

CSS Multi-column Layout

Editor's Draft: <https://drafts.csswg.org/css-multicol/>

Status

CSS Multi-column Layout (multicol) is currently a Working Draft. It was previously a Candidate Recommendation, but was returned to Working Draft status in October 2017 (<https://www.w3.org/TR/2017/WD-css-multicol-1-20171005/>) due to the number of unresolved issues. With those issues and more resolved, and with wide implementation already, I feel it's time to request transition back to CR.

Substantive changes from 2011 CR

All changes from the 2011 Candidate Recommendation to date can be found in the draft at <https://drafts.csswg.org/css-multicol/#changes>. The majority of changes were clarifications, and adding specification text where the only indication of behavior was in an example.

- The breaking properties are now defined in CSS Fragmentation.
- The column-gap property is now defined in CSS Box Alignment.
- The section “The Multi-Column model” was largely rewritten with the help of Morten Stenshorne and Erika J. Etemad.

Horizontal Review

<https://github.com/w3c/csswg-drafts/issues/6103>

All groups have reviewed other than Security, review was requested on 12 May 2021.

Updates were made on the request of the Accessibility and Internationalization Groups.

Disposition of Comments

<https://drafts.csswg.org/css-multicol/issues.html>

The only outstanding issue tagged as multicol that relates to the level 1 spec is <https://github.com/w3c/csswg-drafts/issues/6559>, however this is to do with a <dfn> that multicol references rather than this spec itself.

Implementation

Multicol is already widely implemented. Can I Use currently shows an inaccurate picture as it mixes multicol with fragmentation support. For the properties defined in this specification the following table shows un-prefixed or flagged implementation versions in desktop browsers.

Property	Chromium	Edge	Firefox	IE	Safari
column-width	50	12	50	10	9
column-count	50	12	52	10	9
columns	50	12	52	10	9
column-rule-color	50	12	52	10	9
column-rule-width	50	12	52	10	9
column-rule-style	50	12	52	10	9
column-rule	50	12	52	10	9
column-span	50	12	71	10	9
column-fill	50	12	52	10	9

Multicol is used extensively for publishing and is widely implemented in print user agents.

Tests

There are a large number of tests for multicol dating back over 10 years. I have begun the process of linking those into the draft. There are a number of recent changes that may not yet have a test, so my next job is to identify those and ensure the spec is properly covered. The substantive issues that I believe may not yet have a test can be found in the Needs Testcase column of the GitHub project <https://github.com/w3c/csswg-drafts/projects/4#column-1838609>

A number of the existing tests do not belong to any multicol specification text, but instead to behavior now detailed in CSS Fragmentation, Box Alignment, or Sizing.