Matthew Bacarro, John Ho, Qirui Wang

INFO 380 AA

Professor Thompson

30 Jan 2022

**Project Proposal**

Opportunity Overview

Networking leads to your future friends, peers, co-workers, your next job, it connects to almost every aspect of your industry background and experience. However, the usage of online networking through LinkedIn and Handshake can give an artificial feeling of ‘networking’ by merely adding another connection under your profile. The amount of resources and profiles on LinkedIn is a vast ocean of information, so the revamp of the alumni system would be a more localized place to find those meaningful and genuine connections on top of having accessible resources for all.

Stakeholders and Users

The main stakeholders include alumni and students as the revamp of the alumni system are catered towards the connection between these two parties. For students, they are looking for resources and mentors to give insight and advice to get started on their job-searching process and get introduced to the workforce. The platform of the alumni system lets alumni members fill in this role, becoming leaders and mentors within the UW community and being engaged with its students. What alumni are looking for are those who are passionate and genuinely interested in their work and are engaged in the networking process – active users on the alumni system. For alumni already in the workforce, they will still have a personalized experience in their networking based on their goals from their profile and background.

Organization Challenges and Opportunities

The current alumni system does not fully migrate the users’ information when logging in as UW students, leading to a long setup process despite using a UW NetID account. Additionally, it asks repeating questions that are time-consuming to create an account. While this problem is not detrimental by any means, it would simplify the setup process and make the system more attractive to students and alumni with less downtime.

In addition, we want to differentiate goals and user types on the alumni network so that users can get what they want. Some are looking to ask about a first job opportunity, others can talk about experiences at different companies, but there is no clear way to display this information.

Organization Benefits and Metrics

More students and alumni would create accounts for the alumni system as their profiles can be shared on other UW platforms. It allows students and alumni to talk about internships and job opportunities and encourages them to explore career development through its resources. By providing useful information and communication, it produces a tighter community being the bridge between students and alumni with similar backgrounds as opposed to searching through a large catalog. In turn, there could be more UWAA memberships from those invested in the university as alumni want to support their programs and research.

Benefits and Values to Your Stakeholders and Users

One benefit to the users is having clear and concise information about others on the platform. The platform is more oriented on the discussion portion of networking as opposed to the initial impressions you get when viewing someone’s entire profile. While the current system has a search feature and can filter majors, locations, and industries, having a way to catalog or tag keywords would be a direct way to find users very similar to you. Though there is less in-depth information about the users, it leads to an easier way to find those in your affinity groups and focus on the interactions.

Adoption Strategy

To cater to alumni, the platform can enable the promotion of their brand. We believe that they should be rewarded from the university, being the main source of partnerships, donations, and mentors in general. By being a leader, the platform should give benefits to the alumni that are heavily engaged with other users. This includes the benefits that UWAA already offers (e.g. early access to library resources and publications and exclusive community events) but also has a flair on the platform to make them stick out for the experiences that they empower for future generations.

User Metrics

The new system has many elements to measure to capture trends of users’ usages of the platform. It can track the amount of time needed to log in, total time spent on the website or application, and time spent searching and filtering data or profiles of other users. To gauge the engagement of alumni, reports can be made on the modes of communication used to reach out to them.

Other details covered can be subscription rates, the number of replies to emails and notifications, and the reach of the platform posts. For alumni, seeing how many attend events, accounting donations and fundraising, and utilization of alumni services would be a good place to start.

Existing Solutions

Outside of the UWAA services, users also use other services like LinkedIn and Handshake to get the same or similar results. Networking is the main goal for all of these products, yet LinkedIn and Handshake are something that the University of Washington promotes more than the UWAA services. Departmental emails, such as the iSchool emails, promote networking events to their students with none relating to the current UWAA services.

Risks

A risk regarding our solution is that stakeholders may not be willing to wait or adapt to a remake of the alumni system. As we plan to remake and redesign the current alumni system, stakeholders will have to adapt, change, and update based on our solution. This may not be ideal for many people as alumni can be of all ages, so a redesign may not be beneficial for them and organizations may have to change their policies based on the redesign.

Assumptions

When users are online, they are using the services available such as asking for help or giving suggestions, reading text messages, and writing replies or posts. We could also assume that the text messages, subscription rates, and other activities can be used to gauge the representations of users being involved in the community.

Requirements Discovery Plan

* Visual schedule for group members for convenience
  + February 1st
* Affinity diagram to identify user goals, ideas, and themes
  + February 4th
* Workflow diagram to show interaction with system
  + February 7th - 13th
* Design the information and data flow of the system
  + February 14th - 20th

Miro Boards:

[Opportunity Canvas](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOU61k9g=/?invite_link_id=783074498902)

[SWOT Analysis](https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVOTNKNTs=/)

References

*About the UWAA*. University of Washington Alumni Association. (2022). Retrieved January 30,

2022, from https://www.washington.edu/alumni/about-uwaa/

Chase, J. (2021, May 17). Relationship Building: The Key to Alumni Engagement. EDUCAUSE

Review. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from https://er.educause.edu/articles/2021/5/relationship-building-the-key-to-alumni-engagement

Chiu, T. K., Lin, T. J., & Lonka, K. (2021). Motivating Online Learning: The Challenges of

COVID-19 and Beyond. The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 1-4.

Drezner, N. D., & Pizmony-Levy, O. (2021). I Belong, Therefore, I Give? The Impact of Sense

of Belonging on Graduate Student Alumni Engagement. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly, 50(4), 753-777.

Lauersen, K. T. (2021). Time, Talent, and Treasure: Exploring Development and Alumni

Relations Metrics.

Morgan, G., Lowendahl, J.-M., Thayer, T.-L., Yanckello, R., & Sheehan, T. (2021, February

23). Top Technology Trends Impacting Higher Education in 2021. Gartner. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from https://www.gartner.com/document/3997314?ref=TypeAheadSearch

Morgan, G., Lowendahl, J.-M., Yanckello, R., Sheehan, T., & Thayer, T.-L. (2021, February

23). Top Business Trends Impacting Higher Education in 2021. Gartner. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from https://www.gartner.com/document/3997318?ref=gfeed

Thayer, T.-L. (2021, May 12). Market Guide for University Alumni Advancement Systems.

Gartner. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from https://www.gartner.com/document/4001517?ref=solrAll&refval=310003363

Yanckello, R., & Thayer, T.-L. (2021, September 7). 2020 Strategic Roadmap for Higher

Education Student Information Systems. Gartner. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from https://www.gartner.com/document/3984281?ref=algorightrec&refval=4001517

Yanckello, R., Lowendahl, J.-M., Thayer, T.-L., & Morgan, G. (2021, April 8). Higher

Education Ecosystem 2030: Classic U. Gartner. Retrieved January 29, 2022, from https://www.gartner.com/document/3975479?ref=solrAll&refval=310003471