

Buchanan Alumni Application

Presented to

Buchanan Alumni House

Proposed by

ASAP Media Services
University of Maine

May 7th, 2012

I. Introduction

Buchanan Alumni House is seen as a “place to call home” for alumni and friends, a warm and welcoming building showcasing the University of Maine. Buchanan Alumni House acts as the front door to campus and is the starting location for many University of Maine tour groups. Additionally, each year more than 13,000 visitors attend more than 500 meetings there.

An application was developed for the Buchanan Alumni House as an additional tool to promote the University of Maine. Called Galaxy of Stars, this application resides on a touch screen within the main lobby. Users of this application can view introductory videos that focus on the University and its alumni and explore alumni individually. Each alumni page consists of varying media, such as text, audio, and video. Currently, the content associated with alumni is limited, and older alumni seem to be highlighted more than recent alumni. However, this type of kiosk has the potential to be more informative and relevant to current visitors of all ages.

Buchanan Alumni House has approached ASAP Media Services to design and build a replacement kiosk application focusing on younger alumni who are demonstrating leadership and ‘making a difference’. This proposal outlines ASAP Media Services' response to this request.

II. Audience Analysis

Prospective Students

A large majority of the people who explore the Buchanan Alumni House, and in particular the current kiosk, are prospective students who begin campus tours there. Students participate in these tours to get answers to personal questions involving facilities, meals, and campus environment. Many also want to know what sorts of opportunities present themselves upon graduating from the University of Maine.

These prospective students would benefit greatly from a redesigned alumni application. Those with specific careers in mind would find relevant University alumni and learn about their experiences. Undecided students could browse the alumni to find sources of inspiration and possible career paths. In either case, prospective students would start to develop an idea of what the University of Maine has to offer and where those offerings could lead.

An additional audience associated with prospective students is the parents that accompany them to campus events such as New Student Orientation. These parents come not only to support their child’s decision to attend the University of Maine, but also to ensure that this school provides great opportunities relative to their interests. The proposed kiosk will immediately present parents with accounts of recent alumni, each highlighting the variety of paths they took through the University to get where they are today. Because the showcased alumni will be fairly recent graduates, parents will also see the effort that the University of Maine puts forward to facilitate the success of its graduates. Both of these factors will help parents develop a continued commitment to the University throughout their child’s education.

Tour Guides

Tour guides would also benefit from a new alumni application. A tour guide acts to introduce and advertise the University of Maine to prospective students and visitors. Currently this is accomplished through a combination of verbal and visual presentations (walking tours, dining hall explanations, etc.). The new alumni application would provide guides with an effective tool to further showcase the University. Because campus tours start in Buchanan Alumni House, guides would be able to seamlessly integrate the new application into tours. Additionally, the tour guide would be able to choose the most interesting and relevant alumni for a tour group.

III. Solution

ASAP proposes a redesign of the current Galaxy of Stars kiosk that will focus on younger alumni who have demonstrated leadership. Alumni will be presented as role models of the University of Maine community. The redesigned kiosk will provide visitors of the Buchanan Alumni House a way to quickly browse through and learn about alumni. Further functionality to be developed will allow visitors to get more detailed information about a specific alumna/alumnus, including, but not limited to, video interviews, images, and texts. Content will be recorded and collected by a group independent of ASAP and stored in a database. The system will be developed to ensure that content can be easily uploaded, updated, maintained, and expanded.

A new navigational system will be developed to accommodate various audience expectations. For instance, a prospective student may search for alumni by area of study, wanting to see alumni who graduated from the prospective student's field of interest or alumni who graduated from a different discipline but found a career in the prospective student's field of interest. A tour guide will search for alumni who have made major positive impacts both in their industry or in their community, and alumni may search for showcased alumni from their own class.

The new application for the kiosk will be built using HTML5. Building in HTML5 is a more modern approach than building in Flash, the authoring tool used for the current Galaxy of Stars application. Additionally, building in HTML5 will allow ASAP to develop a web version of the application so that users can access the new application from anywhere. The use of HTML5 also opens doors for future development of mobile applications.

