Avalanche Level 1 Workshop Website – Post-Mortem Project

Nik Russell | Web Development Final Project
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1. Project Overview and Process

For my final web development project, I chose to showcase the **Avalanche Level 1 Workshop** website. This site was built to promote a hands-on avalanche safety course designed for backcountry enthusiasts. I approached this project with both functional goals (clear schedule, registration, gear list access) and aesthetic goals (clean layout, outdoorsy feel, mobile responsiveness).

The project started with basic wireframes and a list of required content. I focused on simplicity and clarity from the beginning, avoiding clutter and building mobile-friendly layouts early. Once I had the HTML structure in place, I used **custom CSS styling** with Google Fonts, a dropdown nav menu, and styled buttons to polish the design.

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2. Growth and Reflection

Throughout the course, I gained confidence in **responsive design**, especially when working with navigation systems like the dropdown menu in this project. I also improved my understanding of **CSS specificity and layout structure**, using sections, padding, and background contrast to organize the site.

One of the most significant skills I built was **debugging and layout troubleshooting**. Early on, I struggled with getting spacing and mobile responsiveness to behave properly. Using browser dev tools and checking against multiple screen sizes helped me solve those layout inconsistencies.

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3. Technical Skills Demonstrated

- **HTML5 Structure**: Semantic tags like `<section>`, `<nav>`, and `<header>` helped with clarity and accessibility.
- **CSS Styling**: I used a consistent color palette, rounded borders, button transitions, and typography with `@font-face` and Google Fonts.
- **Responsive Design**: The dropdown menu and flexible section padding worked well across screen sizes.

- **Custom Fonts**: Loaded and applied the Montserrat font for headings, which helped with the overall brand feel.
- **Version Control**: I used GitHub Desktop to track changes and push updates. This was crucial for organizing my work and restoring past versions when needed.

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4. Tools & Frameworks

- **GitHub**: I used GitHub to manage version control and host the project on GitHub Pages.
- **VS Code**: My primary development environment, enhanced with extensions for live server previews and syntax highlighting.
- **Frameworks**: While I didn't use Bootstrap for this site, I leaned heavily on lessons from using it in earlier projects (like container spacing and mobile responsiveness) to guide my hand-written CSS.

GitHub's live site feature allowed me to view and test my changes in real-time, which helped me refine my designs faster and share my progress with peers during feedback sessions.

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5. Creative Thinking and Design Inspiration

My inspiration came from real-world avalanche course sites I've seen—simple, functional, and gear-focused. I wanted to keep things minimal but professional. Peer feedback throughout the semester helped me fine-tune colors, padding, and button layout. Small changes, like increasing border radius or spacing around headers, made a big difference in polish.

I also learned to apply **design principles like visual hierarchy**, ensuring that the course date, location, and registration buttons stood out immediately to site visitors. Accessibility was also a consideration: I used sufficient color contrast and clear text for readability.

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6. Transferable Skills Gained

- **Communication**: Writing concise, audience-specific content like course descriptions and registration calls-to-action.
- **Problem-Solving**: Debugging layout issues, fixing font path errors, and experimenting with flex properties for spacing.
- **Time Management**: I paced my work across my weeks.
- **Creativity**: Design decisions were iterative. I experimented with font combinations, background contrast, and button colors.
- **Adaptability**: I learned how to structure a site from scratch without relying on frameworks like Bootstrap and made stylistic choices independently.

7. Takeaways and What's Next

I'm proud of the overall look and feel of this site—it's clean, navigable, and would work well as a real informational page. If I had more time, I would have added media queries for even better responsiveness and maybe implemented a real form or interactive gear list.

Overall, this project helped me apply the course's core learning outcomes, especially around maintaining a web presence, applying responsive design, and thinking critically about design choices. I now feel more confident building small websites from scratch, and more aware of how transferable these skills are to future technical and professional roles.