Employing an HTML editor

HTML code can be created in any plain text editor that provides encoding in the recommended UTF-8 format. As long as the code in the new text file is saved with a file extension of ".html" or ".htm" an HTML document is created. This file can then be opened in any web browser, such as Internet Explorer, to see how the HTML code is interpreted to "render" (display) the content on the screen.
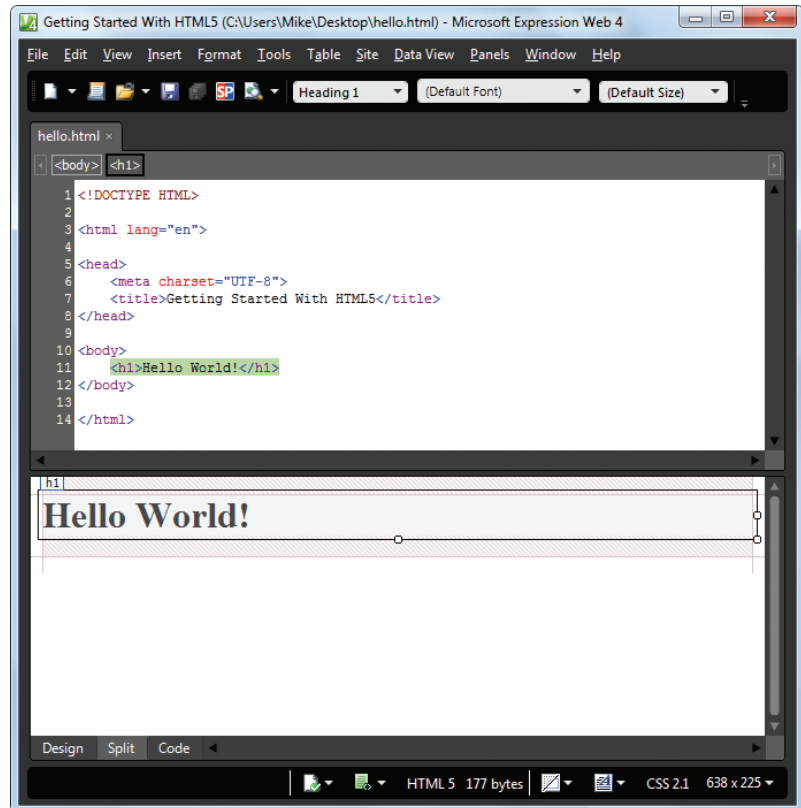
Older web browsers, such as Internet Explorer 8 or earlier, will not fully recognize the modern HTML5 markup code. It is best therefore to view HTML5 web pages in the very latest version of Internet Explorer, Firefox, Google Chrome, Opera and Safari.

Some HTML authors prefer to use specialized HTML editors that colorize the various parts of the source code for greater clarity and offer further features. Microsoft's Expression Web editor, shown below, is a popular choice for many HTML authors.
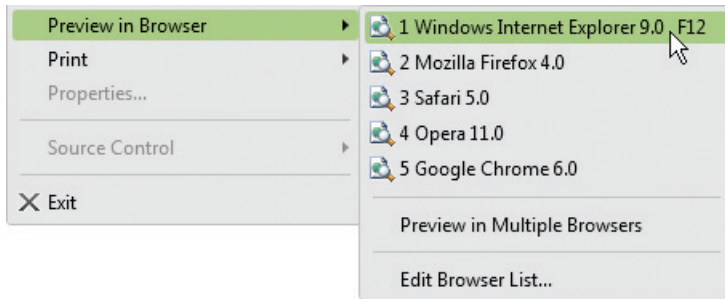
Beware

The Expression Web interface also allows web pages to be created visually by dragging components onto its Design window – but knowledge of HTML is often helpful in fine-tuning the web page.
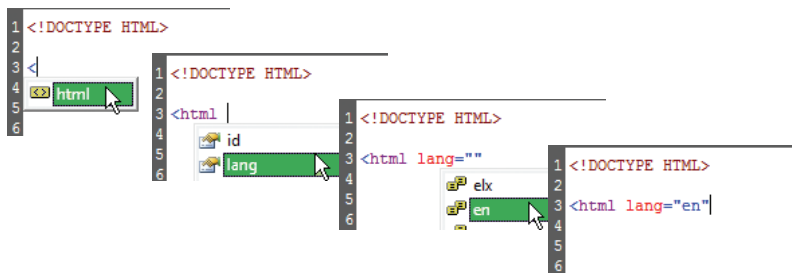
The Split view in Expression Web provides a live preview of what the HTML document will look like in a web browser. Additionally a built-in menu lets you quickly view the document in any web browser installed on your computer.

Expression Web's "Compatibility Checker" tool lets you easily locate code errors that do not conform to the declared document type. Additionally, like other Microsoft development tools, the Expression Web editor has "Intellisense", which identifies syntax errors live as you type the HTML code. This feature also provides context-sensitive menus that can insert HTML tags compatible with the current point in the document. For example, when you type a "<" in the head section Intellisense presents a list of tags that may be inserted at that point. After selecting a tag and typing a space Intellisense then presents a list of attributes that may be inserted within that tag.

21

By default Intellisense automatically inserts a matching closing tag, if appropriate, whenever you type an opening tag. Some authors dislike this ability, however, but the Expression Web options allow Intellisense features to be turned on and off individually to customize the editor to your personal taste.