INFS3202 - Website Proposal

ComicCentre

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Introduction

ComicCentre is a website for web comic enthusiasts to view, discover and discuss comics. The website works by scraping the raw HTML of other web pages and extracting just the comic in a format that makes it easier for readers to view and discuss.

It is essential that websites such as this comply to web standards due to the heavy use of server-side code. Server-side languages can be used more efficiently if the client-side code conforms to web standards as they can more easily identify the structure of given documents. In addition, using web standards could speed up the process of working in a team on a given project, as new team members would already know what to expect when they begin work.

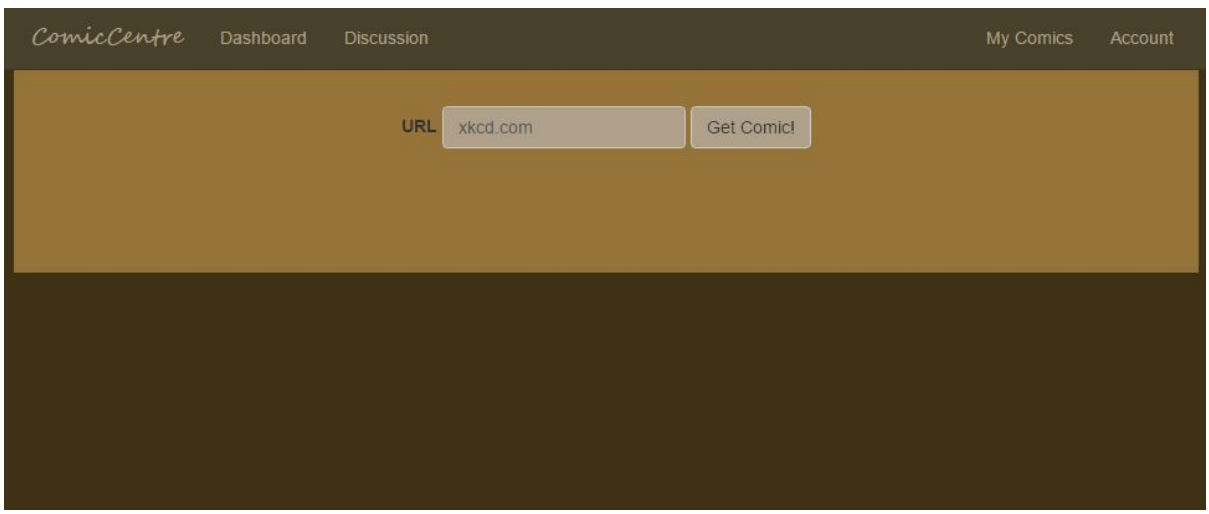
This project will use a combination of HTML (for basic page structure), CSS (to style the HTML), JavaScript (for in-browser functionality) and PHP (for server-side functionality). This development framework was chosen as it is easy and secure to implement, without adding unnecessary complexity to the project.

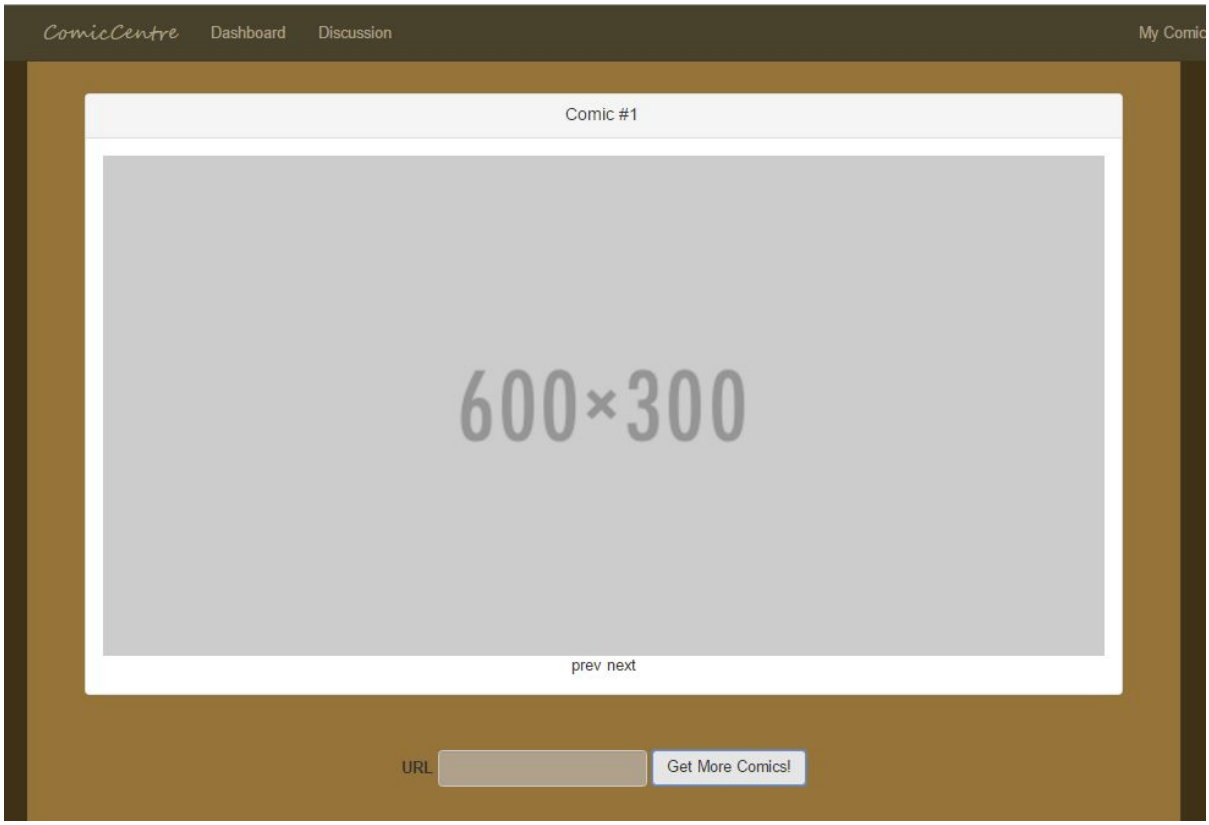
Design

The website was designed with three equally important goals in mind.

