

Web Creations

Class offers a chance for HCHS students to create websites - Zach Caldwell

Harlan County High School web design instructor Scott Pace worked with Abby Landis on a project during a class. The HCHS program allows students to create web pages for area businesses and organizations.



Sierra Hatfield, Bear Tracks editor

April 3, 2015 • 52 views

With the decline of the coal industry forcing many to look toward new fields of work, one class at Harlan County High School might have the answer for some students.

Scott Pace's advanced multimedia class allows his web design students to expand their abilities and encourages them to take the skills and techniques they have learned and apply them to the real world. They develop and improve websites for churches, businesses and non-profit organizations. Clients have the option to make a donation toward the student who develops and maintains their site, but that is completely up to the client. All work is free, but students have received a number of voluntary financial contributions over the years.

Pace's objective for the class is to bridge the gap between school and career, hoping to show his students that their education is valuable. The students not only work from a book or design web pages — they do so for paying customers in many instances. When students realize that their skill set can earn them money, education becomes more of a priority.

“Have you ever been in class and wondered, ‘Why am I here?’” Pace said. “Well, when you're here making a website for a client, whether it be one from Harlan or the state of New York, and they pay you for your time, you'll immediately realize your education is valuable.”

The class operates on a three-step process. First, a website is assigned to a student. Next, it is the student's responsibility to contact the person they are creating the web site for to discuss a plan. Third, the student begins to develop the website and advise the owner on how to obtain hosting and a domain name. Once complete, the site is published online. The class not only benefits students, but it also helps the community.

Pace said he began the class by teaching out of the book, but he wanted his students to see their success in real life. So, he came up with the idea for an advanced multimedia class.

“Chapter three, it gets bigger. Chapter four it gets bigger,” Pace said. “By the end of the day, we know a little bit about Dreamweaver and the application program but we don’t have anything that we’ve actually produced...So I thought, ‘Well, if I can find some businesses to come on board and allow us to develop websites for them, then that would be a real good opportunity.’”

The class has about 80 web pages in production for local businesses. The Advanced Multimedia Class has taught HTML coding, local editors such as Adobe Dreamweaver and has recently started using online, open-source platforms such as WIX.com to develop the websites. Students learn many different levels of design and different platforms from which to work from. This enables them to expand their knowledge and skill set, preparing them for nearly any situation they will face in the workforce.

The class is currently in the process of creating websites for every school club, organization and sports team. They maintain all of Harlan County’s elementary school sites while Pace controls the district site. Additionally, Pace and David Hensley have started to collaborate between their classes, with Hensley’s students beginning to develop logos to use on each of the school websites and, hopefully, for the elementary schools. Other web sites the students create and maintain include the Poke Sallet Festival website, maintained and designed by Jordan Hackworth, and the Harlan County Sheriff’s Office website, currently being modified by Brody Belcher. Pace says he wants everyone to be represented.

Pace hopes to see the class continue for many years.