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I360 Web Design

Reflection Essay

My workflow during this project was a bit different than usual, as I was building my own content and ideas completely and then making them fit the design that I had in mind. Normally with a web project I have content that is available and I create the design to fit the content, but this time it was the other way around. Not only did I have to create all the content myself, I had to make it fit and make sense in the design. This was the most difficult part for me. Displaying myself through the code and design is easy for me, so it is ironic that writing the plaintext and gathering photos was more difficult. I started with thinking about a theme for the website. Since I was doing a portfolio I wanted to take out all the noise and focus only on the important parts. I tried to use white space to my advantage to make everything seem brief but not empty. I used a soft blue color with a white gradient in the center to make it seem inviting but not too bright.

Overall I wanted to go with a vanilla aesthetic but have it situated in a way that was new and different. I think I was successful in the implementation of this, but where I struggled was adding extra parts to it without it seeming obnoxious or overbearing. I thought about adding the swipebox plugin to make my slick carousel go full screen, but the two plugins did not interact well so I had to scrap that idea. I also had problems with using white space and css together. When you have multiple divs interacting it can make it difficult to tell what section of margin or padding is causing your box to not be in the right spot, or sometimes even worse it can work correctly without you having any clue why. I did better with this as I went along and I think the finished product is spaced out as well as I could have hoped.

My other problem is working with the css itself, I have trouble organizing my code properly since I tend to go top to bottom when I write since that is the order of execution, but I don’t necessarily pay attention to grouping these parts of code together. For that reason, my css is sort of a jumbled mess but when I tried to organize it and put it into categories all my pages started to break and I wasn’t sure what needed to go where. In the future I plan to break apart the pages themselves in my css file, and this will help me with organization while still allowing me to write top to bottom.

During this semester I learned a lot about the web. It is one thing to look at HTML and know that what you see displayed is derived from that, but to actually learn the inner workings yourself and build a dozen or so pages lets you see the web in an entirely new light. It is a lot like learning a new topic of coding for the first time, where every time you see something that functions that way you think in your mind on how it works rather than just looking at it and thinking it is cool, or that it is magic. So in a sense, this class has stripped away the magic of the web, which is both good and bad. It is good in the sense that I have learned a lot about not only web design but technology in general by seeing the interactions of these different systems to see the beautiful pages that are on the web today, but it is also bad because you don’t really stare in wonder at crazy webpages anymore because you know the tech behind it.

Going forward, I think this class was a really good stepping stone for me where I can take the code that I write and put it forth in a interface that not only looks good but functions well for the users who use my product. Before this class I would just write a plaintext html form in order to run my code and call it quits at that, but now I understand the importance of the aesthetics and the user’s experience not only with the functionality, but with how they reach the end goal. For a user on your website, the journey really is half the experience, and now I have learned that missing half. I appreciate all the skills and information I learned during this class, and I will strive to improve with every project, until my web skills are up to par with my programming. Thanks for a great class!