gothicbookshop.com

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Problem:

The Gothic Bookshop has been a staple of Duke's campus since 1956. However, it has no online inventory or system of checking/requesting availability. Students have to go in person to make purchases, and the shop may not have what they're looking for. In comparison, customers of bookstores like the Regulator and Barnes and Noble can easily view and order books online. If books are out of stock, customers can easily communicate their requests to the bookstores.

In today's world, websites help businesses connect with their customers beyond the storefront. As the Gothic Bookshop is an important resource for Duke students and community members and features everything from textbooks to original Duke content, it is important for it to transition into the modern age.

The current website: https://www.dukestores.duke.edu/gothic.php

Solution:

We will create a web application to display and manage the Gothic Bookshop's inventory data. Through this application, users can search for and order books. Admin users can update the inventory and check/fulfill orders. Users will have other ways of interacting with the Gothic Bookshop, such as leaving book reviews and requesting new books.

Approaching the Problem:

This idea is conceptually similar to the Mini Amazon project. The application will need user accounts, a product catalog, a cart/ordering system, and product ratings. Additionally, there needs to be a way to update the catalog. Unlike Mini Amazon, this application will have just one vendor (The Gothic Bookshop) and type of product (books).

We plan to stick with the same underlying architecture as Mini Amazon, working with Python, Flask, and PostgreSQL. For early development, we'll use sample data from the ISBN database (such as the data found here). The ISBN database is the world's largest books database, containing up to 19 data points per book (author, title, genre, date published, etc.).

Further down the line, we'd like to get data from the Gothic Bookshop's real inventory. We'll try implementing other helpful features, such as book requesting, book lists, and in-depth book reviews. We believe this project will be both feasible and useful to the Duke population. Given the similarities to Mini Amazon, we will follow a similar project timeline/structure.

Survey of Previous/Related Work:

https://www.regulatorbookshop.com/
https://www.barnesandnoble.com/

Here are examples of bookshop websites. While the Regulator (a local bookshop) and Barnes and Noble (a national bookstore retailer) have different scales of operation, their websites achieve the same purpose: displaying their book inventories and facilitating purchases.

Considerations will have to be made for the vendor's perspective. While these existing websites serve as good templates for the user experience, how will books be added to the underlying database? How will orders be recorded and fulfilled by admins?