LUT University

Software Development Skills Front-End Online Course

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LEARNING DIARY

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Starting the Course & Speculations + Personal Goals

Today is the day I chose to begin this course. I have acquired knowledge regarding front-end development via Introduction to Web-Programming course hosted by LUT-University and Front-End Development Libraries course hosted by FreeCodeCamp. Despite feeling like I am starting this course with a decent background; I approach this course with an open mind.

This course is taken by me as an opportunity to fix some of the shortcomings that I feel like I am currently facing in front-end development. For instance, I completed a bunch of Sass exercises via FreeCodeCamp, but have mostly forgotten how to precisely use it. Learning Sass effectively is a preliminary goal that I would wish to set upon myself; in order to guarantee I can use it in the future, in both my personal projects and potentially in whatever company would hire me in the future.

Video 1 – Introduction to Workflow and Sass

After planning my approach, I decided to start watching the first video of the course, while simultaneously planning my work setup. I chose to go with Visual Studio Code, a traditional choice for me. Most other requirements, such as Git and Node.js are already familiar enough for me, thus they have been installed before starting the course. I set everything up according to the video. The biggest thing I learned (or re-learned) was how Sass compiles the styling into a .css file, in addition to all the written code, as I literally remember absolutely nothing from the FreeCodeCamp Sass exercises.

Video 2 – Homepage and Core Sass/CSS

After setting up my project with the help of the first video, I chose to watch the second video covering the home page and first stylize changes with Sass. When using Sass, I feel that it can do what CSS does, but also implements plenty of "advanced" ways to improve the appearance of the HTML page. I enjoy how implementing these does not look chaotic when writing the .scss. I like keeping code clean, thus being able to organize things into variables, for instance, helps a lot.

It's wild how I have forgotten about everything I learned about Sass via FreeCodeCamp. I guess it is because it fell out of use after the exercises. After using it once again, the bar to use it over basic CSS seems so low and it has so many cool things that I might want to start replacing it with Sass. I look forward to finding out more next time.

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Video 3 – Rotating Menu Button

By watching the third video of this course, I was able to see how front-end tools may behave weirdly even on the video creator's side. I have encountered similar issues in the past, but this serves as a reminder that these minor inconveniences are, at times, inevitable.

Other than the reminder mentioned above, the video mainly got me deeper into knowledge regarding Sass. The :nth-child command was the biggest takeout for me. I have already developed a fascination for Sass, and I am getting increasingly convinced that it is what could be better for me than basic CSS styling. Other than that, this video was "business as usual".

Video 4 – Menu Overlay & Responsiveness

The fourth video showed how translate3d can help make webpages appear more dynamic with cool transitions. I also witnessed the usage of styling to scale the page for various screen sizes to make it suitable for different devices. This is something that I consider an area I could improve upon, as I have never used it in my personal projects. After noticing that my project did not properly handle the nav-item transition, I had to spend some time debugging and ended up realizing my JS file queryselector had an extra letter in the parameter.

Video 5 – Page With CSS Grid

In this video, the most relevant things for me were using Sass to use grid for styling and showing how to further make changes for smaller devices. While I've been able to develop front-end, I perceive it as good-looking, I have not put enough attention to making sure it looks good in other devices. While this video had me following how to code Sass, the things I wrote made me think about implementing them in other projects. I have made plenty of GitHub projects by now, but implementing these necessities would improve what I perceive to be quality.

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Video 6 – Work and Contact Pages

I watched what seems to be the final coding video, as the next one handles the deployment. Along with the video, I programmed the pages for my projects and contact information. When it comes to learning new things, this video was about the same: more usage of Sass. I took a look into the CSS file that the Sass script was converted into, and I have come to the conclusion that I prefer Sass. VSCode has a pleasant syntax highlighting extension and I like the process of writing Sass.

Post-video Personalization

After watching all the coding videos (deployment video has not been viewed yet), I chose to personalize the project into something that suits me better.

Here is a list of changes I made:

- Darker primary color, dark red secondary color
- Fifth page for a slideshow (done according to the video on Moodle)

- All "John Doe" text replaced with my information or other placeholders for privacy reasons
- JavaScript function to automatically set the current year for copyright
- Red text to help modularize text further in the bio section
- A different font

Video 7 – Deployment

After the personalization, I got ready to deploy the site. Initially I had issues, as I thought I handled the links within both HTML and CSS in a smart way by defining them all the way from the root. Turns out this is not ideal when deploying, thus moving from a page to another did not initially work. It did not take me long to realize this, so I was able to solve it rather quickly.

When it comes to the tools required to deploy the project, gh-pages worked well, as it created a dedicated branch in my GitHub repository for the necessities. Now my site runs like it should. Github.io is not a new thing for me, as I used it in FreeCodeCamp in order to have my projects ready to pass the tests.

Conclusion

I really enjoyed this course. It was practical and made me further explore front-end development. Although most of the things in this course were already familiar to me, I appreciate Sass a lot and wish to keep using it in the future because I can see the beauty of it.