

**APT 1040: INTRODUCTION TO WEB DESIGN AND APPLICATIONS**

**FINAL PROJECT MARKING RUBRIC**

The basic project assignment is straightforward: create a web site on an area of interest. You are encouraged to find a topic that has not yet been covered extensively. If you choose a topic that has been covered before, you will be expected to offer a substantially different perspective on the topic, to present at least eight new sources in your bibliography, and to avoid any significant overlap in site content.

The formal requirements for the project are laid out below. Sites will be graded on their adherence to these guidelines and on the quality of their content and design. Please see the extensive list of web design principles below on creating a successful web project.

**LIST OF WEB DESIGN PRINCIPLES**

Designing an effective web site requires more than just gathering relevant information and posting it on the web. Like a good paper or research presentation, a quality web project demands as much attention to the selection, organization, and presentation of material as to the underlying research itself. You should strive, above all, to be both clear and engaging in every aspect of site design. Without the first, you will quickly lose your audience. Without the second, you'll never catch their attention in the first place.

Here are some concrete suggestions for making your site a winner:

Before you begin:

* Consider your audience and your goals. You should have a clear sense of who will be using your site (mostly college undergraduates) and what kind of experience you are hoping to provide. What exactly are you trying to accomplish here? Why is this important?
* Plan your site on paper first. You can draw a "family tree" of pages with arrows indicating links. Or you can make a hierarchical outline. Either way, it is essential to organize your information and lay out the architecture of your site before attempting to implement your vision.

Site Layout:

* Strive for consistency. You want your project to have an identity, so all the pages in your project should have a common feel: there should be consistency among backgrounds, color schemes, navigational tools, and tone of voice. This is especially important if you are dividing up your site's pages among several team members. Otherwise, your project will seem like two or three separate projects lumped together, rather than a single, unified whole.
* Provide a rich set of links within your site. Ideally, there should be multiple ways for your user to navigate your pages. You should consider including a prominent 'home' link or icon on each page, a menu or table of contents, and highlighted links within textual material to related information elsewhere on the site. Feel free, of course, also to provide links to other pages within ECE or elsewhere on the web.
* Don't hide important information. Users don't like to click too many times to find the information they want -- if information is particularly important, make it accessible up front. On any given page, remember that as with a newspaper, the top left corner is the most prominent. See the National Geographic Website for a good example.

The web medium:

* Provide opportunities for interaction. How is your site any different from a traditional print document? How can you involve the reader in ways that non-digitized texts usually cannot? Interactivity can be a compelling, innovative means of engaging your reader and creating experiences that cannot be replicated in other media.
* Avoid text-only pages. Ideally, a user should never encounter an entire screen full of uninterrupted text in browsing your site. Again, take advantage of the web medium!
* Don't sacrifice elegance for pizzazz. Just because you can make images fly across the screen does not mean you necessarily should. Every design element of your site (colors, images, animation) ought to correspond thematically with the content and goals of your project.
* Provide a link for every URL you mention in your site. If your bibliography or notes include a citation for another website, list the URL in full, but make it 'clickable' as well so that the user can go directly to the site in question.

The front door:

* Give your site a descriptive title. Your title should convey the content of your site in a concise but engaging manner. Ideally, it should pique the curiosity of users and prompt them to explore your project pages.
* Include a brief introduction. This should be part of your site's home page, and should explain the scope and purpose of the site. Once users have noticed your title and followed a link to your site, they will expect quickly to find a further elaboration of your title, a brief paragraph or two describing what the site is all about and what makes it interesting. You've caught the user's eye with your title; the introduction is your chance to heighten their interest and persuade them to actually stick around and explore.
* Make your site's home page as useful a starting point as possible. The viewer should be able to see at a glance what your site is about, how it is laid out, and what kinds of resources and features it includes. Ideally, all of this information (along with your site title and introduction) should be visible on a single fast-loading screen that requires a minimum of scrolling.

Accessibility:

* Make sure your text is legible. Check the size, color, and font of all text within your site to confirm that it can be easily read. Be especially careful of dark or fancy backgrounds that make text hard to read.
* Make sure your site is platform independent. Your site should be viewable on both Mac and Windows machines using either of the most commonly available browsers, Netscape and Explorer.
* Consider the needs of your viewers. Think about the bandwidth your site will require. Keep in mind that not all users will have the luxury of an ethernet connection. Minimize the memory requirements of your site by compressing images and other large files. And make sure all your images have ALT-TEXT behind them. This makes the site accessible both to low-vision users and users with slow modems who have turned the images off.

The end game:

* Thoroughly test your site. Ask a friend to sit down and explore your site. Ask them to think out loud, and watch them navigate the site. Do they get lost? Do they have trouble finding links? Do they have trouble understanding your labels? Do they understand your prose? Ideally, you should elicit and incorporate feedback about your site in the course of developing it as well as when its nearing completion. Be sure to test your site both of the most commonly used browsers, Netscape and Internet Explorer.
* Proofread carefully! Check carefully for spelling and grammatical errors before posting your written materials to the web.

**Final Project Grading Rubric**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Website Components** | | |
| The website’s title is in line with the content | 2 | Y |
| The subtitle tells users the main goal of the site | 2 | Y |
| The website contains at least five pages including the home page | 2 |  |
| The website has a footer which includes the copyright notice | 2 |  |
| **HTML Elements** | | |
| The website contains at least 8 images | 2 |  |
| The website contains an ordered or unordered list | 2 | Y |
| The website contains a table (layout tables do not count) | 2 |  |
| The website’s content is organized by headings and paragraphs (this means you must use <h1> and <p> elements in your pages) | 2 | Y |
| Headings are given a unique style | 2 |  |
| The website contains some bold or italic text | 2 |  |
| There are at least two links to external websites | 2 |  |
| The HTML and CSS code is error free | 2 |  |
| **Website Styling** | | |
| An external style sheet is used so that changes cascade to all HTML pages | 2 |  |
| A consistent style and color scheme is used throughout all pages | 2 |  |
| The text is of a size and color that makes it easy to read | 2 |  |
| The website uses a clear navigation scheme and all internal links work | 2 |  |
| Creativity is used to make the website aesthetically pleasing. Suggestions: – Coordinated colors; Gradients, badges, and logos made with Fireworks; Background images and/or colors for different table cells; Effective layout of text and images | 4 |  |
| **Content and Goals** | | |
| The website’s content has been well-researched and is up to date | 4 |  |
| The website is free of spelling and grammatical errors | 2 |  |
| Users can accomplish the stated goal of the website | 2 |  |
| Use of JavaScript, and PHP to connecting to a database | 10 |  |
| **Presentation** | **6** |  |
| **Other** | | |
| You will lose points for any of the following:   * The project was submitted late * The text on your website has been plagiarized (using small amounts of text from other websites is OK but not entire pages) * You have not signed up to work in a team but are using another student’s work |  |  |
| **Total Score** | **60** |  |