

Creative Project 1 - Reflection

Overview

This term, we are introducing a small written component to help students get started, reflect on their development process, and reflect on trade-offs and concepts covered in class that you ran into during your creative projects. These are not designed to take a significant amount of time, but to reinforce your understanding of key web concepts beyond just the source code and end result. For CP 1, this is an optional section (eligible for extra credit, max 100%) to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts covered so far, a reflection of your development process, and anything else you'd like to include. You're welcome to include DOM trees, diagrams, resources you found helpful (also helpful for us to know!) etc. Students may find this a good resource to have already done when building a portfolio for job/internship applications or GitHub.

Instructions: Make a copy of this document for writing your answers and submit as cp1-reflection.pdf **in your CodePost submission** to be eligible for any extra credit. Any additional files, such as DOM tree drawings, can be added in the Github repo for this assignment (we will refer to them with this document).

Reflection Questions

Motivation: *How did you choose your topic? Did you find any inspiration from lectures, peer discussions, or other websites you've interacted with?*

I am studying in Edinburgh and I am on exchange from there to CalTech. My motivation for creating the website was that I was missing the city and I wanted to create something which I could use to show people why Edinburgh is amazing. I also had an Instagram account 2 years ago for the same purpose which I am not active on right now. I found inspiration from some websites online which had a nav bar and had images in the background - I do not remember the exact ones though. Lectures were also inspiring because I got ideas about what I could include in the website and how I could design it.

Separation of Concerns: *A key learning objective of this unit is to understand the "separation of concerns" in web development, which will continue to be a theme as we build up to full-stack development. Why is it better to separate CSS from HTML (linked in the <head>)?*

I've realized that separating CSS from HTML greatly improves the development process. By keeping the structure (HTML) and the presentation (CSS) distinct, I was able to make several changes to the content in my HTML files without worrying about disrupting the design of the site. Similarly, modifying the styles in the CSS didn't interfere with the core information. This separation

made the project much easier to manage and highlighted the importance of maintaining a clear distinction between content and design.

HTML5 Semantic Tags: *Why is it important to choose tags appropriately (semantics over style)? What is at least one example you ran into where you weren't sure which tag was the better choice between two options?*

Choosing the appropriate HTML5 semantic tags is crucial because they provide meaning and structure to the content. This improves accessibility, SEO, and overall code readability. For example using the `<h1>`, `<h2>`... tags semantically and not just when I wanted my headings to be smaller or larger - that is the job of CSS I realized. One example I encountered was deciding between using `<div>` and `<article>` tags for certain sections of my website. Initially, I wasn't sure of the exact difference in meaning, but I ultimately chose `<article>` for consistency across my pages and to better reflect the standalone content when I received feedback from EI on Discord and during OH. For layout purposes, I used `<div class="row">` for formatting which EI suggested, and this became clearer when I started working on the CSS. Another moment of uncertainty was when I considered linking entire articles, but I realized it was more appropriate to link specific `<a>` tags instead of the whole article because the linking would be done by JavaScript.

Design, Implement, Test, Iterate: *Show someone your webpage (a friend, Discord, etc.) and ask for feedback (don't worry about how it looks/etc. this is your first project :)). Think content, responsiveness on different screen sizes, design (a word that refers to any of aesthetics, usability, readability, etc.), creativity, etc. What do they like? What are 2 suggestions they'd have to change/add? Would you need to change the content (text, images, etc.), HTML, and/or the CSS to implement those changes? This section encourages students to build awareness of different user experiences and the impact of small changes made in HTML/CSS. It also gives more practice thinking about separation of concerns between HTML and CSS.*

I asked a friend, who also studies in Edinburgh, to review my website, and he found it aesthetically pleasing and professional-looking. He appreciated the simplicity and ease of navigation, mentioning how accessible the content was. Two suggestions he had were to add a family-friendly section, highlighting attractions like museums and parks, and to include transportation advice for getting around the city. Both suggestions would require changes to the HTML — I could add a family-friendly subsection under attractions and create a new page dedicated to transportation tips. Additionally, adding Google Map links to each location in the articles would make the information more helpful and I could also provide details on tickets and pricing - for example how costly/budget-friendly the restaurant is and what their timings are. Lastly, I wanted to implement flex-wrap to improve the site's responsiveness across all screen sizes, but I didn't have time to do that yet, so that's something I'll explore further. This feedback helped me realize the value of thinking from a user's perspective and the potential impact small changes can have on the overall experience.