Dateline Downtown

PROJECT PLAN

April 14, 2021

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Problem Statement

Dateline Downtown ("Dateline") is the official student newspaper for the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD). It has been in existence since 1982 and is currently published both online and as a print copy. Dateline prides itself on being student-run, and it currently publishes six issues each semester. Dateline is an important resource for information regarding socio-political, economic, and educational events, as well as personalities that affect the student body of UHD.

Due to a myriad of factors, including a small number of full-time staff members, short supply of economic resources, and sparse access to journalistic expertise, Dateline has faced significant challenges to increasing its volume of regular readers and improving the efficiency of its infrastructure. The administrative team of Dateline wishes to implement measures to improve its online website that will not only increase website traffic and online readership, but also make the paper more attractive to potential contributors through added resources and standardized workflow processes.

Mission Statement

The purpose of this project is to propose and apply revisions to the UHD Dateline student newspaper to enhance its appeal to the student body and increase regular viewership. The newspaper has the potential to become a more useful resource tool for information, updates, journalistic development, and scholarship.

Project Objectives

The project objectives are as follows:

- Increase website traffic to the Dateline website by 20% by June 30, 2021.
- Decrease manual onboarding emails required for new student contributors by 20% by May 12, 2021.
- Submit 2 new website sections featuring journalistic resources for new contributors and an editor's handbook for publishing by May 12, 2021.

Project Work Requirements

1. **New resources page**
   a. Visitors will be able to view web pages that contain: Editor's handbook detailing workflow processes, methods, specifications, and points of contact for submitting content to the UHD Web IT for publishing.
   b. An additional page will be created for visitors to view journalism standards and practices.
2. **New page for latest featured articles**
   a. Develop a webpage that will contain featured articles that can be updated frequently with new content.
3. **Redesigned landing page**
   a. The landing page will have additional navigation links to the newly created resources pages.
   b. The page will have a dynamic preview for new articles/issues.
   c. The page will contain a link to the featured articles page.
   d. It will provide visitors links to Dateline's social media accounts.
4. **Updated student application page**
   a. The webpage should contain information about application process requirements and onboarding expectations.
5. **Automated onboarding communication**
   a. The online form will collect student contributors' inputted contact information and initiate a process to communicate via email the next steps taken during the contributor's onboarding process.

Exit Criteria

The exit criteria for each milestone will be based upon group consensus and final approval by the Project Manager (PM). As individual tasks are either assigned or completed, the data is displayed on the shared project management software tool, ClickUp. Each member has the ability to make revisions as appropriate and communicate any alterations or additions to tasks via the mobile-based GroupMe communication tool.

All milestones that require presentation to the Project Management class or instructor will be considered complete after final grade for the milestone has been assigned.

Milestone	Criteria
Data gathering complete	Team Dateline will meet with major stakeholders ("client") to discuss the stakeholders' desire for an improved online newspaper (I.e. "wish list'). Team Dateline will discuss during meeting what items it believes it can successfully accomplish within the scope of time allotted for the project. Team Dateline will receive information from stakeholders regarding resources required to accomplish tasks, as well as sufficient access to resources, such as permission to make alterations to Dateline web page, a copy of the current handbook, and information on current payroll processes. Team Dateline will reach a consensus with stakeholders regarding reasonable deliverables and then hold separate Zoom meeting to determine if all necessary information has been gathered to complete desired tasks. Data gathering will be considered complete when a group consensus has been met by project team.
Automated student onboarding email complete	A script will be designed that can be e-mailed to potential contributors, which will explain the requirements for journalistic submissions. The e-mail script will be edited for content before being submitted to client for final approval. Automated student contributor application initiation email will be considered completed when it is approved by client.
Resources page complete	Team Dateline will obtain content from client needed for resources page, including the editor's handbook. Team Dateline will format a new resources page that will contain information needed for potential contributors to submit journalistic content and understand reimbursement process. Resources page will be reviewed by client for approval and submitted to IT team for publishing. Resources page will be considered complete when successfully published by IT team.
Student application page complete	Team Dateline will retrieve necessary information from client regarding what items are expected to be completed by new contributors to the Dateline newspaper. Team Dateline will draft a new application page and perform QA and editing on new design before reviewing the design with client. After client approval, Team Dateline will submit new application page to I.T. team for publishing on Dateline website. Student application page will be considered complete when it has been successfully published by IT team.
Website mockup complete	A mockup of a new articles page will be designed. Sample articles for the new page will be obtained and submitted to new page. Articles page will be reviewed by client for approval and submitted to IT team for publishing. Website mockup will be considered complete when it has been submitted successfully by IT team.
New and redesigned website pages sent for publishing	The new and redesigned website pages will be considered complete when approved by client and successfully published by IT team.

