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hikenortheast.com
Final Project Report

I. Strategy

The goals of hikenortheast shifted rapidly after I started taking a more serious approach to strategizing. Initially, the goal of the website was to become a one-stop-shop for a certain variety of hiker: someone who has specific type of hike in mind, someone who knows the distance, duration, and difficulty of the hike they want to take, they just don't know exactly where to look. Hikenortheast could then provide searchability based on those constraints, allowing the user to find something unexpected.

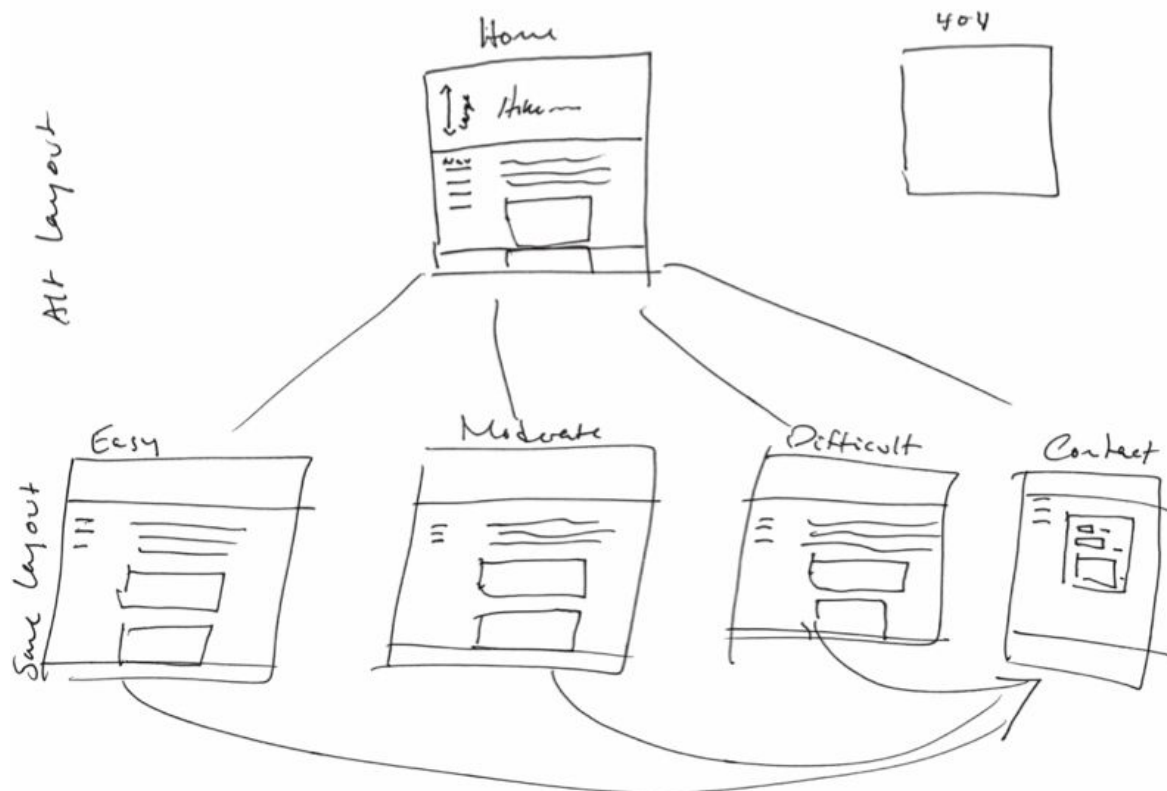
I quickly realized, however, that the feasibility of completing a site of that scope was unlikely. First, I would have to acquire a massive range of data to give the website an appropriate range. Then I would have to figure out how to custom tailor a search function that met my exact needs. Added to that, I quickly realized that my plan, if fully executed, would lead to an inferior product in most ways to that of the big hiking websites like Alltrails.

My solution, and the way I decided to change course, was by shrinking my scope and making the project more personal. Instead of trying to rip massive amounts of data from the internet to populate my site, I decided to only populate information that I knew personally. The focus of the website would be my personal recommendations when it comes to hiking in the New England area. This, of course, shifted the audience I had in mind. No longer about a curious hiker, it would be more oriented toward people interested in learning more about the areas I know best, and the person who knows them. To put it more clearly, my primary audience is people who know me, and my secondary audience is people who would like to get to know me.

II. Scope and Structure

Critical features:

- Organization of hikes based on a personal assessment of difficulty
- Sortable list of hikes
- Visual style and appeal
- Imagery and pictures of the top hikes in question: photo gallery.
- A contact page for user engagement
- Custom 404 page
- Breakpoints for different screen sizes
- Literature page with quotes

