

IT 5007 Project Proposal [Merrime]

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Background

A typical wedding preparation for Chinese in Singapore involves arranging for a) pre-wedding photoshoot and logistics (e.g. makeup artist, bridal dress/suit, photo editing services), b) solemnization (e.g. venue, solemnizer, photographer/videographer, decoration, bridal dress/suit) c) a banquet with restaurant/hotel, d) programs and logistics for the banquet (e.g. make-up artist, Bridal dress/suit, emcee, videographer/photographer, video production, decoration), e) Chinese traditional wedding (e.g. costumes, gifts required for ceremonies). The vendors providing these items/services are operating in a monopolistic competitive market, with each providing its own unique set of packages and pricing.

In the process, some couples might want to drop out due to various reasons (e.g. break up/Covid-19/unhappy with the selection of gowns) and want to resell their packages to others. In addition, couples who have completed certain parts of the wedding may want to also want to resell the used items (e.g. gowns, decorations).

How Typical Couples Prepare for Wedding Today and Issues

There are three key ways¹ that couples can obtain information about the items/services openly (or somewhat openly).

- a) View consolidated wedding-related websites/individual vendors' websites or social media accounts

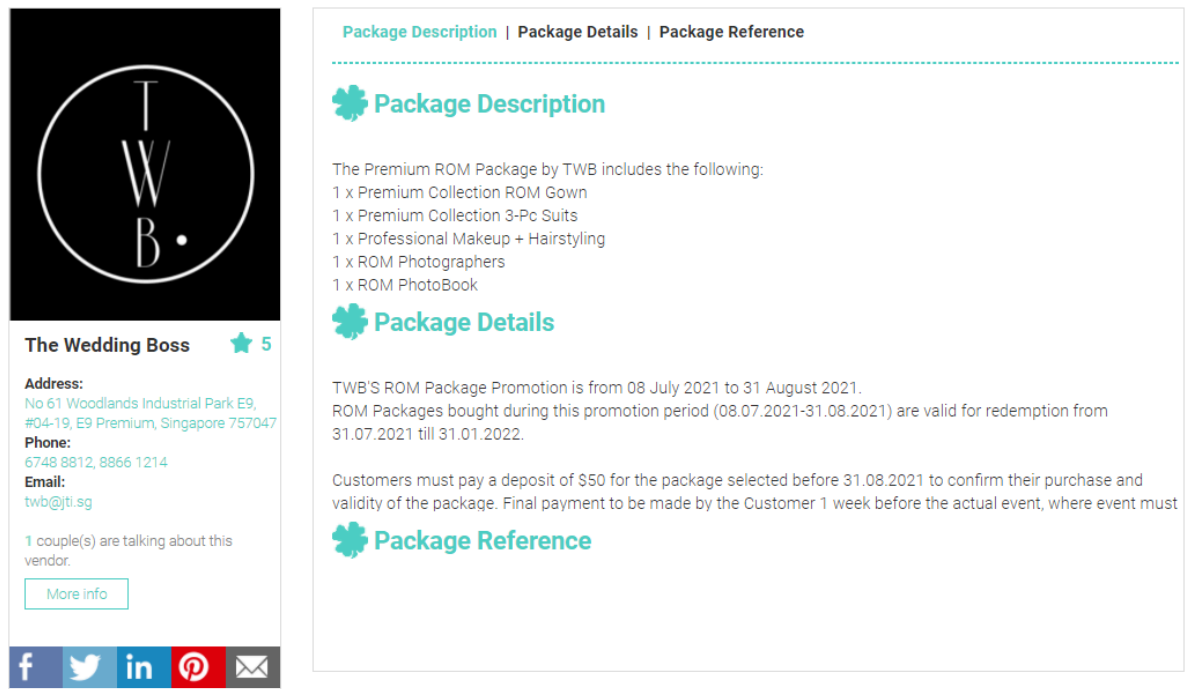


Image 1: Example of a consolidation website ([Blissful Brides](#)) listing bridal shop's package details

