Case Study

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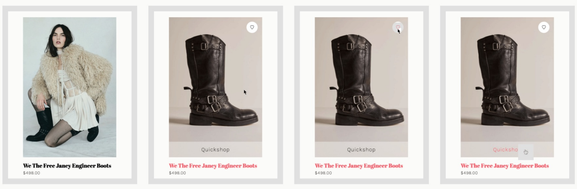

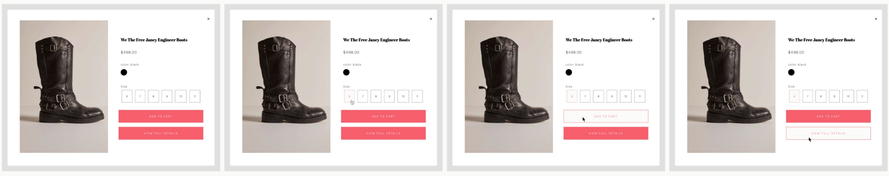

The Overview

My final build for IDM232 my work in developing predictive and enjoyable interactive designs using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. The project spanned an 11-week course and involved creating a microinteraction with at least five triggers. The main focus and inspiration of my final build was on Free People's product card, specifically, the hover effects and the Quickshop modal.
The primary problem I addressed was leveraging front-end scripting languages. My goals for this final included creating a functional and responsive self-hosted webpage with detailed descriptions of triggers, rules, feedback, loops, and modes for the final microinteraction. Throughout the process, I ran into a few challenges, including finding the right timing for fades in hover and click effects and working around difficulties in targeting elements in JavaScript. Additionally, I would like to emphasize the importance of rethinking code, designing for accessibility, and learning and designing based on feedback. This project was a valuable learning experience, providing knowledge and tools that I will carry for the rest of my career.

Context and Challenge

1. Background / Description / Timeline / Purpose:
   For my class, IDM241, we were assigned at the beginning of the 11-week course to individually develop predictive and enjoyable interactive designs based on a holistic consideration of users' experience using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. These interactive designs would make up our final build, a microinteraction with at least 5 triggers, or the events that would start the microinteraction. After this build, we would list the triggers, rules, feedback, and loops and modes that correlated with our microinteraction. Our first assignment, the Alpha, was to pick 1-2 microinteractions that already existed that we liked and wanted to rebuild, along with listing the triggers, rules, feedback, and loops and modes of those interactions. I picked the product card from the Free People website, focusing on the hover effects and the Quickshop modal. The next assignment, the Alpha Build, would be to code the existing microinteraction we chose. This assignment did not pose any issues for me, as I focused on the main hover effect, where if a user hovers over the product image, the image will change to a photo highlighting the product, while new buttons, a heart button where a user can add the product to their favorites list, and a Quickshop button, which when clicked, would trigger a modal to open, will appear by fading in. I did not make these buttons functional in the initial Alpha Build, but I had them appear without building out their full functions.
   For the next assignment, the Beta, we would select two more existing microinteractions and list their triggers, rules, feedback, and loops and modes, in addition to the microinteractions we described in our Alpha. I chose to keep my focus on the Free People product card, highlighting the hover effects on the favorites and quickshop button, and the click effect on the Quickshop button, which would trigger a modal to open. For the Beta Build, the only main struggle I had was getting the modal to fade open instead of open with a hard switch. This took me a while because I was not sure what speed I wanted the modal to open, and how to get the modal to be responsive on a mobile layout. To solve this, I went to CodePen and ChatGBT to ask them questions about my JavaScript code. With trial and error, I was able to resolve the issue, and was left with the image fade from the Alpha Build, the favorites and Quickshop buttons appearing with hover effects, and a functional Quickshop modal.
   For the Final, we had to select 2 more existing mircointeractions we intended on building. I went with the hover and click effects within Free People's product Quickshop modal, while keeping with the trend of adding onto the triggers, rules, feedback, and loops and modes with these new interactions. For the Final Build, I made all the buttons within the Quickshop modal hoverable and the size buttons both hoverable and clickable. At first, I wanted to add more microinteractions than I knew how to code, which proved to be a challenge and ended in me taking a few microinteractions away; like the favorites button filling to a solid heart when clicked, and the Add to Cart button being clickable. It was too time-consuming to add these features, which was disappointing on my end. However, I am happy I took them away, because keeping them without being as functional as I hoped would've hurt my final grade Instead of helped it. Although the process was long, and took lots of trial and error, I am both pleased with and proud of the final result.

