

Lucid Makeup Artistry Website

CIS 562 Project

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Abstract

For this project, I developed a website for my wife, who works as a freelance makeup artist. She provides makeup services for all types of productions including film/tv, photoshoots, and special events. As a freelance artist, she operates similar to small business that offers onsite services. As with any small business, it is important that she has an effective web presence that includes a professional looking website. A good website will help her grow her business by providing her better exposure and the ability to be found by potential customers. A well designed site will also establish her as a serious professional and set her apart from her less experienced competition. I utilized several web technologies in the design of the site including Hyper Text Markup Language (HTML), Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), Java scripting and PHP: Hypertext Preprocessor (PHP). The site was developed on my stage website at www.kfishermsis.com/jesse and can be viewed at this location. Code can also be viewed by choosing to view source option in your browser while on pages of the site.

Keywords: makeup artist, website, HTML, CSS, Java script, PHP

Planning

When planning her site, I envisioned it to be simple but effective in providing all the information potential clients would need including information about her, her services and portfolio and contact information. With that in mind, I developed the following pages: Home, About Us, Portfolio, Services, and Contact. These pages provide all the basic information potential customers require without inundating them with too much information.

For the design, I found a template to use, as I don't have much artistic ability when it comes to graphic design. I found a suitable template that works well with my site's simple architecture and is optimized for layouts with smaller amounts of content, such as her site. Additionally, it was a nice color with artistic flare which I believe matches well with her services as an artist. Although artistic, it also has a professional look to it, these are the main reasons I choose it, because the message the design implies are two very important aspects of her business: professionalism and artistic creativity.

As mentioned above her site is hosted at www.kfishermsis.com. I created this site for a previous class and had it registered with the registrar GoDaddy.com. I had a few choices when it came to hosting the site. I've used the hosting service Host Gator for previous classes, but my host plan expired. My second option, the one I choose, was to host it with the Hostica web host, which I was using for other sites and already paid for. Although the control panel for Hostica was far inferior to Host Gator's control panel, the fact that it was free swayed my choice. With my site registered and hosted, I created a directory for her site and began to brainstorm on the design of the site.

Design

To design and edit the site I used SharePoint Designer 2007. It seems like an odd choice but it is free and although it is designed for managing SharePoint, it works really well for HTML pages as well. I first started with her homepage as it is one of the most important pages on her site and usually the first impression her customers have. As with the entire site, it is very simple with just the right amount of information. I included her logo and small amount of text including: contact phone number, email address and very brief description of services. I also added a title in “h1” with key words, which are informative to customers but most importantly will assist with search engine optimization (SEO). I also configured other simple SEO options such as Title and Meta Content with key words. Design elements that also appear on this page are the menu bar and a footer that has some key words that will assist with SEO.

The menu functions on JavaScript, and although the code was part of the template, it required a good amount of configuration for her site. It consists of two images containing text of different colors, when a menu button is rolled over, the text color changes. I had to create multiple images and set up the code to make this work properly. Another script that I used on the homepage relates to Google Analytics. It enables my site to work with that Google Application to provide valuable information about my site that will help me configure SEO for the site and also analyze traffic and functionality of the site. A sample of some of that the code follows and shows that it accesses a Google analytic JavaScript and links to my Google analytics account by the “Set Account” variable:

```
<script type="text/javascript"> var _gaq = _gaq || []; var pluginUrl = 'http://www.google-analytics.com/plugins/ga/inpage_linkid.js'; _gaq.push(['_require', 'inpage_linkid', pluginUrl]);  
_gaq.push(['_setAccount', 'UA-2705521-2']);
```

The last aspect of configuring my homepage (which also applies to my other pages) and understanding the configuration of the template I used was to explore the layout of my page and configure style for my site using CSS. The layout of the template was done with tables and an external CSS file. I'm not sure that is the most effective way to set up the page because it seemed somewhat confusing to understand, but basically the page is set up with tables that have rows with specific size and layout values and a corresponding image for each cell in the table. When all put together with the separate images, it creates the full site layout. CSS is used throughout the site for formatting and style, this includes the tables and layout for the look and feel of the page. A sample of some of my CSS script that controls format for the tables and layout of the pages follows:

```
table{border:0px; border-collapse:collapse; padding:0px;}  
.border{ background:#000000; width:1px; height:1px}  
.bg{width:766px; height:838px; background:url(images/bg.gif)}  
.left{ background:url(images/left.jpg); width:54px}  
.right{ background:url(images/right.jpg); width:200px}  
.header{ background:url(images/top.jpg); height:230px}
```

The settings for each style listed is set in the code above. For example, any HTML code that is marked as a table will have no border and no padding between cells. For a table with the table class ID of bg will use the image bg.gif. As far as other elements controlled by CSS, I created values for controlling the size, font, and color of H1 and H2 settings and a custom color for links, to just name a few.