Issues:

- Consolidation websites merely provide a listing of items and prices. While there are usually functions to filter packages based on prices, there is no function to compare the pricing with similar package contents on these websites and this is especially important since there are many possible combinations of wedding packages. Please see Image 1 for an example of how items are listed and Annex A for examples from other websites.
 - There is also no review tied to each vendor on these websites, making it challenging for couples to assess which one gives them the best value for

¹ Charmaine has personally gone through each of the processes below and therefore her first hand experiences add another layer of credibility to the research.

money or has a track record of delivering the requirements for the important day.

- In addition, most vendors (E.g. photographers, make-up artists, hotels) have their independent social media pages/websites instead, adding another layer of complexity in comparing pricing and product offerings for the couples.
- Couples also have to engage individual vendors on their availabilities and getting popular vendors on "auspicious dates" can be challenging. Sometimes couples have to approach many popular vendors individually before finding one that is available.

b) Visit bridal shops/hotels in person

The bridal shops usually provide put together services provided by individual vendors providing specialized services (e.g. photography, makeup) and sell different combinations of packages (e.g. pre-wedding shoots, solemnization, banquet's program logistics) and will quote prices based on the required items in the packages, on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, hotels/restaurants will provide different packages of banquet (lunch/dinner) and might allow for negotiation of accompanying perks (e.g. free door gifts/hotel night stays).

Issues:

- Time-consuming for couples to visit/reach out to individual bridal shops and hotels. While there are bridal fairs that try to aggregate the shops/hotels/vendors all at one location, but is still inefficient to go to every booth to understand the packages and prices offered.
 - Furthermore, often the salesperson will try to hard-sell the packages, or deploy sales tactics (e.g. "offering special price that will only be valid for this visit"), putting customers in a difficult spot.
 - Prices quoted on the spot are often different from what was listed to give consumers a sense of "discount" and the "discounted prices" are usually open for further negotiation. Couples are not sure if they have gotten a package value for money.

- There is also no easy way to view/filter the available dresses of a particular cut from any shop, therefore couples sign up for the packages without full understanding of the selection of dresses available, leaving some disappointed after signing up for the package.
- Some contracts of the packages are set up in a way that hugely disadvantages couples. For example, wedding packages usually stipulate the number of pre-wedding shot photos and couples have to top up another few hundred dollars for additional photos (even if there are almost no marginal costs required, as the photos are already taken) if they would like to keep more photos. There is no easy means to find out if there are any shops that offer a fairer contract or to easily compare the price/photo across shops.
- There is also a huge mark up of prices for services (provided by vendors) pulled together by bridal shops (e.g. according to personal experience, about 20-30%

c) Informal channels (e.g. Budget brides Facebook group, telegram groups)

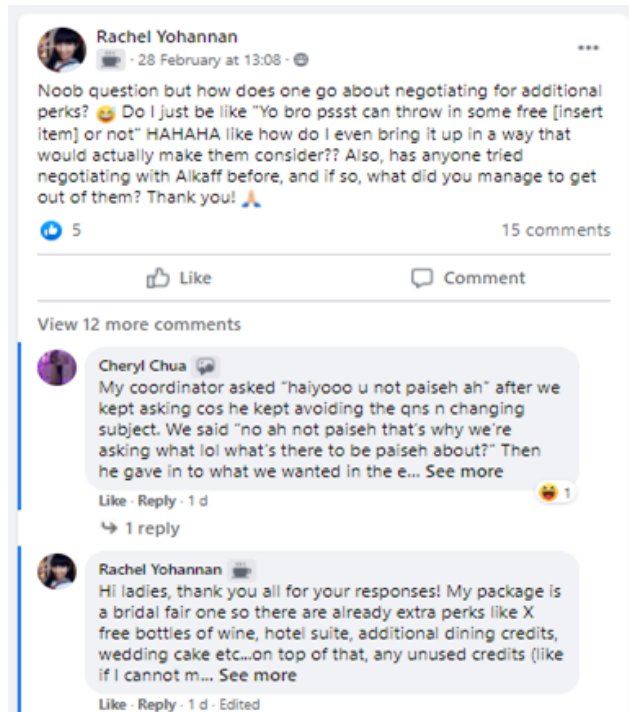


Image 2 (left): Example a post in the Budget Brides facebook group asking how to negotiate for hotel perks