The proposed sections of this project (along with individual production times) are:

Content Manager

- A system for efficiently administering, updating, and expanding content. (Approx. 110 hours)
- A system that would pull new content from the database to the kiosk (Approx. 30 hours)

Alumni Profiles

- A series of intuitive content-viewing modules that will display pre-determined content types (i.e. video, audio, images, text) (Approx. 140 hours)
- A profile page template (Approx. 50 hours)

Presentation Systems

- A navigational system catering to the needs of the defined audiences (Approx. 110 hours)
- A filtering system allowing alumni profiles to be organized in various ways (year of graduation, class, discipline, etc.) (Approx. 100 hours)

Should the decision be made to develop a web version of the kiosk, additional time must be spent to prevent any issues that arise:

Web Development

- A web version of the application showcasing the same content and demonstrating similar functionality as the kiosk application (Approx. 30 hours)

NOTE: Description of proposed sections does not include 50 hours time required to develop database.

A key issue with the existing kiosk is that content was collected for it once, after which there was no drive to keep it up to

date. As a whole, this system will be designed to address the issues that caused this to happen. The content manager that will be created will make it easy to update and maintain content, regardless of previous technical knowledge. This will keep existing content from going stagnant and will also alumni profiles to be updated quickly if necessary. Students or interns, potentially the same ones who collected the content, could facilitate uploading content to the kiosk as part of a course or educational experience. Taking advantage of the kiosk in this way would not only give contributors the real-world experience necessary to produce great content, it would also ensure the kiosk is both updated and expanded well into the future.

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IV. Cost Analysis and Development

The proposed project, if all previously mentioned features are designed and implemented with visual styling, will take approximately 720 hours to complete. ASAP Media Services' hourly rate is \$35. The various stages of the project have been organized into sections based on level of priority. A breakdown reflecting the above estimate is as follows:

Cost Analysis

Phase 1

Database Development	50 hours
Content Manager	140 hours

Phase 2

Thematic and Site Design	100 hours
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Phase 3

Alumni Profiles	190 hours
Web Development	30 hours

Cost of Hours Worked	\$25,200.00
Cost of New Computer	\$1,000.00

Total Cost of Project	\$26,200.00*
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* Virtual server pricing to be determined

In the proposed strategy, ASAP will create a database during the summer of 2012. Kiosk application construction will begin at the start of fall 2012 semester and will finish in December of 2012. The application will be implemented on the Buchanan kiosk January 1, 2013. User feedback will be collected and addressed following implementation. Simultaneously, development of a web version will begin. The web version will extend the current Buchanan website and be accessible by April 1, 2013. Once a project section is constructed, it will be sent to Buchanan Alumni House for review and alteration.

ASAP will strive to complete the above tasks on time based on the hourly estimates above, assuming Buchanan Alumni House does not request additional features or services. Should any given section of the project substantially exceed the hourly estimate, ASAP will alert Buchanan Alumni House in a timely manner. Additionally, ASAP and Buchanan Alumni House will meet bi-weekly for status updates and to discuss progress.

V. Conclusion

ASAP Media Services will assist Buchanan Alumni House in effectively showcasing the University of Maine to prospective students and visitors through development of a redesigned kiosk application. By designing the

application in an intuitive way, visitors will be able to quickly browse through alumni and learn about each alumna/alumnus in more detail. Additionally, a web-based application lets users explore alumni content and biographies from anywhere. Both applications will provide visitors with a better understanding of what University alumni are offering to the world.

Sincerely,

ASAP Media Services

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VI. Agreement

Original graphical elements created by ASAP specifically for the application become property of Buchanan Alumni House once payment has been delivered. ASAP shall retain ownership rights of interactivity designs, and reserves the right to reference and reuse source components (void of Buchanan Alumni House's styling, data, or information otherwise) in future projects.

We hereby agree to these terms, conditions, and scope of work between ASAP and Buchanan Alumni House concerning research and development of the Buchanan application.

Susan Mullaney
Buchanan Alumni House

Date

Mike Scott
ASAP Media Service

Date