

Assignment

MPC 639: ADVANCED WEB DESIGN

PROJECT 1: MONETIZED BLOG

Due: See benchmark dates below

Save as: All files that are not links (PDFs, JPGs, or DOCXs) must be saved in this format before submitting: Lastname_Benchmark#.pdf

Turn In: Link to site and any accompanying documents on Canvas. When requested, bring a physical copy to class

Value: 300 points total (30% of overall grade). Please review point breakdown by benchmark below

Description and Rationale—If you ever work on a website for an established company, or if you ever need to build a website yourself, chances are you will work with a content management system (CMS). WordPress is widely recognized as the most-used content management system, claiming to be the platform for nearly 20% of the top 10 million websites on the internet. This assignment allows you to get your feet wet in the world of CMSs, helping you learn the fundamentals web development, content management, web analytics, blogging for SEO, and monetizing content through advertisements.

Assignment—For this assignment, you will complete benchmarks over several weeks in order to create a fully-functioning, monetized blog. The assignment requires that stay on pace and submit portions of your website each week. See below for benchmark descriptions, due dates, and point values.

You will be assessed on each benchmark on three things: 1) your ability to accomplish the benchmark requirements both technologically (everything must work) and otherwise; 2) your adherence to web design conventions covered in MPC 637; and 3) your creativity, relevancy, and professionalism in both content and design.

Benchmark #1: Site Setup | 25 points, due Week 2—Your first task is to set up your blog on WordPress.org. For this assignment, you'll contact a web host (Bluehost.com is recommended), purchase a domain name and hosting service, and install WordPress on the domain. You will then install an "under construction" plugin on the website with personalized content telling your user that the website is coming soon. To turn in, submit the link to your website on Canvas.

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Benchmark #2: Site Proposal | 75 points, due Week 3

Once you have created your account to begin your blog, you will write a proposal that identifies your site's purpose. Your proposal must be clear and specific. Please identify:

- 1) the site's primary audience (label all demographic information you can think of that is relevant);
- 2) the site's secondary audience (others who may visit the site out of interest or accident, but aren't your targeted demographic);
- 3) any other stakeholders that might be affected by your website and/or its content;
- 4) content subject matter, listed as topics you expect to cover;
- 5) design and layout ideas with justifications;
- 6) your intended WordPress theme;
- 7) any expected plugins, widgets, and so forth; and
- 8) a site thumbnail (hierarchy of pages, like an organizational chart) of your intended navigation.

Proposal should be 700 – 1,500 words in length. Turn in as a digital Word document (.docx file) on Canvas.

Benchmark #3: Site Design, Utilities, and Pathway Pages | 50 points, due Week 5

For this benchmark, you will create the skeleton of your website, including the following:

- 1) all your main menu links (which will have blank pages associated with them);
- 2) all pathway pages (from dropdown menus);
- 3) a contact page;
- 4) a search bar; and
- 5) any widgets or plugins critical to the navigation of your website. You will also be expected to have; and
- 6) a site ID in the header space.

Please turn this assignment in as a link to your website on Canvas.

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Benchmark #4: Keyword Research and Content Report | 50 points, due Week 5

For this benchmark, you will write a short report on your keyword and site optimization research strategies. Your report should draw from information gathered from Jones/Boykin, chapters 2 – 4. Specifically, your report needs to address the following:

- 1) Which key words you intend to focus on and why;
- 2) What you learned about your competition's key words;
- 3) What file names you intend to use and why; and
- 4) What tags will be appropriate and/or common on your website and why.

Your keyword research report can be written as a list and does not need to be longer than one page.

After writing your short report, you will need to create your first page of content, optimized with keywords, optimized images, and links you drew from research. You will need to write a short paragraph that describes to me where your page of content is and what, specifically you did to optimize the content.

You will need to turn in two word documents on Canvas (one keyword report and one description of your optimized content) and a link to your content page on Canvas.

Benchmark #5: More Content, Google AdSense and Analytics | 50 points, due Week 9

With your keyword and content plan firmly in place, for this benchmark you will develop at least three more pages (posts) of content and you will write up, separately, your key words, phrases, tags, and other optimized information for each page. You will then set up a Google AdSense and Google Analytics account and place ads on your website. You will monitor any traffic and profits.

To turn in this assignment, I need several things:

- 1) A link to each page of your content;
- 2) A Word document describing your optimization practices for each page;
- 3) A screenshot of your Google AdSense account;
- 4) A screenshot of your Google Analytics account, showing any activity on your site;
- 5) A link to a page with Google Ads, if it isn't already obvious from your other links.

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Benchmark #6: Content and Social Media Optimization | 50 points, due Week 9

As a final benchmark for this first project, you will write three more posts and optimize the content links, images, and keyword text. You will set up social media platforms in order to create a community and start advertising your blog. All links, images, and pages should be fully functioning, attractive, user-friendly, and relevant. You will write a short memo that highlights the techniques you used to make your website ready and effective for generating readership and revenue.

To turn in this benchmark, I need the following:

- 1) Three links to each page of your new content
- 2) A Word document, in memo format, that describes to me your optimization choices and your plan for generating a community and revenue