**ChessHub**

*Digital Strategy Document*

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Editorial note: all editorial notes (marked with yellow) should be removed in the final document.

# Management Summary

## Strategic Challenges

Editorial note: business external, business internal and IT

Our project is intended to be an intermediate between multiples services.

On one hand we want to provide a user interface for participants and organizers. On another one we want to communicate with chess federations to imports user’s information such as ranking, club, birth date, …

Finally, the program must also talk with pairing programs.

The UI must be user friendly, as easy to use as possible. For our tool to be used by players, it has to simplify the registration process and also has to be totally free for them.

Today, if a player wants to register to a tournament, he has to fill a form where he has to specify his personal information, to tell in which category he wants to play and he will pay the inscription fees with cash on the D-day. All this process can be simplified by stocking the user information on our database and letting him pay online. The registration process would be done in two clicks: one to register and one to pay.

For organizers the UI must also be easy to use, creating a tournament must be done in as few steps as possible. The tool being principally designed for him to gain time, the organizer will have to pay to publish his tournament.

To have complete and up-to-date information our program must import ranking lists from the chess federations. Unfortunately, a unified way to import all lists does not exist. Every federation, national or international, has its own web service to access the data we want and has its own way to classify the data. So we will have to develop a specific importer for each federation.

The communication with pairing programs is maybe the most critical point. For our tool to be useful it needs to be integrated to the used pairing programs. Its indeed assumes a bit of development on their side. We would like that those programs firstly implement the importation of the subscribed users. Other options maybe harder to implement, like publishing the tournament directly on our platform or sending pairings and rankings to participants, can be discussed in the future. We already have an understanding with Luigi Forlano (Creator of VEGA) who is motivated to integer this tool in his program.

## Digital Objectives

Editorial note: business external, business internal and IT

For now, we only have an agreement with VEGA, so the objectives are to make our product used in countries where VEGA is also used: Italy, Spain, New-Zealand and Australia. In those countries, VEGA is used to organize more than XXX tournaments per year. The first goal is to make our tool used in the majority of those tournaments. To make the organizers aware of our product, we will pass by VEGA which will propose this offer and also contact the different federations to talk about it.

## Roadmap

Rôle de VEGA, partie dev, début de la distribution (marketing)

The project has to progress in three different aspects: the development part, negotiations with providers and also marketing.

The development of the tool has not really begun yet. We first want to build a prototype, its goal is to get some feedback from different chess actors (players, organizers, federations, developers, …) so that we will be able to clearly define the scope of the project and define which features need to be implemented first.

Currently, the first version of the program needs to have the following features:

* A user-friendly web app for player subscription and tournaments details including
  + An authentication system
  + A secured payment system
  + Up-to-date player profiles
  + Tournament profiles
* An optimized server and database synchronized to the different federations
* Import scripts for federations
* Import/Export scripts for providers
  + Subscriptions, rankings and pairings can be exchanged between the pairing program and our server easily

Again, we don’t have founds to pay a developer for this task. We so have two possible ways to achieve the development. The implementation car first be done by ourselves but it could also be an interesting bachelor project for a motivated student, which is our preferred option.

Concerning the providers, we already have an agreement with VEGA. We will first work only with them. The objective is to obtain a working tool used in the different countries where VEGA is used. This step done, we will approach other pairing programs developer to also find an agreement with them so that we can extend our clientele.

Finally, we have to convince tournament organizers to use our tool. For this we will do some marketing. We first want VEGA to advice its users to use ChessHub, the chess world is a small environment so if some big tournaments use it, smaller ones will do the same.

We will also directly contact these big tournaments organizers to convince them to use the tool.

We know that our biggest showcase is online, this is why having a nice and user-friendly web-app is necessary.

# Strategic Challenges

Editorial note:

* Overall description of business situation as existing and trends.

## Business External (current)

### Customers & Related

Editorial note:

* This corresponds to the description of “business external” level (sometimes called “customer service level)”
* This does include customers (without restrictions), their influencers, and any one external to the company (possibly even shareholders).
* Please document current situation and trends

Currently, the only partner we have is VEGA which will be the biggest influencer at the beginning. The first goal is to make our tool used by the VEGA users. For now, this chess pairing program is used in 4 countries. We hope that it will continue growing so our program will have more potential clients.

Because our program is independent, we also want to find other partnerships, with SwissManager for example. This would also allow us to increase our potential customers.

We also proposed our tool to the FIDE, with the idea of integrating our program to the federation and making it global. But they don’t seem interested for the moment.

On the expenditure side, the only costs we expect at the beginning come from the web and server hosting. The investment which this represents is quite small but needs to be considered.

### Market & Competitors

Editorial note:

* Competitive pressure that creates a gap for the company management
* Please document current situation and trends

Subscription handlers have been existing for a long time, but there is currently no company or tool that proposes what we want to provide, which is connecting three different entities: players, organizers and federations.

Luigi Forlano has worked on a similar project but it was at a national level and it didn’t take shape.

With our product we will create a new market. The difficulty will thus to create a demand for this market.

### Regulators

Editorial note:

* Please document current situation and trends

No regulators

## Business Internal (current)

Editorial note:

* This corresponds to the description of “business internal” level (sometimes called “business process level”)

### Internal actor to organization and IT service for each actor

Editorial note:

* Please document current situation and trends

Currently only the two of us are part of the project. We don’t have sponsors or investors so we won’t be able to mandate an external company to develop our product. All the development will be taken in charge by us. So that there will only be a time investment.

