This Website

9/13/2021

Toggle the switch bellow to sort things between what I think is the most related to mechanical engineering or what I think is most cool.

**Summary**

I spent a good amount of time making this so of course I’m going to include it!

**But why though?**

This summer I told myself I would learn how to use React. I had built a simple html website before, but it was more like a resume with personality, and I didn’t like how it looked. I wanted a website to showcase my projects, for it to be easy to update, and to look nice!

**How I made it**

This summer I got into cyanotyping which is where you paint some chemicals onto paper or fabric, expose it to the sun, and develop it in water to form a blue image. I like how cyanotypes look so I made this website look like one of my prints! All the textures you see come from a free texture pack from true grit texture supply I recently got.

Some of the cyanotypes I made this summer

The framework was simple. I wanted a little header with my face and links to my LinkedIn and GitHub and a bunch of cards for my projects. Each card is a react component that reads an object with all the information for each project. To create a new project, I add it to the object and my site automatically makes a card for it!

I’m planning on showing this website to recruiters but I also want to put all the projects I work on here so I created a switch that sorts the projects between what I would want to show a recruiter and show my friends. Getting an animation for when the cards switch was difficult. React re renders components by deleting them and re adding them to the dom of a website, so programming an animation function by hand was completely above my head. I decided to use the React Flip Move library <https://github.com/joshwcomeau/react-flip-move>

Because I would rather spend my time making the rest of the website.

Having a massive page with all my projects wasn’t practical or pretty so I modified my card component to expand if the user wanted to learn more about the project it displays. This was particularly challenging to me because I had to use a ref to calculate the height of the card to animate the card expanding and contracting. I also had to store the state of expansion of each card in an array one level up from the card because when an opened card got moved by my switch the card that took its position would open instead of the original card.

After my fun part of making the framework, I got to write all the content. Writing is not exactly my favorite thing but writing about stuff I’m interested in has been alright. Its forcing me to do a better job of documenting the stuff I do which is important to show recruiters and just nice to look back at.

**What I learned**

I think I got better at project management skills while making this website. I put thought into what the purpose of this website would be and what I needed to get done while working on it. It took me four days to create the framework which is pretty good despite my inexperience with react. I am trying to get better at documentation so I kept a log of my progress which I will for sure do with my future projects.