

3. W3C lowers the membership fee for Developing Countries

W3C is a vendor-neutral, non-profit organization with its mission to lead the web to its full potential, by evolving open (non-proprietary) standards for Web languages and protocols in order to ensure Web interoperability. Mr. Tim Berners-Lee, who invented the World Wide Web in 1989, serves as the W3C Director since 1994. He is also on faculty of MIT, USA. Over 80 Web standards recommendations have been published during last 10 years.

The major achievements of W3C include CSS (Cascading Style Sheets) separating content from structure; WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) guidelines for web content, HTML 4.0 that adds tables, scripting, style sheets, Internationalisation and Accessibility features to web publishing; XML 1.0 that promotes Interoperability and domain-specific mark up. It is emerging as lingua franca of web; SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics) for next generation mobile applications; Web Services Activity to provide a standard means of inter-operating between different software applications, running on a variety of platforms/ frameworks; RDF (Resource Description Framework) and OWL (Web Ontology Language) are Semantic Web standards that provide framework asset management, enterprise integration and reuse of data, Voice XML 2.0 for content delivery in interactive voice response applications.

W3C is jointly run by MIT in USA, European Research Consortium for Informatics and Mathematics (ERCIM) in France and Keio University in Japan. W3C has world offices in 14 regions around the world to promote W3C technologies in local languages, and encourage international participation in W3C activities.

The Web is an application built on top of the Internet. W3C is transforming the architecture of the initial Web (essentially, HTML, URIs and HTTP) into the architecture of tomorrow's Web. W3C technology is built on the previous, and that may be integrated with future specifications as well.

Thus W3C technologies will lay foundation for the next generation web – robust, scalable and adaptive infrastructure for a world of information - the web for anyone, anywhere, anytime using any device. W3C adopts Royalty-Free Patent policy-encouraging development of open standards.



W3C activities are grouped into 4 domains: Architecture, Interaction, Technology & Society, and Web Accessibility Initiative.

Membership benefits of W3C may range its involvement from simply associating with W3C endeavors, receiving early access to Member-confidential information, assisting with driving work efforts, generating new ideas, and developing future guidelines for inter-operable web technologies. W3C members can have seat on W3C Advisory Committee, participate in W3C working group and W3C Internet Groups have right to use W3C Member logo, access to W3C information.

Dr. Om Vikas, Senior Director, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, India visited W3C Headquarters at MIT, USA. He had discussion with W3C officers regarding the India's active participation in the W3C activities and membership fee issues. Thus for, the fee for Affiliate Membership of W3C was US\$ 5,750/-. W3C agreed to reduce the annual fee for Governmental and non-profit organizations in developing countries. As per new fee structure, signed on 11th February, 2005, it will be only US\$ 800/- (instead of USD 5,750).

On 11th February, 2005, Dr. Vikas had discussion with Dr. Alan Kotok, Associate Chair W3C; Tim Berners-Lee, Director, W3C; Steve Bratt, Chief Operating Officer; Karen Myers, Development Officer; Ralph Swick, Tech. & Society Technical Director as seen in the picture above.