My Tiny Guide to Shadcn, Radix, and Tailwind

Mairaj Pirzada · Follow

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Long gone are the days when frontend side of the web was lazy and no new advancements happened. Gone are days when jQuery and Bootstrap were the only two shiny UI libraries/frameworks that people used and frontend engineering was simple.

Then came React and it brought with itself a new way to think about frontend. Components, state management and hooks and signals. While things were improving with every version in ReactJS and companies were beginning to adopt React for their frontend. Tailwind CSS arrived at the scene and it made the life of CSS all the more easy.

CSS has to be the one language where you find new interesting things every time you look at it. Anyway, we are here to talk about three major UI techs i.e. Shadcn UI, RadixUI, and Tailwind CSS. Let's dive in.

Tailwind CSS

Tailwind CSS is a utility-first CSS framework that allows you to design web pages with custom styles with a minimal amount of code.

Ready-made classes are available and you have to insert various classes and combine them to produce the design you want.

It provides you with full control over the styles. There's a bit of a learning curve to Tailwind, but once you get the hang of it, it's really powerful. It is really popular among front-end developers.

Radix UI

Radix UI is not like Tailwind, it's a library of pre-built reusable components. It serves a different purpose; provides you with components that you can directly use in your application.

Components come with a few options/variants and produce components that adhere to your theme and brand persona.

With Radix UI, you can move fast if you are not very concerned about custom CSS styles. To design custom components, it's costly in terms of time. Accessibility is built in as well.

Installation

Use the following command and it will be installed as a dependency.

```
npm install @radix-ui/themes
```

Read the official tutorial

Where can I use Radix UI?

You can use any framework that supports React. Next.js, Astro, Remix, Gatsby, etc.

Shadcn UI

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The key difference between Radix UI and Shadcn is that Shadcn is not a package you can install, no need for *npm install* command. It does not add another dependency in your project.

There's no big 2mb installation. You install/fetch the component you need to use in your project. No need to install 200 components to use only 2.

These components are brought in and become a part of your project and are configurable as per your needs. It's like you designed those components yourself.

You use *npx* to bring the Shadcn component you need, e.g. a button, alert dialog, etc.

Use npx to initialize the shadcn-ui and after a bit of configuration, you have to add particular components to use, like button.

```
npx shadcn-ui@latest init
```

Where can I use Shadcn UI?

You can use any framework that supports React. Next.js, Astro, Remix, Gatsby, etc.

That's all. If you liked reading this, follow me for more such posts.

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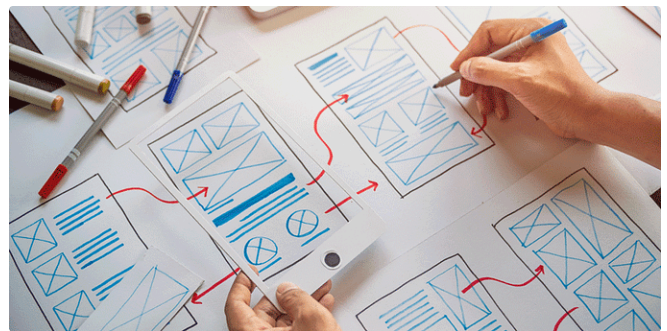
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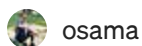
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