

I would like to start this reflection with the fact that I have never designed or created any websites before. I had an introduction to HTML in my 9th grade but it was so brief that I couldn't remember anything from it before taking this course, so it may be considered that all the knowledge that I used in creation of this site came from WRA 210 course. And it was more than enough for creation of my own website.

The work on my portfolio started with creation of categories and items, navigation and sitemap for the future portfolio. It wasn't hard to come up with a few categories and to join them together into a sitemap and a navigation schemes. I knew that this is just a rough-rough draft but still I tried to make it as well as I could on this first stage of my portfolio. As a building a website cannot be good on a poor fundament. So, I came up with many categories and items and decided to get rid of some of them further on if I will need to.

As I have a mathematical way of thinking, the creation of wireframes for my portfolio was not hard for me. I have chosen pretty basic model of a site: logo on the top, navigation bar below it, contact information on the right of body and the rest of it for the main text, footer, obviously, - on the very bottom. It will be easy for the user to locate which item is where.

The next step in creation of my portfolio was the development of design comps. This part of the work was the most laborious and challenging for me because I have never designed anything like that and my mind is more mathematical rather than creative. Nevertheless, I approached the creation of comps with full responsibility.

From the very beginning I decided that my design would be very simple and intuitive. After thoughtful consideration of possible color pallets I have chosen four

dominant color for my portfolio: with and black (white for background and black for the regular text, it is the best combination for reading), red (the one that isn't bright, it is a little dark, so it may be connected to black easily) and dark-red (this is a true dark red that I added to highlight some elements like buttons).

The next step was to create a logo for the header. Fancy and colorful pictures wouldn't fit my design, so I decided to choose a nice handwriting font, write my name, turn the text into a picture and add something. I did so and colored dots above "i" letters in my basic red. A simple and appealing logo was created.

The other item that is located in the header is navigation bar. It should have contained all the categories and a search bar. In order to bring attention of a user to this item I decided to color it in red and to set the writings in it to be white. Such navigation bar looks nicely on white background. Border radius was set to about 25 pixels so the angles didn't look too sharp.

Contact window, the main text in body and footer didn't require much work because their position was set already in the wireframe. I would like to mention that Times New Roman was chosen as a font for them because it is a widely used and simple font that matched my design perfectly.

Here, before the part with description of the actual coding of portfolio, I need write about the learning of how to work with HTML and CSS. Every lesson was full of examples, was easy to understand and was stimulating me not to forget what I have learned previously. I didn't have any troubles at all and during the very last lessons I already was thinking of how to realize my portfolio. This course allowed me to learn HTML and CSS relatively quickly and easily.

Before starting to code I made some changes to my portfolio structure. I removed two categories and one item because I considered them to be not really useful and uninformative. Instead of them I added resume and about pages. These pages shall exist in every portfolio because resume is useful for a potential employer and the about page serves as a description of the whole portfolio.

Regarding the actual coding, it seemed to me really interesting and challenging. I had to find different solutions of problems that I faced and to explore on my own what works and what doesn't. It caught me strongly and in three days of coding and searching for applicable solutions my design that I have sketched in Photoshop was transferred to HTML and CSS. I can describe the overall process but it was that breathtaking for me that I cannot extract specific moments from it because everything just smelted for me in a single solid chunk. I can extract nothing except from the greatest problem that I had and which was solved by my only in the very end when all the text has already been written, the search problem.

Originally, even in the early sketches the search bar was located in the navigation bar, but the only one search that was compact enough for it was demo search by Google. It didn't allow the search on site, so I had to replace it with another one, with Google Custom Search. This one was too long and too tall for the navigation bar, so placed it below the navigation bar, on the top of contact window; as a result, I had to rework my navigation bar once again and put the link to about page, which was just a button previously, in it.

However, the Google Search Engine couldn't perform any search on my site. First of all I thought that exactly this search is defective, but as it turned out later my portfolio

could not be found by Google anyhow. The problem was in the fact that my portfolio website was not included in Google Index, so it was unseen by Google. I added all of the pages of my portfolio on a special page and in 3 hours everything worked just fine.

I must write some words about separation of content from presentation. I tried my best to separate them by placing all the information about content in HTML and using CSS to set the desired style for it. There are no style attributes in my HTML documents at all, everything is set by using “id” and “class” to items if needed and by styling them further on in CSS.

When the coding was done all that left for me to do was to fill my portfolio with text. It took some time because my writing speed is not as fast as I could have desired and because I double-checked each chunk of text that I was placing in my portfolio. However, it wasn't hard for me as I am already accustomed to writing in English, thanks to WRA 110. The descriptive images for every portfolio item were not hard to do because I have already done such work in Module 9, so in three or four day my portfolio was finished.

For the future I have no specific plans but I think that the major priority for me is to enlarge my resume. Later on I will probably rework the categories and add some more items. In the future I will probably face the problem of resizing of my navigation bar that is related to addition of new categories. Then I will just put items closer to each other and make them a little smaller.

I also have to mention that the only help that I received came from Google Custom Search Engine (it provided me a search engine for my site), from htmlbook.ru website (if I needed help with tags in HTML or CSS), from my classmate, Lindsey Spitzley (she helped me to finish every group assignment as a group member and gave

some tips about the course organization) and from my teacher, Christie Daniels, who was helping me a lot throughout the whole course.