Inheriting properties from table row and column

Inheriting property values from an <fo:table-row> to an <fo:table-cell> is simple, and inheriting property values from an <fo:table-column> to an <fo:table-cell> is only slightly more complicated. <fo:table-row> contains one or more <fo:table-cell>, so the normal XSL-FO rules for property inheritance apply. <fo:table-column> is an empty element and, obviously, is not an ancestor of <fo:table-cell>. However, any inherited property can be specified on an <fo:table-column> and used by the <fo:table-cell> (or any of its descendants) in that column by specifying 'from-table-column()' as the property's value on the FO. Specifying 'from-table-column()' returns the inherited value of the current property. Also specifying a property name (for example, color="from-table-column(background-color)") returns the inherited value of the named property.

When, for example, a table requires a different font-weight or a different color in each column, it can be simpler to specify these on the <fo:table-column> than to keep track of the column number of each <fo:table-cell> in order to specify the correct values on each <fo:table-cell> individually.

In the following table, Row 1 inherits the value of the <fo:table-row> property to <fo:table-cell>. From Row 2 onwards, <fo:table-cell> uses 'from-table-column()' to inherit properties such as character thickness, size, and color of <fo:table-column> in each column.

Row 1, column 1	Row 1, column 2	Row 1, column 3	Row 1, column 4
Row 2, column 1	**Row 2, column 2**	Row 2, column 3	Row 2, column 4
Row 3, column 1	**Row 3, column 2**	Row 3, column 3	Row 3, column 4
Row 4, column 1	Row 4, column 2	Row 4, column 3	Row 4, column 4
Row 5, column 1	**Row 5, column 2**	Row 5, column 3	Row 5, column 4

Note that 'background-color' and some related properties, when specified on <fo:table-row> or <fo:table-column> (or <fo:table>, <fo:table-header>, <fo:table-body>, or <fo:table-footer>), apply to background areas that are generated **behind** the areas generated by the <fo:table-cell>.

The inherited value of a property that applies to <fo:table-column> can still be returned by 'from-table-column()' to set the value of the same property, or of a different property, on an <fo:table-cell> or its descendants. Unlike other Rows, Row 4 has swapped background and text colors. This is because the value of 'background-color' in <fo:table-column> is inherited to the 'color' of <fo:table-cell> by specifying color="from-table-column(background-color)", and the value of 'color' in <fo:table-column> is inherited to 'background-color' in <fo:table-cell> by specifying background-color="from-table-column(color)".