Pennsylvania Resources Council

Executive Summary

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Background

Founded in 1939, the Pennsylvania Resources Council (PRC) is the state's oldest grassroots environmental organization that works to protect the Commonwealth's resources for future generations through environmental education, recycling and waste diversion programs, anti-litter campaigns and much more. PRC West manages a broad portfolio of programs and is a leader across the region on issues related to recycling and waste diversion. Some of the programs that PRC has conducted in the past include "Hard to Recycle Collection Events," conservation workshops, and environmental film festivals. With their board, membership holders, foundation, grant, and corporate partners, they have considerable presence and reach in the state. The Spring 2016 semester is PRC's third time collaborating on a project with the IS program.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

PRC hosts numerous collection events over the summer for household chemicals, e-waste, pharmaceuticals, and other hard to recycle items. Each collection event takes place in a parking lot, with approximately 1,000 cars coming in and out in 4 hours. During this time, people wait almost an hour in line until their materials are collected from the trunk by volunteers and they are sent on their way. PRC has been unable to effectively collect information on any of the recyclers, aka their "customers", and is looking for a data collection and analysis tool. This information is important to the organization for two main reasons: data-driven decision making and customer outreach. With the proper visualizations, PRC can present solid data to municipalities and sponsors in order to increase their funding and support environmental initiatives. Additionally, PRC has had difficulty engaging current members and attracting new ones, and would benefit from a tool that would increase their membership value proposition.

Project Vision

Our vision consists of three parts. First, we want to ensure efficient, effective data collection by developing business processes around an offline survey tool so that it is accessible in the parking lots. Second, we want to provide appropriate data visualizations so that PRC can better understand their customers, strengthen their value to the community, and procure more funds from the

municipalities. Third, we want to develop an events filtering map that will be featured on the PRC website. The map will display upcoming PRC events and allow users to filter by different event types near them. We hope that the events platform will increase PRC's membership value proposition and encourage users to visit their site.

Project Outcomes

Our project timeline involved evaluating various survey and data analysis tools, user testing the tools at PRC events, deploying the survey at PRC's first collection event, and developing the events platform. We ensured the solutions would be sustainable by training the community partners and providing thorough documentation. We also involved PRC's technology consultant, FiremanCreative, to discuss the events platform and integrate it with PRC's website. Our efforts helped us achieve the goal of providing value to PRC by asking questions and guiding their decisions surrounding technology.

Project Deliverables

Our final deliverables to PRC include the following:

1. SurveyGizmo subscription, training, documentation, and integration into PRC business processes

2. BatchGeo training and documentation for map visualizations

3. Events platform to be integrated into PRC website and display upcoming events

Recommendations

In order to build capacity, continued use of SurveyGizmo and BatchGeo will allow PRC to leverage these applications to meet their goals. To ensure this, we have provided comprehensive documentation to allow new users to learn about how to use the applications for their specific needs, and have ensured that the current community partners can successfully navigate the applications. We have also worked with their technology consultant, FiremanCreative, in order to ensure the sustainability and maintenance of the events platform and open up further discussion about using technology to improve PRC's business processes.

Student Development Team

Nikita Bokil served as Project Manager for the team. She is a junior majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Hispanic Studies graduating in Fall 2016. She will be interning at Pricewaterhouse Coopers this summer and is looking toward a career in Digital Consulting.

Ann Chen served as QA/Documentation Lead for the team. She is a junior majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Human-Computer Interaction graduating in Spring 2017. She will be interning at Capital One this summer and is looking toward a career in Software Development.

Connor Moore served as Technical Lead for the team. He is a junior majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Computer Science graduating in Summer 2016. He will be interning at Apple this summer and is looking toward a career in the field of Cyber Security.