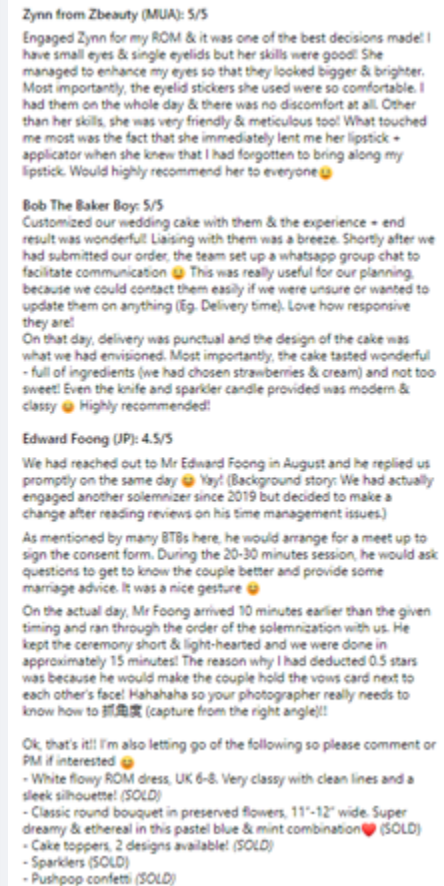


Image 3 (middle) and 4 (right): Example of a post in the Budget Brides facebook group providing review of the vendor that she has engaged.

Couples rely on these informal channels to do the following:

- Gather information on suitable vendors/bridal shops/hotels and any suitable tips in handling vendors (e.g. negotiation). Please see Image 2 above.
- Gather reviews on vendors/bridal shops (please see images 3 and 4 above)
- Resell/buy the packages/used items

Please see Annex B for more of these examples which showcased the use of these informal platforms, arising from the issues highlighted for the existing three ways to prepare for a wedding.

Issues with using these channels:

- There is no easy way to view/search relevant information as post will be "lost" when new ones get posted. This is a huge waste of valuable, unbiased information from couples.

In conclusion, couples do not have a platform to easily check and compare pricing/availability/reviews of services/items/venues across various bridal shops/vendors/hotels easily and the hefty price tags to wedding preparation is partly driven by the lack of transparency (and therefore competitiveness) and presence of middle man (bridal shops) which take a huge cut of the profit. Couples who want to resell items/packages also face difficulty in surfacing these easily amongst many other posts in informal channels.

Approach to Solving the Issues, Key to Success and Monetising the Platform

The team wants to build a platform (Merrime²) with the following features that help to improve the user journey:

1. Search and compare items/similar packages/prices provided by vendors/bridal shops/hotels/restaurants (service providers) to increase transparency and competitiveness in the industry
2. Couples can find out the availabilities of service providers

² Merrime: Sounds like 1) Marry Me ("y" in Marry has been changed to "i" for a singlish accent), 2) Merry (happy) Me. We want our users to be happy as they prepare to get married.

3. Leave reviews for service providers that they have engaged and couple in the future can view these reviews easily
4. Be protected and only allow for the release of payment when services are provided according to the terms of the agreement. This ensures that couples pay through the Merrime ecosystem which in turn, allows the platform to track genuine customers who can leave a review for the service provider/s they have engaged.
5. Allows couples to resell packages/items

While we are unable to patent the built of the platform/technology, the key to success is to as per following:

- 1) **Happy users:** Implementing a platform with useful features that caters to the needs of the user journey
- 2) **Mainstream:** Onboard the key service providers early and fast so that this platform becomes the go-to platform for couples
- 3) **Trust:** Keeping the information on the service providers updated and have recent reviews from couples that have engaged the services

The platform can be monetized through advertisement placements in banners/listings and/or taking a cut with every successful transaction.

