Tocumwal Archive Rationale

The Tocumwal Archive is a website consisting of three separate pages that intends to both preserve the information of the events of the Tocumwal houses being moved into the Canberra suburb known as O’Connor, and to inform those that do not have the information. The site is intended to be used by all ages, and over any platform, such as computer, tablet, or phone.

During the process of programming the website, many choices both stylistic and rational had to be made. To start with, I had decided that using light background colors for the site would be the best idea for the site. The reason for this is because it makes the text and pictures stand out from the webpage, and the light colors are easy on the eyes and evoke a calming emotion to the readers. You will also notice that every page has an image section at the bottom within its own table. I had decided that the images of Tocumwal houses be placed at the bottom of each webpage as a visual reference to visit after gaining all the information from within the text. The decision for using a table to hold the images was to make the presentation of said images seem like they were organized in a collected manner, much like a physical archive. Lastly, the navigation bar at the top also contains the reference images tab, so that viewers who would like to look at the pictures can skip straight to them. The navigation bar also sticks to the top of the page no matter how far you scroll down, for easier navigation. The information in the navigation bar is also centered so that readers don’t have to turn their heads to either side of the screen to navigate to another page.

The home page states the purpose of the webpage and shows some example pictures. This sets up an expectation for the viewer, just so they know the purpose of the site, and why it exists. The heritage listings page provides information on the specific houses, and stories from the people who lived and them during the movement. Their pictures are displayed on the left side of the text as a notion as to what the person telling the story looks like at the time of the story telling, and to form a better connection towards the person telling the story. The origins page displays the historic information of the move to the new neighborhood in O’Connor. I decided against adding any flashy or distracting details to this page, as I believe it would take away from the historic message that it sets. All in all, the amount of information on each page is kept to a minimum as to not overwhelm the reader with and overabundance of text, and to maintain interest in continuing to read into the information.

There are also scaling changes made dependent on the viewer’s screen size. If they are using a phone, tablet, or simply reading in a smaller window, the text is automatically scaled for easier reading. Images that were next to text now appear above the text to first give the reader an idea of what they are about to read. Tables are collapsed into a single column, starting with the picture first, then the name, and then the description, as the order seems formal.

Overall, the project was an interesting one to approach. On one hand, the purpose of the site must be kept in mind, such as whom it is intended for, and how to get the information across in the best way possible. On the other hand, the website must also be looked at from a design standpoint, such as how to make the site appeal to a wide audience, and how to make the site look tidy. I feel that while it looks very calm and welcoming, it could also use some sprucing up with perhaps some interactive videos or audio recordings (which would obviously have to be mockups given the time period of the subject matter). However, for the time being, I believe that the Tocumwal Archive is at its best, with a simplistic and friendly design that welcomes all that visit the website.