

Team B'Down

Short Project Name

HMB Info-Makeover

Team Members

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Project Motivation

Three of the group members are current or former members of the University of Washington's Husky Marching Band. Using this common experience, we decided to take a deep look at different information technology problems the band is experiencing and how we could solve or improve them through this project. The Husky Marching Band is a 240+ member ensemble that also employs a student staff, senior staff, two graduate assistants, and is run in conjunction with the Husky Cheer and Pom squads.

Currently, the band is expressing dissatisfaction with their website. It was developed in 1999 by the brother of a staff member and does not live up to user expectations in terms of organization and availability of information. Due to a decision made a number of years ago, the website itself is hosted by HostRocket. The band pays for both the domain name and hosting instead of going through the university. The website is extremely neglected with updates once every year or so and with numerous pieces of outdated information. The band and staff believe that use of social media tools (such as Twitter and Facebook) and having a strong online presence are vital to maintaining a following and recruiting new members.

We believe that the ability to "pass the torch" is a crucial concept in successfully completing this project. The band cannot afford to hire a webmaster so updating and maintaining the website is one of the many responsibilities of the undergraduate assistant (a title that changes holders every few years). Given this setup, the technical abilities of the person in charge can vary greatly. To remedy this problem, we will be consulting with the staff so that they understand their duties and are able to keep the website and its contents up to date. This may also entail writing up instructional documents to make it easier for the outgoing undergrad assistant to "pass the torch".

The Husky Marching Band is a very well known program among marching bands with a rich history. The website needs to be able to reflect well of the band.

Project Goals

Needs Analysis

Prior to developing the website, we intend to completely analyze the wants and needs of the organization from as many angles as possible. We plan on interviewing as many people directly involved in maintaining the website as possible, notably the HMB Student Staff and the Program Coordinator, in order to determine the ease of use of the current tools as well as possible suggestions for new tools. The Director will be interviewed in order to determine what content should be contained on the site. We will also survey current band members to find any difficulties they have had in the past using the current website. We will produce a document detailing our findings by the end of winter quarter 2012 and deliver it to our band director for final approval of our plan.

Design and Implement Website

Upon delivering the Needs Analysis, we plan on creating a site map in order to determine the most cohesive way to deliver the information. We will use the content on the current website as a guide, editing and revising it with help from the Band Director and the Undergraduate Assistant as required. At this time, we will also create multiple site prototypes and present them to the Director to identify a functional, aesthetically-pleasing site layout. After adding the static content from the past website, we will explore creating dynamic content such as: a calendar with an event feed on the main page, news and updates, sign up pages for summer gigs, a sign up page for potential band members, sign up pages for high school band related events, and a password protected audition material page for each section as well as school songs and marching charts for current members. There will also be a new page where there is footage of the band that will showcase the band's style and perhaps another page with a recruiting video. Because the website is based off Wordpress, there are many resources like plugins that will help us develop our dynamic pages. The Director will have the final say on what information has been presented on the site. This phase will be, by far, the longest of all our phases as tweaks will be made in response to criticism throughout all of spring quarter 2012. Our final deliverable will likely be finished by the end of the quarter, ready to be used as a recruitment tool for the UW class of 2016. It will enhance user experience, as well as enable the band to spread news, and manage documents and correspondence for events online.

Test and Gather Feedback from Various Users

There are many different reasons people visit the website. So, in order to make sure that a variety of users can gain access to the information that they need, we will conduct tests and gather feedback from them. The website should be more interactive as well as

being informative. Because most of the target audience is those interested in the Husky Marching Band such as members (past, current, and potential), fans, and high school students and teachers, we will test the ease of use of the website by having them try to find certain information. There will be more interactive elements such as sign up for auditions and events so we would be testing on how easy it is for users to register and how well the staff could get to that information.

Consult Staff

One of our main concerns is that the Husky Marching Band does not hire a webmaster, instead relying on Student Staff to keep the site updated. These positions, unfortunately, do not require familiarity with web programming languages. We intend to make the website as easy to use as possible. We will achieve this goal by keeping in constant contact with the people who may play an administrative role on the website in the future (the Band Director, the Program Coordinator, the Student Staff), updating them on our progress and having them evaluate the simplicity and power of our administrative tools.

Evaluate

We will evaluate the usability of our project in various ways with various audiences throughout our development process. This will include a usability test where we will ask various parties to do certain tasks pertaining to the website such as locating specific pieces of information. Feedback will be used to improve the prototype site. We will also be testing the editing abilities of undergraduate assistant. This information will be used to create an instruction manual that can be passed down from assistant to assistant so that they have an easily accessible reference for updating the site.

Launch Website

After receiving the final ok with Dr. McDavid, we will take down the old website and launch the new website.

