**Site Structure and Django Summary**

To get started with this project, and given the lack of time pressure on this assignment, I looked through all of the background reading before I started the project. My first steps were to refresh my HTML and CSS knowledge through the FreeCodeCamp resources. I actually got so into it, that I ended up completely all '300 hours' of the Responsive Web Design course. After this, I covered the Python slideshows and again went on to completely cover the resources on the Python for Everybody website. Git was largely the same, I had it installed on my computer, and a GitHub account, but any knowledge of how to correctly use it was buried deep down behind any remaining A Level knowledge.

Django, however, was completely new to me, and I enjoyed gaining an understanding of a new technology that I hadn't expected to (if the year had gone to plan). I'd been doing some small app development projects, so the file structure of the webapp in Django wasn't too alien, but little quirks kept catching me out. I finished the tutorial and found the way of embedding scripts to represent changing content within otherwise static HTML templates to be intriguing. It was very different to the JavaScript scripts that I'd traditionally associated with being able to dynamically update webpages.

Once I'd finished the tutorial, I read back through it to get an understanding of the things I had just copied and pasted (oops) and then had a look through Django's documentation to gain a better understanding of the logic behind the steps we had followed. I then picked a couple new pages to add, and some basic layout changes, and got to work. There was nothing horrendously difficult, but I did find bugs I hadn't expected to, such as dealing with the previous (in static websites) non-issue of loading static content such as images. I had everything located in my static resource folder, but I was accessing this incorrectly. Nothing a bit of web forum trawling couldn't solve.

I was glad to have already worked on my CV & LinkedIn pages, both during the first academic year, and the start of lockdown (before the assignment was set) because this instantly gave me some content. I've got to a state I'm happy to submit, because I have some other projects to be working on, but I may very well come back and add some more for fun - CSS animations anyone?

**What I've Enjoyed Studying This Year**

Excluding my Widening Horizons module (Applied Psychology), I have had 5 Computer Science Modules this year:

First Semester was Programming in Java and Mathematical Foundations of Computer Science. Both were very different to each other, with regards to everything from content, to learning/teaching methods, to assessments. The programming in Java is the Stereotypical CS course, and despite having previous experience in Java (and the content mainly being a recap), it was brilliant to all have it explained sequentially and have a clear understanding of how the concepts work in industry. I think this is especially important for people who have ‘learnt to program’ through sometimes sub-par school teaching or just a mix of online resources of varying quality. The mathematical foundations module did originally concern me, as I was worried that the gap year would have had a negative impact on my maths ability. This proved to not be the case at all, and a mathematical ability and understanding was more necessary than remembering the techniques used through Maths A Level. I have heard that it meshes more with Further Maths – Matrices and the like, but it did show me that I could actually enjoy proofs, and taught me to think of numbers and data in a less rigid way than we experience through our compulsory education.

Second Semester allowed for more focus on specific topics (given we now had a basic understanding of the fundamentals), through Artificial Intelligence, Data Structures and Algorithms, and Logic & Computation. Here the Programming in Java experience (debugging) proved to be vital for both the practical robotics assignments, and even more so for the Data Structures and Algorithms assignments in Java. The Mathematical Fundamentals were vital for the Logic & Computation module, and the way of thinking was very beneficial for understanding the Artificial Intelligence Theory.

I enjoyed learning about individual topics throughout the year, but I much more enjoyed the build up of knowledge I was gaining, and knowing that everything (even what I found less fun subject areas) would serve to stand me in good stead down the line. While I am somewhat pleased I have escaped the revision period (ignoring the circumstances), I do realise that these would have been good practice for second year, and a further encouragement to stay on top of the work. I don’t think it is necessary though, just the realisation of how the knowledge throughout first year has all complemented itself and each other, such that abstract, complicated concepts soon become perfectly easy to understand.**Looking Forward to the Future**

I am of course looking forward to getting back to campus and living life in Birmingham again, some things can’t be replicated online. Nowhere has this been more apparent than while working as a Student Ambassador on the ‘virtual’ departmental open days.

I’m especially excited by some of the modules for next year – Full Stack Development being one that opens a lot of doors for side hustles & indie projects.

I’m hoping that COVID-19 isn’t affecting my opportunities for the Year in Industry (starting Sept 2021) too badly, as soon after the next academic year starts I need to be applying to the companies of choice, and potentially attending interviews.

There’s a lot of uncertainties, but I’m very pleased with the course I chose; for the enjoyment of studying; for the employment possibilities and prospects; and for the flexibility in being able to study equally effectively from anywhere with my computer set up.

I don’t know what I’m looking forward to, but I’m looking forward to it anyway…