

Unit 3 Diary Entry

Matthew Zarowny

ID: 3484796

Athabasca University, 2021

Link to Site:

<http://student.athabascau.ca/~mattewza/Unit3/html/home.html>

Work Done

In this unit, I added to CSS files ('menu.css' and 'main.css') to be used in tandem with my existing HTML files from unit 1 in order to add visual markup to my site.

In 'menu.css' I wrote the code to display a fixed horizontal navigation menu at the top of each page of the site. There is a lot of code dedicated to the menu, so I decided to make it as its own file for code maintainability purposes. I added code so that the current page the user is browsing has its background colored in and so that when a user hovers their mouse over a different menu item, it's background colour fades in. Each of the items in the menu has a unique colour corresponding to a specific Tetris piece. Additionally, the Guide/Tips menu item also was coded to serve as a dropdown menu. When the user hovers their mouse over this menu item, a vertical dropdown menu will pop out.

The 'main.css' contains the code for the visual markup of the other aspects of the site. I added a footer to the bottom of the page displaying the site logo, my name and the last modified date. I set the fonts of headings, paragraphs, tables, etc. to be Helvetica to give the site a modern touch. I set the background colours of the pages and sections to be unique and serve a purpose relevant to the personas (this is discussed in detail in the next section). I set the padding of the body sections to be large enough so that the navigation menu and footer don't overlap site content. I styled various lines throughout the site in order to more clearly differentiate sections of text. I added outlines and styles to the text in the FAQ section to make it more readable. I centered images throughout the site and made the videos on the video page to automatically resize in accordance with the size of the window.

Rationale Relating to Personas and Scenarios

Throughout the site, I have centered headings and included lines in order to divide text into easily viewable sections. This aids all personas by making the site much more readable. In the setup section, since this is a page that will be seen by even more casual personas like Sally, I chose to also include transparent background colours to make the sections not only more readable, but more approachable and fun to read as well.

I've centered all of the pictures throughout the site to make them more visible and made the videos much larger and scalable in accordance with the browser window size. This aids personas like Tom by making the information they want to see much more visible.

I chose to make the background colour of the whole site "whitesmoke". It is no longer plain white, because that aesthetic is very reminiscent of archaic 1990s era websites and may turn away personas like Tom and Sally. However, the colour is very near white to give off an aura of professionalism to appeal to personas like Luke. The whiteness of the backgrounds is accentuated by the popping colours of the navigation menu and the images which gives the overall site an aesthetic that can be appreciated by all three persona types.

I've included a footer that is fixed to the bottom of the page. For one, this was a Unit 2 requirement to list the author name and last modified date on each page. It serves another purpose for the personas however: the logo on the bottom and footer bar gives the site an heir of professionalism that will appeal to personas like Tom and Luke.

In Unit 1, I envisioned a navigation menu that would appear vertically as a column on the left side of the screen. I ended up changing the format of this navigation menu from a vertical one to a horizontal one however in order to better suit the personas and scenarios. Since quick and easy navigation was a key need of all three personas, and there are many scenarios where users want access to only a little bit of information quickly, I determined that a vertical menu would simply take up too much screen real estate and inhibit users from getting the best experience possible for the outlined scenarios. The horizontal menu takes up less space on the screen so that personas like Tom can see more information at once. The menu has its position fixed to the top of the screen, so even when personas like Luke are scrolling far down through sections, they can easily navigate to another section of the website to access more information without scrolling all the way back up again.

I've added colours to the navigation bar to indicate to the user what page they are on. For example, if they are on the home page, the home link in the navigation bar will be highlighted green. This serves personas like Tom and Sally by preventing them from feeling overwhelmed and allows them to know exactly what part of the site that they are on.

I made each of the background colours for the different items in the navigation menu correspond to one of the seven colours of the Tetris pieces (i.e. home page is same colour as the z-piece, leaderboard is same colour as the t-piece, etc.). This design choice, although minor, is significant by making the site a bit more colourful and approachable to personas like Tom and Sally. It takes away conceptions of seriousness and makes the site give off a much more easy-going vibe, which is key to the more casual personas and users.

Learning Outcomes

I have met the learning outcomes for this unit, which are stated as follows: "write well-structured, easily maintained, standards compliant CSS code to present HTML pages in different ways." I believe that my CSS code is well structured and commented so that it can be

maintained relatively easily in the future. The CSS also uses many different features to present the website in an organized, practical and aesthetically pleasing fashion.

What Went Well, What Didn't

Overall, CSS development went fairly smoothly. Initially, I anticipated that I would have to change the HTML code I had written for the navigation menu because I wanted to change it from a vertical layout to a horizontal one. I changed the HTML to include multiple class containers and went about writing the CSS to make the menu. However, I had great difficulty with this and couldn't get the dropdown menu functionality that I wanted. I eventually went back to my original HTML code and changed the way I used CSS and was able to fix all of the issues. Another thing that didn't go well was that in Unit 2, I had accidentally used DIVs with IDs instead of classes. This was a quick fix though, I simply went back and changed them with find and replace.

What I Would Change if I Did it Again

If I were to do this again, I would likely invest in learning and using a WYSIWYG editor. Having manual control over the markup of your site via CSS is fun and definitely helps with one's overall understanding of how HTML and CSS work together. However, significant amounts of time and effort can be saved by using a WYSIWYG editor with perhaps a better-looking end product. I would likely use an application like Dreamweaver if I were to build a different website after I finish this course.

The Most Surprising and Useful Thing I Learned

The most surprising and useful thing that I learned is that there are so many different functions and descriptions built into CSS. The sheer scope of it is almost overwhelming and I never realized how large CSS really is. The documentation and examples of the many facets of CSS from websites like w3schools.com were imperative to my success and I am glad that I learned of their existence.

How My Previous Experience Impacted My Work

I have not coded CSS from scratch in a long time, so although I did have previous experience, it did not greatly help me in this unit. That being said, my overall website design, coding and debugging experience helped me quickly create a site with visuals and aesthetics that I can be proud of.