

ISS 740 – Fundamentals of Web-based Communication

Midterm Proposal – Personal Portfolio Site

Zelo Zhou – mz171@duke.edu

Motivation:

A personal portfolio site serves as a pivotal tool for professionals, particularly those within the design, research, and creative spheres. It offers an opportunity to showcase one's work, detail the ideation processes behind each creation, encapsulate personal values, and establish connections with potential employers or collaborators. During my two-year tenure as a professional photographer, I never ventured into developing a portfolio. However, as I immerse myself in the interdisciplinary graduate program, CMAC, which spans across digital media creation, digital humanities, data analysis & visualization, and contemporary media theory, I've realized the impending need for a portfolio. This isn't merely a storage mechanism for diverse materials but a strategic representation for my imminent career progression. I envisage this site as a space to cohesively present various formats - from images and videos to text-based content and innovative materials like visualization charts and hybrid archives.

Audiences:

Given the transdisciplinary essence of my work, it's evident that the portfolio will cater to an audience spanning across various domains. For instance, while my geospatial data analysis project interacts with individuals well-versed in engineering terminologies and presentation techniques, they might not be equally acquainted with artistic showcases. Conversely, my forays into digital humanities mandate a design that resonates with the general populace, transcending academic boundaries. My imminent transition to the industry post-graduation further amplifies the need for a portfolio designed with an inclusive language - one that melds technicality with

artistry. Consequently, while it's paramount to craft a site aligning with tech, business, art, and design industry standards, it's equally critical to bridge any existing aesthetic divides.

Values:

At the heart of this portfolio lies a commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. First and foremost, it is essential that the site caters to a broad spectrum of visitors – from academic scholars and corporate professionals to art enthusiasts and the everyday curious individual. The intent is to make every visitor feel welcomed and engaged, ensuring that the site's architecture and content are easy to navigate and understand. Moreover, while professionalism will underscore the design, there's an equal emphasis on infusing elements that are lively and interactive, making the experience not just informative but also enjoyable. Ultimately, the site will be a confluence of reliability and creativity, mirroring my dual identity as both a structured professional and an expressive artist.

Narrative:

- **User-centric Design:** The site's design will prioritize the user experience. Given its diverse audience, intuitive navigation will be paramount. Categories, tabs, and sections will be clearly demarcated, guiding the visitor seamlessly through various projects and mediums.
- **Showcasing Diversity:** The portfolio will be a testament to my multifaceted skills and experiences. From geospatial data projects and digital humanities work to photography and other forms of digital media, visitors should leave with an appreciation of the breadth of my expertise.
- **Professional yet Artistic:** While the primary target audience is the corporate and industry sector, the site will not forsake its artistic essence. Clean lines, reliable coding, and

structured layouts will be complemented by innovative design elements and visual storytelling techniques, with the goal of reflecting my artist persona.

- **Personal Touch:** Beyond the professional and academic projects, the site will also weave in snippets of my journey as a person, my inspirations, and my aspirations. This narrative will offer a glimpse into the person behind the projects, fostering a deeper connection with the audience.

Inspirations

- **Design Theory & Guidelines**

Janet H. Murray - *Inventing the Medium: Principles of Interaction Design as a Cultural Practice*

Anthony Conta – *The Art & Science of UX Design*

Linda Ragaine - *The Anatomy of a Perfect Portfolio Website to Showcase Your Work*

- **Visual Research & Cases:**

[Jey Austen](#) – Visual Designer

[Arlen Mcclusky](#) – Product Design in tech

[Vivian Xu](#) – Bio artist & University scholar

[Mack & Pouya](#) – Wedding photographer

[Xinran Lai](#) – Media Studies scholar focusing on WEB 3.0 & NFT

[Xin Tong](#) – HCI Scholar, presenting visual graphs and textual materials.

[Christina Giordano](#) – Animator

[Ruomiao Li](#) – Visual Design & Animation

I'm still collecting, viewing, and comparing many more cases of personal portfolio sites to inspire and guide my design. It's important to see a wide range of people and compare how they tailor their design for their specific discipline and presentational needs.

Data & Information to Use:

My work:

- Several Photography Series
- Several Academic Papers
- A Short Animation Film
- Several Data Analysis & Visualization project

Personal Info:

- CV, About me, and a (maybe) interactive contact me page

Expectation:

- A Landing Page: with complete design tailored based on motivation, audience, values, and context.
- A Clear structural Layout: navigation into different pages starting from landing page, and interactivity between different subpages.
- Clear Sections for different types of showcases and functionality, about me page, CV page, and contact me page, etc.
- Work showcasing is not expected to be fully complete due to not having enough time to compile and edits all previous works.

In sum, the goal of this project is build a usable and thoughtful prototype for my personal portfolio site.