

Project 1

Collection Case Study

Introduction

Our first project this term will leverage our knowledge of HTML and CSS, by designing and building a series of pages that exhibit four related concepts, objects, activities, people or places.

An appropriate comparison might be a series of case studies or information graphics, conceived and designed for the web, that showcase the similarities and differences in a collection of things by intelligently organizing information about each. A landing page will allow users to enter the site and make sense of the subservient content.

Expectations

Qualitative

A successful project will be both visually and functionally compelling, while avoiding any critical technological issues. The information presented must be original research (with the exception of any imagery, which may originate in the public domain), and display a sophisticated understanding of its inherent structure.

The selected topic should be reflected throughout the design, using color, typography and imagery effectively. A rationalization of those decisions, as well as the personal relevance of the topic, must be offered when presenting the work.

Types of information that are included must be displayed in a creative, but practical way. Numerical data inherently demands a different expression than long reading text, so a consideration of this implicit difference is critical. In addition to picking a suitable display for this information, the site must standardize that appearance across its pages.

Quantitative

A total of five pages are required:

- One main (home) page that presents the sub pages in a creative and appropriate way, while adding context to the experience.
- Four sub-pages, comparing a minimum of six attributes that the set of objects share.

See the *Example* section for what attributes we might select from if the topic was *Coffee*.

Process

Web projects will, more often than not, require a number of phases that have unique deliverables.

1 Research & Strategy

A good client comes to the table with a clear vision. Because the student is playing client and designer, it's critical that the subject be selected early and not be changed. As a designer, consider what the subject matter can or must dictate about the organization and appearance of the project. Two distinct variations on this organization are required in the form of a content outline

The research and strategy phase concludes with a content outline and two sets of wireframes, representing the structure and placement of content on the page. One diagram each of the homepage and a subpage will be required, *per organizational conceit*.

2 Design

The design phase of Project 1 will be brief. A first round of design will result in two distinct directions that differ in fundamental ways from one another, including their presentation of information, overall layout, and visual theme. These designs correspond to the two content outlines and sets of wireframes produced in Stage 1.

A second pass will yield a polished mockup in InDesign, which will be the canonical guide for development.

3 Engineering

Once a design is established, the development phase begins. HTML is drafted to reflect the organization and hierarchy of data, as established in the content outline and wireframes. CSS is then added to adjust layout and appearance in order to bring the browser's rendering of the website into agreement with the mockups.

Example

Comparison Attributes

A website that offers explanations of different types of coffee might, for each type, include the following attributes:

- Name
- Origin
 - Latitude and Longitude
 - Country
 - Elevation
- Flavor Profile Notes
- History
 - Regional Culture
 - Grower
- Caffeine Content
-

These options offer a variety of granularity and data types. Dig deep, and pick attributes with care— once the list is signed off on, it is the designer's responsibility to represent that information honestly and sensibly, and no changes will be permitted.

Basic Sitemap

Homepage: Coffee Varietals

- Subpage: Ethiopian Harar
- Subpage: Sumatra Lintong
- Subpage: Mundo Novo
- Subpage: K7

Content Outline

Homepage

- Navigation
- Splash image
- Titling
- Introductory text
- Thumbnail images of roasts linking to sub pages and displaying the varietal name
- Footer

Subpages

- Navigation
- Varietal name
- Main image
- Short description
- Statistics Box (Elevation, Tasting Notes, Country of Origin)
- Region History
- Footer

Presentation

Students will be accountable for a small-group presentation, based on the following criteria:

Context

The presenter offers personal and topical context. Why did they pick this subject? What needed clarification about the content they chose to compare?

Goals

Before discussing solutions, the student should be able to articulate what issues exist with communicating their chosen topic on the Internet. Are the different types of data and their presentation appropriate for the context?

Technology

Projects employ appropriate technology, and the decisions to use them can be supported by pointing to specific needs relating to the content or presentation itself.

Evaluation

The project's design and build will be graded on three categorical criteria.

Design

The design is representative of a thorough design process, and shows that the designer puts equal emphasis on practicality as expression of content. The designer is an advocate of the content, throughout their process, and allows it to speak without interference. Designs that explore alternative contexts than strictly informational ones will be rewarded. Examples of such integrations might be an eCommerce, Museum or Quiz website, each requiring a unique set of considerations and additional functionality.

Architecture

As a resource on the Internet, the site solves core structural problems with communicating the subject matter in a meaningful and straightforward way. Consistency and relevance of the display of information is key. The site is as understandable without a sophisticated stylesheet as with one. Wireframes and all strategy work is evaluated as part of this mark.

Engineering

The proper HTML and CSS features were used to accomplish the stated design language, layout, typographic and informational hierarchy and use of imagery.

Important Dates

Step	Date	Format
Topic Selection	15 October	Slack Post
Design Ideas	20 October	“Pitch” to Professor
Final Design	22 October	Slack Post
Development	22 October–3 November	Twice-weekly Slack check-in
Critique	3 November	Group Presentations

All deadlines are assumed 9AM, that day, unless otherwise noted on the class website.