

E-Commerce Team Project

The Writing Centre (Team 4)

Ndaale Ansah

Kojo Armah

Audrey Obuobisa-Darko

Ernest Ampomah-Benefo

1. BUSINESS OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

The Writing Centre (TWC) is an online platform that allows students and faculty members to request academic writing services such as CV writing, cover letter writing, thesis proofreading, editing of articles, et cetera, at a fee. It takes a business-to-consumer (B2C) model form, as we connect writers with freelance writing businesses to consumers, in this case, students, lecturers, faculty members, and the like.

Main objective:

1. To provide easy and convenient access to quality writing services to help with academic work for students or faculty.
2. To provide an opportunity for student writers to get paid for their services.

2. VALUE PROPOSITION

For customers:

Affordability

Our goal is to provide the best value for money by providing a wide range of writing services to our subscribers at an affordable fee. Many writing services today charge a customer per page or order of a writing service. In other words, if a customer requests a writing service, they are charged per page or a particular piece of writing. Our service, however, allows customers to subscribe to our service and access a range of writing services within a specific period.

Reduced Waiting Time

Customers who patronise our services, irrespective of the package they choose, will receive their deliverables within 48 hours without paying any extra fees.

Privacy

In addition to the personal information of customers and writers being secure, information regarding assignments and other pieces of writing remain solely between the writer and the customer and is not shared with any other customers or writers.

For writers:

Writers who partner with us are provided with a decent salary and consistently supplied with a pool of customers. Work hours are also flexible, so they have a work life that is as stress-free as possible.

3. REVENUE MODEL

Our company has a diversified portfolio when it comes to generating revenue, with a model consisting of two main revenue streams as follows:

Subscription Packages - Students/faculty can pay for a monthly or yearly subscription to The Writing Centre, which provides access to a wide range of services. These include:

a. **The Standard Package**, priced at a hundred cedis per month (GH¢100/month), gives a student access to one (1) free consultation with in-house writers, one (1) cover letter, one (1) CV/resume, and two (2) essays of 700 words each. One-year subscription to the standard package reduces the subscription fee from GH¢100 to GH¢70 per month.

b. **The Advanced Package**, priced at three hundred cedis a month (GH¢300/month), gives one access to three (3) free consultations with in-house writers, three (3) cover letters, three (2) CVs/resumes and five (5) essays of 1000 words each. One-year subscription to the advanced package reduces the subscription fee from GH¢300 to GH¢240 per month.

One-time Fees - Customers may also only be charged per writing service requested. This one-time fee will be calculated based on the type of write-up needed and the word count. For instance, for graduate school application essays, customers are charged GH¢0.10 per word. A 750-word application essay will thus cost $750 \times 0.10 = \text{GH¢}75.00$. CV fees are charged per page, for instance, GH¢50 per page. Prices may increase depending on the deadline specified by the customer.

Affiliate Marketing (commissions) - Writers that sign onto The Writing Centre as affiliate writers pay a specified percentage to our company per each commission or writing gig. There is a platform charge of about 15% deducted from each commission they make.

4. MARKETSPACE OF OPERATION

Our marketplace of operation would mainly consist of students, lecturers and general faculty of post-secondary institutions in Ghana. Our services would be targeted at satisfying the writing needs of the various students, professors, tenured professors, teaching assistants and other adjunct faculty at these institutions.

5. MAIN COMPETITORS

Although some freelancers and companies offer such writing services in the Ghanaian academic market space, there are few Ghanaian online websites with a system like ours that gives customers access to a vast pool of writers, each providing various services. Similar online platforms that exist *but are outside Ghana* include *EduBirdie* and *EssayPro*.

However, writing services operate on social media and via school communication platforms, such as the writing centre at Ashesi and many other writing centres in different universities. Another identified competitor is *Writers Block* at Ashesi, which has a small group of writers who assist students with writing and editing services.

Some indirect competitors offer different services but to the same target markets and may provide alternatives to certain services we provide, such as proofreading. *Grammarly* is an excellent example of a substitute for our proofreading and editing services.

6. COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE

Our main competitors are the Ashesi Writing Center (AWC) and Grammarly. Through workshops and one-on-one consultations, Ashesi Writing Center helps students identify writing problems and discuss improving their writing skills.

Our main competitive advantage over AWC is availability. With our services, users can submit the works they want to be reviewed at any time. Once payment is made, a writing consultant will be notified, and the user can expect their reviewed work within 48 hours.

With Grammarly, our only comparative advantage is the price offered. The service we offer is similar. However, Grammarly trumps us in terms of live, interactive reviews. As

mentioned earlier, our review service is currently planned only as a behind-the-scenes review, not live with the user.

7. MARKET STRATEGY

Since our primary target audience consists of students, lecturers and other persons in academia or any related field, our marketing strategy will involve placing advertisements on prominent academic journal websites. This way, we can introduce our services to potential customers whenever they require them. We will employ search engine optimisation tools to ensure that we are more visible and increase our chances of drawing more traffic to our website.

Also, interested students attending various tertiary institutions in Ghana will be employed as sales agents to create awareness of our services to other students. Their commissions will be based on a flat fee plus 5% of the monthly subscriptions of each new customer. Partnering this way would be instrumental in motivating more members to sign up.

8. ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

TWC uses a flat organisational structure for the achievement of our goals. This organisation has few or no levels of management between the leadership/top executives and employees. We decided to use a flat organisational structure because we do not have strict ties to our employees. The employees in question are industry expert consultants. Our value proposition to our writers is connecting them to a pool of potential customers who need their reviewing skills to improve their work. This enables our writers the opportunity of a flexible secondary stream of income where they dictate their working conditions.

