**Reflection - Nathan Sweeney**

**Give a brief explanation of the webpages**

I have attempted to create an updated version of the current gov.ie website (Gov, 2019). My project was built around the idea of modernising both the user interface and user experience. The current website can be quite daunting for new users - with a large proportion of the information being displayed on the home page.

I have created seven pages for this project:

* homepage (index)
  + Hero section with search bar along with a quick link to the portal section and the services section. UI and UX updated to modernise and add images to make content more distinguishable.
* Services
  + Keeping in line with it being a functional website, I decided to focus on one main service (eirfinder) and also display the services that were currently available.
* Eirfinder
  + Simple and clean UI for a tool to search any address or eircode in Ireland.
* About
  + Information about the website along with their two main social media communication channels.
* Contact
  + Contact information for the government along with a map to pinpoint the location of the office.
* Login
  + Username and password required to login, with forgot password or cancel link.
* Dashboard
  + Once logged in, this was the main dashboard that appeared that gave access to services, settings, and customer help if needed.

**Give a brief overview of the HTML code, and why you chose those HTML tags/elements.**

Given that the aim of this project was to make the website more friendly to the average user, my HTML content needed to reflect this. I ensured the larger pages were divided into sections, and classes were given to ensure my CSS would be as consistent as possible throughout. I was conscious of using plenty of images and to add helpful elements to allow the user to search for what they were looking for. I was also aiming for seamless website navigation - ensuring the user could easily find their way around and not get stuck in a random ‘404 page not found’ section.

**Explain how your CSS leads to the presented web pages**

My goal for the CSS was to ensure consistency while also keeping things simple. I am a big fan of a minimalist approach - using lots of spacing between elements to let the design breathe, and also to use similar colour schemes and contrasting elements throughout.

The first major overhaul for this website was colour. I found the current Gov.ie website to be quite bland and grey. My take on the project was to inject more personality and to keep things modern.

Flexbox was utilised throughout the project. This is a CSS tool that I was fortunate to have some (not much, but some!) previous knowledge in. For the most part I am happy with the outcome, with elements spaced neatly and evenly around my web pages.

A new one for me - embedding a Google map location. Luckily a quick google (Spot, 2024) and I was able to implement a random location fairly easily into my HTML and quick styling with CSS.

**Give an explanation of any limitations/problems that you encountered**

This was, on paper, the largest frontend project I have coded from scratch. As a result I found myself sometimes “putting the cart before the horse” where I was sometimes structuring a page with a guideline in my head rather than outlining the structure on paper / figma beforehand. If I were to approach this project again, I would follow the correct guidelines by mapping it out first before jumping into creating from scratch.

I found flexbox to be a bit frustrating at times, I think I need to give myself a refresher on it. Some of my content I believe was executed quite well, whereas others I found more difficult depending on the direction and spacing that I was planning for the content.

Regarding git, I did not read the underlined instructions correctly regarding the git commits to CA git repository. I am hoping that I am able to correct this for the upload.

Another limitation (one I thought I would mention if you are looking at dates of git commits) was an unfortunately timed holiday that took a few days away from myself being able to work on this project. I found that when I returned it was a race to the finish to get everything finalised.

And lastly (and potentially may have been timed with the above) is refactoring. I began reading a book titled The Pragmatic Programmer (Thomas and Hunt, 2020) and I began learning about how to not duplicate my code and attempt to refactor as I go along. I am certain my CSS could have benefited from further refactoring to ensure it was more legible and easier to track changes. I noticed that as the project was coming close to completion, I found it much more difficult to find sections of CSS that I wanted to change due to the sheer volume of current stylings.

**Conclusion**

Overall I very much enjoyed the challenge of creating this project! There were a few decisions that, looking back, I would have changed, however I am overall happy with the outcome. I hope you enjoy.

# **Reference list**

Gov (2019). *Gov.ie*. [online] Www.gov.ie. Available at: https://www.gov.ie/en/.

Spot, H. (2024). *How to Embed Google Map in HTML [Step-By-Step Guide]*. [online] blog.hubspot.com. Available at: https://blog.hubspot.com/website/how-to-embed-google-map-in-html.

Thomas, D. and Hunt, A. (2020). *The pragmatic programmer : your journey to mastery*. Boston: Addison-Wesley.