**Year 13 Assessment Template – Use complex techniques to design a website.  
Digital Technologies Assessment 3.4 – 4 credits – AS91903**Part 1 – Establish in depth what the design requirements are

**Context:** VR Journalism website with accompanying forums and wiki.

**Purpose:** My site will serve as a place for people to come to find out about VR, how to get into it, and news surrounding it. It will be a blog/forum where the home page will be curated articles, but there will also be a forum section where anyone can post if they have a verified account.

**End-user requirements:**

* I will have a homepage with a mix of top articles and forum posts from today (decided by user interactivity over time period). The first section of my site will be curated articles written by verified users. This will be separate from the forum section of the site which will be posts which can be made by anyone with an account.
* You will be able to comment on the posts as well as upvote or downvote them meaning the community is choosing what it wants to see, in contrast to the articles section, which will be curated. Users will also be able to choose which topics they want to browse – hardware, software, gaming, etc. or even just all topics.
* Some accounts will be given moderator access with more permissions – permissions such as power over posts and comments that are not their own, or the ability to ban other users from posting. These moderator accounts will be chosen by the site administrator (me) who will have another level of control beyond what is provided to the moderators.

(My research and progress images are in the media folder of my website assessment folder)

**Relevant implication 1:** *Aesthetics.*

Aesthetics is the way something is styled artistically, and consistency is usually also a big part of this. Aesthetics is the way you decide to present your work to an audience, a first and lasting impression – considering I want to provide a good first impression, as well as have a clean, aesthetically pleasing website, aesthetics will be a big focus of mine throughout the development process. I will accomplish a satisfactory style/aesthetic by spending time on the research and development of my website and making sure that it uses current conventions of web design while also standing out as a great, consistent website. I will use a consistent colour palette, consistent fonts and consistent styling in general to ensure that each part of my website looks like it belongs.

**Relevant implication 2:** *Functionality.*

Functionality is how the website works, and how much it can do. Functionality can cover behind the scenes things such as using JavaScript to update content on the page, or clean links so that the URL is prettier. It can also mean surface level things such as being able to comment on posts or use a search bar. I would like to attempt to implement all of these things, and more, to create my website and make it the best it can be. I will address functionality by looking at other similar websites and seeing what functionality they offer over each other and which I prefer. Once I have completed this research I will look at the best ways to implement what I have found into my website and make sure it works on all of the common browsers (Firefox, Chrome, Edge, Safari etc) through extensive user testing and feedback. I will also be implementing a dark mode (which definitely also counts towards aesthetics too) which will automatically detect the system dark mode setting – supported by MacOS, Windows, iOS, Android and more.

Part 2 – Design Development & Research

**Layout research:**

I have looked into other websites with similar contexts to mine and decided I liked it best when the content *(articles, posts, images – other content, such as ads or article recommendations, could be placed outside of the center without bothering me)* was kept to the middle of the page, meaning it looks less cluttered and your eyes don’t have to move as much so its more comfortable. As a reader, I personally prefer sites less when they put the content across a large amount of the width of the screen because of this and will therefore also be putting my content in the middle of the page, elevated above the background.

I’m also going to be using a normal navbar, nothing too fancy, as navbars have stood the test of time and are therefore proven to work. Navbars are very easy to use and I don’t see any reason to further complicate my design. However, as I am designing a responsive website, I will consider developing a mobile version of my site – this will not include a traditional top mounted navbar + hamburger drawer like the desktop site, because mobile users largely ignore content at the top of the page as phones are becoming so large today that reaching for the hamburger drawer icon is an effort that much of the population won’t even bother to go through. Because of this, I will be using either a floating hamburger or a bottom mounted navbar, no hamburger needed.

**Colour palette research:**

I was researching websites one night, and I realized how much I hated it when a website didn’t offer a dark mode option as my eyes would very much prefer it if they did, and so, I will be implementing both a light and a dark mode in my website design. Using both light and dark mode presents new challenges, such as having to be conscious that just inverting the colour scheme of your website is not going to cut it, as this will be very ugly, and users will not be coming back to your site in a hurry. I discovered that using pure white text, especially against pure blacks, can actually be very painful to look at and cause eye straining as a result of the visual smearing that can occur in this situation. As a result, I found that using 87% opacity white text on a #121212 background was the best way to resolve this issue – this is actually a convention recommended by Google’s Material design division so I’m sure I can trust it. This is not an issue with black text on white background, however, so I will be sticking with that custom for any text in light mode.

 In my first design, I actually used the same dark coloured navbar in both light and dark mode but upon further research, I discovered that when using a dark theme, high saturation colours should be avoided as much as possible as they will clash with the dark colours of the site and cause visual vibrations/smearing which are unpleasant to look at and can induce eyestrain. On the contrary, high saturation colours look at home in a light theme full of white and light greys. Upon reading this, I decided that I didn’t have to keep the light and dark mode colour schemes identical as long as the layout stayed consistent, and I changed the navbar colour in my light theme for a much more saturated, brighter one which I think looks much better with the rest of the theme.

