**Part 1: Team and Collaboration Plans:**

Phillip Nguyen, Senior Informatics Major, [phillihn@uci.edu](mailto:phillihn@uci.edu)

Juwan Michael De Jesus, Junior Informatics Major, [juwand@uci.edu](mailto:juwand@uci.edu)

Matthew Morales, Senior Informatics Major, [matthdm2@uci.edu](mailto:matthdm2@uci.edu)

Alonso De La Torre Vega, Senior Informatics Major, [delator2@uci.edu](mailto:delator2@uci.edu)

Jason Hing Lun Tam, Senior Software Engineer Major, [jasonht@uci.edu](mailto:jasonht@uci.edu)

**Will you be assigning particular roles?**

* We will not be assigning particular roles, I think we will just be doing it based off work-load, so we’ll assign people work-loads but not roles. Work-loads will be distributed based on team member’s capability and will be cycled to ensure each team member performs each task to maintain equal distribution. Should differentiation be needed later for more specialized tasks and assignments we will revisit role assignment.

**How often will you meet? How will you handle situations when you can't all meet in person?**

* Our team has agreed to meet at least once a week outside of class (preferably twice a week to ensure quality), totaling about 4-6 hours for the entire week. If we cannot meet in person, we will agree on work distributions and complete the work remotely and update each other on our individual efforts.

**Do you have processes in place for scheduling meetings, making decisions, writing together, submitting assignments, etc.?**

* We are using third-party applications to manage scheduling, like “when2meet”, shared virtual workspaces like Google Team Drive to manage workload and in-person meetings to make decisions. Communications are kept through direct text-messaging in a collective group chat.

**What are your communication expectations?**

* Expectations regarding communication are as follows: team members must communicate consistently and promptly and communication between team members must be respectful and reflect the priorities of the group as a whole. Furthermore, if team members are unable to complete a task or attend a particular meeting, they are expected to reach out to other group members and inform them as soon as possible. Transparency and honesty are appreciated by the team, and we will try to be as understanding and flexible as possible.

**What tools will you use to support your collaboration?**

* Currently, the toolset we utilize is: Google Drive as a virtual workspace, text messaging for communication, and web-based applications like “when2meet” for scheduling. Weekly face-to-face meetings will also be used to manage collaborative efforts in task assignment and completion.

**Are there any challenges you anticipate to completing your project on time (e.g. travel, work schedules, platform incompatibilities, etc.)?**

* A few of our team members commute from off-campus locations, which may affect availability for weekly in person meetings. Other team members engage in extracurricular activities which may also require work-arounds to ensure consistent scheduling. Furthermore, most of our team have work during the week, which also may complicate weekly meetings.

**Is there anything else we should know about your team?**

* N/A

**Part 2: The Product/Service/App:**

**Product Description:**

Our team has decided to evaluate and redesign a system called “Bottom Line Telecommunications” (BLT). Bottom Line Telecommunications originally began as a systems design and consulting firm, but has since evolved into a global e-commerce “product and solution provider” (shopblt.com). The system itself is a website similar to other e-commerce websites, such as Amazon and eBay; however it does not possess as extensive a catalog as its competitors. The website sells over 300,000 items that fall under the category of modern computing technology; items such as computers, computer parts, accessories, etc. It can be accessed through a normal web browser via desktop and mobile.

**Will you be working with the complete product or a subset of its features?**

* Our team has agreed to work on the complete product, since we believe that the site as a whole can give us more to work with. Some features on the website already work well, we just want to concentrate on the other features that don’t work as well and merge the two together; this will enhance the website as a whole. Specifically we will be targeting areas of the website that reflect core goals expressed by the user base. These features include, looking for information about products, searching for specific products, finding information regarding logistics of the service, and item collection and purchasing.

**Who produces this product? What kind of an organization is it?**

* As previously stated BLT was founded in 1991, as a systems design and consulting firm and turned into an e-commerce website providing its customers with over 300,000 products and solutions from major manufacturers all over the world. The company CEO’s name is David Durel. He serves as the head of the customer service department and sole developer of the website. The organization is a for-profit business that aims to provide products while maintaining excellent customer service.

**What is the product's history? Is it new or old? Has it gone through lots of versions? How has it changed?**

* Bottom Line Telecommunications began twenty-eight years ago in 1991 as a systems design and consulting firm. Since then they have evolved into an e-commerce website similar to those of Amazon and eBay. Their primary source of business is selling software, computers, and computer-related technology. The website has undergone several version changes over the years as it is under constants development. The CEO works on developing the service everyday to improve functionality and productivity.

