

CS3240 Interaction Design

Lab Assignment 1

Yau Yen Ching

I chose option 2: **a re-design of a current website**. As for the website I chose, I redesigned W3Schools.com.

1. Homepage

I thought that their original homepage was overly cluttered with redundancies and poorly arranged. They present the same information to the user far too many times. For instance, the links under the *tutorial* heading on the menu bar is reiterated again on the sidebar, whereas the headings in the menu bar itself are presented again for the user on the homepage itself. Hence, I aimed to remove the redundancy by removing the sidebar on the homepage and extending the menu bar to encompass all the available features of the site (i.e. How To, Web Templates).

1.1. Menu bar

I also noticed that the menu bar differed between the homepage and all other pages. I found this confusing, as a user might get familiar with one menu bar only to be disoriented by the other variation. Hence, after extending the menu bar, I made it the universal menu bar across the website.

1.2. Presentation of Courses

I found the vertically long and linear presentation of their courses to be unappealing. At first glance, a website should impress the user or grab their attention, and I found that a user might lose interest halfway through scrolling down the homepage. With HTML presented as the first, it might also give the impression to unsuspecting users that HTML is their main (and only) course offering. W3Schools has since expanded to encompass much more than HTML/CSS, and their homepage should reflect that. Hence, I followed the example of several other of their competitors by presenting W3School's 8 courses grid-style in my design (4 in a page with a navigational arrow). It is still presented in the same order as it is on the website currently (so orderly priority still applies), but it better encompasses all that W3Schools has to offer at first glance.

1.3. Search bar

I found that their search bar obscured part of the menu bar upon being pressed. By moving it to the top, I found that the search bar had plenty of space to extend without obscuring navigation.

1.4. Navigational features

I moved important links to the top of the webpage so that users had quicker access to important links such as *forum* and *about*.

2.0. About Page

I removed the sidebar. I think the terms, privacy, and advertising policy should be separate pages from the about as the user might not necessarily want to know these technical information upon wanting to learn more about the website.

Similar to the homepage, I found their *about* page lengthy. I think centering the text places more emphasis on the descriptions, whereas separating the advantages of W3Schools (i.e. Easy Learning, Try It Yourself, Free) into 3 side-by-side boxes allows the user to overview these benefits with less effort on their end.

3.0. HTML Homepage

For the page of my choice, I selected the landing page of one of W3School's key offerings: HTML. I chose this page because I thought it to be quite important in order to grab user's interest to start learning HTML on their website and thought it could be improved.

I think that the current HTML homepage is not very user-friendly in the sense of increasing users' informed decision-making power about whether or not to take the course. It throws plenty of information and resources at the user which is already accessible by the menu bar. Though it's good to consolidate resources for one language in particular on the language's landing page, I thought that the page could benefit from a syllabus.

3.1. Syllabus

Taking another page out of their competitors' handbook, I thought to include a syllabus. Though users well versed with web development programming languages might know how to navigate this sea of information, users new to the programming scene might be overwhelmed. W3Schools does an excellent job of including a link to every page in the course but grouping links together into intuitive and technical groups along with some

form of description might attract more users to use W3Schools to learn HTML/CSS from scratch.

3.2. Retainment of Sidebar

Given that W3Schools has a reputation for being a website used for referencing HTML/CSS (as opposed to a website known for learning HTML/CSS from scratch), I thought the retainment of the sidebar on the HTML landing page would be helpful for users who would only want to navigate to the certain pages.

3.3. Collapsing of Sections

Besides the syllabus, I thought that the website could better present their resources for a particular language as buttons labelled with their headings (which are quite self-explanatory). This lets users navigate faster to said resources. However, if a user wanted to learn more about a particular resource, a user could hover over that button to find more information.

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Lab Assignment 2

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<https://www.figma.com/file/bJE0kQ2jwrS3tWuyVmaK4O/W3Schools-Redesign-Mockup?node-id=1%3A2>

1.0. Changes from previous design

I had made a small change from my wireframes which is to not spell out JavaScript in the navigational links on the homepage (i.e. “LEARN JS” instead of “LEARN JAVASCRIPT”). It allowed me to not have to put links across two lines just for JavaScript which created for better consistency between all the links on the homepage.

2.0. Considerations during prototyping

2.1. Branding

At first, I was going to follow W3School’s existing colour scheme of their signature accent green, white, and grey. However, as I designed my rather simplistic homepage, I realized how bland it was turning out to be. There was a cognitive *underload* almost, an under-stimulation of the brain due to the lack of colour. Their font that they had chosen for their website (Segoe UI) was also, frankly put, plain and boring especially when considering the repository of modern fonts made available by Google Fonts. So, I hunted for a modified colour scheme as well as an updated font.

2.1.1. Colour Scheme

Some time ago, due to my own interest in UX, I had learnt about the 60-30-10 rule. 60% background/primary colour, 30% secondary colour, and a 10% accent colour. I believe that is what inspired me to find this colour scheme. I was looking on other competitors’ websites, and on *TeamTreehouse*’s, I saw that they had utilized this deep blue colour and had elected to copy it straight off their website. The coding community has been especially crazy about dark colour schemes for their visuals so I thought it was suitable. I then went on colors.co and looked for colour schemes which utilized W3School’s signature green and found this mint green which stood out well against this new secondary colour I had found.

2.1.2. Font

The font family I chose (Public Sans) was one I found it off a website listing good fonts for design. I thought it looked cleaner and more material and modern-looking than Segoe UI.

2.2. Design principles

As previously mentioned in this writeup as well as the writeup for the previous lab, I **strove for consistency** in my design. I made sure the header was designed and positioned identically for all frames as well as sought out a colour scheme to stick to so as to **reduce users' cognitive load** (by eliminating colours as part of new information they'd have to process) when visiting new pages on the website.

Furthermore, I made sure that **users felt in control** throughout the website experience. Navigation is a clear feature throughout my no-frills redesign. By keeping breadcrumbs (the navigational sidebar) from W3School's current design on certain landing pages, users can skip sections of tutorials that they have already learnt. I also highlighted 'About' in green when on the 'About' page to signal to users what page they are on. The homepage implements quick lateral navigation through arrow buttons to allow users to survey all available courses on the homepage with a click of a button. I also wanted all help available for the user to be seen at a glance on the HTML landing page. By implementing explanations that only activate upon hovering, experienced users can skip the explanations and immediately click on the resource they require.

Finally, I believe the parts of my design which lays out information neatly and concisely for the user (i.e. the benefits on the 'About' page, the suggestion for a syllabi) would **reduce cognitive load** for a user by reducing the uncertainty they might have about learning HTML or W3Schools.