Schedule

Important Dates and Project Milestones

Pre-Capstone: Gather Data, Set Problem, Analyze, Find Solution

- Jessica: Talk with Program Coordinator and Undergraduate Assistant
- Bryce: Contact UW's dept web service <http://depts.washington.edu/>
- Jessica and Kathryn: Help purchase new domain name and advise on actions to take about web hosting options
- All: Analyze other marching band websites and decide on content organization
- Research and learn how to make own theme in Wordpress (Developers)
 - At the end of this quarter, discuss if it is feasible to make a customized theme of our own. Otherwise, fine a suitable theme to work off of during Spring Break

Week 1 (March 26 - April 30): Create Website's Wireframe and Site Map

- Jessica works on the site map
- Kathryn works on wireframe
- Create the website on the same server that will be hosting it

Week 2 (April 2 - 6): Start Gathering Site Content

- Continue setting up the website for content to be added
- Jessica gathers any new information for the website from Dr. McDavid and staff
- Kathryn takes old content from the website
- Start writing/coding in content with any adjustments that may be needed
- Bryce and Steven: Start working on dynamic pages

Week 3 (April 9 - 13): Create Dynamic Pages

- Bryce and Steven: work on dynamic content, integrating external services
- Jessica: work on CSS and color scheme of the website
- Continue working on editing content and start uploading them to the website

Week 4 (April 16 - 20): Add Content to Website

- Add content to pages and style them
- Keep in mind on site map
- Adjust content if necessary by team mates or Dr. McDavid

Week 5 (April 23 - 27): Start Testing and Getting Feedback

- Kathryn: Send surveys to current and alumni members, and high school students and teachers
 - Grab high school contacts from Dr. McDavid or fellow members
- Jessica and Bryce: If possible, in person testing so we can observe

Week 6 (April 30 - May 4): Make Improvements

- May 1st, Survey (due at 8 am)
- Bryce and Jessica go to Shanghai with the band (April 27 - May 3); Work with Dr. McDavid on any adjustments needed in project
- Kathryn and Steven: Make any necessary changes based on testing, begin work on poster and presentation (make 5 prototype poster designs)

Week 7 (May 7 - 11): Working on Poster and Consulting

- Continue work on poster and presentation
- Kathryn and Steven: discuss layout/look and feel of final poster with Jessica and Bryce (since they've been in china)
- Introduce new student staff (chosen after the Spring Game) to the website, other tools

- Test user ability with updating the site
- Continue making improvements if needed

Week 8 (May 14 - 18): Same as Week 7

- Complete user manual
- Continue work on final poster
- May 14th, project abstract and info overload powerpoint slide (due at 8am)

Week 9 (May 21 - 25): Finalize deliverables

- Complete final poster
- Arrange printing logistics for final poster
- May 25th, final poster (due at 5pm)

Week 10 (May 28 - June 1): Finish all course requirements, launch website

- Final touches, dress rehearsal
- May 31st, Capstone event (6 - 9pm, UW Tower, S Building)

Finals Week: Finalize and submit course deliverables

Roles:

Bryce: Developer
Steven: Developer
Jessica: Client Liaison, Designer
Kathryn: Designer, UI, UX

Resources

- Knowledge of web programming languages/tools including:
 - HTML/CSS
 - Javascript
 - PHP
 - MySQL
- Wordpress
- Image editing programs such as Photoshop

Related Work

The following are websites of marching bands that our project sponsor, Brad McDavid, pointed out to us. Each demonstrates a strong website that the HMB site hopes to strive

for.

Michigan State

<http://spartanband.net/>

- uses traditional top and side navigation with slideshow script for top stories and individual stories listed below (on main portion of page)

Florida State Marching Band

<http://www.marchingchiefs.fsu.edu/>

- Aesthetically appealing with clearly defined categories of information
- Information is organized well to find anything from announcements, history, and signing up for try outs.

Notre Dame

<http://www.ndband.com/>

- traditional site design with banner and top navigation, right side navigation for search, donation, and other band news headlines
- limited to one front page story

Ohio State

<http://tbdbitl.osu.edu/>

- custom site design
- three main 'branches' (marching band, athletic band, prospective members)
- one week calendar
- events and contact information

Client Letter

January 27, 2012


To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter voicing my support for the project proposal by Husky Marching Band members Jessica Chiu, Bryce Ito and Kathryn Kuan. Their project involving a total re-evaluation and potential re-design of the band's website is an enormously beneficial project due to the fact that our current website is extremely outdated. The importance of this project cannot be overstated due to the impact a well-designed website will have on our recruiting and ability to more effectively get information out to current members and alumni.

I wholeheartedly support this project and will be more than happy to help the students in their completion of it.

If I can be other further assistance in your determination of its worthiness, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office at 206-897-1408.

Sincerely,



Brad McDavid, PhD
Director
UW Husky Athletic Bands