HTML5 reaches 'Recommendation' status

October 29 2014, by Nancy Owano

W3C stands for World Wide Web Consortium, and the W3C HTML Working Group is responsible for this specification's progress. As the title suggests, they have a far-reaching job of watching out for the progress of the Hypertext Markup Language (HTML)—the core language of the Worldwide Web, also referred to as the cornerstone of the Open Web Platform. "Today we think nothing of watching video and audio natively in the browser, and nothing of running a browser on a

phone," said Tim Berners-Lee, W3C Director. "We expect to be able to share photos, shop, read the news, and look up information anywhere, on any device. Though they remain invisible to most users, HTML5 and the Open Web Platform are driving these growing user expectations." Earlier this month, W3C CEO Jeff Jaffe said that "Bringing HTML5 to the status of W3C Recommendation (in October 2014) is a defining moment in the development of the Open Web Platform (OWP), a set of technologies for developing distributed applications with the greatest interoperability in history."

They announced on Tuesday that they published a "Recommendation" of the fifth revision of the HTML, HTML5. "It's good to see HTML5 reach the Recommendation stage," said Andreas Gal, CTO of Mozilla. "We're now working with the W3C to help lead the work behind the HTML5 test suite, ensuring that tests can be run in an automated way, so that users and developers can benefit from more consistent behavior between browsers."

What does the Recommendation status mean? InfoWorld's Paul Krill said Recommendation means the consortium "finally endorsed it as an official standard, even as the technology already is in use in browsers."

What's so special? "New elements are introduced based on research into prevailing authoring practices, and special attention has been given to defining clear conformance criteria for user agents in an effort to improve interoperability," according to the abstract. HTML5 brings to the Web video and audio tracks without needing plugins and what the press announcement described as "programmatic access to a resolution-dependent bitmap canvas." The latter will be useful in rendering graphs, game graphics, or other visual images on the fly. There is native support for scalable vector graphics (SVG) and math (MathML); annotations important for East Asian typography (Ruby); features to enable accessibility of rich applications; and more. Also, with Tuesday's

publication of the Recommendation, software implementers can benefit from Royalty-Free licensing commitments from over 60 companies under W3C's Patent Policy. "Enabling implementers to use Web technology without payment of royalties is critical to making the Web a platform for innovation," said the news release.

The W3C headlined the event as a milestone, as next-generation Web technologies will build on a stable foundation. "For application developers and industry, HTML5 represents a set of features that people will be able to rely on for years to come." W3C's role in making the Recommendation is to draw attention to the specification and to promote its deployment. After HTML5, however, comes more work that needs to be done, said W3C CEO Jeff Jaffe. He said, "now that HTML5 is done, W3C should focus on strengthening the parts of the Open Web Platform that developers most urgently need for success."

"W3C is growing to accommodate the use cases of the payments, automotive, digital publishing, telecommunications, and entertainment industries. At the same time, 4500 engineers are socializing new ideas for the Web in more than 180 Community and Business Groups," said the announcement.

   More information: www.w3.org/TR/html5/

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