How to help the Dunedin Former Refugee community through web presence

Otago Polytechnic | Professional Practice 2 | Team Blue

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Proposal

We would like to propose a greater community interaction and help method for the Former refugees living in Dunedin. This is to be done through a new interactive site to promote communication between the Former Refugees and the wider Dunedin community. The primary site design will be based off a forum with separate groups able to post about issues and requests for help to the greater Dunedin community. With Former refugees having access to this it will be a great quality of life improvement for all those involved with greater access to relevant information and being welcomed into a new community with help from the community interacting and helping through this method.

Support and charity groups have been having issues communicating to each other and as such we are offering the forum service to them with all groups being offered a post locked forum so that only the relevant group may post what they are doing and this will be viewable to everyone to improve overall productivity with no tasks being done twice and increasing exposure to the groups and what they are doing.

Members of the wider Dunedin community that are interested in helping the Former refugees can also use our service to learn about the cultures of Former refugees and interact with them to increase interactivity between cultures and learn about the diverse ways of living in other cultures while also being able to help the Former refugees understand the local Dunedin way of living in turn.

The site will include an integrated Google maps map with pre-set pins detailing any points that may be of interest to the Former refugees.

Centralised Information Space

As part of the site, there will be a centralized information space controlled and managed through a forum. This will take up a bulk of the site as it will provide a means of communication with the community, as well as relay information shared by certain organisations and charities that wish to keep them up to date with their services. The forum can be made up of a variety of programming languages, such as PHP, Perl, JavaScript, and ASP. We would recommend the use of PHP, as it has a simple user interface and can easily manage various forum posts, while at the same time storing the posted information into either text files or a database.

The forum would need to follow a tree like directory structure, allowing users to easily find certain topics discussed or a specific piece of information (for example, where the post office is). This is due to each forum branching out into various topics, thereby managing the workflow of the site and providing user friendly searching for Dunedin community members. The forum, as well as its directory structure, will be managed by administrators and moderators to monitor any "irrelevant" posts and to manage all the technical implications

behind the forum and the site as a whole. As for the various charities and organisations that wish to share their information about their available services to the public, they will have a User Group privilege. This means that their forums will be locked to be only edited by them but seen by the general public, allowing them to update any information without any interference from the public.

Former Refugee Host Help

The site will be usable for members of the Dunedin community as well as host families. This will be done through a separate page of the overall site with helpful packages available to the users such as where they can go to volunteer, where they can go to learn Arabic and other helpful information. A forum style area will also be available here where hosts can talk to each other about things to help as well as discuss donations that a family they know or are helping may need. An example of this is a family in need of a bike so they can post up and any locals from Dunedin (host families or otherwise) can reply in offer. Former refugee interaction in this area is also crucial to discuss any issues that may be posted up in regard to cultural differences and to encourage general discussion

Support Groups and Charity Help

The website will host a forum style layout with multiple sections including a dedicated pinned area for all charities and major organisations that are there to help the Former refugee group. This will be implemented in a separate section that will allow all major organisations to sign in and post frequent updates on what they are doing to help. This section of the forum will only allow the group that started the thread to post in the thread.

This will help keep unwanted information out of the channel and allow other organisations and members of the community to view what each group is doing and to increase inter-organisation management of what organisation is helping in what way as this has been an issue in the past. Also with the organisation area of the forum all members of the forum will be able to post and message in the forum to discuss and offer feedback to the organisations, however only the organisation and commenter will be able to see this meaning that there will be not bloat in the forums themselves.

Former Refugee Help

Former refugees face many challenges in their day to day lives that we believe we can aid them with. Challenges like how to get from point A to point B and how to learn the English language. Our website/ forum is a solution to these issues and is tasked with making Former refugees lives easier. The sites forum will help Former refugees by allowing them to post issues that they might be facing such as not knowing what schools would be good for their children. The issue would then show up on the forum and other Former refugees, Former refugee helpers or hosts would then be able to give their local experience and help someone new to the community.