### Security, legal & compliance issues

Editorial note:

* Please document current situation and trends

In the current state of things, there are no official ways to distinguish a real subscription from a malicious one, except by two checks from the tournament organizer (first, the player does belong to the federation he claims to belong to, then the player truly is who he claims to be). This is a massive security pitfall. In practice, the second check is almost never made, which opens the door for falsification of player results.

### Sizing

Editorial note:

* Please document current situation and trends

On average, using only Swiss-Manager’s database as a source of information, there is between one and three tournaments per day in the world with over 20 people.

### Historical information, past strategy

Editorial note: Related past information (previous attempt, failed initiatives, success, etc…)

According to Luigi Forlano, developer of Vega, this project has been an idea of his (but at a national scale, within the Italian Chess Federation) for multiple years but never went into development.

## Business / IT Coordination (current)

Editorial note: this section describes what is already in place to coordinate the digital transformation process.

There is currently no tool that provides what ChessHub will. This solution already exists in other domains but none fits for chess tournaments.

All user data are stocked in the different federations server, pairing program get them to know the players ranking but all players are entered by hand.

# Digital Objectives

Editorial note:

* Please be “somewhat precise” at 3 years and give an idea long term (7 years)

## Business External (objectives)

### Customers & Related

In three years, we want ChessHub to be used in the majority of tournaments in countries where VEGA in used (Italy, Spain, New-Zeeland and Australia). We also want to find deals with other pairings programs so we can extend our number of clients. We mostly want an agreement with SwissManager so we can enter the swiss market.

In a long-term view, we want to have an agreement with all FIDE approved pairing program.

We also want to find some deals with different national federation and provide them a tool that can simplify their ranking system.

### Competitors

Again, there is no competitor for the moment. If some come on the market after us we will see that as a sign that our product was a good idea.

### Regulators

none

### What will not be done (in principle)

All import script will not be done. We will implement them as and when a new federation wants to use our tool.

Exporting results to federation won’t necessarily be done because it mostly depends on their desire to pay for a new system.

## Business Internal (objectives)

### Workers and Suppliers

In three years, we will have one more developer in the team who will be in charge of maintenance and script writing.

### Security, legal & compliance solutions

none

### Sizing

Numbers to find

As said before, we want to be fully established in 4 countries in three years. We also want to be partially established in some other countries like Switzerland and Austria. The goal is to be implicated in X tournaments with more than 20 people per year.

In seven years, we want to be established in more than 20 countries and to be implicated in more than X tournaments.

### Excluded from project

?

## IT Internal (objectives)

The app architecture will be separate in two different parts: client and server. For the moment we will have two different types of client, the pairing programs and the web-app.

We want our web-app to be implemented in Ruby on rails. The framework contains a lot of libraries the will be useful for us. So, we will use already implemented plugins to handle authentication and payment. This will save us a lot of work and guaranty security.

On the other hand, the pairing programs will communication directly with our server and only have some set/get methods that will permit to create a tournament, import participants, …

All imported and exported files will be in csv, their format will vary according to the program.

The server itself will be coded in java, it will be the only one able to talk with our database. Its role is to do some security checks and to support parallel usage of data.

Having seen that all federations and all pairing programs have different ways to send and receive files, the server will provide particular import/export scripts for each actor. We want this to be as modular as possible.

The database, as for it, will be implemented in SQL. The actual database schema can be seen in the annexes.

Finally, we have to think about the web hosting. We will host the web-app and server in Switzerland it will cost 10.- per year. We will also have to buy a domain name. We want to have a .*com* site web because of our international objectives. It would cost us to much to have one domain per country. It would also be problematic for international tournaments with players from multiple countries. *mychesshub.com* is available for 10.- and will probably be the one we will buy.

## 

# Roadmap

## Organizational aspects to develop

We want our codebase to be as modular as possible. The objective is to add functionalities as time goes by, so the more our codebase is “future-proof” the easiest it will be to implement new features.

We also want modularity because of the import/export scripts. As told before, each actor with whom we will work has its proper way to send or receive data. Since we don’t want others work for the integration of our tool, we will have to make different script for each entity. If we want it to be easily maintainable, we also have to make it the most modular.

Ruby on rails being a quite recent framework, we will have to be constantly up to date concerning plugins we will use and will also always look at possible better alternatives.

## Competencies to develop

We will have to work on our marketing skills. We already have some notions but if we want to sell our product in multiple countries we will have to learn how to do it.

The strategy can be totally different from a country to another so there will be a lot of work to determine a good publicity campaign for each country.

We will also have to create a support service. At first it will only be an email communication. If we see that the support is used a lot, we will use a ticket manager to be more efficient.

## Suppliers to develop

We have to improve our contact with the different chess federations. We first want to have some federation as client. So we can propose an automatic ranking handler synchronized with tournaments results. This would also allow us to reduce our hosting costs because all those federation data could be stored in their server.

We also have to take contact with other pairing program owners to find an agreement with them. This will be the step after the first test with VEGA. If the test works well, it would be easier to convince other suppliers to integrate our tool in their program.

As told in the last chapter, we will have to convince tournaments organizers to pay to use our tool. This will be the most important part. The difficulty is also increased because we will have to work with people from different countries, with different cultures and also different purchasing power

# Annex I – Customer Meetings, Information Sources, Joint Sessions

Editorial note: description of when did you meet whom and main insights.

# Annex II - Template Versioning

Editorial note: this section can be removed in the document when describing a project. It is here only to capture the evolution of the template.

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First version for Digital Strategy course.