Personal Website Design Rationale

Target Audiences:

As a junior in computer science major, I would like to create a personal website that demonstrates some of my personal projects to potential recruiters. Therefore, my target audiences would be recruiters/interviewer from Tech companies that I will apply for next summer.

My website will be neatly structured to guide the recruiters that wonder upon my site to discover that I am a very hands-on person. From theoretical codes to physical projects and robots, I would like the tech companies see that I can do well both front end as well as back end.

My design goals will include making the website super neat and clean. My ultimate result is a website like Apple's homepage, with big beautiful pictures accompanied with documentations that highlights what's important.

Website feel and feature:

The website should have a clean and professional look. The home page should be well focused with important content only, ones that will stimulate interest with little words. Navigation should be clear and well organized.

Color layout of the website should help with organization. For example, navigation area should have a mono-tone color style but words with strong contrast with the button color. Pages should have one signature color. Red/yellow/black/white are my preferred choices.

Feature-wise, the website will have links to different pages with more detailed description of my personal projects. Embedded video and pictures will be included. Maybe some interactive components or background slide shows as well.

Contents:

In my final version, contents will include: written descriptions of my project, abstract, personal statement, etc. Embedded videos, pictures,

The basic structure could be:
1. Home Page:
   a. Site navigation
      i. Home

     ii. Projects
     iii. About me
     iv. Personal Blog
     v. Contact me
  b. Live tiles: Cycle featured/highlight pages, updates, etc.
  c. Site map, different paths in small font size.
  d. Homepage will be the most important page of all, since it's the first place a person sees when he/she lands on my site. I will design it so that it grabs the viewer's attention and makes he/she wants to explore more by clicking on interesting links. Also a general navigation bar/drop-down menu will be implemented across all pages.

2. Projects:
  a. MAE 3783 Mechatronics Robot Project Page
  b. CS 4752 Robotic Manipulation Project Page – Baxter
  c. iPhone App/Apple Watch development Project
  d. CUAUV Projects
  e. Home Automation Project and Future Ideas
  f. These pages will be designed to be fun and with themes appropriate to their content. For example, the code page will be in a very techy theme with syntax coloring just that it would look like in an editor.

3. About me: A page dedicated to the one and only James Fu. Should include a profile picture, mid-length bio, link to full CV. May also include links to social network sites, etc.

4. Personal Blog: My personal blog page, where I post ideas or daily "eureka!" moments.

5. Contact me: a page to post various methods to contact me, email, phone number, mailing address, etc. Could also include a small dialog box for quick feed back or message.

6. Search: This function allows a user to search through the entire site for content. Powered by Google.

CSS and Design:

   In milestone 3, with site structure mostly set up by HTML, I started to play with CSS to make my site look more aesthetically pleasing. First thing I did was to pick a font that I like the most since a huge proportion of my site consists of words. As an early adopter of the OS X El Capitan Beta, I fell in love with the San Francisco font Apple uses for system text font as well as watchOS 2 font. After font was picked out I decided to stylize my navigation bar and title. I gave the navigation bar a simplistic yet very clear design, which I believe can catch attention from the view but do not distract them from the actual content since they are relatively smaller than the rest of the text.

   Additionally I changed the layout so that pictures are displayed next to the text, makes the page more concise and clean.

   Currently my CSS class/instance structure is what I am going to work on next. I will have better generalization instead of styling each individual element which creates clusters in the CSS file.

Conclusion:

After completion of milestone 3, my website finally has the clean and professional look that I wanted. Since I liked the layout, I decided to only make some minor changes. First, for cosmetic I included animated CSS rule so that when user hover on the navigation bar buttons, the texts grow a little bigger to further highlight their selection. This neat little feature will potentially provide visual comfort when browsing the site through the navigation bar. Also I added a footer, for copyright statement as well as any maintenance link, legal information, etc. Additionally, I fixed a lot of CSS margin properties of my pictures and paragraphs. Before I was using pixel number to create margin to the border but now they are all percentages which is better adapted to different window aspect ratios.

In general, I enjoyed this project a lot. They website has a feel that I had imagine for a long time but never got to really implement. I look forward to upcoming projects to test out my web design skills on real world situations!