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| CIM 545: Managing Interactive Media Projects Spring 2016 Project | |
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| EduViz | |
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Table of Contents

CIM 545: Managing Interactive Media Projects 1

Revision History 3

Project Overview 3

Goals 3

Stakeholders 3

Roles & Responsibilities 4

Approach 4

Phase 1: Data Curation and Analysis 4

Phase 2: Visualization Design 4

Phase 3: Testing and Eliciting Feedback 5

Phase 4: Polish and Release 5

## Revision History

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Version | Date | Section | Change Description | Required By | Changed By |
| 1.0 | 1/24/2016 | All | First Draft | Stetson | Aguirre |

## Project Overview

*EduViz* is an interactive data visualization, in the form of a single-page web application. The visualization focuses on revealing how many universities, especially for-profit institutions, exploit impoverished students. The project is well-substantiated by a massive volume of data.

*EduViz* serves two main purposes. The first is to provide a tool for comparing accessibility and affordability of different institutions. The second is to serve as a compelling interactive article that exposes institutions using predatory lending practices.

### Goals

The primary goal of this project is to **inform** readers about the predatory practice of exploiting poor students by higher-education entities. This project does not aim to incite any action from readers.

To convey a successful idea of this visualization, the website should:

* Show data in a way that is **intuitive** (needs little explanation) and **accessible** (understood by most people)
* Be **usable** – Able to be navigated and operated without error or frustration
* Be **compelling** – A story/narrative should be evident from the visualized data (although it may need to be augmented with written elements)
* Be **flexible** – Versatile in its potential uses and ability to relay information

The main goal is to take an immense and somewhat cryptic dataset and transform it into a visualization, or series of visualizations that is sensible and more readily available to the general public; in its current state, the data caters mostly to statisticians and researchers, as well as though who can manipulate data.

### Stakeholders

* ProPublica staff
  + Annie Waldman – Reporter, education
  + Scott Klein – Team director of data-driven stories
* Students (prospective and present)
* Members of education-driven entities
  + Kaplan
  + CollegeBoard
  + ACT
* Professor Stetson Pastore (course instructor)

### Roles & Responsibilities

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| --- | --- |
| **Name** | **Role** |
| Nicolas Aguirre | IA / UI |
| Nicolas Aguirre | Visual Design, Aesthetics |
| Nicolas Aguirre | Project Management |
| Nicolas Aguirre | Front-end Development |
| Nicolas Aguirre | Data Analysis and Curation |

## Approach

*EduViz* is a highly technical project; meticulous planning and execution are paramount to success. In general, the approach to this project can be divided into two parts –

* **Front-end** – Ensuring that the application is usable, aesthetic, sensible and flexible for users
* **Back-end –** Ensuring that all code execution works properly, using strict version control, enhancing performance, and handling datasets properly

The tentative approach is as follows

### Phase 1: Data Curation and Analysis

Because this project has an immense dataset (over 1700 columns), finding variables of key interest is important. This phase will center around making the dataset smaller so as to enhance browser performance, and also aims to uncover correlations and trends of interest among variables

### Phase 2: Visualization Design

Even if interesting trends are uncovered within the dataset, they are meaningless if not visualized appropriately. This phase will focus on finding appropriate means of displaying data. This phase will likely spur multiple iterations of charts and visualizations in an attempt to find the most apt fit.

### Phase 3: Testing and Eliciting Feedback

After finding feasible ways to test the data, I intend to interface with my contacts at *ProPublica* to get feedback on the project. As some of their staff works with education stories, they will have proper insight as to how well the application is doing in its narrative element.

### Phase 4: Polish and Release

This phase will consist of debugging, enhancing and finalizing aesthetic elements, and fine-tuning nuances of the visualization. Using feedback from users and readers, any ambiguous facets of the visualization will be smoothed over to better accommodate the average reader. Any additional features that could benefit the visualization will be added at the end.