Overview

For this project, you will select a web-related, code-based topic of interest to thoroughly explore and research. You are to become an expert on your topic, document your research through blog posts and technical demonstrations, and present a practical overview of your topic to your classmates. In turn, you will be asked to use some of your classmates' presented topics in your final project.

Research

The bulk of your time will be spent learning, researching, and refining your understanding of your topic. You will present a basic plan at your first progress check (more on these below), but you should anticipate your topic being refined and clarified as you go along. Follow what interests you about your topic while also seeking to develop a broader understanding of your topic as a whole, with all the options and implications that might entail.

You should plan to spend 2-3 hours a week outside of class on this project, with your time roughly split between research and practice. Seek out high quality sources for your research whenever possible.

Progress Checks

There will be 5 formal, graded progress checks throughout the project. These should be considered part conversation and part presentation—I will ask questions, prod, and make sure things are going smoothly, but it is ultimately your responsibility to demonstrate that you are on track. These are ideal moments to discuss any changes or course corrections you are wanting to make.

Progress checks are worth 10 points each. Your grade will be based on your overall preparedness, plan, progress, and communication.

Grading Scale   **Dates**
10 points   Good   Wednesday, January 29
8 points   Acceptable   Wednesday, February 12
6 points   Poor   Monday, February 24
0 points   Unacceptable   Monday, March 10
                                                           Monday, March 31

Blog Posts

The blog you create in our first project will be a place for your to provide glimpses into your research and exploration of your topic. You can choose to write between 5-10 blog posts and can structure them pretty much any way you'd like. Overall, they should be informational and at least somewhat technical. Most importantly, they should document your learning process—discussing difficulties, discoveries, and insights is encouraged.

Blog posts are worth 10 points each. Your grade will be based on the overall quality of your writing and the extent to which you document your research.

Grading Scale
10 points   Good
8 points   Acceptable
6 points   Poor
0 points   Unacceptable

Dates
You will provide a basic schedule for your blog posts at your first progress check. Blog posts will not be considered late at any point; however, falling behind will adversely impact your progress check grades.

Technical Demonstrations

During the project, you will also create 2-3 technical demos to illustrate some specific aspect of your topic. The main goal of these is to provide a tutorial to your fellow classmates; thus, it is important that they include thorough explanations and background information as necessary. Keep in mind that these should be more than just practice code from your research. Take pains to make your demos approachable to someone who might not be familiar with the topic, and check and double-check your code for accuracy.

Technical demos are worth 50 points each. Your grade will be based on the approachability of your demo and evidence of technical competence.

Grading Scale
50 points	Excellent
45 points	Good
40 points	Acceptable
30 points	Poor
0 points	Unacceptable

Dates
You will provide a basic schedule for your demos at your first progress check. Demos will not be considered late at any point; however, falling behind will adversely impact your progress check grades.

Presentation

Your project will culminate in an hour-long presentation to your classmates. The exact structure of this is up to you. Do not plan on presenting every aspect of your research; instead, consider your presentation a practical guide to your topic. Give your classmates an understanding of the basics as well as the most useful portions of your research should they want to pursue your topic further. Some of your classmates will be using your topic in their final site, so it is important that you make sure they understand it.

You should not present at the podium for an hour. Your presentation should be structured in such a way that your classmates have time to try things out and ask questions. It will be important for you to circulate around the room and provide feedback and assistance.

Your presentation should be highly polished. Remember, at this point you should be an expert on your topic. It should be evident that you have rehearsed your information and carefully prepared your demos and examples. Do not make the mistake of taking this lightly.

The presentation will be worth 100 points. Your grade will be based on your preparedness, the approachability of the information presented, and the quality of your demos and examples. A more specific rubric will be provided closer to the presentation dates.

Dates
Presentations will begin on Wednesday, April 9. A schedule will be prepared in advance so you know when you are presenting. Please keep in mind that if you are absent on the day of your presentation, you will lose 50% of the possible points and still have to present when you return.

Final Grade

The final grade will be a cumulative assessment of your understanding of your topic as evidenced by your various writings, demonstrations, and communication with me throughout the project. This will be heavily influenced by the quality of your presentation and the material available on your class blog.

The final grade will be worth 100 points.

Grading Scale
100-92 points	Excellent
91-82 points	Good
81-70 points	Acceptable
69-60 points	Poor
59-0 points	Unacceptable

Possible Topics

A list of possible topics is available at web.cadavis.net/spring2014/topics.