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Web Development  
Assignment 3: Critique of Website

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## Critique

The following is a report on my implementation of the Astronomy Ireland website. In this, I hope to outline, as succinctly as possible, my methodologies, my design choices, and, as impartially as I can, I will evaluate the effectiveness of this implementation. To achieve these objectives, I propose to structure this report as follows:

1. Firstly, I will examine each individual webpage and discuss my approach to its design. Topics of discussion may include style choices, responsiveness, a discuss of JavaScript functionality (where appropriate) and any other related items.
2. Moreover, after each individual webpage is discussed, I will then summarize in what I believe to be the strong points of the design and how they each contribute to the overall effectiveness of the website.
3. Subsequently, I will then determine the weak points of the website and how they negatively take away from the overall effect.
4. A list of recommendations will then be made, based on these weaker aspects, to determine possible ways in which this website can be improved.
5. Finally, a conclusion will follow this report.

## Home page

Overall, I believe the design choices and responsiveness of this webpage are implemented very well and, consequently, create a satisfying visual effect. Three separate media queries exist for mobile, desktop and tablet and, as determined by the wireframes, the page is separated into essentially three main components: a header, main-body, and a footer. The header consists of a spaced-themed, hero image and, moreover, consists of a logo, navigation bar and search bar. The main body is broken into three distinct sections: a main paragraph of information, a subsequent image, and four cards, with contain call-to-action buttons that redirect the user to other sections of the webpage (although these CTAs are here for appearance and do not actually have functionality). Finally, the footer section is composed of three separate components, which outline the third-party website accreditation, site links and social media icons. This template, especially the header and footer sections, is important, as it is used and varied within all other sections of the website to promote consistency of appearance.

Responsivity of these elements when viewed on different screens is effective and all elements generally align nicely on different screens. In particular, the navigation bar appears very well on the website and, with the use of these separate media queries, the elements on this do not appear cluttered on the website. Overall, responsivity is certainly one of the strongest aspects of the page design.

Regarding the styling of elements, moreover, most colours are derived from the spaced themed header image and are used to determine the colours of all main elements not only on this webpage, but on the entire website. For example, the pink colour, seen very clearly, is used for many heading elements on the website and is used for call-to-action buttons on other webpages, such as the Contact Us webpage. Similarly, the navigation bar is styled with these colours, the 'active' option features this pink colour too. Moreover, the darker navy colour, seen in this image too, is used to style the background colour of the footer. Correspondingly, the smoke-white colour is also used with the website, most prominently

seen on the main title on the heading. Furthermore, in relation to the font type, Space Mono – a font downloaded from Google fonts – is used for many of the titles and headings; this felt like a very natural selection to communicate the Astronomy themes within the website. Overall, I believe that the colours combine well within the website and feel stylistically appropriate to the nature of the website.

However, there are certain elements that, in hindsight, should perhaps have been executed more carefully. For example, the main logo – found on this page and every other – is slightly ineffective. While the positioning of it is fine, the text present on it is somewhat illegible, especially on smaller screens, and the background colour of this element does not blend well against the header background. Moreover, the background colours for the cards, found on the main body of the webpage, may have been more effective with the use of darker colours, such as the one in the footer. Colours such as these would further communicate the Astronomy theme of the website more clearly, as there is maybe a surplus of white space at these points. These aspects, in a reimplementing of the website, would certainly be refined and modified.

### [Contact us and confirm page](#)

Like the home page, this section is presented very neatly and adopts a similar template, with a header, main body, and footer. The main body is presented with a different grid structure; this time a two-column layout is selected with form details and a corresponding image on the right. Moreover, the header image is different to the home page but, however, it does contain very similar colours and themes to enable it to remain congruous with the other block levels on this webpage. For example, to illustrate this point, this image contains similar shades of navy and purple/pink to remain consistent with the home page and the other pages within the website. Overall, because of these choices, the page feels very consistent within the website and maintains a strong visual identity.

