

**ONLINE BUSINESS EXPANSION PROPOSAL**



LARAMIE'S RENTAL SOLUTION

WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN  
QRT2: Task 1

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## **Background**

The Purpose of GNU Solution, Laramie's Rental Solution, is to offer a one-stop location for all available housing in Laramie, WY. Currently GNU Solution's location is phone and email based. However, the purpose of this proposal is to take Laramie Rentals to the next level: integrating a low cost online strategy designed to attract rental owners and potential renters alike. There are many reasons this service is viable in the Laramie area, which I will demonstrate through the four P's of marketing; product, price, place and promotion. However, the most important reason is there is a real need for a low cost comprehensive website that brings all available Laramie rental units into one virtual location. When the idea is presented to consumers and homeowners alike there is a common theme, "when will it be available and how can I get on board."

Laramie houses Wyoming's one and only University, University of Wyoming, and sees to the needs of 17,000 transient students semester to semester. Currently there are 30 online resources for home, business and apartment renters. However, with these 30 online resources combined, only one-fourth of all the available rentals in the Laramie and Albany County areas are represented. Furthermore, not one website combines all of the online resources for easy access for the consumer. The current condition of the home and apartment rental market in Laramie, WY makes consumers frustrated and call out, "Isn't there an easier way!?" This frustration is not solely among consumers but is also found among the home and apartment owners. In a small survey of 20 diverse homeowners the need for a comprehensive website was critical.

Currently, GNU Solution's website has been promoted at a monthly rate of \$10 per a unit per a month. The market demand among one to two unit rental owners has been high with 100% saying they would be interested and 80% saying they would sign on today if it was up and running. Rental owners owning 5+ units have yet to be approached and there is anticipation that a discount or incentive will be needed to acquire clients with several units. Several unit clients include real-estate agencies and apartment complexes.

## **Viability**

It is important to know when GNU Solution has reached a viable stage in it's online development process. Below is a diagram detailing three goals that will be monitored throughout the first year to see if GNU Solution will be viable in an online environment.

<b>How to Know when GNU Solution is Viable in an Online Environment</b>	
<b><u>Goal</u></b>	<b><u>Viable When:</u></b>
Market Demand	Reach 50 paying online rental-owning customers within the first year.
Online Business is Functional	Customers can search, pay for, and rent homes through GNU Solution's website without phone or face-to-face contact with a GNU representative.
Successful SEO	Backlink creation with the University of Wyoming, 500 followers on Facebook and when searching for "Home or Apartment rentals Laramie, WY" GNU Solution shows up above the fold on the first page of Google.

### **Competitor Website Analysis**

Competition for an online home rental resource is present in and outside of the Laramie and Albany County areas. Below you will find a detailed analysis of the competition with their accompanying strategies, objectives, past performance, strength & weaknesses and their likely reaction to GNU Marketing campaigns.

<b><u>Competitor</u></b>	<b><u>Potential Competitor/Client</u></b>	<b><u>Unlikely Competitor</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Apartmentguide</li><li>• Craig's List</li><li>• UW Classifieds</li><li>• Laramie Boomerang</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Brettglass</li><li>• Century 21</li><li>• AdvantageReal-estate (laramiehomes.com)</li><li>• ACRE Company</li><li>• CheyenneHousing Authority</li><li>• Re/Max</li><li>• Quality Real Estate</li><li>• A-One Rental Inc.</li><li>• Raving Real-estate</li><li>• Maxium Realty</li><li>• Laramiemls.com</li><li>• Realtor.com</li><li>• Brownrealtyle.com</li><li>• Tdrealstate</li><li>• Realestate-one</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• LaramiePeakApartments</li><li>• Neighborcity</li><li>• Laramie Apartments</li><li>• C&amp;W Rentals</li><li>• Grand Villa</li><li>• Campus Habitat</li><li>• Homes.com</li><li>• Yellowpages.com</li><li>• Local.com</li><li>• Renttoown.org</li><li>• Rent.com</li><li>• About.com</li><li>• Homefinder.com</li><li>• Homefinder.com</li><li>• Trulia.com</li><li>• Zillow.com</li></ul>

