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Tastes of the Past: A Recipe and Blog Site

Brainstorm

When I began brainstorming, I wanted to make sure that my ideas would highlight who I am and my skill set. My first idea was to create a website that would explore the connection between the Korean diaspora, food, and culture. Growing up, I always wished I could be more connected with my heritage, but never knew where to begin. The website I had ideated would have a library of recipes and a blog section to share my thoughts and provide historical and cultural significance of Korean cuisine. My intention is to create a starting point for people looking to find delicious foods to eat and learn more about Korea.

My second idea was to create a website for readers. Up until a few years ago, I was an extremely avid reader, however, when I got to college, I got burnt out, as most of what I was reading was for academic purposes. This past year, I've made it my goal to begin reading again, but I felt lost and unsure of where to begin, as so many incredible books have been released since my burnout. This website would have modern and classic book recommendations based on age, reading proficiency, and interests. It would also provide resources to local libraries, lessons, and

events for students, readers, etc. This would be a great hub for people to go to for all of their reading needs.

Looking back, there are so many ideas that I could have developed into my senior project, but I am glad that I went with my recipe site. It is representative of my interests and passion, as well as what I can do as a front-end web developer. There will be many more opportunities to develop my ideas, but for a capstone project, I am satisfied with my final decision.

Identify

My solution to my original problem has remained the same throughout the design and development process. However, drafting and developing the blog section made me realize the significance of the content and shifted my focus a bit. “For Koreans, food is both love and their roots,” so I hope that these posts will showcase how food “[ies] Koreans across the world to their heritage” (“The Importance Of Food In South Korean Culture”). The recipes are still there, but I wanted the blog posts to distinguish my site from any other recipe page. Not only do I want to bridge this gap between the diaspora and our heritage, but I also want to help preserve generational wisdom that is being lost due to changing times. Fermentation is a process that has helped Koreans “survive the harsh natural environment”. This special technique is a vital process in many Korean staples, so I hope to help preserve what is unique to the Korean peninsula (Kim qtd. in Watanabe).

Define

The website will be a multi-page website with a home page, about us page, blog post page, and contact us page. The site will be responsive and implement a light and dark mode for preferred viewing. The overall design of the website was inspired by minhwa (민화), which are “free-style, informal folk paintings... contain[ing] the essential consciousness and spirit of nature” (Kang). These paintings are representative of “people’s hopes and desires” (Kang). However, I also wanted to bridge these traditional artistic principles with playful and youthful design, using illustrations and characters.

The major steps in completing this project is completing the sketches and wireframes by November 3, the mockups and prototypes by November 4, the site’s content by November 6, the HTML/CSS/JS by November 24, the testing phase by November 26, and the submission by November 28. I managed to stay on track for the most part. Drafting the site’s content was my main obstacle during the project, given the amount of original content I would need to write for the blog posts. This isn’t something I accounted for in my project brief, so given my experience, I would make sure to allow for more time for something of this scale.

Ideate

My sketches start as ideas in my head, and once I have something that I like, I sketch it out. This usually means that I end up with a few sketch varieties, because by the time I put pen to paper, I have a good idea of what I want. Much of the focus of this website is on the art, content, and functionality, so I didn’t want the website to be bloated with text boxes and images. I stuck with my sketches for the most part, but I ended up putting my recipes into the about page layout and leaving the home page as the about us section of the website.

Prototype

I had three key development stages for this project: drafting, developing, coding, and testing. My drafting process is typically a project long process, as I am prone to changing things and shifting focus. However, there is some structure that I adhere to. I first gather my sketches and determine a color scheme. I always reference the WebAIM contrast checker in order to determine what colors will comply with ADA standards, while also being visually coherent. Next I start coloring in my sketches to find the right balance. Once I determine a layout and design that I like, I create a more developed mockup to visualize my website's final outcome.

The development stage is all about gathering, editing, and writing out all of my content. This can also be a project long process, as it takes putting it into code for me to understand what can stay and what needs to be cut or changed. When gathering images, I put them into Photoshop to unify the sizing and cohesion. All of my written content is put into a document, where I format it to flow like the layout of the website. This content is continuously edited until the end of the coding stage.

The coding stage starts in CodePen and is then moved into Visual Studio Code. I utilize CodePen to experiment and test my code, to get a feel for how the website will look and function. This is a necessary step for me, so that I am confident when working in VS Code. After I am finished with my coding, I will move on to the testing stage. This involves validating my HTML and CSS and looking at the site in different dimensions and web browsers. This way, I am able to guarantee that my site is fully responsive and functioning.

My development process ultimately worked for the project, it was just a matter of how I implemented it, that I would change in the future. I have a structured plan for how I work, but I struggle to stay within the boundaries and stay on track.

Test and Refine

My first mockup was simple and rudimentary, but I received feedback that it was too formulaic and lacked the visual language that indicated it was a website about Korean recipes. One of my peers that reviewed my work was Korean and was able to give me a better perspective on how to better implement my design.

The first thing I did after I received feedback was go back to the sketching stage. My latest prototype was a result of me getting stuck on an idea and forgetting what my website was all about. I looked at hanbok fabric patterns, architecture, and iconography to get a better grasp on what I wanted the website to look like. There were so many types of Korean art that I could pull from, so I'm glad that I was able to receive the feedback that I did.

Implementation

Overall, I am satisfied with how my project turned out. The scale of the project was much larger than what I have done in the past, and I was worried about not being able to make it look and function the way I wanted, or that I wouldn't finish it on time. The functionality is the standout of the website for me. It was a lot of work making sure that it was responsive and ADA compliant, but in the end, I am proud of how it turned out. Visually, I am okay with how it turned out. I received great critiques about what designs I could implement, and I did to the best of my time and ability. I was very ambitious with what I wanted to accomplish, but had to scale back

due to time constraints. If I were to have more time, I would play around with more interesting patterns and have more illustrations.

As a designer, I found that I have room to grow and develop. I believe that I have a strong point of view of visual design, but on the front-end side, I don't have the skill set to fulfill that point of view, which makes my final designs feel plain. However, this project was a wonderful opportunity to explore traditional Korean art and design, which is something that I don't typically work with.

As a project manager, I could do better. I struggle with sticking to a set plan and making sure that I don't stray from that plan. I have so many ideas that I want to implement, to the point where everything gets muddled and overwhelming. Even though I struggled with managing the development of this project, I am glad that through my struggle, I was able to learn things about my self and the way that I manage my work.

Works Cited

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