2. The Problem:
   This project exists to challenge us to identify and design meaningful microinteractions, define proper usage of front-end scripting languages, and build meaningful microinteractions. While building off of our knowledge on CSS and JavaScript, we were asked to develop predictive and enjoyable interactive designs based on a holistic consideration of users' experience using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript.

3. Goals & Objectives:
   Create, design, and code a functional and responsive self-hosted web page that displays a microinteraction with at least 5 triggers, while describing in detail the triggers, rules, feedback, loops, and modes of the microinteraction we coded.

The overall goal for this project was to individually create a self-hosted, responsive web page that displays a microinteraction with at least 5 triggers, while describing in detail the triggers, rules, feedback, loops, and modes of the microinteraction we coded. This will teach and challenge us to to identify and design meaningful microinteractions, define proper usage of front-end scripting languages, and build meaningful microinteractions.

Process and Insight

For the first assignment, I first conceptualized my brand identity. I have always admired Free People's branding and website design, so I decided to mimic that while making it my own. For my color palette, I went with a light grey background, dark grey text, white, and pink for highlights and a pop of color when needed. This color palette allowed me to keep a sleek and soft design that complimented the fonts I picked. I kept this branding and design for all of the assignments. I knew that I wanted my microinteractions to reflect the softness of this branding as well, so I chose an ease-in-out fade for anything that changes, whether it is a hover or click effect.
Figuring out the timing for the fade for all of the microinteractions was a challenge, because I had to find the happy medium of making it fast enough that it didn't look like a hard switch, but not slow enough that it would bore the user and take a long time to complete. I ended up going with a 0.6s fade for hover effects and a 0.7s fade for click effects. This way, it is not too fast nor too slow. The other challenge I mentioned before was adding too many microinteractions that were not necessary. I had to remind myself that if it was not functional, keeping it would hurt my grade. I had challenges targeting certain elements in my JavaScript code, making it difficult for me to figure out how to change things from having a fade instead of a hard switch. I eventually removed some of the unnecessary features, since I ended up having over five triggers anyway.
Improvements to the existing microinteraction was making everything that was hoverable or clickable on the page have a fade instead of a hard switch when the user hovers or clicks.

The Solution

Link to my live final web page

Above is the link to my final live web page. Overall, I am most proud of the design and brand that I created, along with overcoming challenges with my code. Although I did not encounter any major issues until the Final Build, I am happy with the result. Defining features of my site include smooth hover and click transitions on every microinteraction on the page. Figuring out the timing for this was a challenge, but taught me a lot about creating the best possible experience for the user. Additionally, everything that is clickable is reflected in the cursor on the user's screen, with clickable items changing to a hand cursor instead of a pointed cursor. The color contrast passes and is readable, adding a layer of accessibility to my page.

The Results

This project is something that I am truly proud of and one that I would consider a success. When I finished the final, I received positive feedback from family, friends, and my peers about the microinteractions and overall design. I learned that it is okay if your code does not identically reflect something that you ideated or or wanted to include, and that there are ways to rethink these issues to come up with something better and more unique. The knowledge and tools I gained from this class and project are ones that I will apply for the rest of my career. As I mentioned before, this project also taught me the importance of rethinking my code, designing for accessibility, and applying feedback from critiques. All of the feedback I received from both my professor and my peers in class made my final project what it is now, and I would not be as proud of this project as I am without it.