What Should I Do Now?

Results, Conclusions, Future Work

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# Conclusions

## Changes in development

Over the course of three months, our team was able to plan and execute the building, testing, and launching of our website. The site is home to our service What Should I Do Now? which is a questionnaire-based activity suggestion tool. The semester was spent working towards this one main goal. However, we did have a few major changes in our approach during the completion of the work.

The main change in our development process was our shift to using Wix. Initially, the team was planning on coding the web application manually. It would be created mostly using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript. It would also be connected to a dynamic database to supply the information for generating pages in the assessment. During the course of development, we ran into several issues. The amount of programming experience and knowledge that team members had meant that there was a lot of time spent on learning new concepts. This compounded the difficulty of trying to manually code the service, since we were working with an experimental structure for a web application as well. The frustration in troubleshooting and debugging led to the change in approach. Instead of focusing on the architecture of the application that was giving us so much trouble, we wanted to focus on the actual content and appearance of the service. The team decided that a switch to a website building platform would be more beneficial. In testing services from Squarespace, WordPress, and W3Spaces, Wix offered the most suitable solution.

## Challenges

One main challenge for this project was time. Due to the scheduled nature of the course it was completed for, we had to work under extreme constraints for time. The team had to ensure we could get all design, development, and testing completed within three months. This made planning somewhat difficult, since we all had individual schedules as well.

Another challenge was coding knowledge of the team members. We had varying skills and an uneven distribution of programming knowledge. This was one of the main factors for changing platforms. Spending weeks on uncooperative structural code took away from time that could have been spent on tailoring the content and appearance of the service.

Budget was also a large challenge. Due to the nature of the project for an academic capstone study, there was no outside funding. This meant that the team couldn’t hire outside contracting for any problems. We also had to ensure that all tools and services we relied on for hosting and storing the code were accessible as free or low-cost. This limited the options we had for what we could use in development. We were able to find tools that sufficed but may have had an easier time if we didn’t have the limitations on budget.

## Lessons Learned

The biggest lesson we all learned while creating this unique project was how to work as a team. The first challenge we had to face was deciding on what to create within the boundaries of what was required. Each of us handpicked a few ideas, and we went over the pros and cons of each of them and finally decided to go with the What Should I do Now website. As discussed in the challenges, we also had to work around each other's schedules, and the course itself. Through the use of Microsoft Teams we were able to collaborate and establish a hub for all of our work. This made working together easier even though we would occasionally run into some issues with Microsoft Teams.

Another takeaway from the project was the overall experience of creating a unique product, and all the small tasks that led up to the final product. Early in the semester we created charts detailing the operational flow and the functional decomposition of the prototype website. We also created a WBS all of which can be viewed in the final report.

Originally, we were going to use Planet Scale as our database and integrate it with HTML code we developed ourselves, but due to time, and knowledge constraints we ended up using Wix to speed up the process and make it easier for all of us to contribute. There are some drawbacks to this like not being able to fully customize all of the minute details and having to create a unique page for each card to be displayed. However, we ultimately decided that the benefits of using an easy and free web development tool like Wix would be perfect for the product we want to create.

# Future Work

We have discussed making several changes in the future. These modifications have been left for further work due to the focus on creating a minimally viable product and the time constraints. We met our production goal, but there is room for improvement in many areas.

## Account

One idea for work to be done in the future is to integrate an account setting. This would allow users to document previous results. With the addition of creating an account, we would also like to incorporate the option to rate the results of the assessment. This means that users could have data on how accurate the assessment is for them. They would also be able to track which results they receive most often, or which results they seem to like best.

## Result Indexing

Another track to explore is further indexing of all the potential results. This would allow for expanding on other functionality. One of those is the possibility of a randomize function. Sometimes a user really does just want a random activity suggestion. Adding a button for randomization would let them get a randomized choice out of the possible results. We have also discussed adding a search function. That function would give users the ability to search the indexed results for a specific activity or previous result, without the need to retake the assessment. This capability sparked the idea to include a tagging system as well, to denote categories of similar results.

## Mobile Application

The service was designed as a web page to take advantage of searches for what to do when bored. A suggestion we have received is to make the site into a mobile application. We were not able to develop a parallel app due to design standards and time constraints. The site is accessible on mobile, but due to the layout and assessment system, it is not ideal for mobile use. If there is sufficient interest in a mobile application for this service, the team would gladly take on the adaptation.

## Expanded Decision Tree

We received a lot of helpful feedback from reviews of the project. One such review had the suggestion to expand the capabilities of the assessment outside of just boredom. We were able to expand on the decision tree in our planning for the final project, but not as much as the team believes is possible. The reviewer made a good argument that this tool could be used for many different scenarios, and we agreed. In the future, we would like to develop the branches to even more situations.