

Juliann Phan  
Professor Eyman  
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Final Report

(•\_•) Website (•\_•)

## **INTRODUCTION**

For my website I created a variation of an eportfolio. I originally created my first eportfolio through my ENGH 386 class through the Colorado State University page, but it is not accessible to the public and lacked design. I decided to create a web space for all my academic written work at George Mason University. As a transfer student from Virginia Commonwealth University, I wanted a place where an incoming GMU student, or future employer, could view my work. As a transfer student, I understand how much an advisor can help, but it would've been beneficial if I could access a website with information about courses, without it being a college catalog. As an English major and minor in Legal Studies, a majority of my coursework is geared toward ENGH and GOVT courses, so my target audiences are college students who anticipate taking similar courses, and secondarily are future employers. In this report I will discuss my website on the basis of the Five Planes, and somewhat my reflections in certain phases of constructing the website.

## **STRATEGY PLANE**

The Strategy Plane is best defined as, “incorporates not only what the people running the site want to get out of it but what the users want to get out of the site as well” (Garrett 21). For my website, I wanted to incorporate all the courses I have taken at George Mason as an Undergraduate English student for future students or employers to see. My product objective was to portray my academic progress at GMU. I wanted this website to function to two audiences. My user needs were dependent on my two audiences, students and future employers. Students

could access my page and retrieve information on courses they could potentially enroll in; however, employers could access the page to see my progress as an undergraduate student with writing examples. The goal for the website was to give my users an experience they would return back to get information, and potentially read my writing. Identifying the brand identity was crucial. The typography and images were important to function as a way of impressing my users by the organization, while being visually appealing.

In user needs, it was important to divide my audience into smaller groups, this is called “user segmentation” (Garrett 42). By clumping both audience needs together is not sufficient, or fair, because a student user verses a future employer user is different in various aspects according to needs. A student wants to merely glance, scan and get to know me minimally, while reading more about the courses in depth, and possibly viewing my writing for tips on what the professor expects. Students are interested in what are the course requirements. On the other hand, employers are interested in getting to know me as much as possible, my progress in courses, writing examples, and possibly a resume. My user needs had to be closely interweaved within each other, but subtly showing I was keeping mind of both audiences.

## **SCOPE PLANE**

The Scope Plane is where, “various features and functions of the site fit together,” but also attempt to enable features that create a website to be useful to a customer when they return (Garrett 21). Clear requirements were necessary for the launch of the website. I needed to decide exactly what I wanted to describe in the courses, possibility of a resume, and a brief ‘About Me’ section. I deliberately analyzed my courses on what students would want to read. Students often use Ratemyprofessor.com to be the ultimate decider if they take a course with a professor. I wanted to take the objective off the professors and focus on the course by giving my student

audience an overview of what is expected. By doing this, I am also facilitating functionality to employers who visit the website. They instantly understand this is an online portfolio with brief biographies.

Content requirements and functionality were where a majority of brainstorming and work derived from. The content needed to be clear for every course, not straying away from the pattern of other courses. Giving the course name, semester, professor and a bio were the primary stages; however, I decided to add a quote from a textbook or essay I read in the course. The quote would tie into paper assignment, but also giving an overview of what is taught in the course. As for the functionality, the website needed to function cohesively. The courses would be arranged together visually and needed to bring the user to each course they wanted to view with ease. It was difficult to format the images, but in the abstract part of planning, I knew I wanted all courses to have a designated image.

## **STRUCTURE PLANE**

The Structure Plane is where abstract ideas become concrete, and works beside the Skeleton Plane. It functions to interact with the design and content. Ideas are still in their forming stages and aren't so tangible yet. Information architecture is concerned with the organization, grouping, ordering, and presentation of content" (Garrett 81). My website needed to be visually organized for my audience. I decided my main page would be my course selections, but my courses would be images. I wasn't sure what images to include, but they would obviously be images pertaining to the course or paper. My website courses would be organized in a way my user would not be stressed out once they viewed the main page, so I opted to have the background a plain white so it wouldn't interfere with the visuals. Users could process the

information best if they are associating courses with images, so my idea for incorporating images was becoming a concrete idea.

### **SKELETON PLANE**

The Skeleton Plane “is designed to optimize the arrangement of these elements for maximum effect and efficiency” (Garrett 20). This plane was where a lot of my plans for the website were executed. I decided to have images that would navigate to my courses. Having images as navigation would help the interface design come alive. I wanted a unique website so I decided navigation would be a good tool to manipulate. The square type pictures ideally would be related to the written work I produced in the class. It was important to include various pictures to facilitate the design process.

In the ‘About’ section, I included social media websites where I could be contacted. Integrating these buttons adds to user experience. It gives my student audience the option of following me on social media; however, it openly invites my future employers to see what I post on my social media platforms too. Also, having a new page open to these types of links was important, so it didn’t stray the audience away from the website. In the Resume section I wanted something very minimal for my audience to see. If they wish to retrieve my Resume they could, but for the most part I didn’t want to lay out my resume on the website, I only wanted it as a PDF. I included a column indicating where I currently work, and a column what I want to do. Giving my audience insider perspective adds to the experience.

### **SURFACE PLANE**

The Surface Plane is the last plane, but defines “series of Web pages, made up of images and text” (Garrett 20). This part of the plane accounts for all five senses the user has. Visually I wanted my audience to see something first before they read anything. The minimal color as the

background, the same sized pictures, and the typography used for all headers were visual elements I wanted to portray. I wanted my audience to have a reason to continue viewing the website, even with the minimal color and text. The texts that I do have on the individual course pages are minimal bios and a description of the paper assignment. The two columns are intended to be brief and simplified to follow the same pattern as the images. Integrating a quote from texts read in the courses is intended to be a short take away message the audience could be receptive to.

I was highly satisfied with my website nearing the Surface Plane process; however, I did not manage to find out a certain code that could be beneficial to my page. The code I wanted would let a user hover over an image on the ‘Courses’ page, and the course name would appear. For example, if a user hovers over the picture of the New Vision Youth Services, Inc., then ‘ENGH 388’ should appear. I tried numerous codes and tweaked the CSS to the best of my ability, but never found a solution...if I found a way before presentation day it’s because I stayed up all night to figure it out tbqh<sup>1</sup>...

## CONCLUSION

There are still parts of my website that need to help, but it is mostly as comprehensive as I could make it. This was the first time I had ever been introduced to HTML/CSS, so my beginners knowledge relied on the information in the textbooks and various HTML/CSS help website. My website is not only comprehensive and creative, but it shows my audiences my academics and personality. The design element of the website was successful mainly because the images and formatting. The website is easy to function and give students and employers the opportunity to understand who I am as a student and individual.

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<sup>1</sup> Tbqh: “To Be Quite Honest,” internet slang ^\\_(\u263a)\\_/\u2013