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Assignment 9.4 – Client-Side Debugging

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Google Chrome Developer Tools is one of the most popular and widely used tools amongst developers due to the popularity of the Google Chrome web browser, utilizing the built-in developer tools feature is convent and intuitive making it an easy first choice when working on code for a website. Google Chrome Developer Tools offers many features that assist the user when debugging code for a site or wanting to try and make adjustments to the code, even gathering some deeper understating of how a piece of the website is coded. When you open Chrome Developer Tools the first tab that is displayed and opened it the Elements tab. This section displays the HTML and CSS code for the current page displayed. The user is able to select the pointer tool from the top left of the window and select any element on the webpage in turn highlighting the its corresponding code in the Elements window. Rather than having to read through and navigate to the line of code you are trying to find in the HTML of the page it jumps you right to it. Similarly, by right-clicking on the webpage element and selecting inspect element the same action happens. Along with being able to view the HTML and CSS of the current page and selected element you are able to actually edit the code by adding, adjusting, or removing elements being able to see the result reflected on any page visited. The alterations are not permanent and are only viewable for your session and will be returned to their original state on page navigation or refresh. This does give the user a lot of freedom to help identify where a piece of code may be broken or a better understanding of how an element was coded.

One of my favorite features of the Chrome Developer Tools is a downloadable third-party extension called axe. Axe was developed as an “accessibility checker for WCAG 2 and Section 508 accessibility.” (2019). After downloading this extension, it adds a tab to the end of the developer tools window, when you open this tab is displays a button labeled “Analyze”. When you select analyze the axe extension runs through the HTML code of the current page and checks for best practice recommendations based on the guidelines set by WCAG 2 along with Section 508. This is an extremely useful free and compressive auditor tooling helping the developer of the webpage ensure their code is going to work well for visitors using with disabilities or utilizing accessibility tooling.

In today’s market one of the most important features of a website to have in order to attract high traffic rates is to load fast. With Chrome Developer Tools another section they offer built-in is the “Network” tab which will “show a play-by-play breakdown of exactly everything that Chrome had to do in order to display a page.” (Chromium, 2018). This gives useful insight on what files are being loaded, in what order, and how long each takes to load. Having a measurable read on page load time and a breakdown of load time for each element is extremely time saving when troubleshooting a slowly rendering page or looking for areas of improvement to target.

Chrome developer tools offer many more features then what were discussed here but these are the three I find valuable as a developer. The downloadable third-party extensions the Chrome store offers along with the built-in features makes it a very powerful tool developers can carry and the biggest benefit is that is free.

References

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