LIS650

Passive Web Site Architecture and Design

2005–08–27

See the course web site at http://openlib.org/home/krichel/courses/lis650w05a 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
- and some other minor features.

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 W3C working draft.
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.

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Class structure
Classes will be held in room 125 of the Westchester graduate campus of LIU, between 13:30 and 18:30. 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:

2005–09–10	introduction to the course and to XML
2005–09–17	HTML
2005–09–24	major CSS
2005–10–01	minor CCS, design and accessability
2005–10–08	web design
2005–10–15	javascript, 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 5/12 of the assessment. The worst performance in a quiz is discounted. 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 1/12 of the grade. On second-to-last meeting, students will also hand in a web site assessment. This assessment should cover the web site of a LIS academic department in the US or abroad. The assessment should not aim to describe the web page, but assess its strength and weaknesses in terms of the usability criteria reviewed in the class meeting from the week before. Each students should announce what web site they want to cover to the class email lists. The assessment should roughly be two typed pages long. If students don't like the first grade they get on the assessment they will be given a chance to improve it. The web site assessment will count for 2/12 of the course.
The remaining 4/12 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. Students are recommended to develop the web site on behalf of someone else, just to get useful feedback on the site and to avoid creating something that is too designer-centered. The informational contents of the sit should go beyond simple link collections or path finders. Personal web sites, such as for the student describing themselves, are not allowed. The total amount of information contained should roughly be equivalent to a conventional student essay. It has to be finalized one week after the last class.

Students

Louis Antonietti[1]

Amalia Connolly
Niki Atherton[2]
Sharon Kullberg[3]
Edward Canora[4]
Julie Marallo[5]
Rebecca Newman[6]
Betsy Bishop[7]
Melinda Watkins[8]
Jennifer Spanier[9]
Ian Hertz[10]
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References

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[1] http://dlib.info/home/jasper
[2] http://dlib.info/home/atherton/home.html
[3] http://dlib.info/home/sharon
[4] http://dlib.info/home/ecanora
[5] http://dlib.info/home/jmarallo
[6] http://dlib.info/home/rnewman/webproject.html
[7] http://dlib.info/home/bishop/firstpage.html
[8] http://dlib.info/home/mwatkins
[9] http://dlib.info/home/jegs/NLD1-homepage.html
[10] http://dlib.info/home/slayer
[11] http://dlib.info/home/mggirija/home.html

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