



CSS Secrets: Better Solutions to Everyday Web Design Problems

Lea Verou

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Based on two popular talks from author Lea Verou--including "CSS3 Secrets: 10 things you may not know about CSS"--this practical guide provides intermediate to advanced CSS developers with more than 40 undocumented techniques and tips for using CSS3 to create better websites.

The talks that spawned this book have been top-rated by attendees in every conference they were presented, and praised in industry media such as ".net" magazine. Get information you won't find in any other book. Learn through small, easily digestible chapters. Helps you understand CSS more deeply so you can improve your own solutions. Apply Lea's techniques to practically every CSS problem you face. Gain tips from a rockstar author who serves as an Invited Expert in W3C's CSS Working Group.

CSS Secrets: Better Solutions to Everyday Web Design Problems Details

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Douglas Fenstermacher says

This was the best book on CSS I have ever read. It changed the way I style websites before I had finished the first chapter. I would recommend it to anyone who already has a working knowledge of CSS but is looking for a more thorough understanding.

Juhamatti says

I think this is the best CSS book I have encountered. Book presents 47 everyday design problems with well thought out alternative solutions using latest CSS features.

First chapter gives short introduction on how CSS standards are formed and presents some best practices for writing CSS. That introduction chapter itself changed the way how I have been thinking the DRY principle regarding CSS. Before my interpretation of DRY CSS did limit in clever use of selectors etc to maximize re-usability / minimize file size. However book presents DRY as a design which could be changed with minimal number of property changes.

Rest of the chapters are actual design problems with solutions divided into several categories like typography, user experience, backgrounds, animations etc...

Pros and cons of each alternative solution are discussed and each problem is worked towards solution as DRY as possible without adding extra HTML wrappers when not absolutely needed. Solutions are also designed in a way that won't sacrifice possibilities to extend designs with animations or other related effects. Also upcoming but yet unimplemented standards are presented if they would offer even better solution someday.

Author doesn't waste pages on discussing browser support issues because they are in constant flux and CanIUse.com provides more accurate information anyway.

Book is aimed for people with intermediate to advanced CSS knowledge and I personally would recommend it to everyone working with Web front-end or design.

Radimir Bitsov says

Without a doubt the best book about CSS I've ever read. It presents solutions for problems that every front-end developer is facing constantly. The structure is perfect, the examples are really well crafted and the author is one of the most respected persons in the community, with numerous articles and conference talks on this topic.

kirill bytin says

All front end developers should read it

Joseph Rex says

CSS Secrets is a manual for anyone with a good fundamental knowledge of CSS. It is like a dictionary I'll hold on to for years to come

Akram Mahmoud says

Perfect!

Patrick Wiseman says

Lea Verou if you've had the pleasure of following her amazing career on the internet has skyrocketed to being among the freshest thinkers in the bleeding edge of web standards. Following her on Twitter is an endless source of inspiration, well thought out commentary on standards, and simply a great way to stay on top of the latest and greatest.

This book combines a fresh take on some of everyday CSS problems and better ways to solve them. Lea is painstakingly familiar with the standards, how they tend to be applied, how the browsers work internally, and combines all of these aspects into better approaches that you can apply in your work today. It is a brilliant culmination of her writing constant tips for web developers and web designers and is a must-read for anyone designing or styling websites.

Eric says

For a library rental, this was really enjoyable. It's basically just 47 "secrets" that were written by somebody very close to the CSS spec. It reinforces the DRY principle and shows why and how it got there, which is always nice to see as a programmer.

Vlad Ardelean says

Lots of tricks and helpful advice. Lots of references. Provides historical context and insights into the future. Not made for reading cover-to-cover. Not for beginners.

Angelina says

Clear examples of CSS. Helpful book!

Arturo Tadeo says

Very technical book, a must read for web designers and developers.

Marian says

Bought this on a whim (Amazon lightning deal) last year because I'm a CSS geek and have been following Verou on her blog for some time.

First off, this is *not* a book for beginners. What you have here is true to Verou's brand - the "cutting edge" of CSS technology. Even as someone who's worked with CSS for a decade, I found much of the subject matter to be complex (some of the concepts are explained mathematically) and certainly stretching my knowledge of CSS.

If however you love CSS as a markup language and want to learn some tips that are not just a compilation of Stack Overflow answers - and don't get me wrong, I live on Stack Overflow; I just wouldn't buy it in book format - then *CSS Secrets* is for you. Rather than read it cover-to-cover, your best bet is to read by category, because it's divided into sections which are geared to target certain kinds of design challenges: typography, visual effects, and usability, just to name a few. I skimmed some sections and focused more on others, based on personal interest and application.

What really made this book worthwhile was Verou's breadth of knowledge. Again, this is not just a compilation of internet tips you can look up (or at least, not easily), and while some of the "secrets" are credited to others, Verou is a careful curator. I appreciated her in-depth explanations which helped me understand things like viewport units and why they matter. In the end, I took away several key tips which I was able to present to my team as useful to our projects.

I'm deducting a star because I felt some of the book could have been thinned out a little (*too much* explanation at times) and occasionally the author's style sounded too self-promoting to me. (I have got this feeling from the blog as well). Nonetheless, this is purely my personal impression and just a minor detail. I still look forward to continuing to learn from Verou's expertise.

P. S. The included links to demo code were extremely invaluable. I wish all computer science books included that...

Elias says

Neat book.

First chapter is great, I found useful the CSS coding tips about maintainability and DRY -- the most important idea from the book, really. It highlights (with examples!) the importance of understanding how the CSS rules work together and some mechanisms (e.g. proper units, `currentColor`, `inherit`) that empower you to reduce and sometimes even eliminate the dependance of values from each other, minimizing the amount of edits necessary to make a necessary change.

The remaining chapters are mostly demonstration of applying the principles to design problems -- some were interesting and I read avidly, some not really (I found myself skimming over solutions for problems I couldn't relate to).

Shayuna says

i'm not a professional procrastinator, but with this review i surely made it to the big fella's league. i delayed the review, because on the one hand it was obvious that this book is a really good source of info. the book is full of updated knowledge and years of experience, of the author and others all around the digital landscape. it is balancing great between theory and practice. it is addressing current obstacles standing in the way of almost everyone trying to build a modern website, e.g. : vertical centering, e.g.: sticky footers. every problem has several solutions, and the author is discussing the pros and cons of each one of them, and the last thing is that the book isn't just a from start to end read, you can pick a subject from the appendix (you've got two appendixes, two competing but nevertheless somewhat overlapping, suggestions for reading the book) and start investigating it in a serendipitous manner, taking advantage of the links and code snippets that are scattered within to start a private investigation outside the book's boundaries.

and still, with all its merits i delayed the review as long as i could have. and now i think i understand why: not because of the book, but because of me, and my natural inclination for development rather than design. css is a language intended to solve problems in design, so what do you want ?

it's true. all of it, but for me, as a web developer, i prefer a book that doesn't necessarily cover various esoteric design problems (e.g: frosted glass effect, fancy ampersands) and in its stead deal with subjects that are close to my heart: like selectors: alternative conventions for naming them, relations between them and more, in short dealing with the logical and abstract conundrums that css as a language present us with.

this book certainly makes good on its promise, but for me the lack of attention for the more theoretical and abstract aspects of css make it worth only four stars for me.

Jason says

Numerous really useful, but not obvious, solutions to very common issues with page design. Everything is explained in great detail with complete example code.

