Beaver County Humane Society

Executive Summary

Community Partners
Donna Bucek
Susan Salyards
Jasmin Wu
Student Development Team
Gus Henry
Shijie Rao
Alex Wang

Background

The Beaver County Humane Society is a local humane society that has served Beaver County and the surrounding area since 1950. Aside from adoption services, veterinary services, and educational sessions, the Humane Society also has a fostering program, which allows for local residents to take home animals that are young, sick, or injured, and care for them until they are ready to be adopted out. Throughout the year, and especially at peak seasons when more animals are brought in, the humane society needs as many people as possible to volunteer to take home foster animals.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The current process of deciding whom to foster an animal to requires either looking through existing paper foster applications, or relying on the memory of a few individuals. This semester, the Beaver County Humane Society worked with the student development team to create a solution to better reach out to local residents, in order to increase the percentage of animals fostered. The team hopes to save the staff significant time by digitizing foster applications, and matching potential fosters to the animals the humane society takes in, but cannot yet adopt out.

Project Vision

Our team proposes an application that shows all animals needing fostering, and matches each to the best foster parent, so the staff can quickly and easily foster out animals as quickly as possible.

Project Outcomes

Our team built a web application in which staff members can view all animals currently needing fostering, and a prioritized list of suggested fosters who are best matched to each animal. The system takes in characteristics about the animal (e.g. whether it is sick or has behavioral issues) and matches them to potential fosters based on requirements and preference (e.g. will only take dogs).

Project Deliverables

We will be deploying the system on their server in-house, as well as delivering folders including source code, design documents, user interview and test results, and informational and maintenance documentation.

Recommendations

The first steps that BCHS needs to take to begin utilizing the functionality of this system requires digitizing their existing paper foster applications in order to have the foster base available in the system to use to match to animals. This will need to be done either by current staff or volunteers, according to procedures laid out in documentation.

In order for the project to be sustained within BCHS, we recommend they follow the provided documentation regarding procedures and maintenance steps. The people in IT positions at BCHS will be able to carry out any general maintenance or repair steps such as server restart, data manipulation, and networking changes, if needed. For app-specific errors or changes, we will be providing source code and instructions to another person close to BCHS who is familiar with Ruby on Rails applications, and additionally the software development team will be willing to answer questions and provide quick fixes for issues arise after the semester is over.

As we were focused on accomplishing a minimum viable product, not all requested features for our application were implemented. Therefore, if BCHS wishes to add some of the already-requested features, we recommend they or another software development team (e.g. a future IS 67-373 team) implement these features. The work this semester provided a lot of the back-end groundwork to allow for many of these future requested features to be more easily implemented. Other potential future changes that we recommend could include cleaning up and refactoring of existing code, fixing any existing bugs or user frustrations, and conduct further user testing to review and revise existing design, interface, workflow, and general experience of the application.

Student Development Team

Gus Henry headed deployment and served as project manager. He is a third-year student double majoring in Information Systems and Human-Computer Interaction, and minoring in German. He will be interning at Apple this summer. He served as the general point of contact with BCHS staff.

Shijie Rao served as backend developer. He is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems and minoring in Human-Computer Interaction. He will be interning at Amazon this summer.

Alex Wang was the front end developer for this project. He is a third-year student in Information Systems, Human-Computer Interaction, and minoring in Design. He will be a user experience intern at Apple this summer.