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As a student with a bachelors degree in English, I knew immediately what I wanted to use for my table: my collection of books. When I began to build the table, my first step was deciding which tags would be used for the project. It was also necessary to decide which information of the book was the most important for the table’s audience. I decided that it was most logical to separate each book with <book> tag and include the subcategories of <title>, <author>, <picture>, <year>, and <genre>. The author section was further expanded by including <first> and <last> to separate the author(s’) names and allow the document to translate into other formats with more ease. This same pattern was also used for the editor tag, when it applied to the entry. As discussed below, this task proved difficult at first. The order of the XML tags was also important to me, as I considered how a potential audience to a table of literature would want their information. I also included a .jpeg image for each picture tag to enhance the visual appeal of the table. The image then links to Amazon.com, allowing the user to further explore the book’s details using the website’s search feature. I chose this website over Wikipedia due to the fact that its contents are only edited by the staff of the webpage, rather than users from across the globe.

The first issue I faced in my project was connecting the XML and XSL pages. Initially, only the first row was displaying and it lacked titles for each column. After attempting to fix the XSL page several different times, it ended up simply being space issues within the first 20 rows. Downloading Sublime Text also benefited me greatly as I continued the project, allowing the text and tags to stand out with different colors, which minimized issues within the documents.

The XSL document was a bit more complex when it came to issues. The most difficult part was working with the author and editor aspect of the table. The editor tag became necessary once I realized how many of the books within my collection lacked an overall author for the book. Multiple first and last names were difficult to fix at first. It eventually required several for-each loops to display correctly and separate the information (without a comma within the text itself) for further use in other documents. This also required the use <first2> and <last2> to keep the author and editor names from displaying incorrectly. Also, when there was an editor, I left out the author tag in that entry all together. This was done so there would not be single commas sitting in the middle of the table. It also took some experimenting to get the text image to work correctly

Working with the CSS page, I was most concerned about color. The background and text colors of a website greatly affect how effective the webpage is in communicating with the audience. The contrast between the two is very important, which is why I choose a lighter blue for the background and black for the text. The text is bold and center-aligned. I also chose to alternate colors for each row, attempting separate each entry a bit more and keep the title and page background from blurring together, making it harder for users to read.

This assignment was rewarding and has boosted my overall confidence in working with XML, XSLT, and CSS. While it was initially confusing, (partially due to having to catch up with the readings), I started noticing that the more I played with the XSL page and experimented with tags, the more the elements began making sense to me. I look forward to eventually completing the table and adding every book in my collection to it, while continuing to try different elements and use this project to keep practicing these concepts.