Competitor Website Profiles					
Competition	Strategy	Objectives	Performance	Strengths & Weaknesses	Likely Reactions to GNU Marketing
Apartment Guide	Offer a superb apartment rental experience from the first internet search to move-in for potential renters and Landlords alike. Apartment Guide does smaller units in Laramie, however its main focus is larger apartment complexes and facilities; 20+ units. Search Engine optimization, social media, and advertisements are part of their strategy.	Become the number one resource for finding an apartment or home nation wide.	Over 37 years of Professional experience in the apartment industry.	<b>Strengths:</b> Accurate information, Superior SEO. Website is easy to use and navigate. Website theme stays consistent throughout. Professional in appearance and has good detail. Client has option to refine search. <b>Weaknesses:</b> Rural areas not presented fully. Social networking links to follow Apartment guide are below the fold.	Quick to react if large apartment complexes are part of GNU's marketing strategy.
UW Classifieds	Free, Word of Mouth advertising, student body loyalty.	Offer a free classifieds service for the student body of University of Wyoming creating student and community network.	Over 50 years of experience in the Laramie, WY area. Trusted source by student body.	<b>Strengths:</b> Easy to navigate. Professional in appearance. <b>Weaknesses:</b> Difficult to find; poor SEO. Available only to student and staff. No Social links. Nearly no back links making the UW Classifieds page low in search engine rankings.	Slow to react (for defense)
Laramie Boomerang	Affordable, reliable, and local loyalty. Mainly news oriented with a small classifieds section online and in the news paper. Search engine optimization for the Laramie Area.	To produce the area's best up to date source of news and information for the Northern Colorado, Laramie County and Albany County Areas.	Over 130 years of news and advertising experience.	<b>Strengths:</b> Website has a consistent theme and is professional in appearance. <b>Weaknesses:</b> Client has not option to refine search or organize information by personal preference (i.e. room size, location). SEO is poor, making it hard to find if you are not a Laramie, WY Resident. No social networking links.	Slow to React (for defense)
Laramie Rentals	Target Market: Small complex and/or home owners with single and multiple units. Offer low prices with a high quality guarantee. Price is based off a per unit cost.	Become the number one source and one stop location for all housing needs in the Laramie, WY and Albany county areas.	Partners have a combined 30 years of experience in marketing design, strategies and customer relations.	<b>Strengths:</b> Networking links are above the fold. Professional in appearance. Consistent website theme. Easy to navigate and has good detail. <b>Weaknesses:</b> Not fully functioning. Poor SEO. Social network is weak. Back links are non-existent.	Will imitate deals and promotions, Will offer bigger price cuts or deals to compete, Reacts Aggressively (for defense)

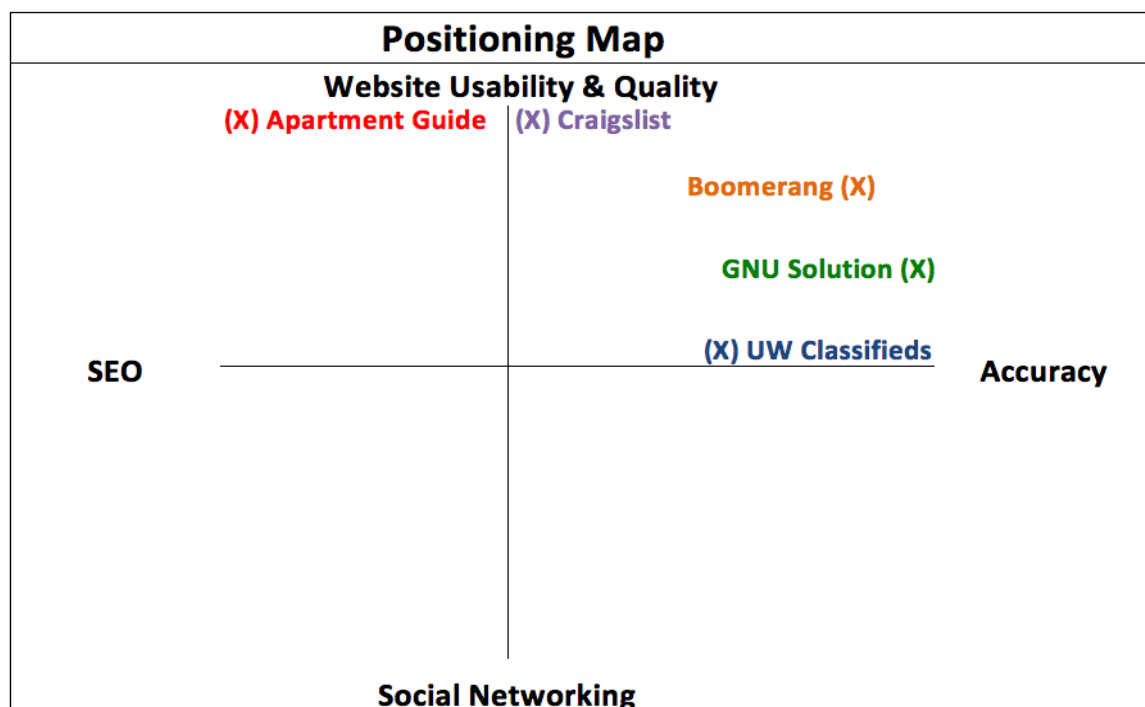
\* <http://www.apartmentguide.com/about/> (Apartment Guide, 2013)

\* <http://www.uwyo.edu/> (University of Wyoming, 2013)

\* [http://www.laramieboomerang.com/classifieds/real\\_estate\\_sale/](http://www.laramieboomerang.com/classifieds/real_estate_sale/) (Laramie Boomerang, 2013)

