Project proposal

The purpose of this assignment is to define both your project and your team. We want to know what you plan to do, how you plan to do it and see that your team is working. The team needs to decide how it will work and determine the expectations of each of its members.

One of the aims of combining the courses this semester is to expose students to working in multi-disciplinary teams. The ability to work effectively with colleagues with different skills and backgrounds is essential in the workplace and is sought-after by employers.

Specifically, technology and design computing students need experience working in domains that can leverage their full suite of skills. The projects you develop this semester provide the chance to develop these competencies and more.

As we've outlined in lectures, the news domain provides a rich vein of design and development opportunities. The industry is under pressure and needs new ideas. These ideas need not be restricted to content – although creative and innovative narratives are certainly one goal your team could pursue. Also news can be applied to other domains, so do not necessarily constrain yourself to journalism.

Other goals might involve developing tools that improve an aspect of news collection, aggregation, awareness or dissemination; or exploring how social and mobile platforms impact narratives or production processes.

Warning

When developing your project plans, be wary of compartmentalising. It might seem easy to let the design students do all the content work and user interface, while the IT students look after the prototype creation and file management. That way you don't really have to talk to each other much until the end … right?

Wrong.

This won't work and your project will suffer if you approach the work in this way.

The key to success this semester is working together: come up with a solution that exploits social and mobile computing to improve & innovate in the news domain. This means considering the problem space from both a technical and a design perspective.

Form a team

The workshop in week four and the first assessment task are focused on getting to know each other and brainstorming ideas. This will form the basis of team allocation.

Team size will vary, but we want teams with a mix of information technology and multimedia students. As part of the first assignment you have the option to nominate project preferences. This information will inform our team decisions.

By week five you will know who you are working with. Spend this workshop getting to know one another and discussing project ideas.

Set up a Github repository, Slack channel and Zenhub board that everyone has access to. These collaborative areas will be used to document the project and publish assessment items. Set up milestones within Github issues that are based on your plans.

Oral Pitch

Prepare a 5-minute pitch for your project. Outline the concept, team, and your plan to deliver it.

This component of the assignment is formative i.e. it is not graded and is intended to provide feedback that can be addressed in your written proposal, which is graded. A clear and focused presentation is the best way to elicit this feedback, so put some thought into what you say and how you say it.

You may choose one member of the team to deliver the pitch, or, all members might discuss different components. In either case, all team members must be present and be prepared to answer questions. No slides.

When? Week 6, in class

Proposal

Prepare a proposal for your project. The proposal should be posted to your Github repository as a readme.md markdown file (that is visible on the front page of the repository). Upload the Github URL to Blackboard. It should outline a news dilemma and how your project will address it. Identify the target users/audience and what makes your idea different from existing solutions. Outline the work to be done and what will be produced as a result.

The proposal should explain how the team will work and how it will communicate. Identify and justify any platforms you will use to manage work and communications. Identify who is on the team and what their key roles are in the project. Outline how decisions will be made and how conflicts will be dealt with.

Format

We've outlined a suggested structure for your proposal below. You are free to adapt this or use an alternate structure:

Introduction: What is your project and what dilemma does it aim to address.

Concept: outline the idea and the rationale behind it. Define the project aims and audience and identify how your idea is different from / improves upon other current offerings.

Team: Who is on your team, what are their responsibilities, and how will you work together? List all the members and their course code. Identify:

- Who will lead the team and manage the project;
- Who is responsible for logistics e.g. equipment, meetings, transport, etc;
- Who fills key roles, e.g. back end, front end, content, design;

- How will decisions be made;
- How will the team handle poor performance and resolve conflicts.

Communications: Where and when will your team meet and how will you all communicate?[1] Where will files be stored and shared? What are the file naming conventions?

Identify the social platform/s your team has adopted and explain the choice. How will it facilitate communication and / or file sharing?

Plan: Identify the key tasks that need to be completed and when. Identify:

- Project phases e.g. research; requirements; design; construction;
- Key deliverables for each phase (Milestones)[2];
- Resources – equipment or other tools/people you might need.

Tags: Tag your proposed idea with 5 key concepts from social and mobile lectures (e.g. awareness, Collaboration, CSCW) and 2 keywords related to journalism and News (e.g. Citizen Journalists, ...).

Submission

Week 6: Oral pitch delivered in class.

Week 7: Upload proposal Github URL to Blackboard by 23.59 on Monday September 5, 2016.

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[1] Course workshops are designed for you to work in your team. If your project requires you to work at a different location, let your tutors know. All team members are required to attend 75 per cent workshops. This quota includes workshops in which assessment is due.

[2] Project interim sprints are your chance to show progress, to make sure you have something to show.