**Part 3: Competitive Analysis:**

1. Bottom Line Telecommunications
   1. <https://www.shopblt.com/>
   2. BLT is an e-commerce website that specializes in selling computer related products and services.
2. Amazon (Direct Competitor)
   1. <https://www.amazon.com/>
   2. Amazon is an e-commerce site that sells a wide variety of products ranging from kitchen appliances to expensive electronics.
3. eBay (Direct Competitor)
   1. <https://www.ebay.com/>
   2. eBay is an e-commerce site that is similar to Amazon however it is less popular even though it provides almost the same goods and services. It allows everyday users to buy and even sell their products without setting up a formal business.
4. Best Buy (Indirect Competitor)
   1. <https://www.bestbuy.com/>
   2. Best Buy is a physical and online retail store that specializes in electronic related goods. They typically carry big brand names and target the general public for their audience.
5. Fry’s Electronics (Indirect Competitor)
   1. <https://www.frys.com/>
   2. Fry’s Electronics is also a physical and online retail store that specializes in electronic items as well. They carry a wide variety of electronic goods.

**You should then compare and contrast the products in terms of:**

* **The problem being addressed**
  + Amazon: Providing an online platform for customers (or users) to find and discover desired products they wish to purchase.
    - Searching for a product: Amazon uses categorical drop down menus that allow for organization of products beyond that of our system. Amazon possesses a much wider selection of products than BLT, resulting in a wider user base and thus more customer traffic.
    - Purchasing: Amazon utilizes several forms of payment methods once an item or set of items have been discovered and allocated to the shopping cart. Standard credit card information collection is used for less frequent customers and one time sales: however Amazon also offers “one-click” purchasing, streamlining the checkout process for more frequent customers.
    - Finding information regarding shipping and logistics: Amazon offers several links to information regarding their services. Most information is posted online for users to find on their own. Customer support can also be contacted via phone, which are similar locations to how information can be found about BLT.
    - UI: The User Interface is cluttered with advertisements of Amazon owned products, products offered based on user activity and trending and products under price reduction. Amazon tends to use a lot of images to provide visual support for product identification, this differs dramatically from BLT given that most of the product listings do not offer visual aid.
  + eBay: eBay works to provide a global online marketplace that is centered around providing users the opportunity to buy, sell, and trade any items they wish.
    - Searching for a product: eBay like most other e-commerce websites has a search engine that indexes the products located in the eBay “inventory” and user listed marketplaces. This allows users to find and discover items that they may want to purchase. eBay offers an opportunity to find items, such as collectibles and gadgets that may not be offered by competitors like Amazon or BLT.
    - Purchasing: eBay offers standard credit card information collection, allowing users to pay via credit card. eBay also supports other forms of third-party payment systems, such as PayPal. Some vendors even accept cryptocurrency which allows for greater variation and scope of payment methods. These other forms of payment may appeal to a niche user base that competes with BLT.
    - Finding information regarding shipping and logistics: eBay offers many online resources for standardized information on eBay’s operations. User-based vendors have online portals that provide information on how operations work and how to get in contact with non-eBay affiliates.
    - UI: Similar to Amazon’s user interface, eBay’s homepage is riddled with product images that signify the type of product to the user making it easier to identify and discover products. While eBay is more of a free market trading platform, the products advertised on the homepage are those that resemble newer products from more established vendors. In this way, eBay builds a customer base similar to that of Amazon, but differs from competitors such as BLT and Fry’s Electronics.
  + Best Buy: Wishes to provide a central location for customers to acquire latest devices and services at competitive prices while educating customers with knowledgeable advice.
    - Searching for a product: When at a Best Buy store the customer can look for specific sections that are labeled to make finding their desired item easy. Another option is to also ask an employee at the store to direct them to the product they need. Asking the employee also has the benefit of obtaining information for them to know if they are getting the best product for their needs or if there is a better alternative. This type of interaction allows users to have a more intimate interaction with Best Buy when compared to BLT which can be advantageous for future purchases.
    - Purchasing: In store purchases will allow customers to pay with cash, check, credit card, or some sort of combination of these things. These are generic purchasing methods used by most users while BLT tries to provide more purchasing options to appeal more to their niche user base.
    - Finding information regarding shipping and logistics: The Best Buy website gives clear information about their shipping and logistics. This information can also be found out in person or similar to BLT they can also make a phone call directly to the company to find out more information.
    - UI: One of the first things to be noticed about Best Buy is that whether in person or on their website there will be an emphasis on the amount of savings that you can have by buying certain products. This is to entice people into buying these sale products even if it was not their first choice. On the other hand BLT has a focus on their most popular products on their website.
  + Fry’s Electronics: Establish a solid customer base with a broad selection of devices, services, and products relating to electronics, computers, and household appliances.
    - Searching for a product: Searching for a product at Fry’s is like most other retail stores where you can either go onto their website to see if it is available in a store near you or available for shipping. The alternative to this would be to go physically to the store and look in their aisles or ask one of the employees to assist with finding the item. However, BLT is an e-commerce site so the user would only be able to see what they have on the website since no physical location exists.
