



PROGRESS OUTCOME 4

Designing a portfolio website

Context

Amber has been designing and coding a website to showcase her visual arts portfolio. During the process, she had to make decisions regarding the website's design, layout, image file sizes, and file types, all of which have an impact on its usability and functionality.



Insight 1: Preparing images

Because I'm developing a website to showcase my visual arts portfolio, the quality of the imagery is an important consideration. I decided to use one of the school's high-quality digital cameras and shoot my artwork in the photography room to ensure consistent lighting.

However, I couldn't put the raw images straight onto my website, as the large file size would make the download time too slow (when researching human-computer interaction, we learned that most users won't wait longer than a few seconds for a page to load). So I used GIMP to scale the images to fit my design and exported them as optimised jpegs, which testing had proven would give me the best quality for a reduced file size.



Insight 2: Website design

When developing my design, I researched websites of photographers and artists to see what works best when displaying portfolios. I learned that most portfolio websites have smaller thumbnails of images for the user to browse and navigate for a larger view.

From my research I realised it's important to use a neutral colour scheme without background patterns so that the focus is on the artwork rather than the website graphics. I also wanted only a small amount of text so that the artwork could be as large as possible.

Before starting to code my design, I got feedback on it from my visual arts teacher and classmates, because they understand design aesthetics and often look through art-focused websites. I also asked my digital technology teacher about whether my design would be able to be coded effectively. I integrated their feedback into my final design.



Insight 3: Development and improvement

From our practice in web coding, I realised that it would be more efficient to first plan out my page structure on paper, thinking about HTML tags I would need. I coded the structure and then I applied some basic Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to see how it would look. (It's easy to make changes to the CSS and look at them in the browser for quick testing.)

Once I had worked out the structure, I started adding some content and the colour schemes and fonts. I used comments in my HTML and CSS to help me with my testing because you can comment out parts and easily go back and forth between choices. My classmates and my teacher helped me to make decisions about size and font choice that matched my design aesthetic and made the information easy to read.



Insight 4: Browser testing

All along, I had been testing my website on my laptop in both Chrome and Safari as they are the most common browsers for macOS. My teacher had set up a server so that we could upload our websites and have others test them out. Having my classmates and parents test my site on different computers and browsers showed me things I could improve if I ever wanted to use it professionally. I decided to make sure it worked on modern browsers but didn't waste time checking whether it worked on older ones, because it was currently only for personal use.

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