The next page I designed was the About Us page. Again the page was quite simple, it offered a short biography for my wife and has two links; one for her Internet Movie Database

(IMDB) page and another for a pop up that lists some of her recent credits. The IMDB link was easy to set up, I used the " target="_blank" link property to open the IMDB page in a new browser window. The recent credit link was a bit more complex, I utilized a java script to create a lightbox style pop up with text. I utilized the same script more heavily on the Portfolio page and will discuss how it works in the explanation of that page.

Next, I moved on to designing the Portfolio page, which actually consists of 4 separate pages; one main page and a page for each one of her portfolios. These pages were the most complex on the site to design as I had to configure java scripts for each of the portfolio books. The main page consists of a small table with three columns that contain a picture and text that is linked to its' respective portfolio book. Each portfolio book consists of a table with 14 cells, each containing a thumbnail that is linked to its full size photo.

As previously mentioned, the portfolio and recent credits use the Lightbox java script to display images by filling the screen with the image and dimming out the rest of the web page. It also gives the ability to scroll left and right to photos in the same set. Lightbox utilizes multiple scripts including the prototype java script and lightbox script. Although an older script, lightbox works very well and is widely used, that is why I decided to use it. I put these scripts in a directory named js specially for containing java scripts on the site. With the java scripts referenced in the page head, each thumbnail has a link that runs the java script. An example of the code for the second image follows:

```
href="images/lucidmakeup2.jpg" rel="lightbox[page1]"></a>
```

You'll notice the property [page1] in the code, I used this to link portfolio one and two. When users are scrolling through the photos, they can scroll through all portfolios in the page1 set. I didn't need to make any edits to the java scripts but did open them to view the code to decipher how the script works to scroll photos.

The next page I designed was the page to list her services. Similar to the About Us page, it is very simple, listing her services and has a link to another page I developed for her related airbrush tanning business. The final page that I configured was the Contact page. It contains her contact information including phone number and email link that will open in a user's default email program. A user can use the Email Us form to send an email as well. The form uses a PHP script that runs server side to send an email from the webpage. Using PHP to create a mailing script is a very common use of a PHP script on a HTML page, there are many free scripts available to web developers for this purpose. A sample of the HTML code I used that works with the script follows:

```
<form method="post"
action="http://www.lucidmakeup.com/lucid_formmail.php"name="contactform" >
<input type="hidden" name="recipients" value="jfisher@lucidmakeup.com">
<input type="hidden" name="good_url" value="http://www.lucidmakeup.com/thanks">
<input type="hidden" name="subject" value="Lucid Make-Up Artistry">
```

You can see that on the post it references the PHP file, sends the email to her specified address of jfisher@lucidmakeup.com, subject for the email, and page to direct to once the script has executed (I created a simple "thanks for contacting us page"). Once the code on the page was configured, I also had to configure the referenced PHP file. A few configurations in the PHP

were entering the target email and location of the accompanying form ini file that specifies additional settings for the script. Example of the code for these configurations follows:

```
$TARGET_EMAIL = array(EMAIL_NAME."jfisher@lucidmakeup.com$");  
$FORM_INI_FILE =  
"/hsphere/local/home/kfisher/lucidmakeup.com/hp_formmail/formmail.ini";
```

Conclusion

I set out to and succeeded in creating a simple yet effective website for my wife's freelance makeup artistry business. I used many common web technologies that we have discussed in class such as HTML, CSS, java scripts, and PHP to accomplish functionality such as style formatting, pop up image viewers and mail contact forms. Along with good functionality I choose a template that conveys her image as a professional and artistic makeup artist. Taking on this project I re-sharpened some web skills that I haven't use for a while and also learned a lot about using java scripts and PHP. Now that her site is designed, I plan to move it to a production environment at her own domain and use analytics to see how I can improve we traffic and user experience at her site.