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Final Rationale

I'm a Computer Science major, and as a result, I work on lots of projects. I think that a personal site would be a great way for me to show off my work, achievements, and fields of interest. Whether I'm looking for a project partner, or looking to show a potential employer my skills, this site should be my means to communicate this. It looks much more impressive to have a personal site filled with projects than to be sending huge files across emails, and I'm very excited about this project.

My audience is slightly more professional than my group of friends, but slightly less professional than if it were solely to be used for job hunting and recruitment. It's not something that I would expect to mean a ton much to an HR representative, content wise at least, but for an engineering lead, or a project manager, it might give an idea of who I am and what I can do. This website is planned for others in the technical field, so I'll be assuming a bit of knowledge and technical proficiency on their part.

After the Professor pointed out CSS Zen Garden, I was hooked. Even though P1M2 had already passed, I decided to redo my entire website. My theory was that if my site didn't feel as professional as these, it was probably time to redo it. Side bars, after looking at all these sites, seemed like a must. I didn't feel like my website had enough content to pull off a top bar, like sites such as Facebook might. It just didn't feel like the right design for a personal site. That was the first thing I wanted to redo. I decided on a right side bar, for a few reasons. Sites traditionally start with a left sidebar, but I wanted to evaluate that. On entering a homepage, with a layout with a left sidebar, the eyes are first drawn to the sidebar. I wanted to focus on the content first, and have the nav bar be an afterthought. I thought it would look nice if my content area was tucked in nicely to the side of the page area.

My next goal was a theme. Many of the CSS pages just looked nice, but the best ones, in my opinion, had a theme. I needed to think of a theme, one that wasn't too cheesy, and wasn't too unprofessional, and just looked generally nice, impressive, and clean. As of my mark up for P1M3, I basically knew what I wanted my site to look like. My first option was just black and dark blue, just nice, clean and sleek. However, it just seemed pretty boring to me. I then thought of a site with a nice sun, sky, and hills. I got a friend to help me with a logo, and designed a top bar. I then hunted for colors. I picked out shades of blue and green, classic sky and hill colors. Then, I hunted for colors that matched. I went online to a color scheme generator, and searched for colors that went along with it. The tan seemed like a good content area, and the orange went nicely both in the sky and on the tan. I now had the beginnings of a design scheme.

For content, I just thought about what would be important for someone looking to know my professional experience to see. I had a main splash page, just an intro to the site. I briefly considered having my about me page be on the home page, but I thought conceptually it wasn't right to make the main page a

page with any significant content. I then planned out what content I'd need. User testing helped me get the content in order. First, an employer wants to find out who I am, and they check my about me page. They learn my interests, where I'm from, and some of my experience. Then, they want to find out my specific experience. They go to my projects page, learn about my true technical experience and things I've worked on. Now, hopefully they're interested in me. They go to my resume, to see if I'd actually be suitable for the job. Now, they're sold on me, and ready to hire me. They go to my contact me page to get in touch.

My about me page may be worked on in the future, but I wanted to keep it short and simple for now. It gives a glimpse of who I am and my interests. My projects page has a nice simple layout, every project supplemented by a picture, to form a sort of "gallery". I had first decided on a carousel model for my projects page, but I found that this was an awful design scheme. It wasn't easy to see all of my work at once, and it would be pretty unintuitive for a user. I decided on a top down layout of the projects, picture followed by text vertically, because it scales well for any width, and it's easily extendible if I decide to add projects. The resume was modeled after my actual resume, I basically formatted it the same way. On my contact me page, I had first copied buttons from linkedin and twitter, but then decided it'd be nicer to make my own, after seeing a friend's site. I searched on some icon websites, and found a set that I liked, and was licensed appropriately. I love the way it ended up looking against the tan background, especially because the colors were orange and blue.

After some testing with a few of my friends (Sample Users), I made several changes to my design, and my functionality. Initially, all of my links were just differently colored, but I noticed that it was hard to notice for users, so I re-added an underline. I usually don't like the underlines, but it is the universal symbol for a hyperlink, and functionality is my number one concern. Also when talking to users, they commented that my cloud logo at the top didn't take us back to the home page, and that most websites happen to do that. I quickly and easily added that, and I think that looks nice. I found the feedback cycle very useful; it definitely helped me develop my site for the users I was targeting, my peers and fellow engineers.

I think my website appeals to all audiences I'm looking to appeal to. For engineers, my site is functional, usable, and displays my information intelligently and impressively. For a less technical employer, my site is nice, simple, and clean, and everything an employer could be looking for is easy to find. Even to an elderly person, unfamiliar with computer, it's a nice looking site, and it's very simple.

I made what I think are a few "interesting" design choices. I used lowercase for my nav bar, and all headers. This adds to the minimalist theme that's very in now. It looks soft, casual, and friendly. I made a cool bar for my headers, by making a div that I filled with a gradient from orange to tan. I also think that my icons on the contact me page were rather unconventional, but ended up blending really nicely, and coming across as very professional, like I was a true web designer.