Project 2 Reflection

# Reflection of the Experience

For this project, I created a database of chicken recipes. Working with XML and XSLT was a new and challenging experience, and my past HTML experience had become somewhat rusty over time. Therefore, this project helped me recall my past HTML and CSS teachings and introduced me to a new markup language and outputting technique.

## Challenges

I enjoyed learning new ways to organize data. However, there were some challenges that came with learning a new technology:

* **Technology doesn’t always cooperate**. One of the biggest problems I had was linking the XML and XSLT files. Working with XML and XSLT requires an abundance of patience and determination. This project tested my patience and pushed my determination to new limits.
* **Tagging is tedious.** The part of the assignment that took the longest was marking up the XML. This made me appreciate XML because the thought of having to input and edit all of the information without a single-sourced document seems infinitely more frustrating. I cannot fathom marking up the information I input in a few different locations and then attempting to locate and edit every instance in the event of an error.

## Limitations

Although the Internet is useful in learning different markup languages, it also includes misinformation and contradictory information. I attempted to add JavaScript to make my table sortable and found a page with 33 different methods of making a table sortable. This quickly became overwhelming. Rather than trying to plug in a code that I do not understand, I plan to take time to learn JavaScript rather than attempt to plug in and use a code I do not understand.

# Organization

I divided each recipe by tagging it under a <recipe> tag. In each recipe tag, I included the following child and grandchild tags:

* <name>: The name of each recipe
* <cuisine>: The style of cooking based on its country of origin
* <method>: The method by which the recipe is cooked
* <total-time>: The total amount of time it takes to prepare and cook the meal
* <servings>: The number of servings each recipe yields
* <made-before>: Whether or not I have made the recipe in the past
* <ingredients-list>: A complete list of ingredients needed for the recipe.
  + <ingredients>: Each individual ingredient needed for the recipe
* <directions>: A complete list of directions to complete the recipe.
  + <step>: Each individual step taken to complete the recipe.
* <recommended-sides>: A list of sides that I recommend to go with the recipe.
  + <side>: Each individual side that I recommend.
* <recipe-link>: The source link where I got the recipe.

Mostly, these tags help users either decide what to cook (name, cuisine), narrow down their choices based on what they have (method, total time), or help them cook the recipe (servings, ingredients, directions). The made before section is for me to decide whether I want to try something new or use a tried-and-true recipe. The recommended sides tag notes what kind of sides I would eat with the recipe.

I organized the information into a table so each recipe’s information, ingredients, and directions can be viewed on one screen without needing to scroll. I decided not to use the <made-before>, the <recommended-sides>, or the <recipe-link> tags because they are not as beneficial for most users than the other tags. I rationalized that the recommended sides are based on my personal preference. As I continue to expand this database, I would like to include personal notes in an additional information window.

Overall, I found this project interesting, even fun at times albeit challenging. I would like to revisit this project once I have a working knowledge of JavaScript and PHP in order to maximize the usefulness of this table for users.