

**TEAM REPORT**

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# Introduction

The Loving Paw is a small business dedicated to designing and selling products that will raise awareness about animal adoption. Run by Alexis Enright out of Scottsdale, Arizona, the business sells t-shirts, custom dog tags and other animal adoption related products and donates 10% of the proceeds to the 501(3) non-profit organization Athletes for Animals. The business is run on a user built site hosted on GoDaddy and Alexis designs and creates her products out of her house. In addition to her online orders, Alexis travels the country and attends various pet related events in order to help spread the positive message about animal adoption (as well as sell a few more products). Due to her efforts, The Loving Paw has been steadily growing over the past few years and Alexis is ready to start expanding the business into more professional territory.

# v0.1

We made contact with Alexis immediately after the group decided on The Loving Paw as our project. We were able to set up a meeting with her the weekend after the project selection. Unfortunately, due to other commitments by both the client and team members, the meeting was only able to last 90 minutes to do preliminary requirements gathering. We sat down with Alexis to discuss what her business does, is it a profit or non-profit organization, walk through her current site, find out what technology she is currently using to register and host her site and discuss further what she was looking for from us.

Alexis’ message to us was that she was looking to start expanding her business from a home garage operation to a legitimate small (primarily) business but that she didn’t like her current site hosted by GoDaddy and designed by her with GoDaddy site making tools. She also made very clear to us that she is technologically illiterate when it comes to designing things online, even with site building tools. On top of this, her site had designed piecemeal using GoDaddy for hosting, WordPress for her blog, and Etsy for her shop. The Etsy shop in particular was frustrating for her because it redirected from The Loving Paw site to Etsy itself which has some stifling policies for growing businesses. From our discussion with her, we determined that what she wanted was a brand new site with professional looking design that has centralized features (i.e. shopping cart featured on the site instead of a redirect), and the same features as her previous site. In addition to this, the site had to be easy to manage and edit for someone who has no knowledge of computer code. Most importantly however, due the small size of the company, the web site needed to be completely functional and ready to use by the end of the semester as there was no IT department that would be able to take what we had completed and improve upon it.

With these requirements in mind, the team sat down to discuss our options. After a robust two hour discussion in which every team member contributed quite a few ideas, the following options were decided on as potential choices for our client.

1. Remain with GoDaddy/Etsy/Wordpress. Though this was almost explicitly what the client said she DIDN’T what, a financial analysis revealed that at the level she was at, it would be the most cost effective decision to stay with the format she had.
2. Sign up for Shopify and let us design the site and site functions for her. This option was more in line with what the client wanted and provides easy to use, “out of the box” tools that would make it easy for the client to maintain and manage once our part of the project is completed. Additionally, the site functions are centralized with many available apps to add additional functionality to the site if she decides upon it later. Though this was the least cost effective option for her at this time, her goal of growing of her business means a site on Shopify will eventually come more in line with her goals if she is able to increase her sales.
3. The third option for the client was to allow us to design her site from scratch. This idea was easily the most cost effective as it would cost very little aside from site hosting and domain name registration and provided the most potential creativity as we wouldn’t be restricted by the paid service site building tools. The risk of this option is that there was no guarantee that we would be able to complete the site with the necessary functionality by the end of the semester.

We presented the clients with this option and after some discussion, she elected to use Shopify for her site hosting and designing needs. This was primarily due to the fact that a centralized site that would be easy to maintain and would be completed for her was the primary goal over cost and potential creativity. Understanding that the project that she needed would be completed relatively quickly, we also decided to start brainstorming ideas for analytics campaigns for her new site to try and provide some extra value to the client for her future endeavors.