Web Development Reflective Essay

Roles and contributions

In my experience, selecting roles was not in any way, shape or form, a difficult process. We worked under a "First-come, first-served" basis the first 2 weeks. Since the workload did not require extensive planning in the beginning, each person said which task they are going to do from the assignment in a way where there were no conflicts. Once writing HTML and CSS was involved, each person took a page to work on, once again on a "first-come first-served" basis. If one was doing extensive HTML layouts one week and another was doing more CSS, the next week their roles would be shifted.

Each team member contributed accordingly, there was never a case of one team member disproportionately over-committing or under-committing for each task. An immense deciding factor in the amount of work one would do in a week was their lifestyle outside of university tasks. We were all understanding to one another as academic progress can never be more important than family and physical and mental health. Whenever someone needed a break, they would inform beforehand and they would do more for the next task to compensate. Personally, I was blessed with incredibly responsible teammates and no productivity or task-distribution rules needed to be discussed more in-depth than on a superficial level.

I was amazed by everyone's planning and timeliness. I would like to list the best contributions of me and my teammates. This is only a highlight of our best, this is not saying someone did nothing else apart from what I have mentioned, nor does it mean all other tasks were done in a less satisfactory manner, quite the opposite – everyone was reliable, willing to learn, willing to help others learn, and most of all – a team player. Jacques was incredible when it came to editing, wireframes, and HTML, Shikhar and Yuli were great planners and made outstanding contributions towards HTML and CSS. I was doing a little bit of everything, but I would say that my skills with CSS grew immensely with this project. Last but not least, Ilya was absolutely incredible at the final polish he gave the website. It transformed it from a student project to something that would be market-competitive was it a full time endeavour. I really admire him for the professional he is and his real-life work experience with websites was an incredible learning experience.

Your use of HTML and CSS

Regarding my use of HTML – HTML was my first language I experimented with during my teens. It was a delight to find that most of my knowledge had stayed and it assisted me in writing and navigating code very easily. Of course, thanks to the Web Development course, I was able to evolve my HTML and use it more purposefully. This was my biggest take-away when working with HTML. I believe being a mark-up language it is often underestimated when discussing coding. However, I could not disagree more. Each language, no matter its purpose or capabilities has

intricacies and best practices to be learned and embraced, HTML and CSS are no exception. Code is ultimately created to be read and understood by humans. Making code understandable to a computer is the easy part. Making code easy to navigate for people, on the other hand, is an art form. I believe I performed well in creating and editing lists, working with various tags, and providing good format and structure to my code.

What I believe I lack in is experience. I would love to say I am currently an HTML & CSS expert and can create professional-grade code as second-nature, but that would be an extremely unrealistic claim.
My main struggles with HTML and CSS are optimisation (picking the right tag/option/structure for what is needed), and trying not to bloat or overcomplicate simple solutions. I also believe I should expand my arsenal when it comes to CSS and I want to learn more features to expand my toolset when using it. Due to the vast amount of tools it provides, sometimes pin-pointing how to implement a solution is less of an issue than what to use to implement it.

I believe adding additional functionalities to tags, such as inline styling can be really powerful and under the hands of a skilled web developer it could be the difference between writing a solution in 10 lines and writing the same solution on a single line. I also believe HTML as a concept holds great power. When things shine is through the use of CSS. I was astonished at how much cross-platform flexibility a website can have through only CSS. My best guess before engaging with CSS would be that some form of JS code is the main contributor to websites looking different on desktop and mobile but I was definitely not expecting so much of that to be mainly attributed to CSS. That is incredibly useful in my opinion.

Positive aspects of your team work experience

Working in a team was an enriching experience. I remember being a teenager and making practice websites on my own. Looking back, the amount of work I would have been able to do on my own would have been a magnitude of times smaller than what we were able to achieve as a unit. The process of selecting who will do what and holding accountability for your quality of work to others was a daunting thought at first. I love doing projects but getting feedback was always an anxiety-filled endeavour. I am happy to say that all of these pre-emptive thoughts were proved wrong from the first moment. The atmosphere was incredibly casual and light-hearted yet tasks were handled responsibly. I could learn from and alongside other people, and we could easily make mistakes and receive feedback on how to fix them. I never felt judged, in fact I felt appreciated.

Negative aspects of your team work experience

I believe having teammates selected on random can have its cons. Firstly, while talking to people from various points of the globe was exciting, it would sometimes be hard to get a grasp of someone due to differences in our time zones. An afternoon text for me might as well have been a late night text for another person. I was also worried about working in a multicultural team of various faiths and beliefs. I did not want to accidentally offend anyone. Thankfully, nothing even remotely close to that ever happened. And although sometimes there were few-hour delays between responses, I still felt like that was never a concerning issue, rather a minor setback.

Effects of team work on the quality of the work

Team work was a crucial aspect of this project. Every idea could be changed and improved and every aspect of work was always subject to change. And having 4 other people meant change can come incredibly fast. This has its pros and cons. When working together progress is fast and ideas

come in many ways. You may encounter something you find to make sense and another person can suggest another thing which performs the same functionality in a better way. However, especially when writing code, people have their own work flows, writing styles and naming conventions. This can cause some initial confusion. Furthermore, a collaborative application which allows changes to be committed and downloaded would have been a good solution that we did not take. This means, for example, if one was to change the stylesheets file and the change was global (did not work only on classes or IDs), the person needed to submit the file and everyone else would need to download it to have that change take effect in their file. Some automation could have saved us time.

I believe although there are some setbacks, collaborative effort has many more positives and was our team to work on another project, we would perform even better as we have an established workflow and chemistry. Everyone committed changes responsibly and no global changes were committed without first consulting the team. Nobody did less than needed and our workloads were much better than were we to do it on our own.

Tools you and your team used

All of our communication took place on Slack. My text editor of choice is Visual Studio Code. For the wireframes I used Photoshop with a graphics tablet. I cannot account for the tools my team members were using but I would assume most would be the same. For further projects, I would love to implement a planning and productivity applications such as Trello. I have used it for personal projects and it cements the tasks needed to be done, especially if the project is not a full time job. With something you do part-time, no matter how passionate you are, it is only human to forget and productivity applications are a great way to collaborate ideas and set up tasks to be done. They also serve to "gamify" the process of work by creating small and big goals for the team to strive for. These small dopamine boosts when seeing a green checkmark light up are great motivators. I would also implement something like Git/Github for collaborations. This would automate the tedious process of everyone having to download, copy, and replace an existing file.