University Libraries

Executive Summary

Community Partner
Jeff Hinkelman
Student Development Team
Obed Appiah-Agyeman
Devin Fan
Pavan Gollapalli
Stephen Yamalis

Background

Our client is Jeff Hinkelman who represents the interests of both the Oscar Micheaux Society and the University Libraries. The Oscar Micheaux Society is a specific scholarly interest group (SIG) within the greater Society of Media and Cinema Studies. Its specific aim is to promote studies in film and media created by producers of African descent. The University Libraries currently houses the Video Collection which is a location where students can go to view video and film resources for classwork. Jeff Hinkelman serves as both the Carnegie Mellon University Video Collection Manager and the chairperson of the Oscar Micheaux Society.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

Currently the Oscar Micheaux Society does not have a platform that supports the research and learning of Oscar Micheaux films for students, teachers or film enthusiasts. Additionally, for Film & Media Studies instructors there is no platform that supports film studies for pedagogical use. Due to their size, it becomes difficult to share film files that have been edited or created. This causes issues for instructors when reviewing student submissions. Platforms that currently support video uploading such as Youtube and Vimeo allow users to freely upload to their own channels, however these platforms cannot be considered archives as videos can be removed by the platform, and also all videos will be lost if the service discontinues.

Project Vision

The vision for this project is a system in which users can download and stream films in the public domain and upload student films and accompanying essays. The goal of our project is to create a resource that can encourage the pedagogical use of video materials and documentation through the context of Oscar Micheaux. The project should enhance the learning experience of users interested in Micheaux but also users wanting to practice film techniques. Our initial project build will include an overview of Oscar Micheaux but also the ability download, edit, and reupload films on a social media like user interface. Users of this project would include students, teachers/professors, and scholars interested in learning about Micheaux. The value of our solution is not only in providing a resource for learning about Micheaux but in its long-

term ratifications if expanded. This project can encourage the practice of video learning in classrooms with films across universities.

Project Outcomes

The immediate project outcomes created are a system deployed on CMU infrastructure which hosts Oscar Micheaux films for download and streaming and allows students to upload their own film projects. Students in one of Jeff's courses have used the system to complete two projects in the course. Additionally, the project has been accepted by the Dean of Libraries as a test case for the broader project of hosting downloadable content and archiving student submissions.

Project Deliverables

The deliverables primarily consist of the current system hosted within CMU infrastructure focused on Oscar Micheaux as well as a brief guide for how to use and maintain the web application.

Recommendations

We recommend that Jeff hires an IS student on a work study program to work among his video collection staff and handle maintenance and upgrades for the system. Additionally, we recommend that single sign on (SSO) gets fully implemented on the site and that the library continues to support the system as it expands to further capabilities across the university.

Student Development Team

Stephen Yamalis served as Project Manager and User Test Lead. He is a senior majoring in Information Systems with minors in Business Administration and Film & Media Studies. He is graduating May 2018 with plans to work at Deloitte as a Business Technology Analyst.

Pavan Gollapalli was the Technical and Quality Assurance Lead. He is a junior majoring in Information Systems and minoring in Computer Science. He is graduating in May 2019 and plans to work in software engineering at a startup.

Obed Appiah-Agyeman led Design and Front-End Development. He is a junior majoring in Information Systems with an additional major in Human-Computer Interaction. He is graduating in May 2019 with plans to work around creative direction starting with software development.

Devin Fan was the Back-End Development Lead. He is a junior majoring in Information Systems and Computer Science. He is graduating in May 2019 with plans to work in software development. He will be interning at Apple Inc. this summer.