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Final Project Report

**Goals and Purpose:**

My final project is the official website for my fencing club in Philadelphia called Fencing Academy of Philadelphia. The club was established in 1989, and the previous website has not changed a lot since. Therefore, it looks outdated and it sometimes confuses users who are looking for useful information. The primary viewers of the site are all who live around Philadelphia and are interested in the sport fencing, regardless of their background and levels. Since fencing is one of those sports in which the age of the athletes does not matter, our viewers include, as stated in the website, children and adults from 8 years old to 80 years old. Thus, young kids, middle and high school students, college students are all primary audience who can be potential fencers of our club. Moreover, our secondary audience include the parents of the students and our fencers who might look up information for their kids. Since age is only a number in fencing, parents can also join our club, which make them potential audience and participants as well.

**Implementation:**

Links to Home Page:

OR

Right now three pages are functioning, including “Home” page, “Maps & Direction” page and “Contact Us” page. There are multiple functional links to these pages. On the “Home” page, “Register Now” tab and “Fencing Academy of Philadelphia” tab will take you to the “Contact Us” page and “Maps and Direction” page respectively. Also, in the footnote, “Home”, “Maps”, and “Contact Us” tabs are clickable, as well as the three icons on the right. Moreover, in the side navigation bar on “Maps and Direction” and “Contact Us” page, the links to these three pages are working.

Home page is the most important part of a site since it is the first page that audience can see. Thus I put lots of time and effort on it to make it not so boring to see. The features I bring into the Home page include a photo slider, three responsive tabs to show users the most important things like maps and registration. Links: <http://us27.siteground.us/~jianbinz/FinalProject/index.html> OR <http://cs12students.dce.harvard.edu/~jzhang/KenZhang_98/FinalProject/index.html>

Maps and Direction page is necessary as well because people want to know how to get to you once they make up their mind to pay you a visit or once they register and have to start training. To improve user experience, I implemented maps for each location so that users can know where exactly are the locations and how to get there. Links: <http://us27.siteground.us/~jianbinz/FinalProject/Maps&Directions.html> OR <http://cs12students.dce.harvard.edu/~jzhang/KenZhang_98/FinalProject/Maps&Directions.html>

Contact Us page is the final page that I made is a new feature than the old site which is a registration form and a sign up form to get more information. For those who prefer pen and paper, I also include a link to download the paper version of the form which also includes the schedule and fee. Therefore, they can fill out the form and email it back to us to sign up. For the form validation, I was using Bootstrap’s validator at first which works perfectly except a major problem – it does not work on safari. After some research, I found out that Bootstrap validator does not support safari. Thus, even though I really liked it, I still had to give it up and use another form validator plugin. Right now, the result is pretty satisfying. Links: <http://us27.siteground.us/~jianbinz/FinalProject/ContactUs.html> OR <http://cs12students.dce.harvard.edu/~jzhang/KenZhang_98/FinalProject/ContactUs.html>

In addition to these three necessary pages, I also implement and customize a 404 not found page. It is simple and neat which tells users to check the link that they enter. I also put a funny fencing picture there just to ease things up.

**Future Direction:**

Since it is only the beginning of the site, there are a lot more to do in the future. First of all, I will definitely finish other pages to make the whole website functional, which will be my primary workload afterwards. Then, I will use other plugins, such as PayPal or Stripe, to make sure that users can pay their classes online within the registration form. After that, I will work on the database and implement an account system so that fencers can login to their account and make changes to their schedules for classes and private lessons. Finally, I also plan to implement an online store since our club sells sporting goods as well. In a nutshell, there are a lot more to improve and to add to the site. The future is bright and promising!

**Reflection:**

All of the plugins and the framework Bootstrap help me a lot, especially Bootstrap, which let me lay out my site in a very easy and efficient way with all the classes it provides. The plugins also let me be able to implement the features which I cannot do by myself or which would take me a huge amount of time to do so, such as the slider, the sticky side navigation bar and so on.

My favorite part is the “Home” page because of several reasons. First of all, I Photoshoped and improved the image at the header myself and I think it looks better than it was at the old site. Also the slider at the center improves the general feeling of the page, making it look more modern and dynamic. I also like the grow transition effect of the three tabs at the bottom of the page. With the help of Bootstrap, I make them responsive to the size of the screen. All of the cool features, and time and effort of course, that I put into the home page makes it becomes my favorite part of the site.

Even though I am satisfied with the site now, there is certainly room for further improvement. Maps and Direction page has always been a tricky part since I started my project. I believe that the four maps I implemented with Google Maps API can surely help the users find their way to one of the four locations easily from wherever they are, but they do bring a major issue –the layout problem. Because the classes I use provided from Bootstrap use float left to lay out, the distance between the sections are really tough to change and to manage. To solve this problem, I wrote the JavaScript myself to adjust the margin of the sections when the maps are showing or when they are hiding. Right now it is working but in a buggy and unstable way. I will definitely find a better and smoother solution and improve it before the formal release.

I really appreciate the framework and plugins that I chose for my project because they helped save me from a lot of extra works and time “reinventing the wheel”. Thus if I were to finish the project again and if I had any suggestions for my future projects, I would definitely use framework and plugins again. Furthermore, a great lesson I learned from my project is that I should always have a good preparation before doing any project. When I started my project and imported the framework, I just used it right away instead of fully understanding all of the cool features it offers and some tutorials online in advance. So I wasted a decent amount of time figuring out why my css suddenly stopped working as I changed something. So I understand now that “if you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail”, by which I mean that I should definitely learn about the frameworks better next time before I use them. Another issue that I bumped into during my project was the attention of the details. As I was building my project, after I implemented all of plugins by script tag, I found out that nothing was working. I spent countless number of hours choosing and importing different plugins since I thought the problem was on the plugins. After a while, I finally figured the problem: I put the JavaScript files in a wrong order, which causes some plugins did not have access to jQuery. What I learned from it is that it is always helpful to pay great attention to details, due to the fact that every single snippet of codes matters.