Criterion F: Feedback and future product development

Client evaluation

Overall, the Android application that I developed was a great implementation for the IIC. News items were being updated weekly, and all of the updates happened in a fast and easy way. This was much better than printing out thousands of pages of news every week for updates. The Android application made everything digital. News updates were convenient and easy to read.

As stated in the client interview, the use of tabs helped categorize information items well. The Android application brought many features that improved the previous Al-Akhbar system for the IIC. Overall, this project was a success.

Evaluation of specific performance criteria outlined in Criterion B: Analysis

Questions regarding the specifications were asked when talking to Hamida for the final evaluation. The answers to those questions will be used to evaluate the degree to which they were met.

1. Create an application/system to display weekly news updates, event information, and Quote of the Week from Ismaili Institution Canada (IIC).

   - All 3 aspects of the Al-Akhbar were incorporated into the Android application through the use of tabbed screens

   - Updates relating to each aspect were displayed in lists along with similar news types

2. Application must be user friendly and work smoothly with the user.

   - Dialog boxes were used to guide the user

   - As Hamida stated, the "offline system was a very smart implementation," as for the first time, the users were able to access news items no matter where they were

   - The process was smoothly designed: simply click the news item and details are expanded

3. Application should be visually appealing, with a logo.

   - Application was designed using XML GUI interfaces, with a custom ListView adapter to display more information for each news item

   - A logo unique to the Ontario users of the IIC was designed through the help of an artist, it was designed in Photoshop

   - The red color scheme was followed to represent the IIC

4. Application should provide important contact information of the IIC.

   - Hamida mentioned the contact information was important in case there was a problem, it can be quickly fixed so that "all Ontario Ismailis can take full benefit of this application with full support from the IIC."

5. Create a server-end application to allow Hamida and IIC committee members to input information into the database and keep the users updated.

   - The application connected to the JSON database to update news content in the application

   - The IIC can update news records in the online database anytime they need, and users connected to the Internet would be instantaneously updated

   - This helps information to be sent to users fast and easily: very important if something urgent needs to be updated last minute

6. Database entries are user friendly for the IIC, and organize content appropriately and automatically.

   - The database records can be added through SQL queries, or through text boxes in the phpMyAdmin built in GUI – no programming knowledge needed to use the system

   - The content is organized by "class" of the data: to categorize events, information, and quotes together.

   - System does this automatically. IIC does not need to worry about anything. All they need to do is input the news updates every week.

Recommendations for the future development of the product

The IIC's Al-Akhbar Android application can be taken much further for the future.

An Apple iOS application can be created to support more users using the Al-Akhbar system. This requires experience in Apple development using Xcode and Swift. An iOS application would extend the IIC's reach to all mobile platforms and help to communicate messages with a 100% delivery rate. The big challenge in making the iOS app would be trying to replicate the exact design of the Android system. Some pre-built features in Android require 3rd party libraries in Apple. The design of the Apple application may need to be modified to fit the specifications of Apple. Maintaining 2 systems simultaneously would become challenging. Separate databases, processes, and structural designs would raise the overall cost of running the Al-Akhbar on mobile devices, and require constant technical assistance. The IIC would need to develop a separate committee to help run the new mobile system.

Moreover, improvements to the actual design of the application can be made as well. One important addition to the application can be a notification launcher. Every time an update is available for the news database, users can be notified about it and launch the download. This would keep users up to date.

An email system can also be integrated into the Al-Akhbar application. Under the more tab, an email text box can be added so that users can directly message the IIC regarding the Al-Akhbar updates. This would help the IIC gain instant feedback on the design of the app, any errors in the news updates, any glitches in the system, or suggestions for future improvements. User feedback would help increase the scope of the application into something the users want. By listening to the users, the application would truly be useful and be used by everyone with full interest.

However, maintaining an email system would need a larger database that is capable of taking input form the application. This would lead to advance database coding, which I do not have knowledge of right now. Developing an email database would greatly increase monthly hosting costs and may not allow the application to be free anymore. Cost would become an issue.

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