Feedback from discussion

After presenting and discussing my system idea, I received feedback questions which will be answered below.

1) Will there be a reminder system for bookings? / 2) What kind of system would you use?

This is a good suggestion that I had not considered before. It would be easy to implement in access, by both showing a notification icon on the users main account screen as well as sending an email to the user 24 hours before their booking is scheduled. This can be done by making use of Windows' Outlook API to send emails from the computer on which the database is hosted.

3) How will you make your system user friendly?

I aim to make this system intuitive by presenting users with a simplistic and minimalist design in which the contents are laid out large words and pictures, self-explanatory directions and helpful tooltips in the case that someone does get stuck. Every element of the system will be large and an eye-catching colour so that people are naturally drawn to the order of which the form should be completed. There will also be user instructions in the documentation, which should be readily available and will be shipped with the software.

4) How would someone know if they have booked a room?

After booking a room, the user will be emailed with a confirmation of the booking which will include the time, date, price and any equipment being provided. The user will also be able to check their current bookings by logging into their account via the web – there will be an option to access a bookings page which will show previous and future bookings. A notification icon will also show on the user dashboard if there is an upcoming booking. Lastly, the user will receive a final confirmation email 24 hours before the booking to serve as a reminder.

5) How does the system deal with a double booking?

The system uses a virtual built-in calendar to make sure that one date/time isn't able to be booked twice. This will notify the user with a warning that they cannot book into a slot if it is occupied. In the case that there is a glitch or an issue with a booking, the administrators / employees who use the software will be able to amend and delete existing bookings and also create new bookings.

6) Is there going to be training for the staff?

The system is designed to be very user intuitive, so only a very short training period is necessary. Staff will be given a run through of the system and documentation in 1-2 hours, however most of the knowledge about the system will be obtained through practical usage.

7) How will data be exported from the system

Staff will be able to tick a box which opts them into the weekly automatic report mailing list. This will send the recipients a report that is automatically generated by Access. The report will contain a record of revenue, peak times, additional notes such as broken equipment and more. Users of the system will also get emails which confirm bookings and remind people of booked sessions.

8) Will any money be handled by the system?

I was not originally planning to handle money in this system, however I have now decided that handling fees would be a lot more convenient for the employees at Cathays so I will do this. The fees will be calculated according to time booked, age of the musicians, whether or not it is during discount hours and if any equipment is hired. This will be paid via direct debit which will be implemented by using the banks own API (to increase security). Card details will be stored in the system, however they will be encrypted with an MD5 hash and adding a random string before the card details so that if the system is compromised, the hash will have a miniscule chance of being found online (e.g. the has for the CVV code '212' is much easier to decrypt than the hash for a record of '@~#dfiud212'). This can be done using features of MySQL.

9) Will there be a backup/archive system?

There will be a backup system for the database containing the customer and staff details. There will also be an archive of each report that is sent to the recipients of the mailing list. The backup system will work as a Grandfather-Father-Son system, and the administrator will be able to choose where the backups are saved (a separate SSD is recommended). The reports will be stored in the cloud. I have chosen these methods as the SSD is secure and relatively cheap as the data won't be huge and only one will be needed. I chose the cloud for the archive as the reports will not hold overly sensitive information such as card details and hackers won't benefit from accessing them.

10) Will people be able to make multiple bookings at once?

One account will be able to hold multiple bookings. Bookings for rehearsal space will be able to be made up to 2 weeks in advance, however bookings for the main hall will be able to be made up to 6 months in advance.

Conclusion

These questions have given me many more ideas for system functionality, and have ultimately made the system much better and more efficient in theory. These ideas will be expanded in further design and will become a reality in the project.

I have made a few changes to my initial proposed idea, in that I am now implementing a payment system, I am implementing a notification system and finally, I am implementing a backup and archiving system. I have also been able to specifically explain some features in more detail and have gotten a better overview of how the system will work.