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Capstone Reflection

400-plus hours, multiple assignments, soft skills refinement, and a lot of late nights led to this one practical project. This semester was the culmination of all our hard work over the last couple of years and based on the amazing presentation, it paid off. My team, TreaCode, were asked to build a site for The Francis Allen School, which is a school for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities here in Little Rock. The school has a long history of helping children reach their greatest potential and we wanted to be sure we built them a site that reflected their professionalism and dedication.

Our team started by breaking down our group into desired roles to maximize our time and effectiveness. The role breakdowns are as follows:

- Project Manager: Mariam Bouzihay
- Design Creator: Brittany Fugate
- Content Manager: Latia Harris
- Developer: Daniel Condit

With roles assigned, we started analyzing the previous website and identifying deficiencies, updates, and improvements we could make for the client. We also started writing out questions to ask the client during the first meeting. With the initial analysis and questions done we felt confident about our initial planning session.

After the meeting with the client we came away with some clear deliverables and better game plane to get the site built. Each of us took to our roles and started to form the site in WordPress (WP), which was the hardest part. The learning curve for WP was a bit higher than anticipated and caused us to lose a lot of time during those initial weeks. Despite the initial set back, we found plugins that worked well for what we needed and willed WP to do what we wanted, allowing the content to click into place like a digital puzzle.

Once we got our rhythm, the site started to take form. This, unfortunately, is where we got complacent. Thinking we had the site well in hand and with looming absences on the horizon for a few of us, we didn't see the deadline fast approaching. Amazed at how fast eight weeks can fly by we got together, identified what we were missing and redoubled our efforts to get the site completed. Working up until the deadline of the presentation, tweaking things here and there we were able to complete the site and present something we were all proud of.

The big challenges we faced throughout this project were communication and time management. It was a difficult thing to get us all in one place to work on the project to any great

extent. Once we were together there was not a lot of communication about the process each of us were working on. I found myself waiting for team members to be done and then going back through to make sure everything was linked and styles flowed through all pages. Another issue with time was getting current content and feedback from the client over the course of the project so we could check deliverables off our list. Once we got feedback we pressed on to completion.

Overcoming the communication was another issue. It was hard to track workflows or tasks and collaborate extensively with team members. I found each of us working independently with few of us going behind and peacing stuff together. This got better towards the end as the project manager and I took more control of the project to get it done and everyone filled in the gaps. In the end we worked through the communication deficiency and got our time controlled to produce a great product.

Overall the project was a great learning experience in a real world environment, providing great insight into the client developer relationship and process. Keeping the client expectations in check as well as delivering a professional, clean site in a timely manner is a balancing act that can only be taught through real world experience. I enjoyed the process, the challenge it provided, and most importantly providing The Allen School with a professional clean website they can be proud of.