Moreover, this webpage employs JavaScript to enable the form to be processed appropriately. For example, the form employs validation features for certain key components, including checks for the correct formation of data (e.g. no numbers are allowed in the name text field) and it importantly ensures that each of the text fields are populated before completion. Once these validation checks are correctly negotiated, the form processes the data and sends it to the confirmation page via a local storage cookie and the user can view the data that was created. When using Google Chrome, this JavaScript functionality works correctly and is a very useful and vital feature to this webpage.

However, while successful for the most part, there are certain aspects of the design that are weaker, and the page would benefit greatly if these were reevaluated. Firstly, the chief concern, and a glaring oversight, is that the page only contains a media query for desktop. All elements consequently feel cluttered on smaller screens; this aspect did not address this requirement of the brief. Moreover, like the home page, the logo is not effective on this header either, and, like the cards on the home page, the form may have benefitted for the use of darker shades to remain consistent with the space theme. These aspects should have been more carefully considered when implementing this webpage.

## Store

Again, adopting a similar template to the other webpages discussed already, this webpage consists of a header, main body, and footer. This time, unlike the Contact Us and Confirm page, there are separate media queries for tablet, desktop and mobile, with slightly different grid structures. The main body, on all screens, consists of an input text field requiring the users' name, and card-based information that outlines item titles, prices, and item descriptions (all items were derived from the existing Astronomy Ireland website). Generally, this is a simplistic layout, with an emphasis on conveying the item details as clearly as possible.

Moreover, like the Contact Us webpage, the store webpage employs the use of JavaScript and cookies to enhance page functionality. However, unlike the other webpages, this use of Javascript functionality is not as comprehensive or as effective. While on Firefox, an alert message is issued to the user successful with their name and a relevant cookie is stored, the intention was also to alter the inner HTML heading of the 'Store Title' and, after much effort, the effect was unfortunately not achieved. This is perhaps due a certain synthetic error within the Javascript code but was difficult to identify, as the console, nor I, could source what the issue was.

However, while this certainly is a concern, the stylistic elements of the website remained consistent with the overall website themes and are effective. The header image, like before with other webpages, is changed but the colour scheme remains very congruous with all block level features on the webpage. Moreover, while the design is certainly simplistic, the items and images are effectively aligned with each other. These features contribute to overall satisfying presentation of elements.

## Gallery

As before, the gallery adopts the three-section structure, and, once again, a slightly different grid layout for the main body container. This time, the main body is composed a large image and four smaller thumbnails, all of which can be interacted with. The footer and header elements consist of a very similar structure to the other pages already mentioned.

To provide this interactivity for the main body, Javascript is once again used to navigate between images. When the user clicks on the next and previous options, underneath the four thumbnails, the large, main image is altered with the corresponding thumbnail.

Moreover, the user may elect to view the images by hovering the cursor over the selected thumbnail. Both approaches, when tested on the Google Chrome browser work effectively and there were no bugs noticed when utilizing these features.

However, there are some slight design and presentation flaws when using this functionality. While all the thumbnails are very similar in size, the changing main image, despite downloading all at the same dimensions, can be slightly uneven when navigating through the gallery. In retrospective, it would have been more effective to download all the images in a similar landscape or portrait orientation, as that would have allowed for a smoother transition between elements. Moreover, like the Contact Us page, an essential media query is once again missing for mobile phone, this is likewise another oversight. These elements, if the website was to be improved further, would certainly be included.

## About Us

Correspondingly, this webpage consists of the same three component template. In this case, the main body grid now adopts a one column layout, with a two main bodies of text, detailing a possible history and a description of products, and, furthermore, a large image used as separator between information and footer. Again, like the other webpages, the header image is changed but still adopts a similar colour scheme to provide consistency between webpages.

Generally, this is one of the more simplistic webpages, in terms of design, but the layout communicates the information effectively. The border, that surrounds the main paragraphs of information, is effective and provides clarity to the content. Moreover, the paragraph lengths are short and concise and, as a result, the information does not feel cluttered while reading. Moreover, the sans-serif/Calibri text works well to improve readability of these block-level elements.

