**Who am I?**

From the "variable" above, you'll see that my name is Alexandra (O'Mahony) and I'm applying to the Winter Cohort of Founders and Coders.  
  
About me: well, I love a good challenge. I studied French, Spanish and History at the University of Nottingham. I've used these languages as much as possible to meet new people and learn as much as I can about wherever I am. I've been lucky enough to live abroad and have made the most of that time by learning to dance Salsa, Bachata and Merengue, which I now try to do as often as possible back in London. I also spent a lot of time improving my photography - I've shared a few of my favourites below.  
  
After I graduated, I looked for work in international development. This lead to a role at Deki, a Bristol based micro-loans charity, before moving to the Dominican Republic in early 2018. In the DR I worked for the UN Women e-Learning Campus in the creation of online courses. Issues around migration are what most motivated to look for work with Non-Governmental Organisations. So, I was particularly excited to build on my teaching experiences and contribute to the International Office of Migration's 'Gender in Migration' course.  
  
I've learnt a lot from my experiences so far and still want a future working in development. However, from my time at the e-Learning Campus I learnt that there are so many ways to work in this field. With that in mind, I decided to look a different approach.

**Why Coding?**  
In October 2018 I started in a sales role at Personably in a sales role. I was interested in learning the coding basics so that I could engage more in product meetings. Off the back of this, I was introduced to Code First: Girls. I started their beginners course on the basics of building a website and as the weeks went on I was more and more hooked.  
  
The Personably team helped shift my view of the tech industry. As a young start-up there was a sense that we were all learning together: we worked collaboratively and were encouraged to give candid feedback. I found it exciting to take on projects and see them develop in real time. Another great motivator for me was that our product focussed on improving people's life at work, which I could relate to.  
  
Before Personably, I imagined the tech industry either as a world where people hid behind computer screens never speaking to each other or as a male dominated environment where a sexist culture persisted. Neither of these appealed to me and I'm sure put off a lot of other people, too.  
  
I’ve met a lot of those people through codebar.io, NodeGirls, React.JS Girls that support minorities in tech. I'm now positive about the future of the tech industry and of my place in it.

Why Founders and Coders?

I enjoyed the beginners Code First: Girls course so decided to move on to the Python course, while also using freeCodeCamp to learn more JavaScript. I quickly realised it would be difficult to learn the syntax of two languages at once, so once the course was over, I decided to focus my learning on JavaScript.  
  
Two colleagues at Personably were FAC alumni. Their description of the course environment matched what I was looking for and so, when deciding on a next step in my coding journey, Founders and Coders was the obvious choice.

The main thing that attracts me to FAC is its sense of community and collaborative approach to learning. In all my experiences, the best projects and results have come from bouncing ideas off other people. It's taught me to see things from many more viewpoints, not just my own.

I also really like how each cohort teaches the next and the emphasis on growing a community of FAC alumni that support one another. It reiterates the value of inclusivity in tech and is really cool to see. This ethos and the support available have helped me a lot so far in my learning and so I really want that to continue!  
  
I'm most looking to the second part of the course, when we get to work on the 'Tech for Better' projects. It looks like a really exciting challenge! Coming from a background of working in charities and NGOs these are exactly the kind of projects I want to be working on, while learning.

What have I learnt?  
Well, I could write a very, very long list of things I wish I had known before starting my website! From little things such as making sure the script tags are at the end of the html, and how to use the 'pre' tag, to the big things such as flex box and grids - and of course the carousel struggles! All in all though, I'm really happy with my website and how much I've learnt from Codewars and freeCodeCamp in the past couple of months.   
  
Back in May I watched a talk about the easy steps to introducing basic accessibility into your website by Marcy Sutton at the ReactJS Girls conference. The two main tips I took away were: make sure your entire website can be accessed via the keyboard (e.g. using the tab key, enter etc., not the mouse) and use Chrome developer tools to check the visibility of your font colour vs. background colour. So from the outset of this project, I wanted to build in accessibility. I am really happy with the results and I will continue to consider this a key aspect in any future work.

I also wanted to make sure my personality came across, not just for the viewer but also for myself. My favourite colour is orange and so, using the Chrome dev tools, I found an orange that contrasted well against the white and pale orange background. I have used minimal colours on my website to reflect current web design trends and increase accessibility.  
  
You'll find that you can navigate through all links using the tab and enter keys on the menu or up and down using the arrow keys. I introduced key functions into my carousel JavaScript so you can use the space bar to pause and the left and right arrow keys to scroll through the images.   
  
I learnt from Georgia Shaw on the current cohort that subtle additions such as transitions and smooth scrolling between titles have a big impact on the end product. For me, it's also important to inject a bit of fun. The header "variable," although a little gimicky, was an opportunity to do so, and learn at the same time!   
  
I've focussed on improving the readability of my code. I have rewritten parts of my code as I've learnt new tricks and I'm also now in the habit of writing comments and headers so I can easily return to areas I want to improve.

I think utilising FlexBox in more of the website would improve functionality. I thought that the suggestions I got from the Gitter chat were useful, and while the games helped me identify certain issues, there is still plenty to learn!

Overall, I'm really happy with the finish of my website. I can see the areas I want to improve on and will definitely focus on these in the future.

Notes

Below you'll find links to the other pre-requisites.

I will be out of the country from the 5th-20th of September (over the interview week) on a trip to Cuba, where there is a very limited access to internet. (link shit internet) I organised this back in November 2018, before I knew I'd be applying for FAC.

Please contact me via my email and I will get back to you as soon as possible.