Features and Schedule

Timeline ³	Epic	Feature	Description	Priority	Remarks
By Interim Report	Users (couples) Sign Up & Login	Sign Up Details Collected: -Name -Email - Password	Users who wish to buy/book wedding-related services can register here.	HIGH	completed
		Login	Registered users Login Here	HIGH	completed
	Service Providers Sign Up & Login	Service Providers Sign Up -Company Name -Address	Service Providers register here to offer services	HIGH	

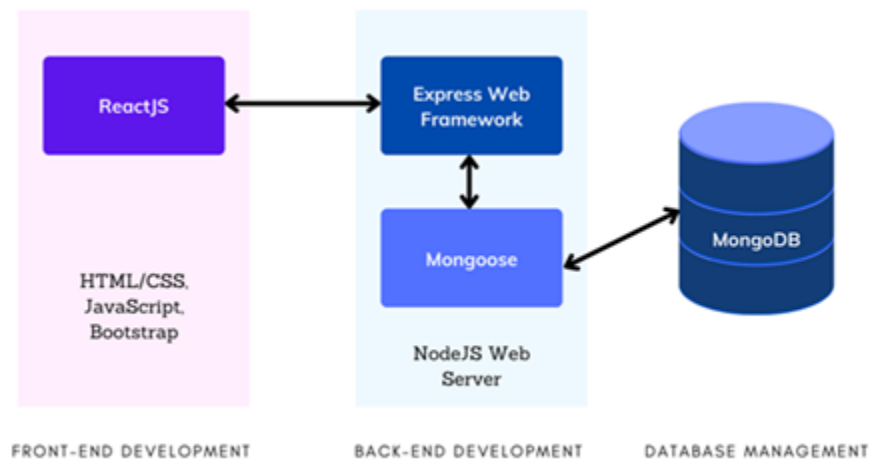
³ The timeline of the sprints will be decided when we have a better sense of the teams velocity.

		-Email -ServicesOffered			
		Service Providers Login	Service Providers can manage bookings and services they offer	HIGH	
	Service Providers Posting their Services	Selling Bridal Dress/Suits -Dress Name -Description -Price -Sizes available -Photos - Cutting of dresses (e.g. A-line, mermaid) and suits	Service Providers will be able to post the services they offer by filling all the required fields	HIGH	
		Solemnizer -Name -Available On -Contact Details -Experience -Photos -Price	Solemnizer will be able to post the services they offer by filling all the required fields	HIGH	
		Photographer/make-up artists -Sample Pictures -Price -Details -Styles (e.g. dreamy)	Photographers/make-up artists will be able to post the services they offer by filling all the required fields.	HIGH	
		Chinese Traditional Wedding - Dialect group and items - Sample Pictures - Price - Details	Vendor will be able to post the services they offer by filling all the required fields	HIGH	
		Packages - Combination and prices of packages (including optional add ons) - Other features are the same as photographers, makeup artists, and gowns/suits providers	Service providers will be able to post the services they offer by filling all the required fields	HIGH	For this feature to be useful, shops providing packages will have to be engaged and offer packages which can be customised with add ons. This will allow the packages to be compared across shops easily.
By Final Submission	Retrieve and Display Info	Banquet packages by hotels/restaurants	Display all details about Banquet packages (e.g. menu, pricing, dietary	HIGH	APIs feel like the most logical

