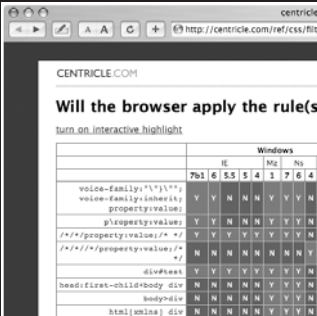


8 HACKS AND FILTERS



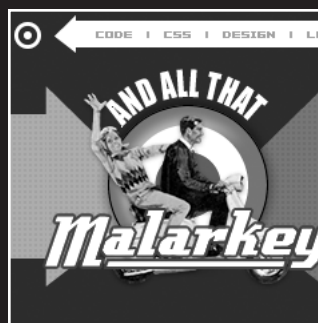
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Will the browser apply the rule(s)
turn on interactive highlight

	Windows									
	IE									
	7	6	5.5	5	4	1	7	6	4	
voice-family:"\"{\"}	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N			
voice-family:inherit;	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N			
property:value;	Y	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	N		
/*/*/*property:value;/*	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N		
/*/*/*/*property:value;/*	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	
div#test	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N		
head:first-childbody div	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N		
body>div	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N			
html xmlns div	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	N			



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In an ideal world, properly coded CSS would work in every browser with CSS support. Unfortunately, we do not live in an ideal world, and browsers are littered with bugs and inconsistencies. To create pages that displayed the same across a variety of browsers, CSS developers had to get creative. By using bugs and unimplemented CSS, developers were able to selectively apply different rules to different browsers. Hacks and filters are a powerful weapon in a CSS developer's arsenal. However, with great power comes great responsibility. It is important to know about the various common hacks and how they work, but it is equally important to know when and when not to use them.

In this chapter you will learn about

- The difference between hacks and filters
- Good versus bad filters and how to use them responsibly
- IE conditional comments
- The star HTML filter
- The commented backslash filter and the Holly hack
- The backslash filter and the modified simplified box model hack (MSBMH)
- The !important and underscore filters
- The child and attribute filters

An introduction to hacks and filters

A CSS filter is a way of displaying or hiding rules or declarations from a particular browser or group of browsers. Filters rely on weaknesses in a browser such as parsing bugs and unimplemented or incorrectly implemented CSS to show or hide rules from that browser.

A CSS hack is simply an ugly and inelegant way of getting a browser to behave the way you want it to. CSS hacks are typically used to get around specific browser bugs such as IE's proprietary box model. Unfortunately, the term *hack* has rather negative connotations and implies that there is a better way of doing something when often there isn't. Therefore, some people favor the term *patch* to indicate that it is actually incorrect browser behavior that is being dealt with.

CSS hacks can use filters to apply one rule to one browser and a different rule to another. Alternatively, hacks can use incorrect CSS implementation to “trick” browsers into behaving the way you want them to. In essence, a CSS filter is a specific type of hack used for filtering different browsers. Unfortunately, most people tend to use the generic term *hack* to describe filters. As such, when people talk about CSS hacks, they are usually talking specifically about filters.

A warning about hacks and filters

As a language, CSS was designed to be very forward compatible. If a browser doesn't understand a particular selector, it will ignore the whole rule. Likewise, if it doesn't understand a particular property or value, it will ignore the whole declaration. This feature