Snowflake Landing Page Revamp

Mentors:

- raya (IRC) - Raya Sharbain
- donuts (IRC)

About Me

Name: Shravan Goswami

GitHub Handle: shravanngoswamii

LinkedIn: shravangoswami

Email: shravanngoswamii@gmail.com

Country: India

Time Zone: GMT + 5:30 hours

University: Uka Tarsadia University, India

Abstract

The Snowflake landing page is the main source of information for the public regarding Snowflake, a tool that helps bypass the blocking of Tor in highly censored environments. The goal of this project is to revamp the Snowflake landing page to improve its usability, content, and navigation, as well as to ensure that it complies with Tor's brand guidelines and is well integrated with Tor's Web ecosystem. The project will involve translating user research findings into user interfaces and experiences, providing design improvements and wireframes, and developing the website using Lektor, HTML/CSS, and Bootstrap.

Description

Snowflake has experienced a significant increase in popularity since September 2022, with a staggering growth in the number of volunteer proxies. However, the current Snowflake landing page may not be the most effective way to communicate Snowflake's benefits and functionality to the public. The Tor Project user research team is currently conducting usability research on the landing page, and based on their findings, we will design and develop an improved landing page that builds off of user research and is well integrated with Tor's Web products and ecosystem. The GSoC contributors will work with Tor designers to translate wireframes into code, ensuring that the website complies with Tor's brand guidelines and is integrated with Tor's Web ecosystem. In addition, the GSoC contributors will have the opportunity to provide feedback on wireframes and brainstorm options to demonstrate their understanding of user-centered design processes.

Expected outcomes:

- A redeveloped landing page explaining Snowflake that is well integrated with other Tor Web products and builds off of user research.
- A landing page that complies with Tor's brand guidelines.
- A landing page that is developed using Lektor, HTML/CSS, and Bootstrap.
- A clear and concise communication of Snowflake's benefits and functionality to the public.

Technical Details

As per the project description, the revamped Snowflake landing page must be well integrated with Tor's Web products and ecosystem, applying Tor's brand guidelines for the Web, and developed using technologies used by Tor. To achieve this, I plan to use Lektor, HTML/CSS, and Bootstrap.

Lektor is a flexible, fast, and secure static website generator that is recommended by The Tor Project. It has a simple and user-friendly interface, allowing easy content management and quick updates to the site. Bootstrap will be used for front-end development, providing a responsive and consistent design across

different devices and screen sizes. HTML/CSS will be used to customize and style the site based on Tor's brand guidelines.

I also have experience in UI/UX design and user-centered design processes, which will be useful in supporting the translation of user research findings into user interfaces and experiences.

"I am aware that some of the things I am proposing may already be available or that someone else may be working on them. In such cases, I am willing to adapt and work on other tasks that are needed to improve the overall user experience of visitors. I am also open to collaborating with others and coordinating efforts to ensure that all improvements are implemented efficiently and effectively."

Timeline

The following is a tentative list of goals I plan to achieve in the mentioned time frame. There could be situations in which the project may get delayed or lead to an early completion. I plan to handle these cases by doing work in an extended timeline and stretch goals.

Community Bonding Period [May 4 to May 28]

- Introduce myself to the mentors and other contributors.
- Learn more about The Tor Project's mission, values, and development processes.
- Setting up a personal blog for my GSoC journey with Tor.
- Discuss and refine project scope and deliverables with mentors.

Coding Period 1 [May 29 to July 10]

May 29 to June 10 - Design and Planning Phase

- Review and analyze the results of the usability research on the landing page.
- Work with the mentors and other contributors to brainstorm ideas and provide feedback on wireframes.
- Develop a design concept that reflects the research findings and Tor's brand guidelines.

- Create a detailed project plan and set specific goals and milestones for the implementation phase.

June 11 to July 10 - Implementation Phase

- Develop the revamped landing page using Lektor, HTML/CSS, and Bootstrap.
- Ensure that the site is well integrated with Tor's Web products and ecosystem.
- Test and refine the site's usability, accessibility, and responsiveness.
- Provide regular progress reports and communicate with the mentors and other contributors.