			types, indoor/outdoor, lunch/dinner)with add on options for customisation		solution, probably can create mock ups and connect to certain calendar instead
		Linking database across different platforms	Pull the information over from other websites via API instead of updating manually again at Merrime	MEDIUM	Some service provides might have already uploaded details of item/services at other platforms (e.g. shopify)
		Dresses, Make-up, photography, solemnizer, packages from Bridal shops, restaurants addMore	Display different categories of services in respective tabs.	HIGH	
		Filters	Users will be able to apply filters (like price range, rating, choosing specific combinations of items) and be able to compare services and products	MEDIUM	
		Search	Users can search for the service/specific service providers	MEDIUM /LOW	Need to learn out how to search through full DB to retrieve correct information.
	Booking a Service	User can Book for a service	By clicking “book”, users can reserve the service.	HIGH / MEDIUM	
		Payment	User pays for the service upon booking confirmation.	LOW	Need to integrate payment gateway (e.g. Stripe).
	Ratings and Reviews	Ratings	Users can Rate how good the service was	MEDIUM	
		Reviews	User can give reviews for the service	MEDIUM	

Please refer to Annex C for the features of the future works.

Tentative architecture and technology involved



As depicted in the diagram above, MERN stack architecture will be used to develop the website. ReactJS will be used in the front-end to build user interfaces. Node JS is an open-source, cross platform, JavaScript runtime environment. It is designed to run the JavaScript code outside the browser, on the server side. Express JS is a modular, lightweight framework of the Node JS, that helps in building web applications. It can be assumed that Express JS, runs on top of the Node JS, managing the server and its routes. MongoDB is an open source, cross platform, NoSql DBMS. Mongoose manages relationships between data, provides schema validation, and is used to translate between objects in code and the representation of those objects in MongoDB.

Mock-ups

The Mock-ups are present in the following link:

<https://www.figma.com/file/P5aQjZpN2QT41Q9eaeCmdm/Nithiya-K-s-team-library?node-id=0%3A1>






Click the link to view the Mock-ups.

Annex A

[HOME](#) [EDITORIALS](#) [FORUMS](#) [VENDORS](#)

Perfect Weddings

My Planner [SIGN UP](#) [LOGIN](#)



1. Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre




Image Courtesy of [Holiday Inn Singapore Orchard City Centre](#)

A wedding brand for the new generation, Holiday Inn® Singapore Orchard City Centre's newest concept, MerryMe, goes beyond tradition and sets itself apart with youthful energy, light hearted moments and a fresh approach towards what makes that special day.

Enjoy attractive perks such as free flow house wine & beer and a choice of complimentary 2-hour photo-booth with unlimited printing or Coolgurt dessert station during the cocktail reception, plus exclusive perks such as an additional night's stay in the Bridal Suite and complimentary enrollment as an IHG Business Rewards member to earn up to 20,000 points.

Lunch starts from \$888nett (Monday to Sunday)
Dinner starts from \$1,188nett (Monday to Sunday)

Price Range (per table): \$888 - \$1,188

Number of Tables: 3 – 38

Floorplan:

- Rectangular
- Pillar-less (Orchid Ballroom)
- Average ceiling height (Orchid Ballroom), high ceiling (Crystal Ballroom)

Example of how other website ([Perfect wedding](#)) provide information about banquet service. There is also no easy means to compare similar packages across service providers.

