How to publish your XML documents

XML's power comes from its use to describe structure, not appearance. But you need a way to render the structural components of your documents so that the text is easy for humans to read and work with. Here is a grossly simplified view of your options.

● = yes   ◖ = sort of   ○ = no

If you want to produce:	... then use:	Can use standard web server	Can use any user agent (web browser, mobile device, etc.)	Notes
webpages	CSS (processed by browser)	●	● (Limitations and workarounds are widely known.)	While you need not display all the text in your XML, it must stay in the same order as in your XML. Good for quick proofing of your encoding using a web browser.
webpages	XSLT processed by browser	●	◖ (All major browsers support. Limitations and workarounds are not well known.)	Painfully slow to load each page. Can only process a single XML file at a time.
webpages	XML-aware publishing system (using XSLT and other technology)*	○	●	Can search specific XML tags. Can easily show portions of documents.
PDFs	XSL-FO	○	●	Open-source tools don't work well yet, and commercial tools are quite expensive. Alternatively, can use a tool like Prince.
EPUB	epub-tools and other packages	○	◖ (Most readers except those from Amazon support.)	

*XML-aware publishing systems for use with TEI are listed in the TEI wiki.