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Project Part 2 Review

For Project Part 2, I decided to keep the website I had already built, adding some new functionalities and making a few minor detail changes to increase the utility and aesthetics of the website.

The first major change I made to my website for Part 2 was adding a form submission and connecting it to a database. This is intended for any users of the website to be able to contact me directly without opening up another browser window to send me an email. The form includes 4 textareas for submission: First Name, Last Name, Email, and Message. To show the user what format the submission should be in, I added a text value to each showing an example format. I made the text value examples gray and italicized, mimicking the HTML5 placeholder format. I did not use the placeholder format in case a visitor is using an older web browser that does not support that attribute. I used jQuery to remove the example text when the user clicks on a textarea. Once the form is submitted, the input format must be verified before being submitted to the database. In the webhandle.js file, I added a formvalidate function that checks whether each textarea is properly filled with new user information, making sure the ‘placeholder’ text is removed and that none of the textareas are empty. For the first and last names, I used a regular expression to make sure those submissions only contained letters. I also used a regular expression for the email submission, making sure there is an @ sign surrounded by words and then a period surrounded by words. If there are any errors, they will be added into one string and sent in an alert message. Otherwise, the form will be submitted.

Once the form is checked and submitted, it will be sent to the msgsubmit.php file via POST. I created the submission so that a new page loads with a thank you message for the submission. I also created another CSS file (submitstyle.css) to format this new submission page. I used mysqli to connect to my database and run a query for submission. Using the POST values, I was able to obtain the form submission data and arrange them for insertion into the database. Since the values were already checked sufficiently in my javascript file, I did not run any checks on them in this php file. If there is an error in the submission, it will be printed on the page. So far, all of the submissions with the javascript validation have been submitted with no errors.

To make the website more visually appealing, I used jQuery to recalibrate the scrolling to the top of subheadings when the user clicks a link to go to different sections of the page. Since there is a fixed heading at the top of the page, this hid the subheadings in the original website when moving from section to section on the website. Using jQuery, I was able to scroll up a fixed amount (the same amount as the heading) after moving to a subsection so that the user is able to see the title of that section.

Since Part 1, I have really learned how to use JavaScript and jQuery to make the website more interactive and change things visually. I became a lot more comfortable using JavaScript by using it to add form validation and website dynamics. I also became more comfortable with sending form data through a POST method and using this data in PHP. Additionally, I was able to successfully create a SQL database and send queries to it through PHP. Overall, I was pleased with the amount of functionally I added to the website for Part 2.