Demystifying Basic HTML

Why HTML?

In Part One of our Web site creation books, we introduce fundamental HTML. Basically, we explain that you construct Web documents by including HTML commands (also called *HTML tags*) within the body of a basic text document. Although other technologies (such as XHTML, CSS, and XML) are beginning to significantly impact Web page development, HTML is still the foundation of many Web pages today—and if you're going to create a Web site, you need to know about HTML.

By knowing at least some HTML, you will be able to modify and tweak Web pages to suit your preferences in the future, even if the pages you're modifying have been generated by an HTML editor. Furthermore, knowing HTML means that you'll be able to remove unnecessary (and sometimes proprietary) HTML commands that HTML editors sometimes add to Web documents. Removing unnecessary code can make your HTML documents smaller, which in turn means that your pages will load faster. Finally, as you become more proficient using HTML, you might find that you can make changes more quickly and precisely by adding, deleting, or modifying HTML code instead of modifying a Web page in an HTML editor.

We're now ready to get started. The first order of business, before we commence creating a Web site, is to briefly (very briefly) go over some basic HTML theory. By the way, when we say theory, we're talking clear, helpful

information—not complex rhetoric. Think of the upcoming theory discussion as spreading a blanket before picnicking—you might as well get somewhat comfortable and discourage at least a few of the pests up front.