Work Breakdown Structure

[A] Resources page	[B] Latest articles page	[C] Redesigned landing page	[D] Updated student application page	[E] Automated onboarding communication
[A1] Obtain content for journalistic resources	[B1] Design mockup of new articles page	[C1] Check for constraints with Web IT team	[D1] Obtain needed information from client	[E1] Obtain links to required forms and instructions for new contributors
[A2] Obtain content for editor's handbook	[B2] Obtain sample articles to feature on page	[C2] Design mockup of new landing page	[D2] Draft new application page with required fields	[E2] Create automated email with instructions and required links
[A3] Draft and format new page with gathered content	[B3] Review new articles page with client	[C3] Review new landing page with client	[D3] Review new application page with client	[E3] Review automated email with client
[A4] Review and edit new page within team	[B4] Submit new articles page to Web IT team for publishing	[C4] Submit new landing page to Web IT team for publishing	[D4] Consult with Web IT team about tracking applicant status	[E4] Submit automated email materials to Web IT team
[A5] Review new resources page with client			[D5] Submit new application page to Web IT team for publishing	[E5] Test new automated email
[A6] Submit new resources page to Web IT team for publishing			[D6] Perform input validation on application page	

Milestone Schedule

Date	Milestone Description
April 16, 2021	Data gathering complete
April 20, 2021	Automated student onboarding email complete
April 27, 2021	Resources page complete
April 27, 2021	Student application page complete
May 4, 2021	Website mockup complete
May 12, 2021	New and redesigned website pages sent for publishing

Working Schedule

Task ID	Task	Duration (days)	Start Date	End Date
A	**Resources page**	**12**	**4/13/21**	**5/11/21**
A1	Obtain content for journalistic resources	1	4/13/21	4/13/21
A2	Obtain content for editor's handbook	1	4/13/21	4/13/21
A3	Draft and format new page with gathered content	5	4/19/21	4/24/21
A4	Review and edit new page within team	1	4/26/21	4/27/21
A5	Review new resources page with client	3	5/4/21	5/7/21
A6	Submit new resources page to Web IT team for publishing	1	5/11/21	5/11/21
B	**Latest articles page**	**10**	**4/15/21**	**5/4/21**
B1	Design mockup of new articles page	5	4/15/21	4/22/21
B2	Obtain sample articles to feature on page	1	4/15/21	4/15/21
B3	Review new articles page with client	3	4/22/21	4/27/21
B4	Submit new articles page to Web IT team for publishing	1	5/4/21	5/4/21
C	**Redesigned landing page**	**12**	**4/13/21**	**5/10/21**
C1	Check for constraints with Web IT team	1	4/13/21	4/13/21
C2	Design mockup of new landing page	7	4/14/21	4/21/21
C3	Review new landing page with client	3	5/3/21	5/6/21
C4	Submit new landing page to Web IT team for publishing	1	5/10/21	5/10/21
D	**Updated student application page**	**13**	**4/13/21**	**5/5/21**
D1	Obtain needed information from client	3	4/13/21	4/16/21
D2	Draft new application page with required fields	5	4/20/21	4/25/21
D3	Review new application page with client	2	4/25/21	4/27/21
D4	Consult with Web IT team about tracking applicant status	1	4/27/21	4/30/21
D5	Submit new application page to Web IT team for publishing	1	4/30/21	4/30/21
D6	Perform input validation on application page	1	5/3/21	5/5/21
E	**Automated onboarding communication**	**14**	**4/13/21**	**5/5/21**

Task ID	Task	Duration (days)	Start Date	End Date
E1	Obtain links to required forms and instructions for new contributors	3	4/13/21	4/16/21
E2	Create automated email with instructions and required links	5	4/20/21	4/25/21
E3	Review automated email with client	2	4/25/21	4/27/21
E4	Submit automated email materials to Web IT team	1	5/1/21	5/1/21
E5	Test new automated email	3	5/1/21	5/5/21

Required Resources

People

Resource	Role	Contact Information
Dasha Tukanova	Project Manager	tukanovad1@gator.uhd.edu
Charles (Anthony) Morehead	Team Member	moreheadc20@gator.uhd.edu
Erik Jaimes	Team Member	jaimese7@gator.uhd.edu
Timothy Davis	Team Member	davist23@gator.uhd.edu
Joseph Sample, Ph.D.	Dateline Faculty Sponsor	samplej@uhd.edu
Jaida Doll	Dateline Editor	dollj1@gator.uhd.edu
Sheryl Sellers	Dateline Business Manager	sellerss2@gator.uhd.edu
Gerardo Nevarez	UHD Web IT Team	nevarezg@uhd.edu
Veronique Molinier	UHD Web IT Team	molinierv@uhd.edu
Jillian Hill, Ph.D.	Project Sponsor	hillj@uhd.edu

