

Creative Crafting

Introduction

My wife and eight-year-old daughter do crafts (crochet hats, necklaces, and keychains), and would like a site to display and sell their wares. (Actually, I suggested the idea since I needed a project, and they graciously agreed to humor me.) It will allow them to showcase their items for sale, serve as a resource to direct potential customers to, and take online orders.

Transitioning From Bootstrap to React/ReactStrap

The move to React is going to improve my site in several ways. Most obviously, it will prevent full-page reloads whenever a user clicks on a link. Fortunately, the content and layout of my site will work very well as a single-page app, so I am looking forward to making the change. In addition to the 'clunkiness' of the full-page reloads, the thing that I like least about my Bootstrap implementation is the redundancy.

For example, as can be seen from the MVP section below, the Header, Navbar, and Footer are repeated on every page of the site. In an effort to avoid cutting and pasting this code into every new HTML document (and then having to change this code in every file every time I decide to do something different or fix a problem), I used the Mustache.js templating engine – creating header and footer templates that I could then insert directly into each new site page. This worked, but wasn't ideal – not being nearly as clean to implement as I envision React will be. In addition, this approach still requires full-page reloads.

MVP Version

1. Navbar (repeated on all pages)
 - Home
 - Products (w/submenu)
 - Hats
 - Necklaces
 - Keychains
 - About
 - Shipping & Returns
 - Contact
 - Basic text info and social media links
 - Orders
 - Static Form (print, scan, and email)
2. Footer (repeated on all pages)
 - Social Media links
 - Copyright
 - Email
3. Homepage
 - One representative picture from each category (that also links to the corresponding product submenu page)
4. Hats Page
 - 3 x 3 grid of product images and prices in captions

5. Necklaces Page
 - 3 x 3 grid of product images (all same price)
6. Keychains Page
 - 3 x 3 grid of product images (all same price)
7. About
 - Text description/static images
8. Shipping and Returns
 - Text description
9. Contact
 - Basic contact info
10. Order Form
 - Printable form that customers can use to place orders via email

According to my wife and daughter, the functionality described above will present their crafts in a way that they would be comfortable showing to others and would allow at least a rudimentary way for people to place orders and/or contact them.

Extra Features

1. Phase One
 - Necklaces and Keychains Galleries: Open larger image in popout window when thumbnail is clicked-on (Necklaces and Keychains pages)
 - Email List Signup Form (Contact page)
2. Phase Two
 - Add image carousel (Homepage)
 - Each image in the hat gallery will link to an individual page for that product - containing more images presenting alternate views (thumbnails that will popout when clicked on and can be stepped through with 'arrow' buttons) as well as written descriptions (Hats page)
 - Embedded video (About page)
3. Phase Three
 - Replace printable order form with Shopping Cart and PayPal support
4. Phase Four
 - Implement User Ratings/Reviews
 - Move data (items, images, prices, ratings, reviews, etc. to backend)

List of Anticipated React Components and Features

- Components
 - Header/Navbar and Footer
 - These will be rendered once and only the information in-between will change based on user input.
 - Product
 - Each product will have the same basic information associated with it: image(s), price, text description, etc., so it seems a natural candidate to become a reusable component.

- Homepage Image
 - For each product category, there will be an image and caption displayed on the homepage that is also a link to a gallery view of all products in that category.
- Extras (post-MVP)
 - Shopping Cart Related Elements
 - 'Add to Cart' and 'Remove from Cart' buttons, quantity selectors, etc.
 - Ratings/Reviews Related Elements
 - 'Add Review' button, Clickable 'star' ratings, etc.
- Features
 - At minimum, I expect there will be features corresponding to each of the three product categories and their displays:
 - Hats
 - Keychains
 - Necklaces
 - Image Galleries
 - As well as (again looking past the MVP) for:
 - Ratings/Reviews
 - Shopping Cart

Market Survey and References

I found the following sites and asked my 'clients' for their impressions (good and bad):

1. <https://www.sewrella.com/>
Feedback – the site presents too much information and is considered visually overwhelming
2. <https://metalicious.com/>
Feedback – this site was considered too “commercial”
3. <https://www.rustichandmadecrafts.com/>
a. Feedback – this site was more in line with their tastes, except for the fact that the image presentation “was too asymmetric”
4. <https://annasui.com/products/hand-crochet-star-hat-br-purple-ombre>
a. This page is a subpage of a larger site that was thought to be a good starting point to use when designing the individual product pages for crochet hats.
5. <https://www.rebeccabessette.com/>
a. This was the top-rated site overall, with all good feedback except that the individual product pages may have a bit too much going on.