Because JavaScript code can run locally in a user's browser (rather than on a remote server) it can respond to user actions quickly, making an application feel more responsive. Furthermore, JavaScript code can detect user actions which HTML alone cannot, such as individual keystrokes. Applications such as Gmail take advantage of this: much of the user-interface logic is written in JavaScript, and JavaScript dispatches requests for information (such as the content of an e-mail message) to the server. The wider trend of Ajax programming similarly exploits this strength.

A JavaScript engine (also known as JavaScript interpreter or JavaScript implementation) is an interpreter that interprets JavaScript source code and executes the script accordingly. The first ever JavaScript engine was created by Brendan Eich at Netscape Communications Corporation, for the Netscape Navigator web browser. The engine, code-named SpiderMonkey, is implemented in C. It has since been updated (in JavaScript 1.5) to conform to ECMA-262 Edition 3. The Rhino engine, created primarily by Norris Boyd (formerly of Netscape; now at Google) is a JavaScript implementation in Java. Rhino, like SpiderMonkey, is ECMA-262 Edition 3 compliant.

JavaScript and Java

A common misconception is that JavaScript is similar or closely related to Java; this is not so. Both have a C-like syntax, are object-oriented, are typically sandboxed and are widely used in client-side Web applications, but the similarities end there. Java has static typing; JavaScript's typing is dynamic (meaning a variable can hold an object of any type and cannot be restricted). Java is loaded from compiled bytecode; JavaScript is loaded as human-readable code. C is their last common ancestor language.

Nonetheless, JavaScript was designed with Java's syntax and standard library in mind. In particular, all Java keywords are reserved in JavaScript, JavaScript's standard library follows Java's naming conventions, and JavaScript's Math and Date classes are based on those from Java 1.0.

Conditional statements are used to perform different actions based on different conditions.

Conditional Statements

Very often when you write code, you want to perform different actions for different decisions. You can use conditional statements in your code to do this.

In JavaScript we have the following conditional statements:

- **if statement** - use this statement to execute some code only if a specified condition is true
- **if...else statement** - use this statement to execute some code if the condition is true and another code if the condition is false

- **if...else if....else statement** - use this statement to select one of many blocks of code to be executed
- **switch statement** - use this statement to select one of many blocks of code to be executed

If Statement

Use the if statement to execute some code only if a specified condition is true.

Syntax

```
if (condition)
  {
  code to be executed if condition is true
  }
```

Example

```
<script type="text/javascript">
//Write a "Good morning" greeting if
//the time is less than 10

var d=new Date();
var time=d.getHours();

if (time<10)
  {
  document.write("<b>Good morning</b>");
  }
</script>
```

If...else Statement

Use the if....else statement to execute some code if a condition is true and another code if the condition is not true.

Syntax

```
if (condition)
  {
  code to be executed if condition is true
  }
else
```

```
  {
  code to be executed if condition is not true
  }
```

Example

```
<script type="text/javascript">
//If the time is less than 10, you will get a "Good morning" greeting.
//Otherwise you will get a "Good day" greeting.

var d = new Date();
var time = d.getHours();

if (time < 10)
  {
  document.write("Good morning!");
  }
else
  {
  document.write("Good day!");
  }
</script>
```

If...else if...else Statement

Use the if....else if...else statement to select one of several blocks of code to be executed.

Syntax

```
if (condition1)
  {
  code to be executed if condition1 is true
  }
else if (condition2)
  {
  code to be executed if condition2 is true
  }
else
  {
  code to be executed if condition1 and condition2 are not true
  }
```

Example

```
<script type="text/javascript">
var d = new Date()
var time = d.getHours()
```

```
if (time<10)
  {
  document.write("<b>Good morning</b>");
  }
else if (time>10 && time<16)
  {
  document.write("<b>Good day</b>");
  }
else
  {
  document.write("<b>Hello World!</b>");
  }
</script>
```

The JavaScript Switch Statement

Use the switch statement to select one of many blocks of code to be executed.

Syntax

```
switch(n)
{
case 1:
  execute code block 1
  break;
case 2:
  execute code block 2
  break;
default:
  code to be executed if n is different from case 1 and 2
}
```

This is how it works: First we have a single expression n (most often a variable), that is evaluated once. The value of the expression is then compared with the values for each case in the structure. If there is a match, the block of code associated with that case is executed. Use **break** to prevent the code from running into the next case automatically.

Example

```
<script type="text/javascript">
//You will receive a different greeting based
//on what day it is. Note that Sunday=0,
//Monday=1, Tuesday=2, etc.

var d=new Date();
```

```
theDay=d.getDay();
switch (theDay)
{
case 5:
  document.write("Finally Friday");
  break;
case 6:
  document.write("Super Saturday");
  break;
case 0:
  document.write("Sleepy Sunday");
  break;
default:
  document.write("I'm looking forward to this weekend!");
}
</script>
```

Alert Box

An alert box is often used if you want to make sure information comes through to the user.

When an alert box pops up, the user will have to click "OK" to proceed.

Syntax

```
alert("sometext");
```

Example

```
<html>
<head>
<script type="text/javascript">
function show_alert()
{
alert("I am an alert box!");
}
</script>
</head>
<body>

<input type="button" onclick="show_alert()" value="Show alert box" />

</body>
</html>
```

Confirm Box

A confirm box is often used if you want the user to verify or accept something.

When a confirm box pops up, the user will have to click either "OK" or "Cancel" to proceed.

If the user clicks "OK", the box returns true. If the user clicks "Cancel", the box returns false.

Syntax

```
confirm("sometext");
```

Example

```
<html>
<head>
<script type="text/javascript">
function show_confirm()
{
var r=confirm("Press a button");
if (r==true)
  {
  document.write("You pressed OK!");
  }
else
  {
  document.write("You pressed Cancel!");
  }
}
</script>
</head>
<body>

<input type="button" onclick="show_confirm()" value="Show confirm box" />

</body>
</html>
```

Prompt Box

A prompt box is often used if you want the user to input a value before entering a page.

How to Define a Function

Syntax

```
function functionname(var1,var2,...,varX)
{
some code
}
```

The parameters var1, var2, etc. are variables or values passed into the function. The { and the } defines the start and end of the function.

Note: A function with no parameters must include the parentheses () after the function name.

Note: Do not forget about the importance of capitals in JavaScript! The word function must be written in lowercase letters, otherwise a JavaScript error occurs! Also note that you must call a function with the exact same capitals as in the function name.

Example

```
<html>
<head>
<script type="text/javascript">
function displaymessage()
{
alert("Hello World!");
}
</script>
</head>

<body>
<form>
<input type="button" value="Click me!" onclick="displaymessage()" />
</form>
</body>
</html>
```

If the line: alert("Hello world!!") in the example above had not been put within a function, it would have been executed as soon as the line was loaded. Now, the script is not executed before a user hits the input button. The function displaymessage() will be executed if the input button is clicked.

The return Statement

The return statement is used to specify the value that is returned from the function.

So, functions that are going to return a value must use the return statement.

The example below returns the product of two numbers (a and b):

Example

```
<html>
<head>
<script type="text/javascript">
function product (a,b)
{
return a*b;
}
</script>
</head>

<body>
<script type="text/javascript">
document.write(product(4,3));
</script>

</body>
</html>
```

Loops execute a block of code a specified number of times, or while a specified condition is true.

JavaScript Loops

Often when you write code, you want the same block of code to run over and over again in a row. Instead of adding several almost equal lines in a script we can use loops to perform a task like this.

In JavaScript, there are two different kinds of loops:

- **for** - loops through a block of code a specified number of times
- **while** - loops through a block of code while a specified condition is true