I have also taken measures to communicate depth in my website. I have layered each element of my website, both light and dark, to show depth and hierarchy of the content. In light mode, this meant using shadows and changing the background colour – I could keep many of the elements white as shadows show up easily against white so no need for different colours, the depth has already been communicated. Dark mode, however, is a different beast. Shadows don’t really show up at all in dark mode, unless you use white shadows, which look very tacky and should be avoided, so depth must be communicated through changing colour – higher elevation directly correlates to lighter colours and I have applied this to my website, which should be evident.

A close up of a sign

Description automatically generated I will be using the below fonts in my website. Neusa will be primarily used in headings as it is a very strong font, and Roboto, which is, by contrast, a weaker font, will only be used occasionally in headings as it is much better suited to paragraphs and subheadings.

Part 3 – Feedback

**Feedback on Initial designs:**

**Tyler Clink:** The article you showed looks clean; but the wiki and forum need to stand out a bit because they look like copies of Reddit/Wikipedia. Dark/light mode is a good idea so run with that and maybe change the colours a bit.

**Mr Adams:** The indenting you used in the forum for comments looks great, even if it is somewhat a copy of Reddit. You might also want to show the UI for scrolling through threads rather than just the comments.

**Michael Longden:** I think your website will need a home page. I prefer your light design; I think that is easier to read. I would suggest making your navbar bigger, so that your search bar and sign up buttons are easier to read. I wouldn't change anything else.

**Andrei Ionescu:** I really like the dark mode theme and layout of your design. The only thing I would change is the positioning of the text on the navbar to make it more centered but great job Jimmy!

**What I will change:**

I will forego the whole wiki part of my site as on second thoughts, it almost seems a bit pointless considering it would have to be a copy paste of Wikipedia articles to make it worthwhile. I will however be keeping the forum and changing the design up to make it more unique. Dark mode will continue to be developed.

**Feedback on Refined designs:**

**TYLER CLINK:** Consider adding a logo to replace the title. Also, you might want to add another section of your site – maybe a chatroom or something? Also, I think it looks too cluttered with all the shadows and layers.

**OMRI KEPES:** Do you have to create an account to be able to vote on the forum? I like the simple design, like it’s not to outgoing. You could add an 'about' section. When your logged in, how do u log out? Can u view and edit your account?

**MICHAEL LONGDEN:** My feedback: You have made some good improvements on your designs from last time. I think both of your designs can be better in an aesthetics approach. I would suggest where there is no text on the sides, that you should put some colour in like you have done with the navbar. I also think your text in the articles page needs to be bigger, so to address people with sight problems. The other thing I want to mention is that I believe there should be some help and documentation in your website because users with learning disabilities etc. will probably struggle to understand what they are supposed to do in your website. It can be quite unclear when the website is a blog. Also, on your forum page, have you thought about a way to block offensive posts, as your blog makes it very easy for cyber bullies to be able to post comments. Other than that, you have two very good updated designs.

**ANDREI IONESCU:** I really like the dark mode theme and layout of your design. The only thing I would change is the positioning of the text on the navbar to make it more centered but great job Jimmy!

**What I will change:**

I will create a login section for my accounts and fix up my navbar as it is not as centered as some people would want to buy. I am unsure what Michael means when he refers to help and documentation for my website – I would consider this if he were more specific. I will also remove some of the shadows and layers and get my site working in bootstrap.

# A screenshot of a social media post Description automatically generatedFinal bootstrap site:

# A picture containing screenshot, monitor, screen, photo Description automatically generated

## Part 4 – Final design decision and justification

**Design conventions:** I applied many design conventions when building my website – I kept a consistent aesthetic which was handled tidily by my SCSS mixins, I used Adobe Xd to model what my site could look like, and I made sure to comment my code.

**Relevant implication 1:** *Aesthetics.* I believe I stayed true to my relevant implication of aesthetics as I spent a lot of effort in learning the ins and outs of SCSS to use in my project. I made a lot of use of media queries to conform to light/dark mode to make sure that the end user would get the most seamless experience of using your website. A big focus of mine was also responsive design – I used media queries to handle resizing of fonts or images that were not already handled by bootstrap – which I also made a lot of use of the responsive design that is built into the framework.

**Relevant implication 2:** *Functionality.* In terms of my design, my functionality was alright, I did get a customized rich text editor running and posting in my website, but unfortunately a lot of my database functionality became broken and thus this was not included in the final code. My dark mode functionality couldn’t’ve been better – I am satisfied with the way I handled the dark mode functionality as the CSS on the page can change without even a page reload due to the media queries and Mixins I wrote. I did encounter some issues with the navbar – for seemingly no reason at all my navbar likes to vertically stack list items and the collapse point seemed to be a bit off as well as the buttons not being properly vertically aligned. A lot of these issues are from a while ago.

**End-user requirements:** *End user requirements.* A lot of my end user requirements were not met due to the same reasons to the paragraph above (broken PHP code) which really stunted any backend code that used to work that now doesn’t. I was able to keep my promise on having multiple homepages with different content due to how I have done my sit.