It's no secret that we live in a wired world, and an organization's attitude toward technology can either propel it upwards or keep it grounded. The Team GAMES Committee presents a bold vision for how we choose to leverage the technology available to us, and this vision is guided by simple principles.

First, The Team GAMES Committee embraces technology in every aspect. Information systems will not be merely an afterthought, nor will their sole purpose be to push content to a website. Instead, we will integrate these systems into our processes; we will use them to make the lives of our volunteers, participants, and website users easier; and we will connect them, enabling us to analyze, act upon, and report data in ways that have previously been unavailable.

Second, we will plan and execute each project with a people-first mentality. We will ensure that our website and all of our web applications are simple to use, designed for use on mobile devices, and accessible to individuals with low vision. Our internal applications will be built so as to simplify processes for our volunteers and staff, instead of merely adding another step in the process. We will also seek to automate tasks wherever possible, allowing us to better allocate our volunteers for other needs.

Finally, we will not reinvent the wheel when we can connect it to the wagon. Most of our technology needs will be filled by software systems that have already been built and tested. Instead of developing these systems ourselves, we need only focus our efforts on integrating vendor-provided systems into our existing architecture. This approach will help save us thousands of hours in software development and testing.

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INFORMATION SYSTEMS PLAN

The Team GAMES Committee presents a bold vision for leveraging technology in almost every aspect of the Gay Games, but this vision will not be possible without a team of individuals dedicated to making it a reality. Positioned in the middle of the Florida High-Tech Corridor, Orlando is the fourth largest high-tech hub in the country, and is home to a number of colleges and universities with respected programs in information technology, computer science and web design.

Some members of the technology team, including the Chief Technology Officer and many of the team leads and managers, will be paid positions. In addition, we will be heavily reliant on skilled volunteers and interns for processes such as content transaction and software testing. The Team GAMES Committee will partner with our local colleges and universities to provide volunteer opportunities for students to help with these tasks in exchange for experience and internship credit.

Chief Technology Officer

It may take a village to carry out the Team GAMES Committee's technology vision, but every village needs a mayor. The Chief Technology Officer (CTO) will fill that role, overseeing all of the technology services and resources developed, acquired and used by our team. The CTO will work with the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers to identify technology needs and requirements; and will supervise various projects to develop and implement solutions to these needs. The Chief Technology Officer is a member of and is accountable to the Board of Directors. Recruitment for this position will begin immediately following the award of Gay Games X.

Design Team

The Design Team will be responsible for designing the user interfaces for all of the technology solutions developed by Team GAMES, including the website and mobile platform. Team GAMES will recruit at least one lead designer. In addition, we will work with local colleges and universities to recruit volunteers to help with the design process.

Content Team

The Content Team will be responsible for writing, publishing, and managing all of the content on the Gay Games Team GAMES website, and will ensure that content is available in multiple languages. The content team will have at least one content editor and as many content writers as necessary. We will also partner with local businesses, such as the Walt Disney World Resort and Universal Orlando, and with local colleges and universities to recruit volunteers to help translate content into all of the languages that our website supports.

Development and Integration Team

The Development and Integration Team will be responsible for developing new technology solutions to meet the needs of the Team GAMES Committee and Gay Games X, in addition to installing and configuring third-party software. The team will test, maintain and support all of these solutions. Finally, the team will develop solutions to integrate the data and functionality of different systems.

Systems Team

The Systems Team will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the hardware and network architecture described below. The team will also be responsible for ensuring that the network, database servers, and web and application servers are adequately secured against external threats. The Systems Team will monitor hardware and network resources and scale database and web servers according to demand.

Gay Games X Envoy

Envoy is the embodiment of the Team GAMES Committee's dedication to creating the best experience for our users. Its goal is to bring together every aspect of participating in the Gay Games. In a single interface, it connects participants to registration, accreditation, lodging, transportation and event ticketing. Envoy will also be social, allowing participants to create an account or login using social media accounts, such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as post messages to their social profiles. Finally, Envoy will be mobile and will even allow participants to use their mobile device as a pass to gain entrance to events.

Envoy will be tightly integrated with our Contact Relationship Management (CRM) system, making it easy for us to collect, analyze and report on all aspects of an individual's participation in Gay Games X. In turn, this data will help us make better decisions in planning for Gay Games X. Transportation for participants, for example, can be scheduled and adjusted based on the hotels at which they are staying and the events in which they are competing.

