Amy Wisegarver
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CSCI 202
Self-portrait Essay

As a design major, I wouldn't really consider computer science my forte. I have gained novice experience in HTML, Java, and Python over the years, but have felt like my limited skillset made it more difficult to produce a product that that I had imagined in my head and with sketches. However, similar to the times of telegrams and radio, the limits that my skillset had did not deem certain goals impossible, such as the effectiveness of communication. My goal was to create a website that was simple, effective, but also conveyed an aesthetic that I was ultimately proud of. Though my skillset (at this time) is limited, I felt there was still room for me to use my love of design to get creative.

When I look at the current websites that I frequent, I notice a theme— I tend to be drawn less to conventionally "beautiful" sites, and more to sites that have a unique, minimalist layout, and edgy aesthetic. I use Reddit a lot for news, memes, information, hobbies, art, and more, and I find that I am especially drawn to the way the website has been set up. I rarely use the desktop version of the site, so I'm on the mobile app more than anything. Some defining features of the Reddit mobile app that I enjoy include the flexibility with the "night mode", which is great, because I usually prefer to read white text on a black background. I also like the pops of orange that surface from the iconic little alien/robot logo, along with the Reddit logo itself. I wouldn't necessarily want to refer to the Reddit logo as "cute", but I think it is. It's simple, it's distinct, it's unique, and it finds ways to repeat itself throughout various subreddits in different ways.

Reddit's aesthetic was a good one for me to try and emulate, because it is what I would call, "the Microsoft Excel of the internet". That analogy basically refers to the simple, linear, repetitive themes that are found throughout the site. For my website, I chose an easy to read, bold typeface, and chose three colors that I felt would best represent me, in a self-portrait sense. I chose Veranda as my typeface, and went with a pastel pink, pastel blue, and white for my colors. I felt these colors gave my website an artsy, whimsical feel, while sticking to the point of the project. Veranda, balanced out the colors with its bold, easy-to-read nature. For my headings, I stuck with big, bold, all caps text, and then varied the scale of the type for the other elements of the site.

Once I had built the skeleton of my website with my headings, different pages, and navigation bar, it was time to have some fun. First, I embedded my favorite skydiving and motorcycling gifs at the top of my page, which are immediately quite eye-catching. Then I embedded one of my favorite skydiving videos, and then a skydiving video that I uploaded from one of my jumps. Then, I embedded a song from SoundCloud that automatically plays when the user enters the site's front page. After the home page was put together, I wrote a few paragraphs for the About page and added some pictures, and then linked my Instagram in the navigation bar so the user would have the option to look more into my life through my social media. Overall, I had a lot of fun putting together a website for this project, and feel I had some good practice that will result in more growth with the next website that I design.