

# CS571 Spring 2024 – ICA C

## Web Design

Please *make a copy* of this document by clicking **File > Make a copy**. You may share and co-edit it with your fellow group members.

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In this in-class activity, you will explore the concept of **Web Design** in three steps:

1. Deconstruct a Desktop Application
2. Deconstruct a Web Application for Navigation Aids
3. Deconstruct a Web Application for Layout

Areas needing your response are clearly marked with **Your Turn!** Be sure to complete all aspects of the assignment. Your Canvas submission will be a **pdf** version of this document.

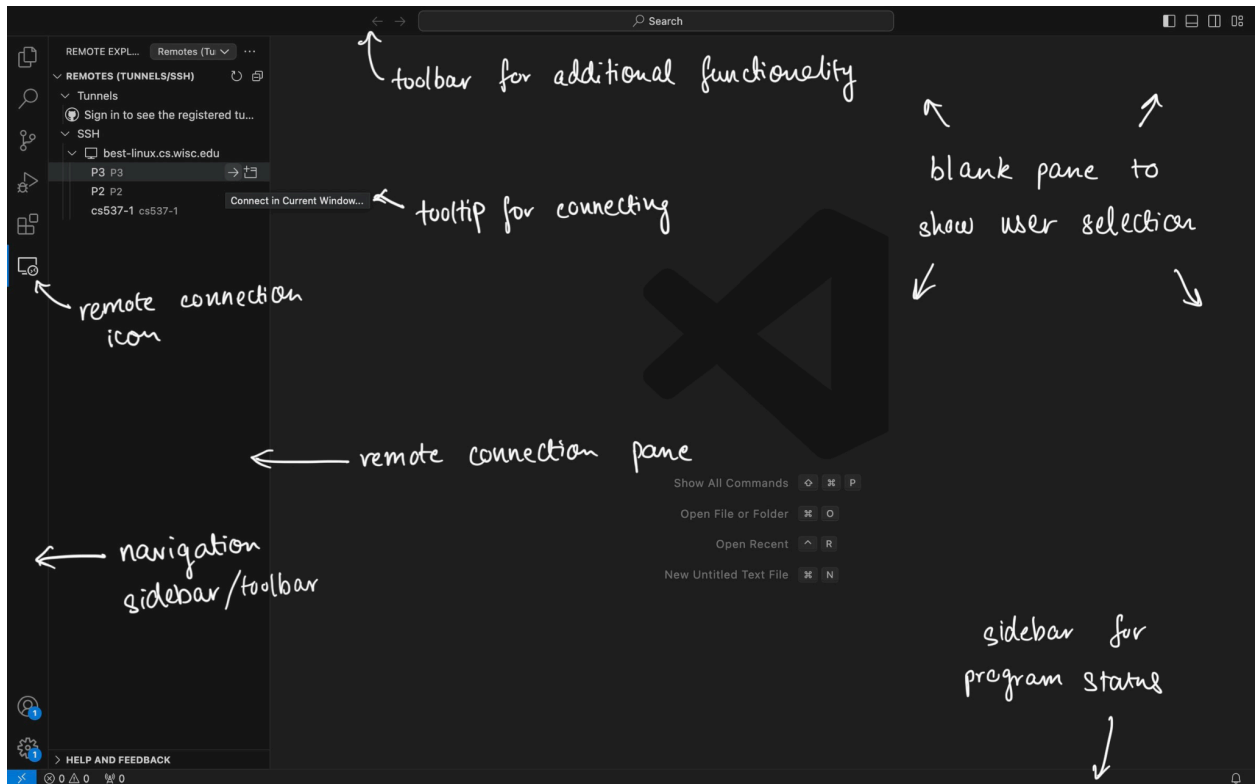
You may complete this in groups of 1, 2, or 3 people! :) Please be sure to assign yourself and your team member(s) to a group by visiting Canvas > People > ICA C.

# 1. Deconstruct a Desktop Application

In class, you learned to deconstruct the desktop into its basic structures of windows, icons, menus, and pointers. Furthermore, you learned how to deconstruct a desktop interface into structures such as modals, panes, and toolbars. Now you get to explore these concepts by deconstructing a desktop application of your choice.

