

Professional website assignment

COM421: Spring 2021

Summary

You'll be developing a professional resume and preparing both a print version, and a properly formatted, standards-compliant web version that you will host on a GitHub project page. We're going to have time in class to learn HTML/CSS and how to write for the web.

Professional website

Most people have more to show off than just their resume. You may have class coding projects that showcase your marketable skills, photography or print designs, music or sound design that you have done, or any number of projects that you want to display on the web. In the physical world, these projects would be organized in a portfolio, but on the web you have a great deal of flexibility in displaying all of your accomplishments.

You will be creating personal websites that can function as your primary resume as well as display supplemental material that you direct employers to when searching for a job.

Your website can have any number of components, but it should have **at least two pages**: your resume/CV, and a page that gives more information about you or your projects. You will also want to provide users the option to download the .pdf version of your resume that you submitted earlier. If you'd like to include more pages, feel free to determine the additional content at your discretion.

Durable webpages are standards compliant and can be validated according to those standards (we will learn about this). Additionally, they are written by hand and contain a great deal of semantic content as opposed pages made using WYSIWYG (what you see is what you get) editors, which generate endless amounts of junk code and make the website useless to you if you no longer have access to the proprietary software (e.g. an application like Dreamweaver or a design service like Squarespace).

Some design templates are allowed (e.g. 960gs, Bootstrap, small JavaScript enhancements, etc.) but they must be cited in the comments, have all unused CSS edited out, and function as positioning or design aids only (no "fill-in-the-blank" templates are allowed—we'll discuss the distinction in class). The goal of this assignment is to show me that you understand how information is structured on the web, not how many bells and whistles you can cram into your website.

Project alternative

If you already have a standards-compliant personal site, I can offer an alternative project redesigning an existing website to be standards compliant. Only choose this option if you feel confident that you can execute the assignment requirements of the professional website project on a larger scale. We can discuss scope and deliverables one-on-one if you choose the project.

Deliverables

With the above considerations in mind, you will create a standards-compliant website that conforms to the following guidelines:

- Written entirely by you; any templates used to aid spacing or enhance design are documented as discussed above;
- Written entirely by hand, with no WYSIWYG editors involved;
- Styled by CSS and not “style” attributes in HTML;
- Free of empty structures like non-breaking space characters and elements (except where justifiable);
- Must be valid HTML5;
- Applies basic principles of document design adapted for the web;
- Has an option to download a .pdf of your resume;
- As stylistically sharp as possible;
- Includes a 200-300 word walkthrough of your website (plain .txt or .md file) that includes a paragraph on what you wish you could have done but didn’t have time to execute.

You’ll submit your project on your GitHub project page. When you are finished, you’ll email me the .txt file with your walk-through and a link to your website. **Final materials must be turned in to me by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 12th.**

Working process

We’ll have one week devoted to the technology of writing for the web and how to use it. We’ll also have two full weeks to learn HTML5 and CSS and work on your projects in class. You’ll finish a draft of your web page and post it to GitHub (or as a .zip file on Blackboard) for peer critique. You’ll review websites from two classmates and provide a constructive critique (I’ll post your review assignments as the date approaches). I’ll also look your draft over, send you a few comments on what could be better, and you’ll have time to make a few changes before submitting the final version.

Timeline and submission instructions

Date*	Item	How to submit
3/29	Website draft (at least one page marked up and some styling)	Posted as a project page on GitHub or as .zip file. Submit via peer review discussion board on Blackboard.
4/5	Peer review	Feedback posted to your assigned peers' discussion threads on Blackboard
4/12	Final version of website and walkthrough document	Send me an email with a link to your site's home page. Your walkthrough document can be in the body of that email or as an attached .txt file.

*All work is due by 11:59 p.m. on the date listed