Annex B

1) Budget Brides (Singapore) Facebook group



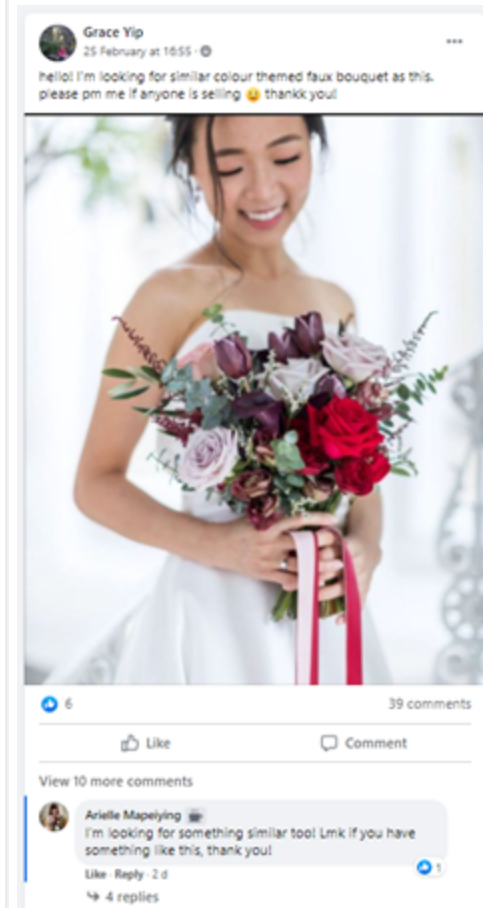
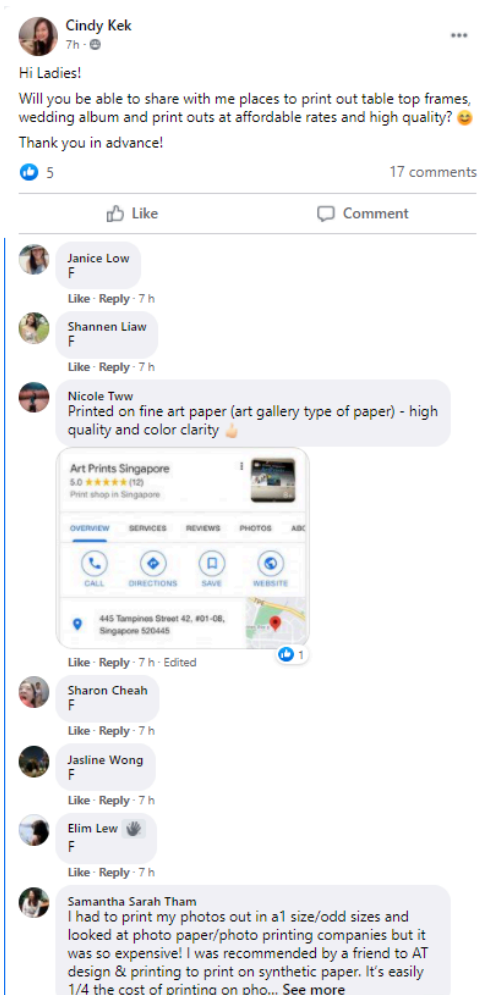
This Facebook group (seen above) is set up for couples to exchange information (reviews, bargains etc). This group is very active until today, with over 20 thousand members.



Left: Example of a post asking for Solemiser recommendations, and expressing that she was unable to find any available suitable.



Right: Example of a post asking for reviews of banquet provided by various hotels.



Left: Example of a post asking for places to printing services

Right: Example of a post asking for Solemiser recommendations, and expressing that she was unable to find any available suitable.

