CS4116 Project Description
2024/25 Semester 2

1. Introduction

This project involves developing a **business service marketplace** where businesses can **advertise their services**, and users can **connect with businesses** to negotiate and arrange services. The project must be built using HTML, CSS, Bootstrap, PHP, and MySQL. Each team will have creative control over their marketplace's design, branding, and specific features as long as they meet the core requirements.

1.1 Business Categories

The **business categories** available on the platform should be diverse, and teams are encouraged to choose a niche. For example, your platform could support businesses that provide **Student Services**, which would attract any business that university students might reasonably use. This could be anything from specialised grinds to house cleaning and plagiarism services.

Your marketplace should be tailored to your selected category and **implement all required functionalities listed below**.

2. Core Functionalities

These functionalities and data items should be considered the **minimum**. For example, if you want to collect more data about businesses, you are entirely free to do so.

To facilitate testing, your website should have at least ten business and 20 user profiles.

It is okay to use material (e.g. images, video, audio) from other sites if your final report acknowledges where each item came from.

2.1 User and Business Registration

- Users and businesses must be able to **create accounts**.
- Businesses should provide details such as a **company name, description, contact info, and services offered**.
- Users should create a profile with **basic information**. Only registered users can interact with a business.

2.2 Service Listings & Pricing

- The focus of the site should be broad enough that many businesses with different kinds of services can join. For example, "Motor Vehicles", "Paranormal Investigation" or "Student Services".
- Businesses can **advertise** their services (e.g., "Paranormal Investigation" (for, say, an investigation) or "Student House Cleaning").
- Each service should have **pricing tiers** or **subcategories** (e.g., "Basic Ghost Removal - €50", "Poltergeist Banishing - €300" or "Parental Visit - €30", "Pre-landlord inspection clean - €200", "24-Hour Rager Cleanup - €3,000").
- Each **subcategory** should have a description detailing what is specifically provided in the service.

2.3 Customer-Business Connection ("Service Inquiry")

- Users can **express interest** in a service by sending a **Service Inquiry**.
- Businesses can then interact with potential customers via an **internal messaging system** to **negotiate pricing and details**. The level of negotiation available is up to the group; some prices can be non-negotiable.
- A **Service Inquiry** is considered **"Pending"** until the business accepts the customer.
- Once a service is completed, the user becomes a **"Verified Customer"**.

2.4 Customer Verification and Reviews

- Only **Verified Customers** (those who have completed a transaction) can leave reviews.
- Businesses should be able to respond to reviews.
- Reviews should include a **rating (1-5 stars) and a comment**.

2.5 Search & Filtering

- Users should be able to **search for services** using keywords and filters.
- Filters might include **price range and rating**.
- Businesses should be ranked based on **relevance and rating**.

2.6 Peer-to-Peer Communication ("Customer Insights")

- Users should be able to **message Verified Customers** about their experience before committing to a business.
- Users must request permission to contact a Verified Customer, and the recipient must **accept the request** before communication is enabled.

2.7 Administrative Controls

- A site administrator should be able to **ban businesses or users** that violate policies.
- Admins should have the ability to **remove inappropriate reviews or messages**.

3. Project Deliverables & Timeline

Your project will have several deliverables throughout the semester. These include:

- **Week 5:** Website Pitch Presentation in labs (5%)
- **Week 6:** Design Document (10%)
- **Week 7:** Database Implementation (2%)
- **Week 10:** Prototype Demonstration (3%)
- **Week 10:** Software Testing Report (5%)
- **Week 13:** Final Demo & Code Submission (32%)
- **Week 14:** Final Report (8%)
- **Ongoing:** Participation (5%)

3.1 Final Report Requirements

Each team must document their design and implementation decisions in their **Final Report**, which should include:

- A description of **how your marketplace meets the requirements**.
- A breakdown of your **database structure**.
- Screenshots of your **website's interface**.
- A summary of **user testing feedback**.

4. Final Notes

This project allows **flexibility** in how teams implement features, but all the core functionalities **must** be present. You are encouraged to **extend** your marketplace beyond the basics to differentiate your project (e.g., add maps, interactive price negotiation systems, or AI-driven recommendations).

Most importantly—have fun! If your business idea is unique (or completely ridiculous), it will make your project even more enjoyable to develop.