XHTML: e**X**tensible **H**yper**T**ext **M**arkup **L**anguage

Differences between HTML and XHTML
Comparing XHTML and HTML, Strict and Transitional

The primary benefit is that XHTML is more widely accepted in non "computer" devices like cell phone, palm devices and other scaled down browsers. This is commonly called portability between devices. XHTML is also said to be extensible: new tags can be added. Also, XHTML, due to it's stricter nature, forces the developer to write cleaner code (yes, that is a ver good thing).

Here are differences between XHTML and HTML:

1. In XHTML the elementy tags must all be in lower case as must all the attribute names. In HTML you can code willy-nilly. Nothing in the W3C states that attribute values need to be lowercase, but some, like ID, are case sensitive.
    Note: Even if you have declared a HTML doctype, all lowercase, while not required, is recommended.

2. In XHTML all attribute values must be encased in single or double quotes. In HTML, only attribute values with spaces or special characters were required to be in quotes.

3. In XHTML, every opening tag must have a closing tag. Empty elements such as img and br must be self-closing. In HTML tags can be left unclosed. So, while this reduces the number of characters on a page, it also allows for sloppy code.
    Note: Self closing tags, such as <br />, will cause strict HTML to not validate.

4. In XHTML, all tags must be properly nested: If you start tag <a> and then start tag , you must close tag before you close the

5. In XHTML, all attributes must be coded as attribute/value pairs. The default selected option in XHTML should be written selected="selecterd". In HTML, the same would simply be coded as selected.

6. In XHTML, the elements need to be coded in a semantic manner. Tables and forms can not be included in paragraphs, but form elements, being inline elements, need to be contained within a semantic block level element, such as a paragraph or table cell.

XHTML Strict vs. XHTML Transitional

XHTML (Extensible Hypertext Markup Language) was developed to address the problems of the HTML code. XTHML is a move towards the stricter coding that is characterized by XML. During the initial release of XHTML, there was a 'Strict' and 'Transitional' version of the language. Strict is the intended form of the language, while the transitional version was a stepping stone for those who were not yet able to adapt to the strict coding.

Transitional XHTML has added tags and elements that make it easier to use. The most prominent are the presentational elements that allow coders to format the appearance of their page, within the code itself. Strict XHTML lacks these elements, and forces the user to use a separate CSS file to carry all the necessary formatting of the page.

Although you might think that transitional XHTML is superior to strict XHTML due to the fact that it is more flexible, this was the problem that XHTML intended to combat. Transitional XHTML is still prone to very messy code, that can be a nightmare when you are trying to find problematic code, or when editing it in future revisions. Strict XHTML is much harder to learn compared to transitional, but the effort spent in learning, can greatly benefit the coder, especially when building much larger sites with more complicated code. Since you are not allowed to haphazardly insert tags and keywords, it would be much easier to read, and trace your code, in order to find the lines that are causing the problem.

Since the transitional version of XHTML was meant to lessen the learning curve, and assist coders that might have had problems adapting to the strict version of XHTML, it is not meant to stay forever. More prominently, transitional XHTML was used to convert older HTML pages so that they conform to XHTML. Later versions of XHTML are all strict, and transitional versions no longer exist. This is necessary to ensure that the new pages being written will adapt to strict XHTML coding.

Summary:

1. XHTML Transitional is a stepping stone for those who intend to move towards strict XHTML.

2. XHTML Transitional has presentational elements that are absent in strict XHTML.

3. XHTML Strict is much easier to read, and analyze, compared to XHTML Transitional.

4. XHTML Strict is much harder to learn compared to transitional XHTML.

5. Later versions of XHTML are already strict, and transitional no longer exists.