June 11 to July 14 - Mid-term Evaluation Period

- Evaluate the progress and achievements of the project so far.
- Receive feedback from the mentors and other contributors.
- Make adjustments and modifications to the project plan and deliverables if necessary.

Coding Period 2 [July 14 to August 28]

July 14 to August 10 - Refinement and Finalization Phase

- Refine and finalize the design and content of the revamped landing page.
- Address any technical issues or bugs that arise during testing.
- Conduct user testing and gather feedback to improve the site's user experience.
- Prepare documentation and instructions for the maintenance and updating of the site.

August 10 - August 28 - Final Submission and Wrap-up

- Submit the final code, documentation, and other deliverables to the mentors.
- Celebrate the successful completion of the project with the mentors and other contributors.
- Reflect on the learning and growth achieved during the project.
- Discuss and plan opportunities for future contributions to The Tor Project.

Stretch Goals and Additional Features [September 4 to November 6]

In case any of the above tasks take longer than expected, I plan to work on them during the additional time allotted for stretch goals and additional features.

Deliverables

The deliverables for this project include:

1. A redesigned and optimized landing page for Snowflake.
2. A user-friendly and responsive design that can be accessed from various devices and browsers.
3. Improved accessibility and localization features for non-English speaking users.
4. Clean and well-documented codebase for easy maintenance and updates.
5. Submission of bi-weekly progress reports to the mentor and the community.

Personal Background

I am a first-year undergraduate student majoring in Computer Science and Engineering at Uka Tarsadia University in India. I am also an active member of the Coder's Club, a student-led organization focused on promoting coding skills among the student community. I have a strong foundation in several programming languages, including HTML, CSS, JS, Bootstrap, C++, and Python. In addition, I am currently learning Julia and Qt development tools, and have been contributing to Documenter.jl from the past few weeks.

Apart from my academic pursuits, I am also passionate about entrepreneurship and have won the Shark Tank competition organized in my college, where I presented a business idea for a tech startup. This experience has honed my communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills and has inspired me to pursue a career in tech. I am excited about the opportunity to work on the Snowflake landing page revamp project for GSoC 2023 with The Tor Project and contribute to making Tor more accessible and user-friendly for people around the world."

Why Me?

As a Computer Science student, I have experience with several programming

languages, including Python, HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. I have also worked on several web development projects, both individually and as part of a team. My interest in open-source software led me to explore the Tor Project and its various tools, including Snowflake. I am a fast learner and easily adapt to new technologies. While I am new to contributing to open-source organizations, I am passionate about improving user experiences and making technology more accessible to people around the world. My skills in web development, attention to detail, and dedication to improving my understanding of complex code make me an ideal candidate for this project. I am excited to work with The Tor Project team and contribute to making Snowflake more user-friendly and accessible.

Logistics

I have no serious commitments before or after the GSoC program, which allows me to devote more than 30 hours per week to this project. However, I would like to inform you that I have a scheduled vacation in May. Additionally, my university's second-semester final exams will take place from June 12 to June 22. Nonetheless, I have already made the necessary preparations for these exams and I am willing to dedicate time during the exam days. Therefore, the proposed timeline aligns well with my availability, and I am confident in my ability to fulfill the project requirements.

Open Source Contributions

These contributions are related to Web Development which makes me an ideal candidate for this project.I am an active contributor to Documenter.jl, a popular documentation generator for Julia programming language. So far, I have submitted a pull request (#2085) to re-enable auto-switching between light and dark themes. Additionally, I am currently working on addressing two issues, namely, auto theme switching based on default browser settings (#1745) and on-hover footnote preview (#2080).

References

- Lektor Documentation
- GSoC Wiki
- Current Snowflake Page

"I am excited about the potential of this project and I am committed to working hard to bring these enhancements to The Tor Project community. I look forward to the opportunity to contribute and make a positive impact."

THANK YOU!!