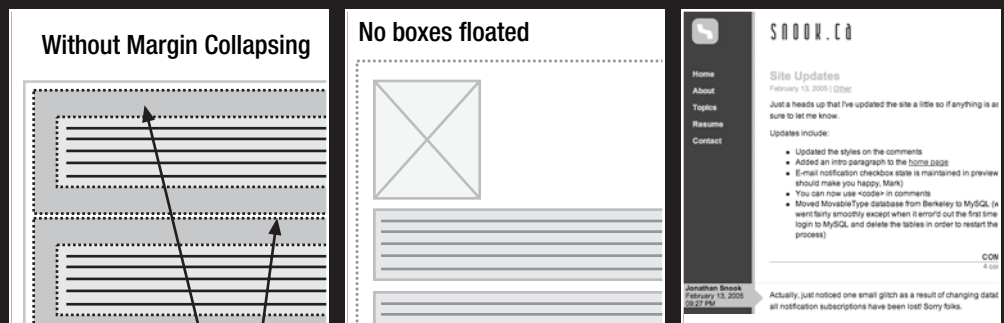


## 2 VISUAL FORMATTING MODEL RECAP



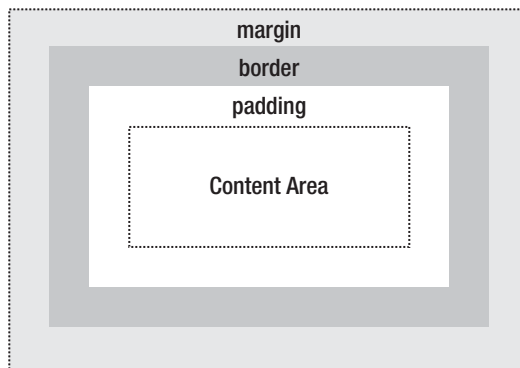
Three of the most important CSS concepts to grasp are floating, positioning, and the box model. These concepts control the way elements are arranged and displayed on a page, forming the basis of CSS layout. If you are used to controlling layout with tables, these concepts may seem strange at first. In fact, most people will have been developing sites using CSS for some time before they fully grasp the intricacies of the box model, the difference between absolute and relative positioning, and how floating and clearing actually work. Once you have a firm grasp of these concepts, developing sites using CSS becomes that much easier.

In this chapter you will learn about

- The intricacies and peculiarities of the box model
- How and why margins collapse
- The difference between absolute and relative positioning
- How floating and clearing work

## Box model recap

The box model is one of the cornerstones of CSS and dictates how elements are displayed and, to a certain extent, how they interact with each other. Every element on the page is considered to be a rectangular box made up of the element's content, padding, border, and margin (see Figure 2-1).



**Figure 2-1.** Illustration of the box model

Padding is applied around the content area. If you add a background to an element, it will be applied to the area formed by the content and padding. As such, padding is often used to create a gutter around content so that it does not appear flush to the side of the background. Adding a border applies a line to the outside of the padded area. These lines come in various styles such as solid, dashed, or dotted. Outside the border is a margin. Margins are transparent and cannot be seen. They are generally used to control the spacing between elements.