1. MongoDB Compass Connection String

MONGODB_URI=
mongodb+srv://User2:jOI9MmVa4fmUC2XS@cluster0.xq4xd.mongodb.net/?retryWrites=true&w=majority&appName=Cluster0

2. Explanation of Additional Features

Custom Categories: While creating an event, users can either choose from existing categories or add a new one. This made things more flexible.

User Dashboard: Logged-in users get a personal profile page where they can see and manage the events they've posted.

Route Protection: Only logged-in users can create/edit/delete events, and only the original creator can change or delete their own. I added middleware to enforce this.

Error Handling: I updated the 404 and general error pages with friendlier messages and cleaner styling.

Better UI: Signup/login/error pages were given a simple visual refresh to improve the user experience.

3. Project Status

All requirements from the assignment and rubric are completed.
 I tested creating, editing, and deleting events — everything works, and access control is in place.

Test users:

- emily.smith@gmail.com / emily123

- jack.wilson@yahoo.com / jack123

The app is working smoothly and I haven't run into any bugs so far.

Challenges & Reflections

A big challenge was securing the edit/delete routes. At first, anyone logged in could modify any event. I fixed this using an isAuthor middleware that checks ownership properly.

Another small but annoying bug was flash messages not showing on the signup form. It turned out I wasn't passing them into the view the right way — a good lesson in checking template logic.

I also had to handle invalid event URLs better. Without validation, the app would just crash. Adding a validateId middleware solved that.

Overall, this project really helped solidify everything — from routing to forms and middleware — and I feel way more confident handling full-stack tasks now.