**RentX - Real Estate Management Platform**

**Benjamin Smith – 6 April, 2024**

Client and topic:

This website not only connects owners with renters, but it can also manage their connection after the fact.  It works for the Real Estate owned by connecting their property to relevant tenants.  It also allows for maintenance and management of their properties.  For the tenant, it is an easy way to choose an appropriate place to live.  Additionally, the tenant may submit maintenance requests for any problems that may arise.

Development Process and Engagement:

I will make this website for myself, and I will consult both renters and owners to find out what they might be looking for in a site like this one.  Additionally, I will research by examining websites and applications with a similar intent for each part of the website.

Testing:

I will test my website in all the major browsers (Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Safari, etc.) to ensure there are not issues with the code.  I will of course also submit my projects into HTML and CSS validators.  Apart from these types of issues, I will also have numerous peers try out and review my website to make sure that everything works as they would expect.  This part is primarily to ensure there is a good user experience.

Description:

This real-estate website aims to connect tenants with rental properties.  Even apart from that initial connection, renters may choose to manage their property through the website.  Tenants may submit maintenance and other requests, message the owners, manage their payments, request payment plans, agree to terms, and perform many other functions regarding their residence.  Further, from the owner’s perspective, they may be connected to local contractors to perform home maintenance on their properties.  They may also seek to boost interest in their properties to keep it occupied through various discount bundles, (like 2 months half rent) or through paying the business to boost their appearance on the platform.  Through offering these services, this business will be able to extract small fees (perhaps 0.25%) for each transaction.  This would include the monthly (or otherwise) rent payments, potential subscription fees, boost fees, and any others that might be reasonable.

I will personally create unique branding styles, logos, and icons within Adobe Illustrator.  For the sake of this project, I will extract apartment interiors from external real estate websites.  These will likely be the only major images I will need to use.  I can also use pictures of myself or friends as placeholders for user profile pictures.

In terms of updating content, the majority will be done by companies or individuals looking to increase their potential to market their properties for rent.  These types of users will be able to add their properties to the website, and they will be shown on the map.  Internal updates will continue so that improvements to the design, and additions to the website’s capabilities continue.  In real life, there would also be an app where renters and tenants can perform the same tasks.

Growth and Maintenance

Over time, after marketing introduces the platform to the appropriate audiences, users will continue to join.  For renters, there will be little to no reason to not put their properties on the website.  As the user base becomes large enough, there may be opportunities to expand the platform to include shared renter-tenant homes split by rooms, and other out-of-the-usual agreements that some people choose to make in their housing decisions.  As stated before, there will slowly become more and more opportunities to connect renters to maintenance contractors.

As services continue to grow and become more and more complicated, it will be important to hire lawyers and professionals who can help renters develop rental agreements.  They can also develop some templates that renters can use or change as they like.  There will also need to be departments within the business that can manage different parts of the business.  Marketing, design, development, etc.  By having specialized teams, the business will be able to focus efforts effectively.  In terms of the actual website, the improvements should never stop.

Organization:

The website will be broken down into two halves: the owners and the tenants.  The experience will be slightly different for each.  There will be a homepage where new users are introduced to the platform.  From here, it will initially cater to tenants, but there will be a clear path that will allow owners to add and manage their properties.  For the tenant experience, they will be welcomed to the platform with a map of available properties.  They can click and search for different properties.  When they find a property, they would like to rent, they can hover or click it for more details. After the user has selected a property, they may contact the owner. If no account has been made, they will be directed to create an account. Otherwise, they will be able to contact the owners.

When the user has talked with the owner, they may arrange to visit the property in real life. All else may be done online through the app. The user may enter their payment options and bank information. They will be asked to agree to terms and conditions as well as fill out any further details the owner requests through the app.

Once a user is renting a property, they have tools to interact with their property such as requesting maintenance or changing payment options. They can of course also message the owners directly within the app.

For owners, their experience will be slightly different. They will initially be asked to provide all the details to put their property on the site. It will require some pictures as well as some obvious details. They will have to specify some common details about the property such as rules regarding smoking indoors or having pets. Once all of the required details are entered, they may put their property on the website to be revealed to potential tenants. They can add further details in the future or adjust different things regarding their properties. They also have the option to offer promotions on their properties if they are unoccupied and in desperate need of a tenant. The website will intelligently offer guidance if the house has remained unoccupied for an extended period.

Once their property has been occupied, the owner can interact with their tenants via messaging, and they will also be notified of any work requests the tenant submits. In more advanced updates to the website, they would have the option to be directed directly to appropriate and nearby contractors to fix any home maintenance issues.

Security:

This website has mandatory financial components. Owners and tenants must both connect their bank details to use the website for its intended purpose. This calls for high-level security to protect user accounts. Even after logging in, they will need to pass through further security measures to view or edit their banking details, or to make any transactions. As the web designer/developer, I can implement certain intentional design decisions to protect information like login and bank details. I can hide these numbers behind visibility buttons.

Web Hosting:

When selecting a web host, I must choose something that offers secure financial interconnectivity. When processing payments, they must be protected from external threats. I chose “RentX as my business name, or rentx.com as my URL. It is currently available.

Marketing:

This website will be marketed to both owners seeking to rent their properties, as well as prospective tenants looking for places to reside. The website will use an accurate description to draw new users in. Through appropriate keywords, we can also direct further site traffic.