Technology

Application	Description
ClickUp	ClickUp will be the project management software used for the project to track tasks and ensure deadlines are met.
Microsoft Outlook	Outlook will be used to communicate with the Dateline team for the purposes of gathering needed materials, providing status reports, and obtaining feedback and approval on project deliverables.
Microsoft OneDrive	OneDrive will be used to store materials needed for the project.
Microsoft Word	Word will be used to draft and review content for new website pages and create mockups of website redesign.
SharePoint	SharePoint will be used to obtain some resources from the Dateline team.
Formstack	Formstack will be used to collect application submission information and generate automated onboarding email.

Control System

Quality Control System

Our project consists of multiple deliverables on different sections of the Dateline Website. The tasks for each pillar follow similar paths. Instead of having the same team member work on the same subtask across all sections, we have different team members working different tasks on the different sections. This gives us the unique advantage that multiple team members have different experiences and know the capabilities of the system and procedural hurdles. The impact of a simple RACI chart is more than just accountability, but quality is also embedded in that internal review.

Ultimately the deliverables are reviewed by the PM and the sponsor. The purpose of the Quality Control System is to identify quality issues prior to the deliverable date.

Change Control System

Scope has been a challenge with this project. There is an overarching desire for the sponsor to restructure the entire Dateline department which is beyond the scope of the project. There was also feedback from the project plan.

Anyone can initiate a change. The request goes through the Project Manager. The PM can make a determination on the spot, or converse with the team during the monthly meeting. Consideration will be given to the impact on the objectives and agreed upon deliverables. A feasibility survey could be considered. Current workload, delays, or concerns about meeting deadlines should also be considered.

Part of this project relies on obtaining information from the client. If this information is not obtained timely, a change request might be initiated to reassign the information gathering to another team member or stakeholder.

Conflict Control System

The deliverables are separated into different pillars representing the different sections of the Dateline website. Different team members are responsible for different sections of the website. There may be creative differences as we try to keep similar style of themes across the different pages.

Internal conflicts are handled internally. This is a small team of 4 people. Conflicts or disagreements should be discussed openly in GroupMe chat or during the weekly status meeting, so we are all aware of the struggles. Conflict management was already defined in the project charter. Different viewpoints are able to express their specific recommendation do the group. From there it's up to a vote. As we have an even number of team members, the PM's vote counts as 2 to avoid a tie.

If the conflict impacts the deliverable, it will be up to the PM to determine if the different viewpoints should be handled internally or if the sponsor should make a final decision. All efforts will be handled at the lowest level possible, usually by the PM.

Major Contributors (Linear Responsibility Chart)

P = Primary Responsibility   S = Support   Blank = No Responsibility

Task ID	Project Contributors			
	Dasha	Anthony	Erik	Timothy
A1	P	S		
A2	P	S		
A3		P		
A4	P	S	S	S
A5	P	S	S	S
A6		S	P	
B1	S		P	
B2	S		P	
B3	P	S	S	S
B4			P	
C1	P			
C2	P		S	
C3	P	S	S	S
C4			S	
D1	S		S	P
D2		S	S	P
D3	P	S	S	S
D4			P	S
D5	P			S
D6			S	P
E1	S		S	P
E2		S	S	P
E3	P	S	S	S
E4			P	S
E5			S	P

Risk Areas

Risk	Probability	Impact	Trigger	Contingency
Information not obtained from client	Medium	High	Information not obtained 24 hours after deadline	Generic information is constructed by team members, inspired by competing university newspaper websites.
Hurricane, plague, or other event disrupts communications	Low	High	24 hours after State of Emergency declared by City of Houston	Team members continue to work on their prospective areas. Quality reviews might suffer if communication is disrupted. Milestones could be delayed, and focus will be put on final quality review and overall project deadline.
UHD IT is unable to test and upload changes by the deadline	Medium	Medium	Upon notification that UHD IT's go-live date is beyond the project deadline	Offline documents are prepared and submitted to the sponsor prior to the project deadline. There should be enough information to assess the quality of the product and give a good indication of the final product.
Project Management software ClickUp becomes unavailable or unreliable	Low	Medium	ClickUp is unavailable for 48 hours	Tasks and assignments have been included in this document. Team will resort to manual tracking of tasks and give mid-week updates to the PM ahead of the weekly team meeting. Instead of automated reports through the project management software, updates will need to be compiled manually by each team member.
Team member unable to complete course	Low	High	Immediately upon notification of illness or dropped course	Tasks will be reassigned equally among the remaining team members including the PM. We will consider if some deliverables are no longer realistic given the timetable and available resources.