2) Telegram groups

Telegram Groups for Singapore Weddings			
TG Group	TG 2020 Group		
	A	B	C
		Telegram invite link or person to contact to be added to the group	Notes
1	SingaporeBrides Telegram Channel	https://t.me/singaporebrides	40 [Hotel] SB Carlton Hotel for BTB/GBT
2	Malay Wedding Telegram	https://t.me/malay_wedding	41 [Hotel] Concorde Hotel
3			42 [Hotel] «Conrad Brides»
4			43 [Hotel] Fairmont Swissotel
5	Year 2021		44 [Hotel] Fullerton Hotel
6	SB Catholic BTB 2020/2021	https://t.me/sbatholictbtb	45 [Hotel] Grand Hyatt Singapore
7	[Year] SingaporeBrides BTB 2021	https://t.me/singaporebrides2021	46 [Hotel] Hilton
8	[Month] Jan 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	47 [Hotel] Hotel Fort Canning
9	[Month] Feb 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	48 [Hotel] Hotel Fort Canning
10	[Month] Mar 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	49 [Hotel] InterCon
11	[Month] Apr 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	50 [Hotel] M Hotel
12	[Month] May 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	51 [Hotel] Mandarin Orchard BTB (Wedding Chat)
13	[Month] June 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	52 [Hotel] Mandarin Oriental Group (SB)
14	[Month] July 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	53 [Hotel] Marriott Tempe
15	[Month] Aug 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	54 [Hotel] Novotel @ Stevens
16	[Month] Sep 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	55 [Hotel] One Farrer
17	[Month] Oct 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	56 [Hotel] Park Royal
18	[Month] Nov 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	57 [Hotel] Park Royal Beach Road
19	[Month] Dec 2021 BTB	https://t.me/jan2021btb	58 [Hotel] Park Royal Pickering
20			59 [Hotel] Raffles Hotel
21	Year 2022		60 [Hotel] Ramada Hotel
22	[Year] SingaporeBrides BTB 2022	https://t.me/jan2021btb	61 [Hotel] Regent Hotel
23			62 [Hotel] Ritz Carlton
24	Bridal		63 [Hotel] Shangri La Hotel (Orange Grove Rd)
25	[Bridal] Alisha & Lace Wedding Collection	http://t.me/toffeehorse	64 [Hotel] St Regis
26	[Bridal] Cang Ai	https://t.me/cangai	65 [Hotel] Swissotel Merchant Court
27	[Bridal] Digio Bridal Studio	https://t.me/jan2021btb	66 [Restaurant] Ban Heng Group
28	[Bridal] France Paris	https://t.me/jan2021btb	67 [Hotel] The Outpost
29	[Bridal] Korea Artiz Studio	https://t.me/jan2021btb	68 [Hotel] W Sentosa
30	[Bridal] Love Bridal Story	https://t.me/jan2021btb	69 [Restaurant] Empress @ ACM
31	[Bridal] Rico A Mona	https://t.me/jan2021btb	70 [Restaurant] Monti
32	[Bridal] Story Wedding	https://t.me/jan2021btb	71
33	[Bridal] ZWedding	https://t.me/jan2021btb	72
34	[Bridal] ZWedding	https://t.me/jan2021btb	73
35			74
36	Hotels & Venues		75
37	[Church] CHUMES	https://t.me/jan2021btb	76
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Left and right: There is an online compilation of the Telegram groups for various years, Bridal shops, Hotels/venues.

Annex C - Future Work

Timeline	Epic	Feature	Description	Priority	Remarks
Future Work	Service Providers Posting their Services	Printing services - Photos, invitations sizes and pricing, paper quality	Service Provider will be able to post the services they offer by filling all the required fields	LOW	Rated this service as low priority as the service is generally lower costs as compared to other items/services and it might have been covered under the packages offered by hotels/bridal shops
		Decorations/Flower bouquets - Bouquet designs, past work etc		LOW	Rated this service as low priority as the service is generally lower costs as compared to other items/services and it might have been covered under the packages offered by hotels/bridal shops
	Advertising	Bidding/sign up for	Service providers bid/sign up for advertising at banners/bumped up at the top of search results	LOW	Depending on business model
	Authenticity Check		Check if the registered company's under Merrime are real	LOW	Future Work Can cross check with ACRA
	Resell Products		Users can post the items they want to resell	LOW	Future Work (maybe can pull certain suitable items API from Carousell, so that users only needs to post once)
	Recommend suitable photographers/gowns based on favourite styles (learnt by AI)	Product recommendation	Based on what the users chooses, AI can be used to provide suitable product recommendations	LOW	Future Work
	Service Providers Posting their Services	Social media	Linking to social media posts via API so that customers can have a omnichannel experience	LOW	Future Work

	Community (like a forum)	Sharing experience	Users can write posts sharing experiences	LOW	Future Work
		Like	Users can like posts	LOW	Future Work
		Comment	Users can comment on posts	LOW	Future Work
		NLP for Vulgarity detection	No vulgar words can be posted in the forum.	LOW	Future Work