    - Purchasing: Fry’s uses all the major payment methods such as cash, check, and credit card while the BLT site will allow users to use credit card, cryptocurrency, or some other niche payment method. The Fry’s payment method focuses on the general public’s payment methods
    - Finding information regarding shipping and logistics:Fry’s shipping and logistics information can be found on their website with an easy search. Another option is to go in the store and ask about it in person or to give a store a call about this information. BLT only has the options of checking the website or calling the company for the information.
    - UI: In person and on their website Fry’s has an emphasis on the best deals they are currently offering and whatever sales are going on. They will also show their most popular products to entice users to buy them. On the other hand BLT focuses on their most popular products on their home screen and want to make the user feel comfortable by showing them that they are a trusted service.
  + BLT:
    - BLT is omitted from this section of the competitive analysis due to descriptions of the product provided in Part 2. Please refer to Part 2 for details on “the problem being addressed”.
* **The functionality or feature set**
  + Amazon: Amazon’s feature set include functions that serve to streamline the purchasing process. Product suggestions are provided when the user is viewing a particular product. When searching for a product, related departments and products are suggested. Auto-fill suggestions and popular searches are also provided. As previously stated in another section, Amazon also provides the ability to save credit card, billing, and shipping information and also offers one-click purchasing.
  + eBay: eBay offers similar product suggestions, a more advanced form of searching and indexing than BLT, and product bidding. Users don’t have to commit to a single price for a particular product. Less established vendors will sometimes put items up for bid, allowing other users to place bids on an item. This method usually allows users to purchase, semi-new previously owned, or even new products for less than the average market price.
  + Best Buy: Best Buy’s on-site location’s primary functionality is its customer service. Customers can come in without knowing what they want and be greeted by a customer service representative who will help them identify or discover their desired products. This allows customers to acquire more information about products rather than scrolling through customer reviews online. They also have on-site consultations and servicing for computer and computer-related products and services.
  + Fry’s Electronics: Like Best Buy and BLT, Fry’s Electronics focuses mainly on customer service. Unlike its competitors Fry’s has a string of superstores in Silicon Valley. The on-site locations provide free consultation for product inquiries. How users search for products differ from online methods. Users can search for products on their own or have a customer service representative assist them in finding the product. Fry’s also has servicing and repair for computer related products and some software services.
  + BLT: Like Fry’s and Best Buy, BLT plays to the strength behind its customer service. The platform itself has basic Boolean Search as its indexing functionality. Because of this, the user must enter word exactly related to the desired product, and related products are more difficult to find. Suggestions are not provided, nor are popular searches. BLT offers full access to customer service during business hours with minimal wait times.
* **The user base for the product**
  + Amazon: Amazon is one of the most valuable public companies today and is one the biggest e-commerce marketplaces. Most of Amazon’s user base are consumers that wish to browse and buy online knowing that they have the ability to return the product if they are not satisfied. Amazon’s primary user base utilizes amazon due to low prices, free shipping options, and high product reviews. Although amazon is a global marketplace most of the user traffic comes from the United States.
  + eBay: eBay is also a major e-commerce website, its users not only have the ability to buy but also to sell and trade. eBay appeals to sellers that may not necessarily want to start a business to sell products but only want to sell a few items. This allows for a broader user base that allows for a different kind of interaction among users. Users will use eBay over other sites and products for this ability to sell personally owned products and because of its long standing reputation.
  + Best Buy: Best Buy sells similar products to its user base like Amazon and BLT but it also has a physical store. Best Buy is a huge contrast to Amazon in that a good number of people go to its physical store to explore its products and then its users decide to purchase it or not. Best Buy offers on site personal computer repair and computer related inquiries. On site customer support separates it from sites like Amazon or BLT, and its wide range of products in its catalog separates it from its direct competitors such as Fry’s Electronics.
  + Fry’s Electronics: Fry’s is similar to Best Buy on the fact that they also have a physical store where most users have the ability to go into the store. Fry’s, like Best Buy has an on-site tech team that allows customers to go in and inquire about computer details or request to have their computer based products serviced. The user base of Fry’s varies as they continue to offer a wider selection of products, but remains relatively the same as BLT’s, being primarily interested in computed based products and services.
  + BLT: BLT’s services are primarily online, thusly they foster a niche environment similar to Amazon. The customer base is served primarily through the website. BLT also has team members present during business hours taking calls from customers providing customer service, for customers with questions or inquiries on orders and processing.
* **Any other notable similarities or differences**
  + Amazon: Similar UI to that of eBay and BLT.
  + eBay: While eBay may not have the same user base as BLT, they both foster a niche customer base. eBay offers a free market trading platform, and BLT offers a tech specific e-commerce experience that competes with Amazon’s customer service.
  + Best Buy: Similar mission statement to Fry’s and Amazon. Similar user base and initiative to that of Fry’s
  + Fry’s Electronics: Similar mission statement to Best Buy and Amazon. Similar user base to Best Buy. Similar to Best Buy in that they both offer on-site tech expertise on products carried.
  + BLT: BLT like eBay has a niche customer base. BLT differs from the other competitors due to the platform offering mostly tech based products, like software, computers, and computer related products and services.