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An Analysis of My First Self-Made Website

I will preface by saying that I had the most fortunate opportunity summer 2020 to tend to my talents. With it being my senior year, my job moving remotely, and none of my core courses offered, I decided to gain new skills I did not have before. As a scholar in need of knowledge, I purchased a course on HarvardX that taught me the ways of deploying a web application with Heroku, Python, and Bootstrap. With that came project one, my first website, and more experiments thereafter. Bootstrap allows developers to quickly deploy user-friendly websites with the look and compatibility. Bootstrap is a very useful tool for rapid development of client's front-end needs.

Development Strategies

I learn best by doing and I wanted to do the whole website by myself. Div by div, I created the frontend by hand in HTML and CSS. "Why?", one may ask, well, to be considered an actual front-end developer I imagined it would involve creating each component and styling those components. Turns out, I am not fully wrong. Real front-end developers create sleek web frameworks to work with, which, according to my personal portfolio website, takes over ten thousand lines of CSS to make the website look and feel flawless (thanks, Bootstrap). My strategy was to learn what it takes to become a front-end and back-end developer by researching what I wanted in a book rating website then making that happen.

My other strategy was to complete the functionality with basic front-end looks within three weeks. This forced me to see my strengths and weaknesses. The minimum website requirements were for there to be a database for users to search books, rate books, and leave a review. To do that, users must also be able to register, login, and logout. Lastly, every book must

have their own API. The user features are possible through Python and raw SQL commands. Bootstrap gave me the tools I needed to get the search bar working, however, the compatibility was not there. As I was developing the website, I did not realize that the search feature was not working in Firefox and Safari. Upon further research, I found that I never copied the JavaScript link for Bootstrap's quick scripts that makes things work, like search bars.

Bootstrap's Overall Effectiveness

Bootstrap is very effective. I did not use the features to their full potential, but I continue to learn how. Using a template may have saved me more time than developing my own frontend, or it could have given me more trouble not knowing where to edit within the ten thousand lines of code. It was a learning experience either way and I learned what Bootstrap is capable of and how to utilize provided code for front-end development.

Solutions

In retrospect, I find that if the client is yourself and/or an assignment with no front-end feature (animation) requirements, use a template. It will save so much time. Using a template means that I would not have to worry about compatibility with the search bar across browsers and mobile phones. It also means that more time can be focused on the backend. Although I did not use a template, another solution is to make the search bar compatible myself with more CSS code. Anything is possible when determination is limitless.

Without frameworks like Bootstrap, web development would be slowed for all developers trying to deploy simple static websites, or even secure ecommerce websites. With over 80 free themes on their website, user requirements are so common that there are templates for every kind of web application.

Conclusion

      Developers sometimes need quick frontend development to achieve fast, qualitative software. Bootstrap offers just that, and it gives more time to back-end development. My book rating website would benefit from a facelift with one of the many given templates. Despite that, I am proud of the fact that users can register, login, logout, rate, review, and search. Those skills will come in handy one day.

Website: https://bookr8r.herokuapp.com