How to Convert PSD into HTML - The Best Option

by Natalia Savchenko

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"*I speak HTML, CSS, and Javascript.*" Resumes containing such phrases are not rare in the Internet. But what to do if your "native" language is colors and lines? In other words, if you are a designer and need to translate your works (e.g., *.psd designs) into HTML/CSS code?

There are three main options to solve this problem:

- Code it yourself,
- Use automated tools,   and
- Hire a provider of PSD-to-HTML/CSS conversion services.

And here comes another question: Which option is the best?

In fact, there is no all-purpose choice to suit every situation. Really, people and circumstances are different.

To convert PSD to HTML yourself or not yourself – Is that a question?

Some of my friends-designers agree with marketing guru Tom Peters: nowadays design is one of the most essential competitive differences that can set products (and websites) apart from other commoditized rivals. A designer is becoming a central figure in website success. And she/he should be completely concentrated on design because very few people can be a universal genius like Leonardo da Vinci.

Others say that web designers should know not only the color theory or graphic techniques but also PSD slicing, HTML coding, content writing, SEO, and marketing. Only in this case designers will create something really effective in the present-day Internet.

For me every website element should be well-designed: website concept, its structure, graphics, layout, HTML/CSS markup, and content. The deeper designers know respective phases and website development operations the better, because she/he can see and control the process in whole. But it doesn't mean that designers should do all the work themselves.

Which of PSD-to-HTML options is the best when...

... HTML/CSS is easy for you or when it looks like mumbo-jumbo? When there is a long line of clients or only few orders? When you design an experimental site for yourself or an important custom work? When there is a large budget or tough times?

These situations obviously require different solutions.

So what is the recipe?

To be effective, we should be flexible. It is difficult to be a universal genius but it is possible to have a universal (or almost universal) knowledge base and manage the process.

1. Collect information: Design-to-XHTML/CSS tutorials, reviews of automated conversion tools, and lists of PSD-to-HTML services providers.

To keep track of new developments, Google Alert can be of very useful assistance or just regularly visit such sites as *designfloat.com*, *designm.ag*, *noupe.com*, *tripwiremagazine.com*, *csstea.com*, just to name a few.

Speaking of tutorials, gather not only the newest techniques and CSS tricks but older materials too, because they may contain gold nuggets of information.

2. Try them and make your own lists. Select tutorials, automated tools, and providers that are the most useful, efficient, and comfortable just for YOU. It takes time but it pays off. Moreover, one day you can publish your own lists named "Practical Collection of PSD-to-XHTML Tutorials" or "My Favorite Design-to-HTML Services."

Select several (2 or 3) providers because of:

- Risk management considerations: if you urgently need to convert your design and the primary provider is overloaded, you will have a reserve option.
- Providers can have strengths in different fields, e.g., one is more proficient in PSD to WordPress themes conversion, others – in design-to-Drupal or Joomla templates development and implementation.

Check out selected providers yourself. It is not out of place because what was the best for someone may be not so good for you.

3. Evaluate project circumstances: volume of works, urgency, project requirements (including W3C standards compliance, browser compatibility, semantic coding), project importance, budget, your level of HTML/CSS knowledge, and so on. Then take your lists and choose an option or their combination that is the most effective for you in this concrete situation.

Each of these options – Do it yourself, Use automated tools or Service providers – can be a good solution to convert PSD into HTML. But no less important is that there are different alternatives available for choice. Really, to be flexible and succeed – that is the best option.

About The Author

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