Departments

- Financial Department: This department is responsible for managing the business's finances. They would also drive the inflow and outflow of money in the enterprise.
- Technical Department: This department is responsible for handling any technical errors, user issues, and any other problem that prevents the efficient use of the website.
- Quality Assurance Office: This department makes sure that the review made by the writers is double-checked to prevent any kind of mistake.
- Operations Department: This department would oversee and supervise such that the work is done promptly. Their responsibilities would include making sure the writers pass their reviewed work through the quality assurance office to ensure the work's quality.

9. MANAGEMENT TEAM

A leader will head our management team in the person of Audrey Obuobisa-Darko. Under the leader, our team would include a Chief Technical Officer in the person of Kojo Armah, a Chief Financial Officer in the person of Ndaale Ansah, and a Chief Operations Officer in the person of Ernest Ampomah-Benefo.

SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT LIFE CYCLE

1. SYSTEM ANALYSIS & PLANNING

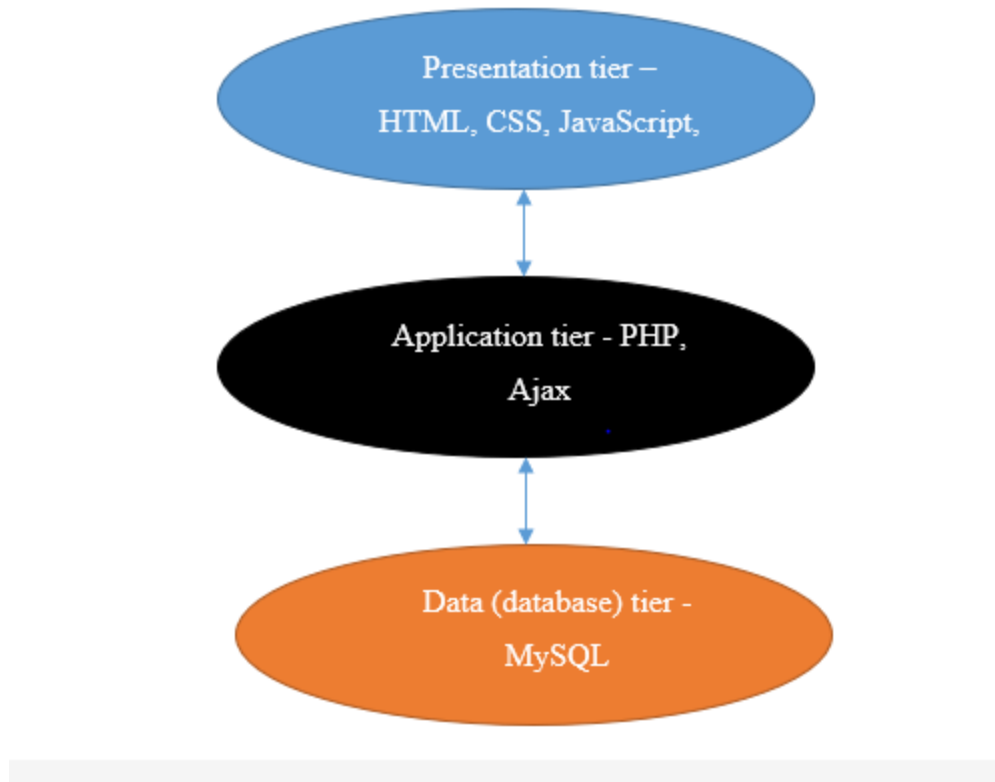
Business Objective	System functionality	Information requirements	Team member responsible
Display writing services available	Digital catalog	Dynamic text & graphics catalog	Ndaale Ansah
Provide service information	Services database	Description of service details e.g., fees, packages, category of service	Ndaale Ansah
Collect user information	Database of user information	Name, school, role, email, phone number	Ernest Ampomah Benefo
Track orders	Dashboard, order management system	Order details (service requested, due date, customer details)	Audrey Obuobisa- Darko
Track payments made	Sales and revenue analytics system	Number of orders, unit prices and revenue generated	Audrey Obuobisa- Darko
Execute transactions and issue invoices	Payment system	Secure credit card and mobile money payment	Kojo Armah

		clearing; multiple options	
Provide customer support	Sales database	Customer ID, service requested, payment, date received	Ernest Ampomah Benefo
Enable and display customer reviews	Review/feedback management system	Customer name and ID, services(s) requested, writer assigned, review/feedback	Kojo Armah

2. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

We made use of selected technologies at the three (3) main levels (three-tier architecture overview) of our system design. These tools were used to develop/ implement the above functionalities for a fully-fledged e-commerce system.

1. Presentation tier - HTML, CSS, JavaScript, Bootstrap
2. Application tier - PHP, Ajax
3. Data (database) tier – MySQL



3. IMPLEMENTATION

Tools

- i. **GitHub** – For effective collaboration and version control, synced with Visual Studio Code for easy deployment
- ii. **Visual Studio Code** – Synced with GitHub for live real-time collaboration and easy deployment

Frameworks

- i. **Bootstrap** for implementing responsive web design to automatically adapt to various screen sizes

Libraries

- i. **JQuery** for form validation and event handling.

APIs

- i. **Paystack** – Integrated in the website to execute payment transactions.

The methodology employed was the scrum development method. The scrum method is an agile development method that is incremental. With this methodology, every stage of the development process was tested to ensure that any problems encountered at an early stage of the process will be addressed early.

4. TESTING

Each team member was responsible for unit testing of components and functionalities they were assigned to build. Any identified areas that fell short were noted and fixed before the next stage of testing. Then, the entire system was tested for overall functionality, correct query execution to the database, usability, and security.

5. DEMO

<https://the-writing-centre.herokuapp.com/>

Admin credentials – admin@gmail.com ; password: admin1234

CMS <https://afibaansah230.wixsite.com/my-site-1>