**Course**: MIS 342

**Task #5**: Design

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**Project:**The Con Notification System

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**I-Design Alternatives**

**1-Custom Development**

A custom solution will be a good design solution for the Con Notification System. The requirement of the Con Notification are a bit unique so it would make sense to have a custom solution to fulfill them. It will be a system that works and also do what it is supposed to do. Also, it will be a good opportunity to build the knowledge of the system since we will be designing it.

However, there are severals aspects that make a custom development impossible.

A custom development involves the company’s internal IT department and in our case, only Jason handles the technology related issues. It will be difficult for him focus on his daily tasks and develop the system. Also developing the system requires expertise with many technologies such as databases, IOS development, android development and other languages. The budget is also very limited for the project and there is a very low margin for error.

**2-Packaged Software**

Packaged software are great because they offer a generic working solution. It is great for small businesses that cannot afford to develop their own system or invest a lot of money. They are often not fully customizable but offers sometimes add ons and tweaks that improve their efficiency.

Also most of the time is spent on testing, understanding the new system and transitioning from the old system to the new system. Those softwares usually have a large user community and support which make their utilisation and training easier.

While packaged software offer quick and ready to go solutions, they are not very customizable and might not fulfill all the business requirements

**3-Outsourcing**

Outsource is a good option if you don’t have any technical experience and the business need is not a core function. However, the Con notification system will be a key system for Story Keeper Events. Dealing with incidents is a big part of their activities so they cannot afford a system that is not completed or unusable. Outsourcing can provide a solution quickly enough but we will be dealing with several issues:

* No in house expertise with the solution developed.
* Technologies used to developed the solution might not be the best.
* Increased cost and time when changes/updates need to be made

**II-Design Choice**

Since the Con Notification system will be a core system for the company, we need to choose carefully the design option we will use. The company lacks adequate IT staff for custom development and there are no in house experience. We can outsource the design of the system to bring in house expertise but it might cost more and take more time to develop the system, develop training and train new staff.

Packaged softwares are the only option left as some of them are free which allow more choices and tries. They are also very robust and bugs are addressed very quickly. Our customer also requested that we avoid subscription based software since they might not use the system all the time.

**1-Spiceworks**

Spiceworks is a company that offers many IT management software to help companies to manages their inventory, It infrastructure and network. They have Spiceworks Help Desk which is free and can be used to manage tickets and incident reports. Spiceworks Help Desk is self-hosted, managed, and backed up. You just download it and install it. It has many great features :

* Free regardless of the number of agents
* Mobile Integration
* Fast and easy Windows installation

The few drawbacks are :

* Can be difficult to install on Linux, Unix, or VMWare
* It can be slow as the number of users grows

**2-OsTicket**

OsTicket is a widely-used and trusted open source support ticket system. It seamlessly routes inquiries created via email, web-forms and phone calls into a simple, easy-to-use, multi-user, web-based customer support platform. osTicket comes packed with more features and tools than most of the expensive (and complex) support ticket systems on the market. The best part is, it's completely free. It offers great features such as:

* Custom Fields to customize the data collected from the users when submitting a ticket to help get the straight to the issue.
* Define rules to route incoming tickets to the right departments or staff members, and action triggers.
* Ticket locking mechanism to allow staff to lock tickets during response and avoid conflicting or dual responses.
* Transfer tickets between departments to make sure it's being handled by the correct staff. Assign tickets to a staff or to a team.
* All support requests and responses are archived online. User can login using email and ticket ID. No user account or registration required to submit a ticket.
* Add internal notes to tickets for staff. Activity logs let you see events or actions that have been taken, when they took place, and by whom.

There are 2 options to use OsTicket. The self hosted option when the client have it own IT infrastructure and the cloud hosting where a third party host the system for you online. The self hosted option requires some technical knowledge while the cloud hosting offer several subscription option. The basic subscription is $9/month/agent.

**3-Support Incident Tracker**

Support Incident Tracker (or SiT!) is a Free Software/Open Source (GPL) web based application which uses PHP and MySQL for tracking technical support calls/emails (also commonly known as a 'Help Desk' or 'Support Ticket System').It manages contacts, sites, technical support contracts and supports incidents in one place.You can send emails directly from SiT!, attach files and record every communication in the incident log. However, You need to build your own PHP/MySQL server to host the application.

**4-Discord**

Discord is built by Hammer & Chisel which is a small startup company. They are a next generation PC Gaming company who has created services to more than 300,000,000 users and built the critically acclaimed MOBA Fates Forever. While they may be a small startup company they have a large experience in dealing with user interface. They are looking to replace older communication systems such as Skype and Teamspeak to provided users with the best communication app that is not only free, but secure, and works on both desktop and phone.

Discord is a chat relay client that would allow users to communicate directly with a staff member to report incidents in a chat environment. It saves logs of and timestamps of every conversation, and allows for the creation of a new private server for every event. The servers are easy to keep private, and allows for the staff member to send announcements to all users logged in. It is a mobile friendly application on all operating systems, and also allows staff to post updates and pin announcements to a channel that all visitors can view. Discord is a free application that many customers may already be familiar with, and offers potential to become more than just a medium for incident reporting.

While Discord does not provide any analytics on it’s own, it does collect a decent amount of raw data through it’s conversation logs and timestamps. Partnering discord with a custom built Access or SQL database would allow the system to be tailored to the needs of the company without costing much money or requiring training in difficult to use applications.