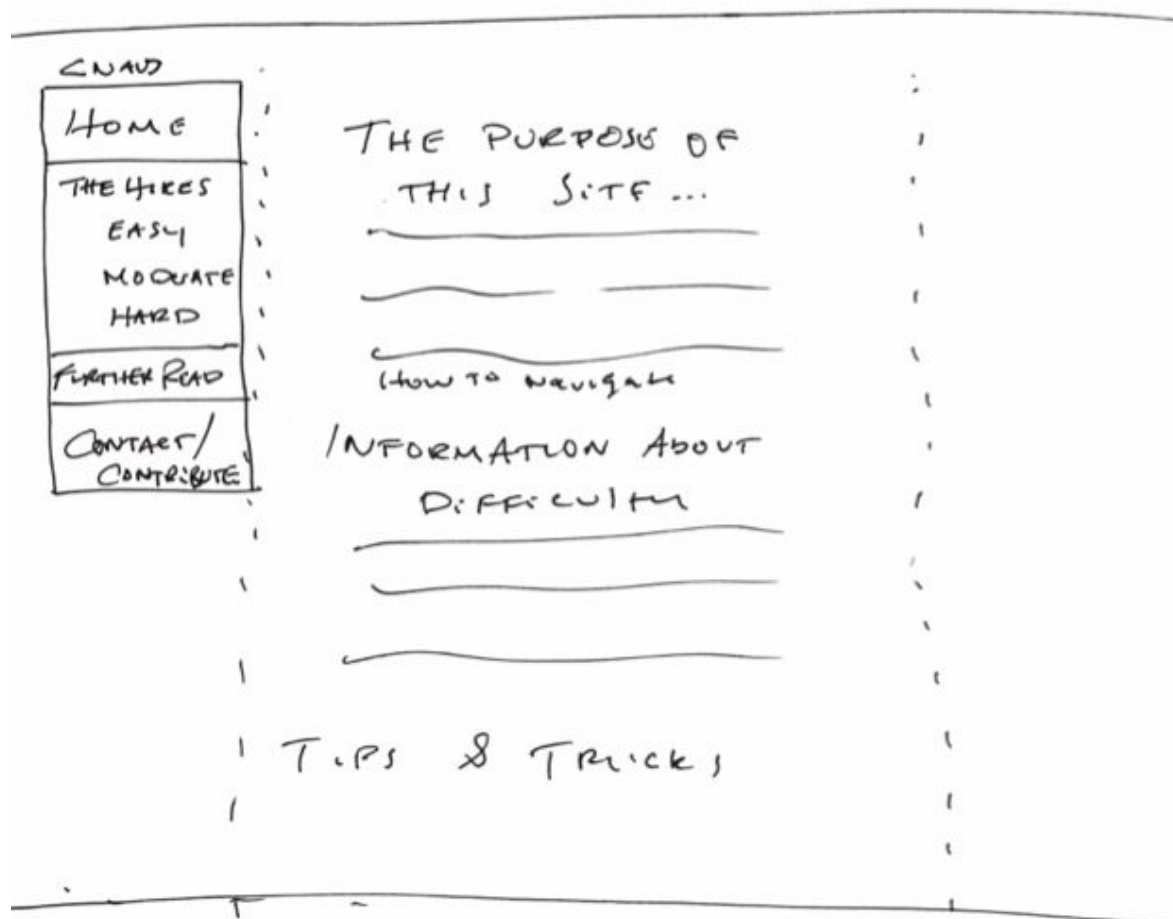


Overall structure and organization of hikenortheast.com site pages.

III. Skeleton - Homepage and Easy Hikes page

<HEADER

Hike NEW ENGLAND



<FOOTER>

"Quote ..."

Contact is
location?

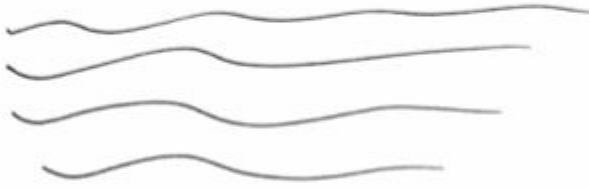
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Hike New England Easy Hikes

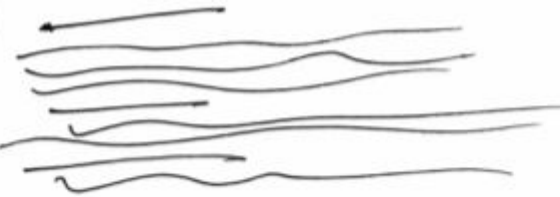
Nav



What Constitutes an Easy hike?



Top 3



The Rest

IV. Surface

Please review the *homepage*: <http://hikenortheast.com/>,

easy hikes page: <http://hikenortheast.com/easy.html>

further reading page:

<http://hikenortheast.com/furtherreading.html>

The *contact page* is also complete with a validated form, it just doesn't lead to an actual submission yet. <http://hikenortheast.com/contact.html>.

The *moderate* and *difficult* hikes pages are live but incomplete.

V. Implementation and Reflection

I initially began setting up my site using the Skeleton framework, as having a clean look was one of my goals. After getting a sample homepage put together I decided to move in a different direction. The Skeleton boilerplate, while attractive, was limiting the width of the page I was looking to design. Also, I figured it would be more valuable to create an entire multipage website from scratch using just CSS and HTML, which would allow me to learn more unpredictable lessons. So though Skeleton made things like layout and breakpoints easier, working from scratch was more useful to me educationally.

The downside to this approach is that the creation of the markup and CSS often felt frantic or disorganized, especially in the beginning stages when dealing with layout. I found myself getting things to work but not entirely knowing why a certain approach was effective. However, as I progressed I found certain tactics that were useful, especially when it came to strategies for organizing tags, classes, and IDs that would mesh well with my CSS. This is most

apparent in the implementation of my header, site title, and page title visible from all of the pages.

The functional parts of my website were a sortable table of hikes, a photogallery, and a form validation. I initially was just planning on the sortable table. But felt the site would be improved with more interactivity. To do this, I used JQuery and the Tablesorter plugin, along with Colorbox.

In the future, I intend to finish fleshing out the difficult and moderate pages. I will also at some point want to make the contact page actually active. Lastly, I would like to create a map available on each of the hike pages that will display the location of my top three hikes.

I was surprised at how quickly I was able to make the website aesthetically pleasing once I settled on a color scheme and collection of fonts. Though I feel more confident in my abilities after finishing this project, I still need more work before I feel sure handed in my approach.