Final Project Reflection Paper, Alex(Chengxi) Peng

What have you changed since the midterm?

Since the midterm, many changes happened with my web design, I move all the existing assessment from an external surveys services provider to internal form building. I was afraid not be able to do so, but turns out was not too bad. Addition pages with more detailed explanation on specific domains of child development were added to be more information for the parents. A description page was also created for each available assessment, do so to provide more accurate description for the users and align their own motivation. The layout and structure of the web has also been changed quite a bit, many unnecessary components were removed to make the website more clean and conscience. Wording throughout the entire program has also been improved dramatically. Based on the feedbacks from the user testing, almost all texts available are now “Children” driven, and instead of asking simple yes or no, not parents have the option to either select “Not sure” and “Not Yet” in the assessment session. A login/registration function was also created to login returning user and registering new one.

What have you learned?

It was a bit challenging for me once again build an entire website from scratch purely based on my completely lack of infor knowledge from the previous HTML class. A lot catch up was needed and overall this is a great learning experience and it was obvious that the smaller class site did in fact help me in some ways to get eh support I needed. The biggest lesson I learn from this designing process is the importance of user testing. The feedbacks from testing users were informative and pointed out some key concerns that I was not even aware of. Based on the feedbacks, I was able to go in and make necessary changes.

What are important factors that you took into consideration?

Factors such as my professional background and knowledge on child development, user testing feedbacks and other objective design principles were taken into consideration during the design process. Due the the amount of hours and work necessary to make the entire website functional, it becomes a bit difficult to choose which components to work on and set the priority. Additional factors such my current knowledge of webdesign and programing skills also significantly impacted this project development. If my knowledge and skills were more mature, I might be able to build a more enrich learning experience.   
What are the challenges you faced? How did you tackle them?

There were many challenges during this semester, such as the lack of basic foundation on html, css and js were kicking in as a result of a poorly inform first term of HTML learning. While other might be already working on animated effects of the overall css code, or design structure to create a more user friendly experience, I was still picking up many basic html programing skills. It was very difficult and add all those extra hours to simply catch up to a level where I should be at. As difficult as it might be, efforts did pay off in some way, as I was able to actually acquire the skills to build my own website. Additional challenge such as trimming down the scope of the website and setting up priority to work on. To tackle these questions, I fully turn to the user feedbacks that I received. By doing so, it gives me the opportunity to changes what are the most important features to the users, not what’s important to me personally.

What kind of user testing did you do? What did they reveal? How did you use your testing results to improve your application?

A group of parents were asked to try out the website and provided detailed feedbacks immediately after using the website in the form of a semi constructed interview. Predefined questions were ask and an open ended feedbacks session was also available for user to address any thoughts and concerns that they have. Testing users have children age range from one to five. Many factors were revealed which have a either positive or negative impact on their user experience. For example, all testing users love the pictures illustration on the assessment pages and found it very informative in terms of the content within each assessment. Based on this advice, additional changes has been made at the home page as well as the team introduction page. On the other hand, many negative feedbacks were also recorded from the interview session. Many such examples were mentioned before in this reflection, here is another example of the feedbacks I received. For instance, the keywords in the home page landing carousel were found to be meaningless and also given up the opportunity to pass on real critical information which might have intern draw in more users attentions. Based on the feedbacks I received, many changes has been made and thus lead to an overall redesign of the website. It was a bit difficult to modify the website based on the feedbacks I received due to my lack of coding capability to do so, but after many hours of learning and trying out, I was able resolve some but not most of the problems pointed by the testing users.

What kind of research did you do? How did they type of research or problem you tackle change through the course?

Many research done for this web project has been focused on the content of information made available for users. Due to the nature of the information we are providing carry out quite potential significant impact on the follow up actions users might take, and to strike for the most accurate and reliable information, researches and readings from accredited institutions such as the CDC, NIH and AAP were taken into account.

What would you do differently the next time you developed this program again?

If I have the opportunity to completely redevelop this program, I would love to have more time to learn and practice additional programming skills to better execute the ideas I have and the feedbacks received from user testing. Also, I would love to actually start to with a survey with parents on what information or materials that they actually want to acquire or learn. In some way, I still believe that the benefit of end users and their take away should remain the priority of similar learning experience. By doing so, we hopefully be able to gather more information for build a more enrich web program to maximum user learning outcomes and minimize the unnecessary material. Overall, this project has been a great learning experience for me and this is definitely much better than the course I took last semester.