Report

HTML & CSS

Course Assignment

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Word count

942

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1. Introduction: the prototype is your friend

The first lesson that this assignment has taught me came in the form of a question: what happens when you design a prototype without knowing how to write a single line of HTML or CSS? For this project, responsiveness was my main challenge. While I was quite satisfied with the web version of my prototype, I was surprised how impractical it was to turn it into its mobile version in a responsive manner — at least from a beginner's perspective. This led me to take an important decision: I reimagined my mobile prototype in a manner in which it largely preserved the main features of the original file, while improving some design elements – such as color consistency, visual coherence and standardisation of button behaviour. By doing that, I have been able to reduce the distance between the web and mobile versions of my web pages.

By the time I had designed the first version of my prototype, I was not yet done with reading David Kadavy's book *Design for Hackers* in its entirety. Having read this book made me reconsider several of the design choices I had made in the first versions of my prototype.

2. Reflections on what went right

The most important elements which characterised my initial vision for this project were minimalism, prevalence of white space, squared angles and ease of navigation. I believe all of

these elements have been successfully expressed in the current form of my assignment.

Another important decision I have taken was to completely rewrite the code for the index.html page. By doing that, I was able to significantly reduce the amount of code in the respective CSS file.

I have also decided to use separate CSS files for each page. Such decision proved fruitful to the extent that the process of editing and debugging my code was easier than I had anticipated. I did consider including one CSS file for global styles, including variables. However, I decided not to do that due to time constraints.

This project has worked as a useful introduction to the use of CSS grids — particularly grid areas. I experimented with Flexbox as well, which could have been used in several occasions. I decided, however, to prioritise the use of grids this time, mainly for didactic reasons.

The accessibility of my colour palette had been approved in previous Module Assignments. The only potential issue would be the low contrast between certain colour combinations – for example, the light and dark shades of grey as well as the use of blue text on dark background. The interaction between these colours in potentially problematic arrangements have of course been avoided. As a result, the website has ranked quite well in several accessibility tests. For example:

- **Source:** https://www.webaccessibility.com
- **Result:** Health Score between 96% and 100%

- **Source:** https://accessibilitytest.org
- **Result:** 95/100

- **Source:** https://contrastchecker.online/
- **Result:** The colour combinations displayed in the website comply with WCAG AAA standards

Finally, when it comes to debugging, all of my pages appear to be bug-free according to the W3C's Markup Validation Service.

3. Reflections on what went wrong

The correct use of decorative images (background-image in CSS) is something I need to further explore. While I was able to correctly position a background image on a given screen size on the horizontal axis, I struggled to make the same image sufficiently responsive when interacting with other moving elements of the page on the vertical axis. My attempts have ended up in varying degrees of success and failure.

In terms of browser compatibility, most of my project seems to be unproblematic. I have noticed, however, that the search bar has a considerably different look and feel in Safari when compared to Firefox. Differences in the scrolling behaviour (smooth scrolling) have also been noticed when comparing the two browsers.

When it comes to the forms, I expected to use the POST value instead of GET. However, due to what seems to be a Netlify-related issue, the <form action="url"> element did not respond correctly. I was only able to solve this issue with the help of an instructor: the solution was to (a) include in the root folder of my project a file called *_redirects* and (b) use the method GET instead of POST, even though it is not the recommended approach.

My project could have benefitted from the addition of animations and transitions. Time constraints have prevented me from implementing these improvements.

Finally, my main frustration with this project was the fact that I was not able to properly implement the CSS hamburger menu hack in order to make the navigation of my pages look better and more responsive. While I have attempted to implement this technique, I have failed in understanding it fully.

5. Conclusion

The development of this first version of the SquaredEyes website has given me an ambivalent feeling. On the one hand, it feels like a pleasing accomplishment to have built my first web project from scratch. Getting familiar with some of the basic tools front-end developer use on a daily basis (VS code, Github, Firefox Developer Tools, Adobe XD, Adobe Lightroom, Adobe Photoshop, Among others) has been a pleasant

learning journey. On the other hand, a sense of frustration also comes into the picture. After all, despite my best efforts, the final product still looks unpolished and my code lines probably read amateurish. I feel, however, excited about having walked this path and accomplished what I consider to be partially successful results, considering that this has been my first-ever experience with developing a web product from scratch.

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