

Q360

Introduction to Web Development

Reflection Paper

I am not a technical person, so when I first thought about learning HTML I had visions of laboring endlessly through long nights of scripting confusion and turmoil. Being in the graphic design business for the past ten years I have seen the evolution of web site design in the industry and was feeling left behind. But, because of the aforementioned fear, never went near "the beast". This fear I now would eventually be my ruin. So, after learning about this class as part of MU's program, I decided it was about time begin to conquer my fear.

When I began this class I did not know the first thing about HTML. The course text was a great introduction and prepared me well for when class did begin. The assignments were laid out clear with an acceptable level of difficulty increase with each one. The practice pages that were developed helped in the understanding of HTML and coordinated with the reading very well. As a matter of fact, they even became fun! Wow! I would find myself going over different options and choices and actually understanding HTML!

The links and information provided in the course gave me a great insight into all of the web site design resources available online. I particularly liked all of the different sound bites available on various linked sites. Although I didn't use any sound bites on my final web site, I definitely have plans to include some.

In all I think my web site turned out pretty good. I took a straightforward approach by laying everything out in easy to read pages with clear links. It is kind of a no nonsense site with only pertinent information relative to the content of the site. I guess that is a good thing for a business site. But I may want to add a "lighter side" link later on. The color scheme I tried to keep modern with limited graphics. I wanted the content to stand out and didn't want to be too flashy. I just wanted it to have a professional look.

Everyone acts all impressed by it. But when I look around at other graphic designer sites, obviously I have a lot to learn. I would definitely like to get more into Dreamweaver and Flash. Things I think I could incorporate into my site right now are portfolio images, student work and contacts links. This is all going to take a lot of scanning, saving and image manipulation that hopefully I will have time for later this summer. I would say the greatest insight that I gained by creating my site was the realization that it is a never-ending process and that it must continually be updated and check.

I thought my learning team was just great! At first I was a little apprehensive at having just three members, but we proved to be a pretty strong team and everything came together well. Jim was a very outspoken and always the first with the posts. He always made good inquires and follow-ups. Dagmar seemed to start off a little confused and had some questions in the beginning but really took off. She did a great job with her constructive comments and critiques throughout this whole process. It was good to have such dependable members in my group. The whole learning team idea I think is a good one. We always had someone to go to first for questions and critiques. The learning team was enjoyable and enlightening.

I would say that at the end of this class I am fairly confident in my HTML skills. I sure wouldn't jump up at some design meeting and go "Let me figure out why that code doesn't work!" but I would sure take a look at it when no one was looking. As far as designing my own stuff, I will continue to make pages with HTML. I think it is a very good idea that designers stay in touch with this code. Even if I do end up learning Dreamweaver or other WYSIWYG programs, I am sure I will always need to know the basics. As we learned in class there are always compatibility and other issues to consider.

I will continue to work with it and learn. Some of this learning will come by observing others web sites. We were given a lot of great links in this course. Links for helping to build sites. Links for images and advice. Most importantly, we obtained links from other students and working professionals. By observing these links I hope to stay aware of trends and other considerations that may help my web site to be seen. I definitely look at web pages differently now than when I began this course.

I have to say that this class has definitely shown me the tools and also provided me with the confidence to continue creating web sites. First I would like to add to my existing site and submit it to search engines and see what happens. I look forward to feedback from people I don't know. Also, I plan on creating my parent's web site to promote their wood carving shop in the near future. I think this project with its different subject matter and over all feel will be quite a challenge. But nothing I can't handle!

All in all I am excited! I am excited that I have overcome my fear of HTML. I sure haven't completely conquered it, but I sure don't fear it. This course has allowed me to learn, create and be competent in a new medium. To summarize how I feel about my competence in designing and creating web sites...let's get started!

Thanks for a great class!

Bill