CT 406: Group Project Report
Spring 2013 - Franceschi

Overview

   Our group worked on a rental search website geared toward apartment and house hunters in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. The thing that makes this particular website unique is that it pulls from a database of listings that are near Metro stops, allowing people to search for housing by mass transit.

   The first page is a login page where users can register for an account and then proceed to enter the website. There is an option for new users to sign up for an account and another option for existing users to login. The user is asked to enter their email address, which serves as their username, password and age. Users are asked their age in order to generate an age appropriate dynamic advertisement in the website. Users are asked to also input their favorite color (chosen between red, blue or green) in order to initiate an option to change the link color accordingly on the main, listings and stops pages. There is password verification as well as a "forgot password" feature that emails the password to users if they forget their login information. There is also a "password reset" feature for users to secure their account if they do forget their password.

   Once users are successfully logged into the website, they are taken to the main page that has a brief description of the website and a map of the entire Metro system. When the user clicks on the metro stop on the map, it takes them to the Washington Metro Transit Authority page for that particular stop, giving the user fare information, cross streets and nearby points and attractions. Below the map is an accordion listing of each Metro stop. Users have the option to select either the red, green, yellow, blue or orange lines and then click on the stop where they want to find housing. From there they are taken to the stop page.

   The stop page fetches all of the listings from the database for a particular stop. The user can then go through those listings and select the listing they want to view more information for. That then takes them to the listing page, which gives more details of the particular listing such as the name of the residence, the address and the asking price.

Structure

   The group came up with the idea because as college students, it is sometimes difficult to find off-campus housing that is near mass transit. It was determined that such a search website would be a great asset to students, young professionals and families searching for rental housing near Metro stations. It was determined that the best approach to tackle this was to use PHP for all of the scripting and to input data into the class MySQL database. The front end work was written in HTML and JavaScript/ jQuery, utilizing several distinct style-sheets. Royalty-free images and maps were found online via Google.

The division of responsibilities for the project is summarized as follows:

IRA
- Database construction
- Stop page backend (and barebones HTML)
- Clickable map (if reasonably doable)

NICK
- Listing page backend (and barebones HTML)
- Database population

TY
- Styling and structure for all pages
- Collapsible line-lists on main page
- Final report

ALEX
- Accounts handling backend and associated pages
(Password-forget, login, registration, etc.)
- Counter and average (not SQL functions!)

The project was based on a (public) GIT repository hosted by Ty and tested on Nick's server. The group had several in-person meetings as well as email communication to connect on the project and collaborate.