**Prog 109 Final Portfolio Submission Questions**

Answers by Cary Gibson:

* **What was your previous knowledge of HTML/CSS/JavaScript?**

Nada. I knew HTML was the “language” that web sites were coded in. I knew JavaScript existed and was some sort of coding “protocol” used in websites. I had heard the term cascading style sheets but had no idea what they were.

* **Did you use a template or did you build your portfolio from scratch?**

I built everything from scratch. I looked over the templates but wanted a site that could expand and contract for the most part. All the templates were simple plug your stuff in and play, which is, of course, why they were “templates”. However, they were also all static sized which I didn’t like. Of course, the direct benefit to me is that while it was a rough go, I got to learn a bunch of under the cover type stuff that I otherwise don’t think I would have.

* **What was your most challenging part of your portfolio (IE, the template, artifacts, CSS, etc.)**

This has to be the CSS and the way <div> elements interact and behave.

Let’s talk <div> first. <div> elements will simply not be visible unless they have something visible in them. If you set their height to say 100 and put a border on them, the only visible effect is a double horizontal line of your “border”. Once you put something in them like text or a picture, THEN they show up and will adjust their height accordingly, mostly. A <div> inside a <div>? Nope still nothing showing. BUT it will take up a line worth of space! What is more perplexing is if you have a div of say height 100, then put images inside that are size 100 but placed at relative top of 50 (so half of them extend beyond the bottom of the initial height of the div, then the div will NOT resize its height to include them! If you don’t set the height property it does but with a height property it won’t! It will allow them to stick out! That can cause all sorts of unwanted behavior (I have the brain scars to prove it!)

Now let’s consider the CSS properties of “position” and “margin”. At this point, I think we all know that if you want to horizontally center an item in any container or even in just the window, you use “margin: 0px, auto;”. Works Every time, right? Eh… well… err…. Nope. IF you set the position property to “fixed” then the margin trick will not work. Every other position property it works fine with but not “fixed”. If you try to then manually center it by saying something like “margin: 0% 1% 0% 1%” you end up with getting the effect of something like you would expect from “margin 0% 3% 0% 0.5%”. Now admittedly, I’ve been working in Firefox with the element’s left location set to 0, so this might be just peculiar to it, but I don’t think so.

If I look a little balder and older after this class, the above are the reasons why!

* **How taking this class changed your view on Web Development?**

I have a serious respect for at least the first HTML, CSS and JavaScript programmers. Having to deal with variable browser implementations of it all as well as what I perceive as quirks in the standards (like described above) means they probably have more brain scars than me for sure!

* **What would you recommend to future students taking this class?**

This quarter I’ve taken both Prog 109 and Prog 209 simultaneously. It’s clear that Prog 109 gets you way way deeper into the guts of web programming. I always prefer to know how the guts work even if I end up using a much higher-level developing environment. This is because if you know how it works at the low levels, then if something goes haywire with your top-level stuff, you can go back to the low level to figure out what went wrong.

So, as far as a recommendation: Go way above and beyond what the assignments ask, any time you have the time and can. Push the limits. Think of something cool to do or that you have seen and try to do it. You will learn way way more that way.