**Your Turn!** Considering the structures you just learned, analyze a desktop application of your choice. This could be Microsoft Word, Adobe Illustrator, Visual Studio Code, or any other substantive desktop program. Perform some basic function (format a paragraph of text, draw a picture, write some code, etc.) and answer the following questions...

- a. What is the desktop program that you are analyzing?  
Visual Studio Code
- b. What is the function that you are performing?  
Connecting to a remote computer via ssh to use remote development
- c. What kinds of modals, panes, toolbars, or other components supported you in completing your function?  
Upon opening VS Code, I was presented with a blank center screen with a sidebar for navigation next to it. To use remote connections, I clicked on the computer icon in the sidebar, which made the collapsed sidebar expand to show a pane with more options for remote connections. Hovering my mouse on an option shows more icons for other actions.
- d. During some point of your function, please take a screenshot of the user interface. Then, *annotate it* identifying all modals, panes, and toolbars.



- e. What, if anything, would you change about the current user interface?

I would change the design for the remote connection pane which opens via the navigation toolbar. I think it has too many drop-down menus and is not detailed enough to inform a user of its functions at first glance.

## 2. Deconstruct a Web Application for Navigation Aids

Similar to what you did in Step 1, in this step, you will deconstruct a webpage, but this time with an eye for navigation aids.

**Your Turn!** Considering the navigation aids you just learned, analyze a website of your choice. This could be Amazon, Channel 3000 News, GitHub, or any other substantive website. Perform some basic function (shop for an item, read a news article, review some code, etc.) and answer the following questions...

- a. What is the website that you are analyzing?
- Github

b. What is the function that you are performing?

- Reviewing a repository

c. What kind of navigation aids supported you in completing your function?

