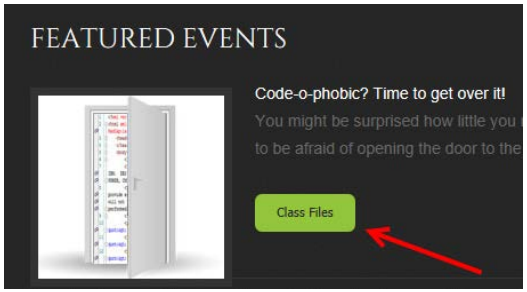
Hands on…

Now, later or both.

1. Go to **pcoca.com** (aka Write On) and select the *happenings* tab.



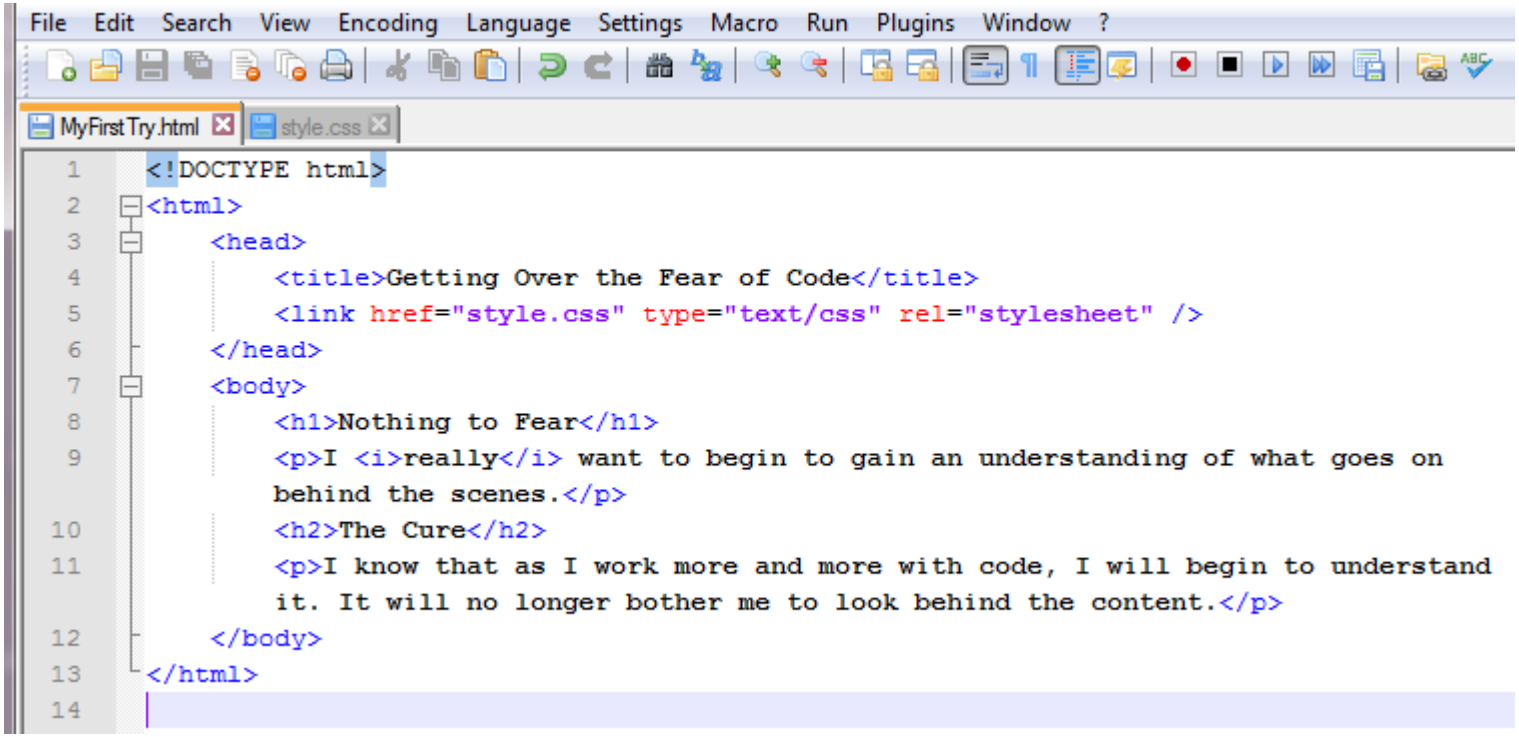
2. On the *happenings* tab under *Featured Events*, click **Class Files**.



