

Gus McGaraghan

Professor Lawson

Web Development

April 19, 2025

1. What was your experience in using React+Vite for building web apps compared to "rolling your own" using HTML, CSS, & JavaScript?

I think the strength of these tools comes in their ability to create and import components. Using only HTML, CSS, and JS seems almost archaic, because it requires writing many many lines of code to achieve something that can be done with an external tool. Local hosting also makes live development much quicker.

2. What are the primary takeaways you had from reading Krug's book and your corresponding analysis of sites?

I think this book helped me understand the thought that goes into every little decision developers make. Every design aspect has to be incredibly conscious, because a little change could vastly shift the way a user interacts with your webpage.

3. What is the importance of accessibility (give a few explicit examples), and what steps can (and should) you take in assessing the accessibility of your site?

The biggest examples that really stood out to me were colorblindness and keyboard accessibility. If your site is inaccessible enough that you entirely block out a subsection of users, you are blatantly discriminating on multiple different

bases. I feel this matters because the internet is a public space, and excluding people means denying equal access to information, services, and opportunities.

4. In what ways did the different design sprints, and use of Figma, help you in thinking about what an end product should look like and how it should function?

Each sprint pushed me to think more deliberately about layout, flow, and how users would interact with different features. Using Figma was especially helpful because it let me visualize and iterate on designs quickly, get feedback, and spot problems in the UI before writing any code. It basically turned abstract ideas into something concrete and testable, which clarified both how the product should look and how it should function.

5. What takeaways do you have from working with AI/LLMs through Cursor (or similar) in building web applications?

I really think understanding these tools and knowing how to use them effectively will be super important for young professionals in software development. Working with AI and LLMs like Cursor or CoPilot really accelerated the development process and getting quick answers without leaving the editor. It also taught me to think more critically about code suggestions, since not everything AI generates is optimal or correct.

6. What was your favorite thing (or deemed most useful) that we covered this semester, and why?

Like I said above, I think knowing how to use AI tools will make me a better programmer and a more competitive candidate for jobs moving forward. I loved

knowing how to hone prompt and project requests, and also the limitations and pitfalls of these sorts of LLM tools/models.

7. What do you wish we had covered, or had covered in more detail, and why?

I think a better understanding of web hosting and Google firebase would have been good. Since a lot of websites require some sort of stored user data, or user interaction that requires authentication it would have been useful to have more of a deep dive on the subject.