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Info Sys 371

ChessMind Website Report

The Information Systems 371 Term Project required me to apply my knowledge and skills that I have acquired over the course of the whole semester into a dynamic and fully functional web application. Over the course of the project, I faced several challenges and obstacles, but I was able to overcome them by using all class resources, troubleshooting practices, and persevering through. This report summarizes my journey and reflects on what worked well, what didn't work well, what I would do differently, and my takeaways from completing the project.

Overall, I am very pleased and proud of how the website turned out. One thing that worked very well was my design approach, which helped keep focus on the content and the user experience. Before beginning to rush into coding in HTML and CSS for my design, I took the time to brainstorm a color scheme, a general layout and my wants/needs for the site. I explored other Chess community web pages along with identifying common design patterns that helped me create what I feel is a user-friendly and familiar interface. Most of all, I think my website encapsulates the classic feeling of Chess through its color scheme and theme.

One thing that didn't work well was not having anyone to bounce ideas off of or get feedback from during the design process. I found it difficult to stay objective and identify potential design flaws without a second opinion. Additionally, working alone meant that some aspects of the project took longer than anticipated. However, I am glad that for my first time using all these techniques and skills, I powered through on my own as I had to push through solving a lot of problems through my own troubleshooting techniques. Furthermore, I think that in general, the firebase database and authentication features that were introduced latest in the course, were very difficult to grasp and implement into my site in such a short time. I managed to include a community page, feedback page, as well as generating new quotes, tips, and events on the homepage through the database. However, it took me a lot of time and resources to get this working as I missed some lectures due to illness, so I had more or less only the Endless Recipe project to go off of. Luckily, I was able to generate dynamically loaded content I wanted, but I think there was a lot more I could have done, given more time.

A sort of cop out answer for what I would have done if I were to do this same project again, would be to choose a completely different idea outside of chess. I think I would do this just because every idea has an entirely different design, theme, features, database, ect. It would be exciting to apply all the skills on an entirely different site. More seriously, centering my attention on if I were to do this specific project of ChessMind differently, I think the main thing I

would do differently would be to garner more comfortability with firebase operations as I think my website could be far more advanced if I took more time to understand firebase features in connection with javascript instead of sort of jumping into the project with the basics. I was fortunate enough to use the Endless Recipe project as a guide for my website, however, I think more practice using all the javascript database commands and function calls would've put my site on another level.

My primary lesson from completing the project is that developing a website on your own may be difficult yet rewarding. I learned a lot about user experience design and how to build a beautiful and effective website. I also obtained a better grasp of the requirements for a chess community website and how to design a platform to suit those requirements.

I believed creating the homepage would be difficult at first because it is the first impression that people will get of the website and I was worried it would take me a long time to commit to a design. However, after sketching out a few ideas and soliciting feedback from others, I was able to design a homepage that effectively communicated the website's purpose and value. Researching other similar websites, as well as committing to the idea of having a classic Chess feel, this part of the process went much smoother than originally anticipated.

On the other hand, I thought that converting my site to be a single-page website would be on the easier side, but it turned out to be very frustrating. Originally, I had setup my javascript to change the inner html of the main tag of the HTML document, however I realized that when I wanted to dynamically load content on each specific page I would need to edit those html pages as well as the inner html content. Thus, I had to transition to using an "is-hidden" class for a bunch of main tags and select them on or off based on what was clicked. This solution worked pretty well, however I never was able to manage to figure out how to make my page accessible through the firebase link without linking it to \home.html(which held all these main tags rather than the requested index.html) at the end of the URL. .

It was a very proud moment to show my ChessMind Website to my family and friends outside of class. Obviously it's not a perfect site in the slightest, but everyone was shocked that I managed to create it all from scratch. The signing up to be able to post, even the feedback page really impressed my friends and family as they didn't expect the site to be as interactive and functional as it is. A lot of feedback from them showed me that the theme was true to the game of Chess and that made me feel very proud and relieved.

Some features I would've liked to add if I were given more time would most certainly be a functional board to play Chess against the computer with. I don't think a Chess website would be complete without being able to play the game, but I have secretly linked Chess.com in the top left corner with the chess board icon. I also think if I were given more time, I would include

options to like and comment on the chess community posts page as ultimately, this site is for people to communicate with one another.

Overall, I'm very pleased with the website's design and eager to see how it will serve the chess community. This project taught me a lot, and I'm excited to use what I've learned to future design projects.