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Web App Development Project Reflection

Project Overview

The Web App Development project required a basic understanding of the capabilities and functions of Python. We used structured data responses (JSON) and APIs from Google Maps and the MBTA in order to create URLs. As the basis of our app, we used “borrowed” code from the properly coded URL in order to make a functioning app. The app would ask the user to input a destination and serve its purpose to tell the user the nearest MBTA station and the distance between the user’s chosen destination and the nearest stop using latitude and longitude. In addition, we used Flask, a web framework for Python which helps present the Python code in the form of a web app. We then finalized the app by using HTML, which provides a space for the user to input the destination, after which the code we formed in Python would compute the functions previously mentioned and generate an output.

Project Reflection

From a process point of view, the project allowed us to connect most of the concepts we have learned throughout the bootcamp and apply them to create a product in the form of a web app. Our team is comprised of members who do not have extensive coding background. Our lack of experience made the process more difficult, yet allowed us to learn to step out of our comfort zone and navigate our way through obstacles by using trial and error and seeking for guidance from the resources available (i.e. Professor, web search). The process of navigating through the uncharted waters went well in our team, especially because of the team’s willingness to take risks and persistence to try again when we failed. We found even more value in the struggle because it was very experimental. However, during the process, we could have improved by being able to differentiate critical and trivial issues. For example, at one point, we were faced with a trivial issue regarding the replacement of the character ‘space’ with ‘%20’ in the URL. Although this was a trivial issue, it prevented us from achieving our goal efficiently because it prevented us from moving forward to the next step of the project as we worked chronologically.

Going forward, we can use not only the technical web app development skills that we learned, but also the soft skills that we learned during the process. The soft skills that we learned include connecting patterns and problem-solving. We learned to connect the different codes that we have learned throughout the bootcamp in order to solve a particular problem, which is finding the nearest MBTA from a destination input using the Google Maps API. Overall, the most valuable aspect of the project is gaining the experience of building a web app, which allows us to experience first-hand the developer’s thought process and scope of work as entrepreneurs or “non-techies.” As every business is a technology business, the experience allows us to better understand and empathize with the developers when we work with them in the future.