



College of Engineering

CS CAPSTONE PROGRESS REPORT

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MANY VOICES PLATFORM

PREPARED FOR

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GROUP 61

REMIX

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Abstract

This document summarizes the progress that the Remix team has made on the Many Voices Publishing Platform for the client Dr. Carlos Jensen. Additionally this document provides a week by week summary of work performed, as well as what is needed to be changed to improve effectiveness in building the MVP platform.

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1 PROJECT PURPOSE

A modern textbook is updated frequently, perhaps even yearly, and can cost in the range of hundreds of dollars. Students are often left to attempt to understand poorly worded, even incorrect information from a textbook often chosen from those sent to a professor for review by the publisher. This can lead to better works with less aggressive sales tactics not being made available, or even known. Another choice would be for a professor to write their own textbook. However, this is a process that takes months of endless research and time spent, and on top of that will require peer review and publishing before it can be released.

The Many Voices platform offers to put an end to this massive, slow, expensive cycle. Instead of a textbook being a single document written by one professor, we seek to re-imagine the textbook as instead a collection of content written by professors from around the world that are useful for a particular class. A knowledgeable professor can contribute a few chapters on their specialty, without needing to write an entire textbook around it.

Professors wishing to use this content can then modify it for their uses in the classroom. The material will be hosted in such a way as to provide the ability to fork content, or create content based off of it. The platform will provide a way to search for and find content, prioritized by relevance and credibility as determined by other users; the most popular material will be shown with the most prominence.

2 WEEKLY UPDATES

2.1 Week 3

The term started with ironing out the problem statement. At the end of the second week, we met with our client, Dr. Jensen, and briefly went over exactly what his vision was for the end result of the platform. The third week was then spent on the initial drafting of the problem statement, which was turned in at the end of the week. Unfortunately, we were unable to meet with Carlos again to go over our draft, as he was unavailable.

2.2 Week 4

We attempted to get Carlos' feedback on our problem statement document, and get him involved in the creation of the coming requirements document, but were unfortunately again unable to find a meeting time that worked well for him. Therefore, we simply pressed on and began the revision process using the feedback our TA, Jon Dodge. We spent some of the time investigating tools that would possibly be useful in the development phase of the product.

2.3 Week 5

This week, we managed to get a hold of our client and get him to sign our revised Problem Statement. We previously were having quite a bit of trouble getting a hold of him because he's been traveling. We also managed to all work together on our Requirements Document, which has been one of the few times we've all been able to find times in our schedule to do it together (even though it was over the internet). The Requirements document was pretty intimidating looking, simply by virtue of its size!

2.4 Week 6

During week six, Steven made a lot of progress revising the requirements document, and then integrated changes. Evan and Josh made to the document. He was also able to attend Dr. Winters' writing session, where we received useful and actionable feedback about documentation formatting. We also revised the Problem Statement after hearing from Dr. Winters that we may be able to re-submit revised documents for regrading. This will hopefully prevent us from receiving another 82/100. Two drafts were sent out to our client, with 48 hours notice each time, but unfortunately was only able to get a signature on the second a few hours before turn-in time. The main issue we had this week were slight differences in the requirements document formatting compared to the IEEE 830 format specification, though our TA Jon Dodge and Dr. Winters feel that the document looks great. It was also slightly concerning that we were not able to get feedback apart from the signature of our client, though this is understandable because he is traveling right now.

2.5 Week 7 & 8

The technology review document was the main point of focus during Week 7, with it being due at end-of-day Monday of Week 8. Steven also made revisions to the requirements document, including many suggested by Jon Dodge, to prepare for a re-submission for regrading. Evan was not available for a good portion of the week seven, as he was on an important trip to California, but as we split the document into its constituent sections early in the week, he was able to work on his way down. On Monday, we combined the efforts that had been written up to that point. Unfortunately, we were not satisfied with the state of the document, and so we requested an extension. We were, along with the rest of the class, given an additional 36 hours, pushing the due date back to Wednesday at noon, when we turned in a satisfactory document.

2.6 Week 9 & 10

Week 9 was mainly spent with our respective families, and as a short break from the march towards project completion. We made the strategic decision to focus on getting rested and well-fed in an attempt to mentally prepare ourselves for the last two main parts of the Fall-term requirements.

