LIS650

Web Site Architecture and Design

2005–03–04

See the course web site at http://openlib.org/home/krichel/courses/lis650p05s for the latest online version of this file.

Course Description
This course focuses on the construction of a web site. Students will learn how web sites work, and how to design good web sites. Students will be provided with free web space where they can design their own sites. This web space will continue to be available after the course ends.
The course will not be conducted using an application package to generate pages. Instead, students will be taught how to hand-code the pages. The emphasis is on the use of standard compliant XHTML 1.0 and CSS level 2.1. Validity control will be an integral part of the composition process. Students are allowed whatever tool they wish to use to create their sites, but final project sites must be standards compliant.
The course will cover all of HTML, except the following

- forms
- frames
- scripting objects
- minor points of table construction

Thus the course will be limited to passive web sites, i.e. that do not change as a response to user interaction.
The course will cover most, but not all of CSS 2 revision 1. At the time of writing, this is a draft W3C recommendation.
In addition, the course will cover the issue of web site design. There will be a special lecture on this topic once we have covered the bulk of the technical material.

Course objectives
After taking this course students

- they will be able to interact with a UNIX based server for storage and retrieval of pages;
- they will understand fundamental concepts of http;
- they will have sufficient knowledge of HTML in order to create simple but interoperable pages;
- they will have sufficient knowledge of CSS in order to create simple style sheets;
- they will have a grounding in information architecture and web usability

Prerequisites
There are no other formal prerequisites for this course. However this course is not suitable for computer neophytes or technophobes. Students should be familiar with the Web, and should be able to use a MS Windows computer, e.g. click on an icon to run a program, cut and paste between applications, copy files from one location to another. Students should also be familiar with basic concepts of computer hardware and software, concepts like files, memory, as well as an understand of the Internet and of client/server architecture. Everything that goes beyond that will be explained in class or by personal tuition from the instructor. No prior knowledge of HTML and CSS is assumed.

Instructor

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Class structure

Classes will be held in computer lab in the Palmer School between 12:00 and 17:00. The instructor will be there shortly after 11:00. Each class will have a lengthy presentation by the instructor. For some small part of class time the students will work directly with their computers under the supervision of the instructor. However, give the hefty weight of the class material, students are expected to do much of the work on the web site at home.
Class details:

0	2005–01–22	introduction to the course and snow
0	2005–01–29	introduction to the Web
1	2005–01–05	major HTML
2	2005–02–12	major CSS
3	2005–02–13	web site assessment
4	2005–02–19	minor HTML and CSS
5	2005–02–26	information architecture, http and apache

Slides for all classes are downloadable from the course web site.

Readings

As far as the design of web sites is concerned, Krug (2000) and Nielsen (2000) are classic references. Morville and Rosenfeld (2002) is a good book on information architecture. The most relevant contents of all three books will be covered in the course. The technical specifications of HTML and CSS are on the web. XHTML 1.0 is defined in Group (2002). To understand it, you need to refer to the definition of HTML 4.01 in Raggett, Le Hors, and Jacobs (1999). CSS level 2 revision 1 is defined in Bos, Çelik, Hickson, and Lie (2004). http is defined in Fielding, Gettys, Mogul, Frystyk, Masinter, Leach, and Berners-Lee (1999). URLs are defined in Berners-Lee, Masinter, and McCahill (1994), but that definition was updated in Berners-Lee, Fielding, and Masinter (1998). MIME types are documented in IANA (2001). The documentation of Apache is online at http://www.apache.org.
If students want a textbook on HTML and CSS, they are spoiled for choice. However, students should be aware that must books teach the loose version of HTML and place much less of an emphasis on stylesheets as the course contents does. This is a LIS-style course with an emphasis on separation of contents and presentation. Castro (2002) is a widely used and reasonably priced book for beginners. Werbach (2002) is a good online source. A book that the instructor likes a lot is Musciano and Bill (2002) . But it is expensive. A good, though outdated book on CSS is Bos and Lie (1999) .

Mailing list

There is a mailing list for the course at https://lists-1.liu.edu/mailman/listinfo/cwp-lis650-krichel. All students are encouraged to subscribe. As a rule, answers to email sent to the instructor will be copied to the list. There are exceptions to this rule

- if the question writer requests the answer not to be posted
- if the question is a purely private matter

Assessment

Before each class except the first, there will be a quiz on the issued covered in the previous class. The average of all the quiz results will count for 50% of the assessment. On the second class meeting, the students will hand in a one-page typed statement about the web site that they want to build. This statement should cover both the purpose of the web site and the site's architecture. The assessment of this statement will count for the 10% of the grade.
The remaining 40% will be assessed through the student's ability to build a web site. The site must validate against the *strict* version of the XHTML 1.0 specification. The site must have a style sheet with the main presentational elements. The site should provide an information source about a topic, though it need not to be comprehensive by any means. The informational contents should go beyond simple link collections or path finders. The total amount of information contained should roughly be equivalent to a conventional student essay. The web site will count for 40% of the final grade. It has to be finalized one week after the last class.

Students

Kathleen M. Sheehan[1]
Joely T. Sergi[2]
Richard Brower[3]
Stephanie Lynch-Loscalzo[4]
Kimberly Tiffany[5]
Rose Tummarello[6]
Clara Tran[7]
Mark Sandford[8]
Mary Snellinger[9]
Stephen Anderson[10]
Matt Conway[11]
Bonnie Marie Sauer[12]
Catherine Hoffmann[13]
Adriana Suarez[14]

References

Berners-Lee, Tim, Roy T. Fielding, and Larry Masinter (1998). Uniform Resource Identifiers (URI): Generic Syntax. RFC 2396 available at http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc2396.txt.

Berners-Lee, Tim, Larry Masinter, and Mark McCahill (1994). Uniform Resource Locators (URL). RFC 1738 available at http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc1738.txt.

Bos, Bert, Taniek Çelik, Ian Hickson, and Håkon Wium Lie (2004). Cascading Style Sheets, level 2, revision 1. available at http://www.w3.org/TR/CSS21.

Bos, Bert and Håkon Wium Lie (1999). *Cascading Style Sheets: Designing for the Web* (1st ed.). Addison Wesley.

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[1] http://dlib.info/home/ksheehan/reading_first/index2.html
[2] http://dlib.info/home/jsergi
[3] http://dlib.info/home/richbrower/RevJen/JBrower.html
[4] http://dlib.info/home/slynchlo/Index.html
[5] http://dlib.info/home/kimberlytiffany/home.html
[6] http://dlib.info/home/rtummarello/index.htm
[7] http://dlib.info/home/claratran
[8] http://dlib.info/home/msandford
[9] http://dlib.info/home/lsnellinger
[10] http://dlib.info/home/sanderson/kafka/
[11] http://dlib.info/home/mlconway
[12] http://dlib.info/home/bsauer/home.html
[13] http://dlib.info/home/choffmann
[14] http://dlib.info/home/adrsuarez

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IANA (2001). Media Types. available at http://www.iana.org/assignments/media-types/.

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Morville, Robert and Louis Rosenfeld (2002). *Information Architecture for the World Wide Web*. O'Reilly. described at http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/infotecture2/.

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Nielsen, Jakob (2000). *Designing Web Usability: The practice of Simplicity*. New Riders.

Raggett, Dave, Arnaud Le Hors, and Ian Jacobs (1999). HTML 4.01 Specification. available at http://www.w3.org/TR/html4/.

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