Documentation

* + 1. Background

The problem I am trying to solve refers to the field of environmental protection and ethics. Animal agriculture is a huge part of human life and of the world economy, but it comes at a very high cost. It contributes exponentially to pollution and to the climate warming crisis. Also, for it to be profitable, it means that animals are subjected to conditions akin to torture. Even if they were kept in the best conditions, no animal wants to die for human pleasure and comfort, so it raises questions about the morality of eating meat.

The site I created tries to raise awareness about a possible solution, that is veganism. By changing their diet, humans can not only improve their health, but also improve the planet they call home and reduce animal suffering considerably. The site gives general information about veganism and provides a calculator that shows the user how many animals are sacrificed a year based on the amount of meat they consume per week. It also has a FAQ page that strives to answer some of the most common questions about veganism. For people interested in transitioning to veganism, it has a recipes page that shows how to veganise some popular dishes. There is also an About us page that contains general information about the site and made-up contact details. The site contains a very simple Site Map and a page with information about the cookie policy.

I named the site Vegan Hero in order to transmit the message that no matter how little one does to reduce suffering of animals, they will see him or her as a hero.

* + 1. Wireframes for desktop and mobile

I have created wireframes for all the major pages, for both the desktop and mobile versions. They are found in the wireframes folder.

1.1.3 Colour choices

I have used the following colours in my colour scheme:

Blue #154360

Green #60ce80

White #f0f0f0

Gray #ffffff

I have chosen these colours because they are the colours of the vegan flag. Also, it is a simple palette that matches the simple, informative nature of the site. Green and blue can also be easily associated with nature, with the green of grass and leaves and the blue of the sea.

Also related to design, I have chosen to use sans-serif fonts, to reinforce the feeling of minimalism. I have used Helvetica for the headings and the navigation and Georgia for the other elements. They are common fonts that should be supported by most browsers. If not, the font will default to another sans-serif.

As a source for images I used unsplash.com, which has a lot of beautiful, copyright-free images.

1.1.4 Accessibility

To ensure accessibility, I have used the “alt” attribute on images and provided a description, I made sure the text on the site was clear to read and in appropriate contrast to the background, I have used descriptive links, so that users understand where the links will take them, I have tested the site to be accessible only through the keyboard, that is without the use of a mouse, I have used header tags to structure the content, I have used labels for the form that asks for data from the users.

1.2.1 GDPR

I have included a privacy policy based on a template I found online at <https://www.privacypolicygenerator.info/>

My site is very simple and does not try to sell anything, just to inform. It will not gather information from users like their email in order to send them promotional offers.

There is dummy form on the About us page, that gathers data only if the users want to be contacted. It does not target them for marketing purposes.

There is a form on the site that will ask the users to input the amount of meat they eat per week and make some calculations based on that. However, the information will be erased as soon as the user moves away from the page.

All this is explained in the privacy policy that also includes the 8 rights. I did not feel the need to add an opt-in form.

1.2.3 Distance selling

My site does not sell goods or services through digital TV, by mail order or by phone or text message, so I have not provided a policy for that. I have made it clear in the general policy that I am not selling anything.

1.2.4 Evaluation

The problem I am trying to solve is very vast and I have just scratched the surface of what needs to be said about veganism. However, I think I have provided a good basis, with valuable, structured information that will get visitors to my site more interested in the topic.

The calculator tool can also be improved, by gathering more information and giving people a more detailed breakdown of the effect of their diet not only on animals but the environment as well, by recording their carbon footprint, for example.

One of the problems I encountered was the lack of user design experience. Even after doing the wireframes and deciding on the look of the site, the colour scheme and functionality, I found myself making changes because some of my ideas did not work in practice. For example, the form I initially designed for the calculator was more complex, but I decided to simplify it in implementation for it to be more intuitive for the users.

I also struggled a bit with displaying information based on user input directly on the screen. I could not use the “form” element, because it would automatically submit and refresh the page and thus delete what I was trying to output to the screen. I had to limit myself to using the “input” and “label” elements.

Validating user input was somewhat of a challenge. In the calculator part, users were prevented from using letters or other symbols by the “type” attribute of the input field. However, they could still input numbers less than 0. I also had to make sure that the class for styling the results was enabled only if there were any values entered.

Positioning and layout required a lot of trial and error. I also had to deal with browser compatibility. Although I am a Mozilla user, I tested mainly in Chrome, as it is the most popular browser. For example, the bullet points for lists would not appear close to the text without the command “list-style-position:inside;” for Chrome.

I tested the site for multiple screen sizes by using the Chrome developer tools. There are a multitude of devices and I could not develop for all of them, I just limited myself to adjust my site to the most popular phone sizes. I set the media screen breakpoint at 480px as this is the size of an iPhone, one of the most popular phones in the UK. I chose a desktop-first implementation as I found it easier to adapt it to mobile than the other way around, to present all the information on a large screen and then cut out any unnecessary parts for the mobile version.

I designed my site with minimalism and simplicity in mind. I wanted to transmit simple ideas and I wanted a simple framework to deliver them. I kept the colour scheme very simple but also meaningful, it is based on the vegan flag and reinforces the message of veganism. I created big navigation tabs and big buttons, I think it makes the site more accessible and the big green buttons are also a good call to action. The message of the site is also reinforced by the home page, that contains a simple carousel of inspirational quotes about veganism.

The site requires a server in order to load properly. You can access it here:

https://radu-lefter.github.io/veganism/

The code can be found on GitHub here:

https://github.com/radu-lefter/veganism