Envoy Works with Registration

While the registration process itself will use the Federation of Gay Games' registration system, registration data will be regularly synchronized with our CRM system. This will be done through SportingPulse' existing reporting facilities as well as through new mechanisms which we will have SportingPulse develop. By integrating with the registration system, we will be able to analyze registration data within a broader perspective.

Envoy Works with Accreditation

It is said that eighty percent of success is showing up, and Envoy will make showing up even easier. Envoy will interface with the Federation's accreditation system to allow participants to print out access passes before arriving at an event. In addition, some events will allow mobile and tablet devices to be used as an access pass, allowing them to avoid long lines and reduce their impact on the environment.

Envoy Works with Lodging and Transportation

Once a participant has registered through the Federations' registration system, Envoy will be able to suggest different host hotels to them as lodging options. After participants make a lodging reservation, Envoy will keep track of the reservation details. In addition, Envoy will provide information about transportation from the hotel to the Gay Games events in which the participant is registered. Envoy will even be able to help with transportation to and from Orlando's two international airports.

Envoy Works with Events

In the same way that Envoy will allow participants to use their mobile devices for accreditation at events, it will also allow participants to use their device as a ticket for sporting and cultural events which the participant might attend during their free time. Envoy will also provide the ability for participants to buy event tickets.

Envoy is Social

Not only does Envoy organize all of a participant's information in one place, it embraces the best parts of the social world in which we live. In order to make Envoy even easier to use, it will interface with Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and other social networks to provide single-sign-on authentication. Of course, participants will also be able to post, tweet, and share with the world that they've registered for Gay Games X.

Results

The Gay Games Team GAMES website will provide a single interface for results for each sporting event and for individuals teams and players. In addition, we will build an Application Programming Interface (API) that will allow any external party, such as the media and individual teams, to retrieve results and information that matters to them in a computer-readable format. Similar APIs are already used on a larger scale by ESPN and CBS Sports.

Hosted Housing

Team GAMES will partner with local hotels to provide discounted rates for Gay Games X participants, who will be able to make hotel reservations directly through the Gay Games X website. We will develop a system in-house for managing our negotiated inventory with each hotel. The system will also be able to analyze lodging inventory and reservation trends to automatically adjust the order in which properties are displayed to the user. A property nearing capacity, for example, might be pushed further down the list of results while properties with a higher available inventory might be shown first or even promoted by the lodging system.

Mailing Lists

Our Team GAMES Contact Relationship Management (CRM) system includes the ability to create and manage mailing lists for keeping in touch with registered participants, event ticket holders and individuals who are interested in the Gay Games. This system can be configured to work in parallel with any existing mailing lists maintained by the Federation of Gay Games.

Inquiries

All inquiries from the Federation of Gay Games, international governing bodies, potential and registered participants, and the media will be tracked using our CRM system's Case Management System. Using this system will ensure that every inquiry is answered by the appropriate person in a timely manner. It will also allow us to continuously evaluate and improve upon the information we provide through our website, mailing lists and social media.

Media Relations

The Team GAMES website will include a section providing information about Gay Games X specifically for the media. Media professionals will also be able to request media credentials for sporting and cultural events through the website. Finally, there will be interface for media inquiries about Gay Games X, which will be handled as described above.

Event Scheduling

Our Team GAMES will develop an in-house system for coordination of event schedules. The system will be built to prevent scheduling conflicts and to optimize the use of available venues and resources. Once events are scheduled, the data will be integrated into our Contact Relationship Management (CRM) system, which will then link participants to the events for which they have registered.

Event Ticketing

The Team GAMES Committee will develop its own system for selling and validating event tickets. Tickets will be made available for purchase through our website, and users will have the option to print their tickets at home, or pick up their tickets at the event venue.

Event Operations – Powered by The Microsoft® Store

Team GAMES recognizes that each event will present its own technology needs. In addition to deploying a local network, as described below, we will provide multiple workstations at each event and venue for participant accreditation, ticket sales, and attendee accreditation. For sporting events, we will provide as many workstations as necessary for use in scoring and publishing results; for cultural events, we will provide as many workstations as are required for the operation of the event. Workstations will be leased for the duration of the Gay Games.

Our Development and Integration Team will also work with individual sporting and cultural events' software requirements. For sports which require the use of specialized software, the team will install and test the software on the event workstations. The team will also develop software in-house to meet the needs of each event, as necessary, or they will seek out an acceptable third-party alternative.

Finally, a centralized help desk will be set up to handle software, hardware and network issues that arise during the Gay Games. If a problem arises, the help desk will create a record in our issue tracking system and dispatch one or more volunteers to help troubleshoot and resolve the issue. Each event site will have one or more support volunteers, as well as additional backup equipment.

