Static implementation

Miro Keimiöniemi – Portfolio website

All parts of the assignment, including the bonus were done and can be seen in action at https://users.aalto.fi/~keimiom1/index.html.

HTML

Html was initially rather straightforward but got increasingly more complex at the accumulation of demands from CSS. There is way too much repetition of "code" to my taste in the headers and footers but this cannot be addressed at this point yet. Images were compressed and resized for display, but the originals can be found from the files too as sometimes they were linked to.

The html does not validate without errors, mainly because there was no way (that I knew of) to use the validator on offline files and now it is too late to do extensive overhauling. However, the errors I get are only about the structure of my button design and filenames and links, the latter of which can be changed easily if truly necessary. The former consists of complaints about the button appearing as a descendant of an anchor element, of which there is an existing debate about whether buttons should act as links or not. For my website, I chose buttons because they emphasize an action, which in the context of my site can be "see given portfolio" or "contact". Both of these are effectively navigation but a button frames them as conscious actions. Therefore, I consider this error irrelevant. The other button-related error is about div not allowed as a child element of button but this was strictly necessary for achieving the elusive skeuomorphic look. This makes me reconsider my choice for the button tag but it may stay as such for now until I learn more.

The other errors were about obsolete iframe attributes, which I did not dare touch as they came with the embed links, and space characters in filenames and "mailto:" links, which can be changed if necessary but appear quite harmless for now.

Most of the site is built but it still requires a lot of content. Code and music portfolios remain to be implemented as those are the ones with least ready-to-publish content and therefore their buttons only link to the portfolio site currently, similar to the different types of writing which currently all point only to academic writing. Dropdown triangle and hamburger menu will be implemented with JavaScript in the next phase but otherwise the site is functional, only with very limited content.

CSS & Responsiveness

CSS was built mobile first based on a flexbox layout without normalizing to reduce number of CSS files necessary. All pages are linked to two CSS files, the first of which sets global properties while the second specifies usually the scaling-related styling of that specific page. Next steps would perhaps be to use a preprocessor such as SASS to combine them.

The validator finds one error with the URI used to import google fonts, which I do not understand as it works perfectly and follows other examples I saw while researching. There are also some warnings about the use of vendor extensions, but those are widely supported and none of them breaking would produce any results that would weaken the user experience.

All hidden menus are also designed and implemented up until the final bit of revealing them on click, which will be done in the next phase. Because of this, mobile navigation is not yet functional as clicking the hamburger menu does nothing. Therefore, only desktop navigation works in this static version.

For responsiveness a mobile-first implementation was made at 360px so that the site scales up instead of down and is usable on most all modern devices. In fact, the true tested range of flawless scaling ranges from 270px to 2500px in width, limited only by the length of my surname and 50px to 1350px in height. This was achieved with minimal breakpoints, the only major one of which was 768px to mark the transition from phones to tablets and devices with larger screens. Additionally, all lengths are expressed in rems or percentages to facilitate smooth scaling.

CSS animations

In the spirit of the rest of the site, animations were kept very minimal but informative. Navigation links get a darker, grey hue whereas regular links get underlined upon hover. Social media icons get a small, bright drop shadow and they get largened to signal the current selection and buttons get their box-shadow brightness doubled to indicate focus, as well as a dip in brightness upon getting clicked. I also added a barely perceptible drop-shadow behind my face on the front page as a fun way to click through to the about page.

Conclusion

The end result follows the design very closely with only some additional eye candy and smoothness as well as occasional simplification of layouts to facilitate larger elements and so ease the users experience in observing the content. Perhaps most notably, I decided to forego all carousels after some reading about the general consensus concerning their usage, which I found to be the right choice. Instead, my home page now features one main highlight project and four secondary highlight projects so that the user can get a more comprehensive view of what I do even with minimal engagement. I am still keeping the option open to perhaps make the primary highlight into a carousel, should I need more tasks for the JavaScript phase as it could still be nice for presenting more visually heavy projects to those truly interested. I also did not add the latest activity section as I could not find free dark themed LinkedIn widgets quickly, so that remains to be implemented.

The static implementation phase with its associated research took easily over 50h of work combined but was rewarding throughout as you get to see the site being built live.

Link to the site (currently with only desktop navigation):
https://users.aalto.fi/~keimiom1/index.html