3. Page 1 is resources and page 2 is the actual text you will need.

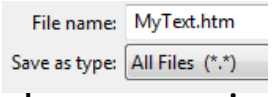
Open a generic text editor

1. Select **Start>All Programs>Accessories>Notepad** or **Notepad++**
2. Type the text below or use the *Class Files* mentioned on slide 25.

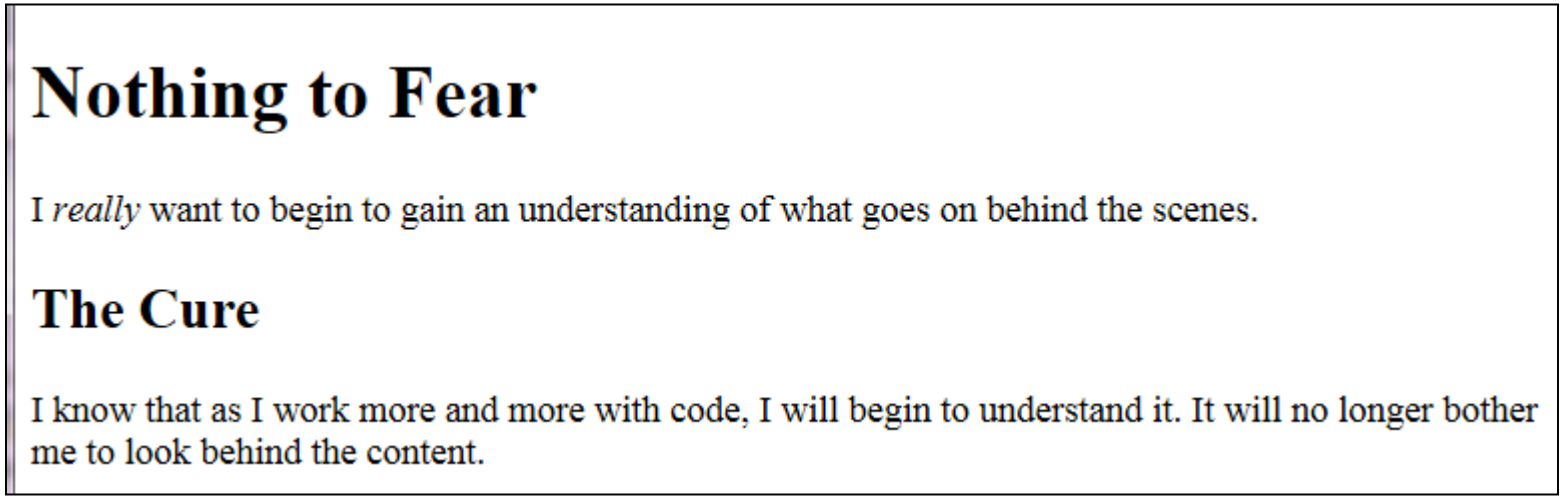


Save and view

1. Click **File**> **Save As**> (select a location and *Save as type-All Files*) MyFirstTry**.htm**
   - Make sure you do not have a secondary extension like *.htm.txt–you should only have *.htm [The default *save* is *.txt.]



