

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is an international consortium where Member organizations, a full-time staff, and the public work together to develop Web standards. W3C's mission is:

To lead the World Wide Web to its full potential by developing protocols and guidelines that ensure long-term growth for the Web.

W3C Develops Web Standards and Guidelines

W3C primarily pursues its mission through the creation of Web standards and guidelines. In its first ten years, W3C published more than eighty such W3C Recommendations. W3C also engages in education and outreach, develops software, and serves as an open forum for discussion about the Web. In order for the Web to reach its full potential, the most fundamental Web technologies must be compatible with one another and allow any hardware and software used to access the Web to work together. W3C refers to this goal as "Web interoperability." By publishing open (non-proprietary) standards for Web languages and protocols, W3C seeks to avoid market fragmentation and thus Web fragmentation.



**Tim Berners-Lee,
W3C Director and
inventor of the
World Wide Web**

W3C Is an International Consortium

Organizations located all over the world and involved in many different fields join W3C to participate in a vendor-neutral forum for the creation of Web standards. W3C Members and a dedicated full-time staff of technical experts have earned W3C international recognition for its contributions to the Web. W3C Members (sample testimonials), staff, and Invited Experts work together to design technologies to ensure that the Web will continue to thrive in the future, accommodating the growing diversity of people, hardware, and software.

W3C's global initiatives also include nurturing liaisons with over forty national, regional and international organizations around the globe. These contacts help W3C maintain a culture of global participation in the development of the World Wide Web.

W3C Goals

In pursuit of its mission, W3C has these long-term goals for the World Wide Web.

Web for Everyone

The social value of the Web is that it enables human communication, commerce, and opportunities to share knowledge. One of W3C's primary goals is to make these benefits available to all people, whatever their hardware, software, network infrastructure, native language, culture, geographical location, or physical or mental ability.

W3C continues to expand its real investment in initiatives that directly support the expansion of Web technologies and their benefits into the developing world. Work in areas like Web accessibility, internationalization, and device independence are particularly important as we work toward a Web for Everyone. There is also a growing effort to translate W3C standards, reports, and press releases into multiple languages (documents have been translated into subsets of over forty languages to date).

In addition, through W3C Offices and other efforts to broaden participation, W3C pledges to make the Web available to more people around the world.



**Valid XHTML
displayed on a
mobile telephone**

Web on Everything

The number of different kinds of devices that can access the Web has grown immensely. Nowadays mobile phones, smart phones, personal digital assistants, interactive television systems, voice response systems, kiosks and even certain domestic appliances can all access the Web. W3C's goal is to make Web access from any kind of device as simple, easy and convenient as Web access from a desktop.

Knowledge Base

The Web is not merely an immense book where people can search, browse, and view information. It is also a vast database that, if designed carefully, can allow computers to do more useful work. By developing a Web that holds information for both human and machine processing, W3C hopes to enable people to solve problems that would otherwise be too tedious or complex to solve.

Trust and Confidence

Ultimately, to be a useful medium for social transactions, people must be able to trust other parties who have earned their trust. While technology cannot guarantee trust, it should enable secure transactions with trusted parties, be they people, organizations, or services. One of the long-term goals of W3C is thus to promote technologies that enable a more collaborative environment, a Web where accountability, security, confidence, and confidentiality are all possible.

W3C Organization

The W3C Members ensure the strength and direction of the Consortium through investment and active participation in W3C Activities. W3C has over 350 Member organizations from 28 countries all over the world, which cover a wide range commercial activities.

W3C Members include vendors of technology products and services, content providers, corporate users, research laboratories, standards bodies, and governments, all of whom work to reach consensus on a direction for the Web.

The W3C Team includes more than sixty researchers and engineers from around the world who lead the technical Activities at W3C and manage the operations of the Consortium. Most of the Team works physically at the three host institutions: (MIT/CSAIL in the United States, ERCIM headquarters in France, and Keio University in Japan).

W3C Process

Most W3C work revolves around the standardization of Web technologies. To accomplish this work, W3C follows processes that promote the development of high-quality standards based on community **consensus**. All stakeholders can have a voice in the development of W3C standards, including Members large and small, as well as the public. W3C processes promote fairness, responsiveness, and progress: all facets of the W3C mission.

W3C Patent Policy

In February 1994, W3C adopted a Patent Policy to enable continued innovation and widespread adoption of Web standards developed by the World Wide Web Consortium. The W3C Patent Policy is designed to:

- Facilitate the development of W3C Recommendations by W3C Working Groups;
- Promote the widespread implementation of those Recommendations on a Royalty-Free (RF) basis;
- Address issues related to patents that arise during and after the development of a Recommendation.

For more information about W3C, see <http://www.w3.org/Consortium/>.

For more information, contact Ian Jacobs, Head of W3C Communications, at w3t-pr@w3.org. Visit W3C at <http://www.w3.org/>