

What the course Multimedia Authoring has taught me:

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For me the course Multimedia Authoring presented an opportunity to expand my horizons in terms of programming languages and general webdesign. I had worked with the core languages like HTML and CSS before (in courses such as Webtechnology), but only on a very basic level, and never focusing on anything beyond conveying textual information.

When we started out with this project, neither of us had any noteworthy programming skills, so I started out reading several tutorials on the various programming languages as well as looking for simple clues on websites like StackOverflow and CodeAcademy. Eventually I decided to just start working with jEdit (in hindsight I can recommend Notepad ++ to anyone over jEdit, the layout is better) as a text editor and see where things would take off from there.

HTML and CSS proved easier than expected, and it didn't take me very long to create the main body for the site, partially based on own design, with some code snippets from others worked in here and there. Even though HTML and CSS are very basic languages that don't add very much to the interactive layout of the site, I was still surprised to see how much could be done even with just a few lines of coding from these languages. Even for someone with very minimal programming skills in terms of building websites and web pages, I still had a blast figuring out all the various possibilities in terms of size, spatial construction and colours to name a few.

This was only the first step though, as a lot of the features that needed to be added to the site, like the multimedia aspect (for which we chose a video player), the annotation editor and a game required more complex programming. This is where Javascript came into play. Javascript was definitely proved itself to be a language that was harder to understand for beginners like me. Even though I didn't write most of it myself (usually building upon what others had already created), it was still hard to figure out exactly what certain pieces of code actually meant and what they were supposed to do, because in order to adequately modify and build upon them I needed to understand how they worked. Eventually I managed to get what I wanted through a process of trial and error, very tedious but rewarding in the end.

Another hard part was making sure the site worked on various browsers and devices. This is something that is still not entirely fixed as of this date and I hope to be able to add more flexibility to it in the future. I often crosschecked various pieces of code in different browsers, but this proved to be extremely exhausting when very little of it was widely applicable, I'm sad to say.

In the end however, I can say it was a truly fun and worthwhile project, building a website. In the future, I'm hopefully able to get the basic layout up quicker so that I'm left with more time for the rest of the project (testing different languages, global application, and an overall more professional look).

For anyone interested in web programming and multimedia authoring as a whole, I would definitely recommend this project as it allows you to easily test your programming skills in various languages and hone them through trial and error to create something that you can truly call your own.