2. To view in a browser, drag the closed file into your browser window.

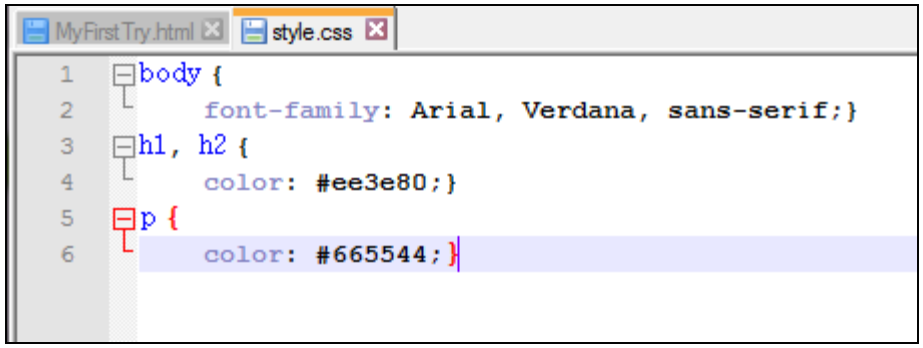


To edit your new html file:

a. In Notepad, right-click and select *Open with Notepad*.
b. In Notepad++, right-click and select *Edit with Notepad++.*
c. Mac users – use control-click and select "open with"…

Give it a stylesheet

1. Select **Start>All Programs>Accessories>Notepad** or **Notepad++**
2. Type the text below.



3. Click **File> Save As**> *styles.css*.
4. Save to same folder as your html file.
5. Drag your html file into your browser again. This time you will see color.

Admire your work

Nothing to Fear

I *really* want to begin to gain an understanding of what goes on behind the scenes.

The Cure

I know that as I work more and more with code, I will begin to understand it. It will no longer bother me to look behind the content.

Right-click your CSS file and open/edit again. This time change the text or background colors. Change the font. Add a bulleted list. Each time you make a tiny change, save it and view it in your browser to see what happens.

TIPS:

- Browsers see text as boxed - so if you color the background of any word or sentence the text will display as if it were in a colored box.
- A single space is all that is ever needed. More spaces mean nothing. Use as little or as much spacing as you like to keep it clean and neat.
- Pressing *Enter* does not break a line.

Resources

Everything is on *pcoca.com*
home
about
portfolio
happenings
blog
contact us
Write On Communications
Communication is key to stellar documentation
more languages
notepad++ is free to download ar
a step up from plain ole notepad
http://notepad-plus-plus.org/downloa
KEEP CALM AND LEARN CODING
This site has some great tips and
fun videos for code newbies.
http://www.fearofcodes.c
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html>
<body>
<h1>We are not code-o-phobic!</h1>
We are learning to like code.
</body>
</html>
w3 schools has lots of places to test code
Just change it in the left window and click "Submit Code" to see the results in the right window
(Click any of the "Try it yourself" links)
http://www.w3schools.com
Container DIV
Sidebar and Content DIVs
Header DIV with Tabs
Footer DIV with Mailto
Cloan and Link to Tabs
Nvu
The video set pertinent to
our work today is Notepad,
which has 15 short,
informative videos.
http://www.udel.edu/edt
ech/video
Beagle aficionado and online help guru, Laura Charles
Johnson has an amazing blog on Madcap Flare (A Flare
for Help).
http://www.flareforhelp.com/
Book: HTML & CSS by Jon Duckett
http://htmlandcssbook.com/
Review of the book on my website

The fear is gone because…

HTML	You know how to set styles	You know how to chunk text	You know it is all just boxes inside of boxes	You know what markup language is	You learned a few new terms
CSS	You see why HTML & XML need CSS	You saw CSS make it pretty	You understand cascading style sheets	You can locate your CSS in Flare	You can connect a CSS in notepad
Flare	You can open and close the text editor	You can split your screen vertically or horizontally	You see the benefits of syntax coloring	You can use auto-complete	You can track down an issue and find its code

You are now a code-star!

Everything will be on www.pcoca.com. Select the “happenings” tab.

Mention “code-o-phobic” to connect with me on linkedin.
www.linkedin.com/in/pamcoca/

Want more?

If you are interested in having me take this code-quest to the next level, just let us know.

MADWORLD
ATTEND. LEARN. ADVANCE.
HARD ROCK HOTEL | SAN DIEGO, CA
APRIL 13-15, 2014
www.MadWorldConference.com
madcap
software

Thank you for watching!

Contact sales with questions or to schedule a demonstration:

Sales@MadCapSoftware.com

Also:
@MadCapSoftware
@MadCapJennifer
@MadCapJose
@MadCapDocTeam