It would help to build up the idea that Dunedin is a community of people trying to help each other. The site would also include an abundance of useful information for Former refugees such as what help is available for them both from the government and charity organizations. This site would be an asset to any Former refugee that uses it as it would be both a wealth of important information and also a place to feel like a part of a community and feel at home.

Start/ End Dates

The runtime on the given proposal will be an indefinite one if chosen. The site will provide all the criteria needed to make this a very viable solution from the start and continue to grow as the site is live. The community on the site will start small leaving the forum to be something of little use at the very beginning but as the site grows the community discussions and help services shall too, making the site the centre of the help base in the local Dunedin community. This in the mind, the forum will be at the centre of the community feel that the site will have, making it a great solution to any and all ways to ask for help if needed.

Project Objectives

Our main objective is to create an interactive site with communication support provided by a centralized information space in the form of a forum. This forum space will allow individuals in the Dunedin community to communicate and share information that is of beneficial use to the public, as well as the Former refugee community. Furthermore, we wish to allow charities and organisations to communicate useful details about their services to the public, allowing them to better know what they offer to aid ex-refuges.

Milestones and Timeframes

This is an estimation based on information gathered.

Milestone	Milestone Goal	Timeline(completed by)
Project begins	Project is green lit and ready to begin.	Day 1
Design Specifications Finished	Pages sketched out and planned.	Day 5
Preliminary Design Review	Initial design complete	Day 10
Critical Design Review	Detailed design complete and ready for coding	Day 15
Skeleton Complete	Rough skeleton pages are linked and back end is set up	Day 20
Functionality Complete	Site functionality such as forum, map and language functions complete	Day 35
Design Implemented	Design implemented on the pages and Ready for testing	Day 40
Testing Complete	Site rigorously tested and ready to go live	Day 55
Site Live	Site is ready and tested and launched to the public	Day 56

Gig city Community Fund Criteria

As the Gig City Community aims to be of direct benefit to the city of Dunedin, we believe that our proposal meets the criteria perfectly. This is proven by the fact that our help method will benefit both Former refugees and the wider Dunedin community, via an interactive help site. The site will be hugely beneficial in community building and information sharing, through the use of forum technology that all community members have access to. This will enable the community to consistently engage with other group members through these digital services, of which can and will be a safe and reliable source of information.

We understand that some support and charity groups, such as Red Cross, have issues communicating with one another. To correct this issue, we offer a locked forum service that only these relevant groups and individuals have full control over. Thus any important information that either new or old Former refugees may wish to know will be available to them via these forums. This will allow other organisations to pick up on this and be more directly involved with the community than before.

Budget Layout

If chosen the project can start ASAP, as long as the funding is all finalised. Two sources have been contacted to find a rough estimate on the cost of the project with two of them being local Dunedin experts in IT. Myth is a local web development company and their estimation on the time and cost to build the proposal given are five thousand dollars with a six week time frame. Another source that I have spoken too is Adon Moskal (head of projects and Software Engineering at the Polytechnic BIT in Dunedin) who has given us his estimations based on his experience in the past. His estimations are that the project will cost around $25000 and the time frame will be around four weeks.

These suggestions sit at each end of the spectrum and in between is where the cost and timeframe will look to be. Another point to consider is the cost may even start low but go up as you pay to maintain the site through a company.

Another option is taking the project to the Polytechnic BIT and requesting it becomes a Software Engineering project for students to complete over a full semester. This will also mean the quality of the work will more than likely be a lot lower than that of a professionally sought company but would also mean it would be a much cheaper option if time is not a factor (six months to a year) and it will bring back that element of community to the website. It achieves this as the subject in the course is all about giving back to the community and helping out wherever possible to make Dunedin a much better community where we can.

A further cost to consider is the deploying of the website and hiring of a server. Amazon web services would be the best option for such a proposal and to be more specific on demand instances is the best option for the price. The t2 micro or small services are what will be needed to start with and the pricing for those are looking to be at $0.016 for micro and $0.032 for small and these prices are per hour.

Permits/ Consent

No permits or consent should be needed to build the site. The only possible consent you would need is a courtesy consent from sites you link to such as Red Cross. There is also consent needed from the users with terms and conditions when signing up to the site.