

## Hints and Tips for WebMCQ Authors

### 1. Introduction

WebMCQ(TM) is software that is used to present interactive questions over the World Wide Web. One of the reasons that the software is so popular and versatile is that it combines simplicity with power. When it comes to creating interesting and exciting content, WebMCQ makes it easy by providing a structured framework into which Question authors simply type the information that they wish to present.

WebMCQ presents information to users' web browsers almost exactly as it is entered into WebMCQ Administration Tools by the question's author. This means that the author can incorporate HTML tags into normal text (HTML - Hypertext Markup Language - is the language used to give Web browsers information about how to display information). Basic HTML is extremely easy to use, and if you will be writing questions in WebMCQ, you will definitely benefit from some of the hints and tips for using HTML found in this document.

### 2. How to Incorporate HTML in WebMCQ Content

Most HTML can be written as plain text placed inside < and > symbols. When a piece of HTML code is written inside these symbols, that code is called a **tag**. There are many different HTML tags, but the most common ones give instructions about how and where to display content (eg. to show bold or coloured text, or to display an image). To add HTML tags to WebMCQ content, simply type the tags into the text entry boxes along with your normal text. For example, suppose you have a question such as "What is the name of the first day of the week?". If you type that text into the Question Body section of a question, it will be displayed in the default font style. However, if you want to emphasise the word "first", you could type the following as the Question Body: "What is the <i>first</i> day of the week?" This incorporates two HTML tags - <i> which turns on Italics, and </i> which turns off Italics. The effect is that the sentence will appear in the actual question with "first" written in italics, like "What is the *first* day of the week?". Many of the other HTML tags are just as easy to use, and allow you to quickly create amazing formatting effects.

### 3. Basic Formatting HTML Tags

Here are some of the common tags used to specify formatting instructions for web content.

**i) Starting a New Line** - HTML content (and therefore, WebMCQ content) does not recognise a normal enter or return symbol in text. There are good reasons for this, but those reasons are beyond the scope of this document. It is important to remember when writing WebMCQ content that whenever you wish to start a new line, you must include a special tag that looks like

this: **<BR>** . "BR" is short for "break" (as in, line break), and must be included whenever you want to force a new line to begin at a particular point.

*For example, the following text in WebMCQ Administration Tools...*

This is one line.  
This is the same line.<BR>This is a new line.

*...will look like this on the web page...*

This is one line. This is the same line.  
This is a new line.

**ii) Using Bold Text** - to start writing text in bold, use the **<B>** tag. To stop using bold for the text, use the **</B>** tag. Be sure to use "/" and not "\".

*For example, the following text in WebMCQ Administration Tools...*

Here is my text. <B>This is bold text.</B> Back to normal.

*...will look like this on the web page...*

Here is my text. **This is bold text.** Back to normal.

**iii) Using Italicised Text** - to start writing text in italics, use the **<I>** tag. To stop using italics for the text, use the **</I>** tag. You can use bold and italics tags together.

*For example, the following text in WebMCQ Administration Tools...*

This is boring. <B>This is important. <I>Wow! This is really important!</I></B>Boring.

*...will look like this on the web page...*

This is boring. **This is important. *Wow! This is really important!***  
Boring.

**iv) Changing the Font Size** - to make the font size bigger for text, use

**<FONT SIZE = +1>**. When you want the font to go back to normal, use **</FONT>**. You can also use **<FONT SIZE = -1>** to make the font size smaller.

*For example, the following text in WebMCQ Administration Tools...*

Normal font.<FONT SIZE=+1> Bigger font. </FONT>Back to normal.<FONT SIZE=-1> Smaller font.</FONT> Normal again.

*...will look like this on the web page...*

Normal font. **Bigger font.** Back to normal. Smaller font. Normal again.

**v) Changing the Font Colour** - to change the font colour to something different, use `<FONT COLOR = BLUE>` then use `</FONT>` to return to normal. Note the spelling of "COLOR". Besides BLUE, some of the other colours available are RED, YELLOW, ORANGE, GREEN, DARKBLUE, BLACK, WHITE, CYAN, MAGENTA, PURPLE, etc.

*For example, the following text in WebMCQ Administration Tools...*

Normal. `<FONT COLOR=RED>` This is red.`</FONT>` Back to normal.

*...will look like this on the web page...*

Normal. This is red. Back to normal.

**vi) Centred Text** - to have a block of text aligned to the centre of a page rather than to the left, use `<CENTER>` and `</CENTER>` tags.

*For example, the following text in WebMCQ Administration Tools...*

This text aligns left by default.`<CENTER>`But this text is centred.`</CENTER>`

*...will look like this on the web page...*

This text aligns left by default.