Strength & Weakness Comparison					
Competition	Website Usability & Quality	Social Networking	SEO	Customer Service	Accuracy of Information
Apartment Guide	10	7	10	8	10
Craig's List	8	5	8	4	4
UW Classifieds	4	0	0	0	6
Laramie Boomerang	7	3	4	7	7
GNU Solution	5	5	4	8	10

Reaction Matrix					
Competition	Behaves Aggressively (on a daily basis)	Reacts Aggressively (for Defense)	Slow to React (for defense)	Will offer bigger price cuts or deals to compete	Will imitate deals and promotions
Apartment Guide				X	
Craig's List			X		
UW Classifieds			X		
Laramie Boomerang			X		
Gnu Solution		X		X	X



## Marketing Plan

GNU Solution's will have the unique marketing position of being the only online resource that provides all the available home, apartment and business rentals in the Laramie, WY and Albany County area. This niche allows GNU Solution to be the one-stop trusted location for the target market: 18-30 year old college students. GNU Solution is the cool place to find homes in Laramie, WY and saves clients time, money and frustration in the home search.



Possible Catch Phrase: "College life is already too busy without trying to find the perfect place to live. With GNU Solution's rental resource website finding your next home is easy. Giving you more time to do what you really want during your college career."


Below: GNU Solution's Marketing plan, strategy, target market, and the time needed.

Marketing Plan			
	Strategy	Time Needed?	Target Market
Backlink Creation	Get University of Wyoming to post our website as "Laramie's Rental Resource" with following enabled so Google's bot will link to us through the Universities Webpage.  Find dependable sites such as real-estate agencies, trusted personal home rental sites, .edu & .gov sites. (i.e.: backlink on <a href="http://www.cityoflaramie.gov">www.cityoflaramie.gov</a> ).	7 hours a week	.EDU's & .GOV's  University of Wyoming  Real-estate agencies  18-30 year old college students
Social Media	Create social networking pages: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pintrest and Blogger.  "Send invitation to all contacts from each site.  Post invitation on back linked sites to follow GNU Solution on social sites. "  Weekly page management	7 hours a week	18-30 year old college students
Viral Marketing	Press Release when website is created at all newspapers including University of Wyoming's.  Window Flier at all local bars, shops, Restaurants, libraries and at the University of Wyoming Ads.  Put Ad on Screen savers at University of Wyoming's library computer.	4 hours a week	18-30 year old college students
SEO	Programs to use: Alexa tools, web ceo, Google analytics, ad words keyword tool & web master tools.	7 hours a week	18-30 year old college students
E-mail Marketing	On every GNU Solution's Web Page create an opportunity to sign up with email.  Send weekly email with current deals through Constant Connect. (See example below)	2 hours a week	18-30 year old college students

## E-mail Marketing Example:

From: GNU Solution<gnusolution@gmail.com>  
Subject: 25% Off Rent - Laramie Rentals  
Reply: gnusolution@gmail.com


 



Providing a one stop Location for  
All your Laramie housing needs!

» *View all Rentals*

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**25% Off First Month**  
**Comfortable and Affordable**


Get 25% off your first month at [www.GNUSolution.com](http://www.GNUSolution.com) when you use us to find your next home and like us on Facebook. [View Available Rentals Now.](#)

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\* <http://www.constantcontact.com/email-marketing/how-it-works> (Constant Contact , 2013)

## **Social Media:**

For GNU Solution, Laramie's Rental Resource, social media is a gold mine. Think of the target market. What 18 to 30 year old college student does not have a Facebook account? However, just creating a business Facebook account does not mean other Facebookers will instantly be driven to GNU Solution's page. There must be an incentive to visit and a means to grab and keep the attention of your target market.

One such way GNU Solution can incentivize their target market to visit their site is through contests. GNU Solution is the "cool" way to find a home in Laramie. So for example, give your target market the chance to share that coolness. Create a contest that can be cross-posted on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Pinterest to see "who has coolest college pads". Each contestant can submit a video or picture featuring his or her home and their friends and GNU Solution's followers can vote to see who wins (Haslam, 2012). Through this contest GNU Solution will be able to expand it's network to their followers friends and colleagues.

To keep people on the website, social network or advertisement GNU Solution will need to use pictures and videos. "Studies have shown that the use of photos helps to hold attention and draw people into your story (Haslam, 2012)." Joseph Haslman suggests if you use Pinterest you should " 'pin' your photo from another platform...(to) potentially draw people back to other content that you have and help people 'discover' you on those platforms" (i.e. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn). It is also important that on all websites the information on your homepage can be processed within 1 to 2 seconds and is above the fold.

Though GNU Solution should be focusing on making meaningful comments, expanding its reach through linking multiple platforms, being active and engaged on its pages and using social media tools link RSS feed, it is exceptionally important to connect with "key influential people in (the) same industry" (Bullock, 2012). By linking to their sites and sharing content with their community GNU Solution can receive significantly more traffic to their site.



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