

Web Technology

The Web Technology course was a totally different experience to We Create Identity. In Web Technology, we had to familiarize ourselves with common web languages, such as HTML, CSS and JavaScript. We didn't get a lot of lectures on this subject, but had to learn by self-study instead. While I like developing web pages, the trouble is always finding a goal to achieve: it is nice to code a web site, but when it doesn't serve a purpose, the motivation to continue to work on it soon disappears. Luckily, we did have goals for Web Technology.

The first goal was to make a portfolio. This portfolio would be a formal and well-structured presentation of your work, so people interested in it can find it easily. To present my work in an easy to navigate way, I opted to use a sidebar, listing all of our courses. Each course has its own page, with a list of the assignments done for this course, as well as a small description of the assignments. To facilitate this system I used a MySQL database. In order to present the data from this database I wrote some code in PHP, which displays the information from the database in a clear and user-friendly manner. For the layout I made use of CSS.

The second goal was to make a worst web page. I wanted to make this page as annoying as possible, but unfortunately not all my plans made it into the actual web site. Initially, I planned to make a website with a text following the cursor, lots of pop-ups and pop-overs, annoying music in the background and of course a bad design. Alas, I couldn't get the text following the cursor to work, and making pop-overs yourself turned out to be much more difficult than I thought, so much so that I encountered websites with the ability to make pop-overs for you, at ridiculous prices. At first, I couldn't get the music to play in the background either, using 'bgsound', but I found a workaround for this: I embedded a YouTube video, set it to autoplay and loop, and made its size 0 x 0 pixels. By doing this, the user will hear the sound when the website loads, without any video, and it will keep on repeating itself over and over.

Producing pop-ups proved to be easy to do, but the problem is that almost all modern browsers block pop-ups. I decided to implement them anyway, since even the notice of a blocked pop-up shows that a website is bad. When you do allow pop-ups, you will get three of them, and each of them asks whether you really want to close it when you try to do so. All I needed now was a flashing background and an annoying ad. There are a lot of tutorials on creating a flashing background with the use of JavaScript, but to me they seemed overly complicated for such a plain thing. Instead, I created the flashing wallpaper by using an animated GIF. For the annoying advertisement I took the same approach: first I typed some text and added a picture of the prize that could be won, and later on I added a border around this. I then saved this picture three times, with a different colour for the border in each version. Using unFREEze, I converted these three images into one animated GIF.

The last idea I came up with is to make a loading screen for the website, since waiting is rare in the digital age, and when it does happen, the user can get very irritated. For this, I used an animated image of a smoking cigar, together with the text "I could load the website for you... But first, I want to smoke." With "meta refresh", I redirected the user to the actual page after 10 seconds.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I can say that I learned a little bit on JavaScript for the course Web Technology. I had already experimented with HTML, CSS and PHP in combination with a MySQL database, so all I had to in order to employ these was refresh my knowledge. I think self-study was not as efficient as it could have been for me, I had wanted to learn a lot more, particularly in the area of AJAX, so I have to improve on my self-study skills in the future.