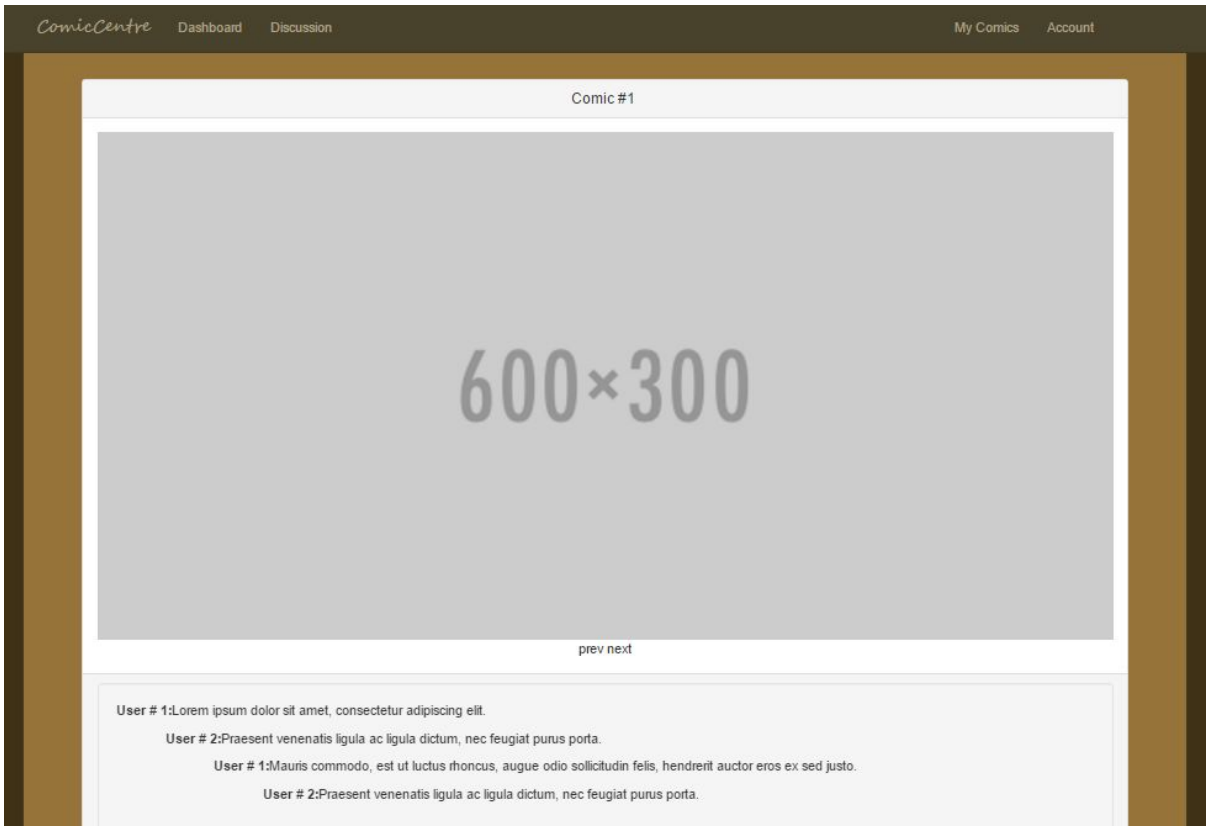
1. Users should be able to easily browse comics at will.
2. Users should be able to easily engage in discussion about comics.
3. Users should be able to discover new comics.

Goal one was achieved via the My Comics page, where users can enter the URL of a comic and have many issues of that comic appear instantly in their browser in an easy-to-view format.





Goal two was achieved via the discussion page, which allows users to discuss each frame of a given comic in detail.



Goal three was achieved by creating a dashboard where users can discover new comics that other users they have interacted with may have viewed.

Earthy colours were chosen to make users feel at ease on the website. A fixed navbar was used so that users wouldn't have to scroll to the top of the page to navigate the site if a large discussion was taking place. The website is also designed to function on devices of any size, as one of its primary functions is that of an e-reader.

Client/Server Communication

Client/Server communication will be utilised in the MyComics section. When the user inputs a URL to get a comic, an AJAX request could be sent to the server a few milliseconds after the user has finished typing that checks if the user has inputted a valid URL. The server could then verify this URL and send back information in the form of JSON about whether the URL failed, and reasons why it might have failed (bad request, HTML couldn't be scraped etc.).

PHP

The PHP used in this project will be the scraping of HTML from another webpage to yield only the images of comics for users to discuss. There are several libraries that could be used

to achieve this effect such as the simple HTML DOM Parser (http://simplehtmldom.sourceforge.net/). PHP will also be used to validate user logins.

Advanced JavaScript

OwlCarousel (http://www.owlcarousel.owlgraphic.com/) will be used to allow users to view the comics on any visual media. On the Discussion page, two owl carousels have actually been linked using JavaScript to facilitate page-specific discussion. Other JavaScript features in the final product will include the ability to add new comics to the MyComics page and the ability to add a comment to the Discussion page.