A fan of *Bulletproof Web Design* by Dan Cederholm, I was looking forward to his *Handcrafted CSS* and it did not disappoint. In addition to the cutting-edge code examples and framework, I appreciated his thoughts on "progressive enrichment," "re-evaluation of past methods and best practices," "80 percenters," "fluid grids," and "craftsmanship." I came away with code and concepts I will use.

"Progressive enrichment," for example, uses vendor-specific versions of the `border-radius` property to achieve the visual reward of rounded corners on buttons in browsers that can handle them with CSS rather than as a design requirement in every possible viewing environment. For future proofing, the actual CSS3 property can be added for browsers that might recognize it in the future. The site displays attractively in all browsers with square corners on buttons in browsers not progressive enough to display the rounded corners.

The rounded corners example also illustrates "re-evaluation of past methods and best practices." Rounded corners on buttons can be achieved with graphics, but they lock in color which can only be changed be manipulating the images. With progressive enrichment, the button colors are not limited by images and can be changed easily in the CSS. Re-evaluating past methods leads to a new best practice in the case of rounded corners on buttons.

A key element for implementing progressive enrichment and re-evaluating past methods and best practices is persuading clients that websites do not have to look exactly the same in every browser. Cederholm confesses, "I used to pride myself in being able to implement designs down to the pixel-level across every browser I could get my hands on." Now, however, he calls himself an "80 percenter" who determines "*which* details are the most important and beneficial" rather than obsessing about all details and getting bogged down.

When clients can be persuaded that websites do not have to look exactly the same in all browsers, they will become open to fluid grids, which have grown out of the "runaway success" of typographic-style, fixed-width grids for websites. Ethan Marcotte, who wrote "The Fluid Grid" chapter asserts, "The problem with the fixed-width approach to interface design is that it's

asking the user to adapt to the design rather than the reverse." He demonstrates that the key to non-fixed width layouts is font-size. By setting all font-sizes in context relative to a base font size of 100% and also setting percentage-based values for the columns of the grid, the proportions of the grid stay intact as it resizes: a fluid grid for various sizes of browser windows. For further convincing, Marcotte shows how to proportion images to adjust to the size of the grid. Challenging? Yes, but "it's definitely not impossible."

Cederholm begins his final chapter, "Craftsmanship Details," with "…on the Web, implementing design involves a cacophony of details, and applying precious time to the *appropriate* details is what elevates your site to great design." My favorite detail is his recommendation to "use the best possible ampersand" by building a font stack for progressive enrichment. His example uses Georgia for the base font and an ampersand stack of Baskerville, Goudy Old Style, Palatino, and Book Antigua in his order of "interestingness" in the CSS. Computers with one (or more) of the stacked fonts display the ampersand in the first available font rather than in Georgia.

An interesting ampersand is well worth the trouble as I found out last year before I had read *Handcrafted CSS*. I had developed a header for a client's second website without the "interesting" ampersand which I had used in the header for his first website. Upon seeing the second header, the first thing that the client said was that he wanted the same "and sign" that the first header had. What fun for Cederholm's ampersand discussion to confirm my experience.

Needless to say, like stacking for ampersands, reading *Handcrafted CSS* was well worth my time and trouble.