But this text is centred.

## 4. Including Images in WebMCQ

Images are also placed on a web page by using HTML tags. WebMCQ also needs a copy of the image to be transferred to the WebMCQ Server computer so that it will always have access to the image. There are several steps involved in adding images to WebMCQ pages. These steps will be demonstrated below by assuming you have a picture called "sample.gif", which is stored in a folder called "pictures" on your computer's hard disk.

**i) Prepare the Image** - you need to have an image that is in one of the standard internet formats: GIF, BITMAP or JPEG. Most graphics programs can save an image directly into at least one of these formats. You should also make sure that your image has a descriptive name to distinguish it from other images that you may include in other questions. The image name MUST also end in either ".gif", ".bmp", ".jpg" or ".jpeg", depending on the image's format.

**ii) Copy the Image to WebMCQ** - next, you need to copy the image to the WebMCQ Server computer so that Server has direct access at all times. To copy sample.gif, press the **Browse** button in the 'Working with images' panel at the bottom of the WebMCQ Edit Question page. You will then be able to select sample.gif from the 'pictures' folder on your computer (if you can't see any images listed, make sure you have chosen to show 'All file

types' in the file selection window). The name and location of sample.gif will now appear in a box beside the button.

**iii) Reference the Image in Your Text** - the last step is to go to place in your text where you want to insert sample.gif, and insert the HTML tag used to place an image there. At that point in the text, you would type the following:

```
<IMAGE SRC='sample.gif' >
```

The first part of the tag is IMAGE, which gives the instruction to display an image on the page. The second part is SRC (short for source) ='sample.gif', which tells WebMCQ Server which image to display.

**iv) Apply Changes** - after pressing 'Apply Changes' the image sample.gif will appear in the text at the point where the IMAGE instruction was added.

Once you're comfortable using the <IMAGE> tag, try adding the following options...

- **ALIGN=??** - instead of having the image placed exactly where the tag appears in text, you can align the image with the left, or right margin of your text. Do this by adding ALIGN=LEFT or ALIGN=RIGHT. For example, the following tag will put the image at the right edge of your text, and text will flow beside it (Note, some older browsers don't support this feature): <IMAGE SRC='sample.gif' ALIGN=RIGHT >
- **WIDTH=?? HEIGHT=??** - you can specify the exact size of the image as you want it to appear on a web page. The size is measured in pixels or the number of screen 'dots' that make up the picture. This allows you to enlarge, shrink or stretch an image to specific proportions. For example, the following tag will make sample.gif appear with a width of 100 pixels, and a height of 50 pixels, regardless of its original size: <IMAGE SRC='sample.gif' WIDTH=100 HEIGHT=50 >

## 5. Inserting Special Characters

In WebMCQ, you may want to insert special characters that do not ordinarily appear correctly on a web page. This is generally accomplished by inserting a special WebMCQ code for that character. The WebMCQ code begins with a percent sign, then includes some text, and ends with a semicolon. For example, %lt; will show a less-than symbol. (For those who are interested, the %xx; symbols in WebMCQ correspond to &xx; symbols in normal HTML).

Special characters that can be used include the following (some of these may not work on older web browsers):

### Name Char Code

less-than sign < %lt;

greater-than sign > %gt;

quotation mark " %quot;

copyright sign © %copy;

non-breaking space ' ' %nbsp;

cent symbol ¢ %cent;

pound sign £ %pound;

degrees ° %deg;

plus/minus sign ± %plusmn;

divide sign ÷ %divide;

superscript numbers 1,2,3 %sup1; %sup2; %sup3; ...

## 6. Including Conditional Feedback Statements

Conditional feedback statements are a feature specific to WebMCQ. These tags can be used only in the feedback section of a question, and they are used to present different feedback to users based on the response that they made to a question. For example, you may want to display one message if a user selects the correct response, but a different message if the incorrect response is chosen. Alternatively, you may want to give different feedback for every option that a user can choose.

Conditional feedback statements are created by including <IF..> tags. The following <IF..> tags are available:

<IF+> - text following this tag is presented only if the correct response is chosen

<IF-> - text following this tag is presented only if an incorrect response is chosen

<IFA> - text following this tag is presented only if the first option is chosen

<IFB>...<IFZ> - as above, presents for options numbered A-Z

<IFABCD> - specific options can be combined (you cannot include + and - symbols in combinations). In this example, the text following this tag would be presented if option 1,2,3 or 4 was chosen.

<IF?> - text following this tag is presented regardless of which option is presented

</IF> - effectively identical to <IF?>, this tag 'turns off' conditionality. Anything after this tag will always be presented.

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