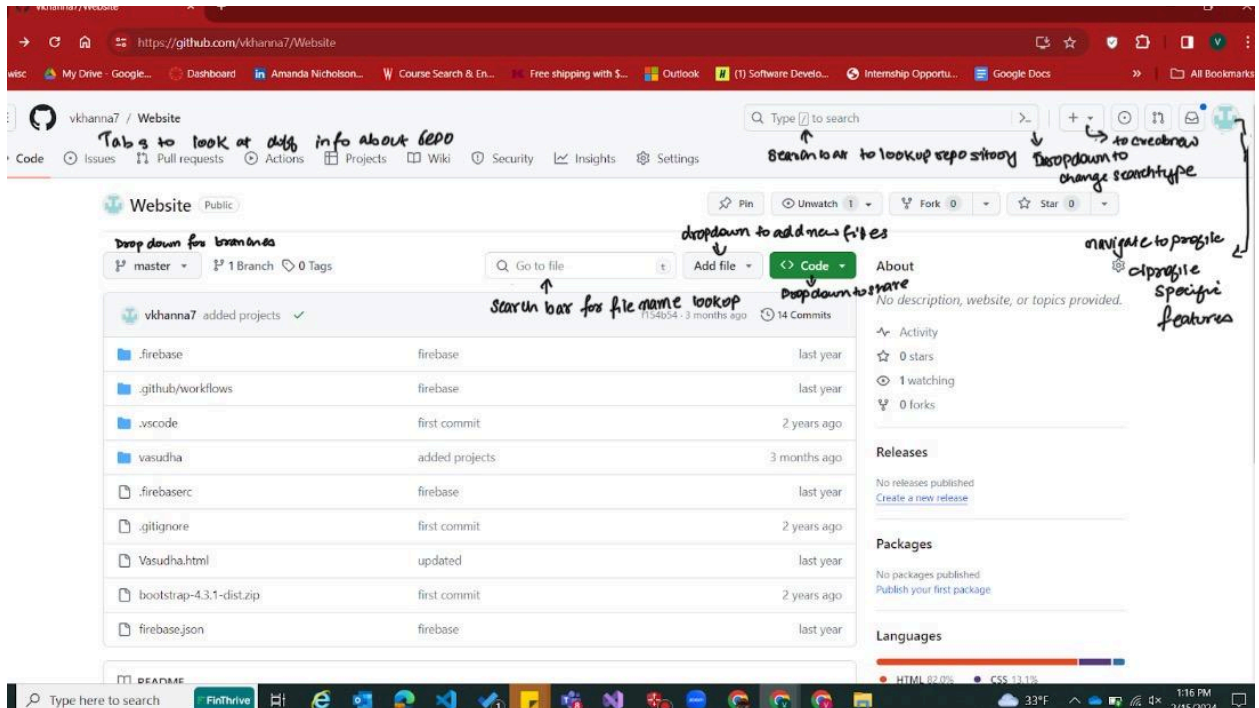
**Global Navigation:**

- Search bar on top
- Drop down to look into PRs, Discussion, etc
- Profile icon to go into account settings, notifications, and other user specific features.

**When Reviewing a repo**

- Drop down for branches
- Tabs to switch between code, PRs, Branches, Tags, Activity
- File list
- Jump to file to go to a specific file
- Code dropdown to clone and share repo
- Add files dropdown to create new or upload new files
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d. During some point of your function, please take a screenshot of the user interface. Then, *annotate it* identifying all navigation aids.



e. What, if anything, would you change about the navigation of the current user interface?

- I would keep a search bar to lookup file names as well as content keywords inside the files.
- I would split add files into create new + and upload button

### 3. Deconstruct a Web Application for Layout

Analyzing the same website as in Step 2, in this step, you will choose a particular webpage and deconstruct it with an eye for its layout.

**Your Turn!** Using a particular webpage of the website that you chose in Step 2, answer the following questions...

- a. What is the webpage that you are analyzing? Paste a screenshot below.
  - Github homepage
- b. Examine the 12 screen patterns [introduced here](#). Which screen pattern is closest to your webpage's structure? Explain your reasoning.
  - The screen pattern resembles Master/ Detail as we have a list of most recently opened repositories on the left and clicking one of them replaces the right with the content from the repository.
- c. Considering content from both "Visual Design" (last lecture) and "Web Design" (current lecture), what design techniques are being used? These could be specific design elements or principles, or more general observations.

**Visual Design Techniques:**

- Color palette: GitHub uses a limited and primarily blue-based color palette, creating a professional and trustworthy atmosphere. The use of contrasting accents (green) highlights calls to action.
- Typography: Clear and legible fonts are used, maintaining readability across different devices. Headings and content use distinct font weights for hierarchy.
- Imagery: High-quality illustrations and photographs showcase product features and create a positive brand image. They are used sparingly and strategically to avoid clutter.
- Whitespace: Ample whitespace between elements improves visual breathing room and enhances readability.
- Balance and asymmetry: Sections are balanced, but subtle use of asymmetry adds visual interest.

**Web Design Techniques:**

- Responsive design: The homepage adapts seamlessly to different screen sizes and devices, ensuring a consistent user experience.
- Navigation: A clear and consistent navigation bar provides easy access to key sections. The search bar allows users to quickly find specific information.
- User flow: The layout guides users through the homepage intuitively, highlighting key features and calls to action.
- Accessibility: The homepage adheres to accessibility guidelines, ensuring usability for users with disabilities. (in dark mode)

**General Observations:**

- Minimalism: The design is clean and uncluttered, focusing on clear communication and user experience.
- Focus on content: The homepage prioritizes showcasing the platform's value proposition and features through high-quality content and visuals.
- Brand identity: The design elements work together to reinforce the GitHub brand image, conveying professionalism, trust, and community.

d. What, if anything, would you change about the layout and overall aesthetics of the current user interface?

**Layout:**

- Optimize mobile experience: While responsive, some elements could be further optimized for smaller screens, especially navigation and content hierarchy.
- Explore alternative navigation: The current navigation bar works well, but consider testing alternative placements or structures for improved discoverability.

**Aesthetics:**

- Modernize color palette: While the black and white theme is established, explore fresher color combinations that maintain professionalism and brand identity.
- Update typography: Consider slightly bolder fonts for better readability, especially on smaller screens.
- Simplify icons and illustrations: Modernize icons and illustrations while maintaining clarity and consistency with the brand identity.
- Accessibility: Ensure the interface remains accessible to users with disabilities according to WCAG guidelines.

After completing this document, please be sure to upload it as a PDF in Canvas!