However, on the topic of readability, the page layout may have been more effective with the more frequent use of white space on the webpage. While the main body of information is surrounded by a smoky-white colour, the separators between the main information and the large image may have been more effective if there was more white space. Moreover, the separator between the footer and the large image may have benefited for a lot more white space, as the elements feel somewhat cramped and do not have sufficient room. On a hypothetical revaluation of the website, these criticisms would certainly be considered.

## Style Choices

In terms of design, this certainly is certainly the most experimental when it came to design and JavaScript functionality. Again, this webpage page has a similar trend to the overall design methodologies of the website; it adopts the three-section model, and the header image is once again changed. The main body this time consists of a two-column layout, with corresponding images and text used in sequence.

However, this webpage contains unique - although somewhat arbitrary - features, to illustrate the stylistic choices of the webpage. Again, like the Gallery and Contact Us pages, this page employs the use of JavaScript to allow for more interactivity. This is seen primarily in three call-to-action buttons that allow the user to modify certain elements of the webpage, to hopefully illustrate the stylistic choices of the overall website. For example, one of the CTAs allow the user to change a heading with a serif font to the Space Mono font, to illustrate the difference and style choice. Moreover, while it would never feature in a professional scenario, as a default, the footer colour is omitted when the page loads. By clicking the first CTA, the user is able to see the exact shade being implemented. These features, while certainly gimmicks, most importantly work, and demonstrate an aspect of JavaScript use.

However, while these features are demonstrating a further use of this programming language, the main body layout and positioning of items may have been implemented more smoothly. In particular, the images feel somewhat cluttered within the grid layout and would have benefited with better borders and more distinct positioning. Moreover, again like certain other pages mentioned, a mobile query should have been implemented to provide clarity to users of smaller screens. These features do negate from an otherwise interesting webpage.

## Validation page

The webpage employs an almost identical structure to the Store webpage, without the use of JavaScript functionality. The cards feature very similar descriptions to the store items, except this time without elaborate descriptions. The HTML and CSS files were all validated using the W3 schools validation tools for HTML and CSS.

## The positives

Overall, as outlined in the report, there are several strong aspects of the overall web design that show a good understanding of website development fundamentals. Among them, and perhaps the websites greatest asset, is that the page has a good visual identity and consistency. In particular, the colour schemes and the selection of images was effective and, for the most part, the themes of Astronomy and outer space was communicated convincingly. Moreover, JavaScript functionality, apart from the store page, functioned correctly and was demonstrated in a variety of contrasting scenarios. In particular, the form on the Contact Us page was validated comprehensively and, furthermore, the retrieval of items on Local Storage on the confirmation page was done sufficiently. These aspects provide a solid foundation for the website design and the interactive web-experience.

## The negatives

However, despite strong principles, there was sometimes a certain lack of attention to detail with certain components of the website. As illustrated in the report, the biggest flaw and oversight was, for certain webpages, there was sometimes an absence of mobile media queries. While this was done under the false assumption that the web design must follow the wireframe prototypes, the brief was not read carefully, and this essential feature was sometimes missing. Moreover, on a smaller scale, certain design choices should have been made more carefully. The logo, for instance, may have been more effective in helping to contribute to visual identity. Moreover, the lack of JavaScript functionality on the store page was certainly disappointing and this retrieval of cookies was an aspect that needed closer attention. These aspects, to name a few, would need to be considered in a possible re-implementation.

## Recommendations

The following is a list of some possible recommendations for improving the website:

1. Mobile media queries for all webpages.
2. A recreation of a more compelling logo.
3. More white space in certain webpages.
4. Improved JavaScript functionality on the store webpage
5. Darker, space-themed colours on the cards.
6. Better image selection for some of the main images in the gallery.
7. More prominent use of call-to-action buttons.

## Conclusion

Overall, I believe that it is appropriate to say that most of the objectives of the brief were followed sufficiently. While there was sometimes a certain lack of attention to detail in certain aspects, the essential components of the website were designed carefully effectively, with a good ability to follow the design of the wireframes. I believe that the implementation, correspondingly, was generally a success and, undoubtedly, the principles obtained from such a project will serve well in the implementations of future websites.