Week 10 began with work towards finishing our design document. After a few false starts and a night of less sleep than desired, the final design document was turned in on time. Unfortunately, we were unable to get our client's signature in time; we will be providing a signed copy to be graded as soon as possible. Later in Week 10, during the weekend before finals week, we wrote our progress update document and recorded our progress update video.

3 WEEKLY SUMMARY

Week	Positives	Deltas	Actions
3	Got the initial draft of the problem statement done after meeting last week with our client.	Were unable to set up a meeting with our client, and thus had no way of getting feedback on the draft before submission.	We will talk to our client via email about possible meeting times, either in person or remote, that may possibly work for everyone.
4	Figured out a time for meeting with our TA.	Need to hear back from our client.	We will wait another day or two and then send a new polite email.
5	Finished revising the problem statement, got it signed. Began the requirements document.	N/A	N/A
6	Revised Requirements document via feedback from TA. Got client signature on Requirements. Attended writing workshop.	Need to be on top of things regarding contacting our client as he is difficult to contact.	We will send him another email asking for feedback on the requirements.
7	Began technology review. Revised requirements document for possible re-grading.	Need better team work schedule to get times to work on documents together rather than separately.	We will discuss possible extra meeting times in addition to our weekly meeting with our TA where we can work for several hours uninterrupted.
8	Finished technology review (after getting extension to Wednesday).	Need to be on top of documents to finish them well in advance of due dates!	We will personally push ourselves to get work done sooner rather than later.
9 & 10	Spent Thanksgiving Week getting rested. Finished design document. Finished progress update document/finished presentation.	Need to get client signature for design document!	We will be emailing Carlos. With the new term we hope to set up a weekly meeting with him.

4 RETROSPECTIVE

Positives	Deltas	Actions
Team came together on planning and design	Client communication	We will talk to our client via email about possible meeting times, either in person or remote, that may possibly work for everyone.
Learned a lot about the software development process	Documentation / Development Confusion	If we are confused and blocked by something in the class that could be helped by asking a question of either our TA Jon Dodge or Professors D. Kevin McGrath or Dr. Kirsten M. Winters, we will.
Learned a lot about Latex and the writing of technical documents.	Team Communication	Solved: Problems with communication were solved by transition to Slack & Email communication
	Team Meeting Time	Need to compare our schedules and find a time that will work for all of us to get together.

5 CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

Thus far we have written documentation detailing the technical and design requirements of the project. Now, we are beginning to move into the technical development phase. To begin, we are finishing coalescing a unified vision of what the project is, and how we will go about architecting and building it. We are planning on beginning to build our initial prototype over winter break, based on the basic skeleton laid out in the documentation.

Moving forward, we expect to spend the majority of time doing individual development work, with weekly team development sessions to keep ourselves on the same track. In doing so we will be able to progress even when one individual team member is blocked on either something relating to the project, or on other work. To do this, we have split the project into chunks, which we will then work on either solo or in a pair.

6 IMPENDING PROBLEMS

For Fall term, client communication was a problem that impeded our progress at a few points. Due to busy schedules of the team and the client, communication slipped from where we expected it to be. This caused problems with project requirements and other questions the team had about moving forward. For Winter term and beyond, the team plans on having a weekly meeting with our client and additionally providing a weekly email detailing our progress of the week.

Additionally, finding time for the team to come together to work on the project proved difficult. Our schedules had many conflicting times with classes and work times that made it difficult to spend large portions of time together. This resulted in a lot of remote development of the planning and documentation, resulting in less detailed documentation

and lower scores on grading. In the recent weeks, the team has spent more time working together, which has led to more cohesive development. For Winter term and beyond, the team has schedules that align more cohesively, allowing for more time to be spent discussing and developing the platform together.

7 CONCLUSION

The Many Voices Publishing Platform has been a great project to work on, bringing each team member outside their comfort zone. A lot of planning has taken place over Fall term, sometimes resulting in shifts in direction of how to manage and develop the platform. The Remix team feels more comfortable moving into Winter term, and for development to begin on the platform. Part of this comfort comes from the planning of weekly meetings with the client, and weekly emails to detail the current project status.