Network Services

The network structure that we deploy at each event and venue will depend upon the requirements of the event. In general, we will deploy our own internal network to connect workstations for accreditation, ticket sales, results management, etc. We will also deploy secure wireless networks for events which require the use of mobile devices. We anticipate that all of our venues will provide internet access to which our network will connect, and we will provide our own internet access when necessary.

In addition, we anticipate that most of our venues will provide free public Wifi access for both participants and attendees. For venues that do not provide such access, we will deploy a public wireless network, separate from the network used by Gay Games X devices.

Cloud-Based Infrastructure

Our Orlando 2018 team will deploy all of its database, application and web servers using a cloud infrastructure provider such as Amazon Web Services or Rackspace. This will provide us with the flexibility to scale resources in real time to meet increases in demand, such as a sudden flood of visitors to our website, while still allowing us to pay only for what we need. It also frees us from some of the concerns of using traditional servers, such as up-front costs, physical securing of servers, power management and internet access. Because cloud servers are virtual instances, they are not susceptible to prolonged downtime due to hardware failures, nor do they require additional spare hardware for backing up data or disaster recovery. Cloud-based infrastructures have already been proven to be a reliable and affordable alternative by companies such as Netflix, which uses the cloud to deliver streaming HD video content to subscribers worldwide.
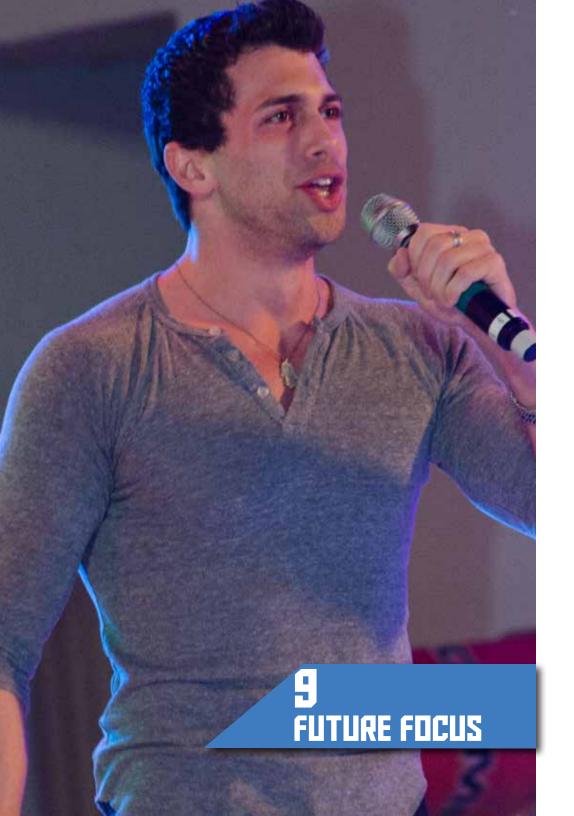
Event Live Streaming

The Team GAMES Committee plans to stream some of its larger events for live viewing across the internet. We will partner with local colleges and universities, allowing broadcast media and film students to operate cameras and switching equipment. We will also partner with YouTube or another online video provider to distribute the streaming video to viewers worldwide.

Telephony and Communications

The Team GAMES will choose a business partner to provide push-to-talk devices use by event staff during Gay Games X. In addition, the same business partner may be used to provide mobile phone service to Team GAMES board members and staff that require it.

Project Management

Team GAMES will follow the standards of the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) in implementing our technological vision. For software developed in-house, we will extend PMBOK with an Agile development methodology. We will use project management and issue tracking packages in order to schedule development projects and resources, and each project will be thoroughly documented from start to finish.

OUR FOCUS ON THE FUTURE

We acknowledge that we present a bold technological vision for Gay Games X. We present this vision, not because we think it will be easily accomplished, but because we believe it will help move the Gay Games forward. In furthering that notion, Team GAMES makes a commitment to pass on as much knowledge as we can to the Federation of Gay Games and to future hosts.

We will use a third-party system, such as a wiki, for all of The Team GAMES' staff and volunteers to document the functions they perform and the processes that they use. In addition, the technology team commits to thoroughly documenting its internal processes and each of the new software packages that it creates.

Team GAMES also plans on using data analytics in various business processes. Because most of the systems we will use will integrate with our CRM system, we expect to be able to gain insight into patterns in website activity, participant registration, participant activities and ticket sales, among other things.

We intend to provide all of this data and documentation to the Federation of Gay Games so that the Federation and future hosts will have better intelligence for Hosting the Gay Games.

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FUTURE FOCUS