

## Final Project Proposal

### CMST 386 | Mykl Quinn

#### CLIENT AND TOPIC

My proposal will outline the creation of a fictional home-based retail business site for a producer of European-style holiday gnomes and accessories. This website will comprise of product selection, company information, e-commerce elements, holiday gnome history/tradition, and a privacy policy.

#### DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND ENGAGEMENT

My husband has agreed to play the part of the business owner, and I will present him with wireframe layouts of the proposed site, a landing-page mockup, color scheme, and logo design. I will conduct research on existing businesses that produce similar products and will review common online marketplaces (i.e., Amazon, Etsy, etc...) to determine what commonalities exist and ways to make this site unique but familiar. Incorporating my client's feedback, I will adjust the styling to fit the business' aesthetic while presenting their web presents as a professional, world-class supplier of gnome décor.

#### TESTING

I will conduct browser testing on both desktop and mobile devices, focusing on the most common browsers (e.g., Chrome, Edge, Firefox, and Safari). I will leverage available hardware to ensure cross-platform compatibility, as well as device emulation via Chrome developer tools. Lastly, I will conduct accessibility testing via manual interaction and browser extension accessibility checker tools.

#### DESCRIPTION

**Goals:** To create an online presence for a craft décor company typically reliant on in-person sales from bazaars, fairs, and festivals while trying to retain the quaint and cute nature of the product discovery one would experience at those types of events.

**Target Audience:** Low-to-middle income online shoppers from western English-speaking countries, as they have shown the greatest increase in product interest over the last five years per Google Trends data.

**Design and Content Considerations:** The products need to be the focus of the site, but it must also draw interest from the long-standing heritage and tradition associated with holiday gnomes. Additionally, the site must have a simplistic e-commerce system that translates well on both desktop and mobile devices. Lastly, as the product types have expanded beyond a solely Christmas-themed focus, color schemes need to accommodate for the various holidays the products will be linked with.

## GROWTH AND MAINTENANCE

The site will need to be updated somewhat regularly by the business owner as products and stock levels change. Maintenance will likely need to be done on an as-needed basis with regular functionality checks at least monthly to ensure any unannounced configuration changes by the web hosting service do not negatively impact the site. I will also refrain from using off-site libraries and CDNs to reduce reliance on external content and avoid unexpected outages or reconfiguration concerns.

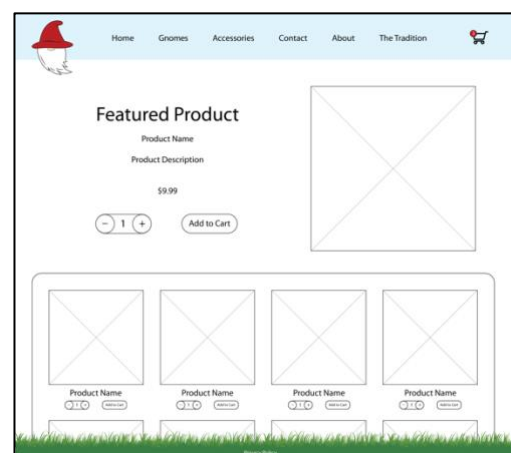
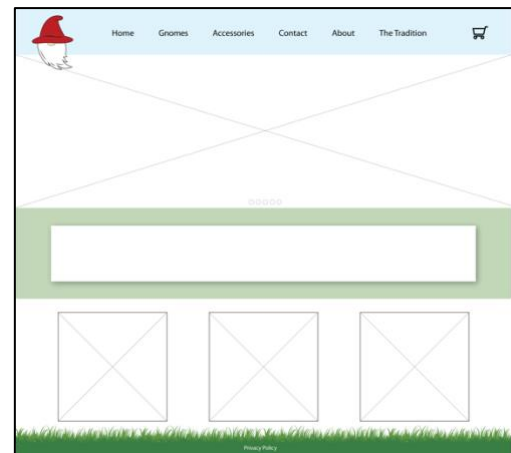
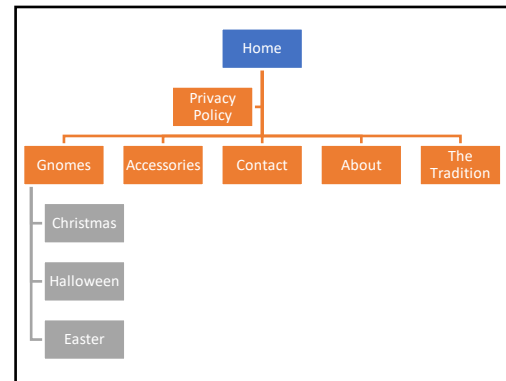
## ORGANIZATION

The site will have a simple navigational layout with a landing page, multiple product pages, as well as contact, about, and gnome tradition pages. The landing “home” page will be designed to fill the view space and have the three product items peeking through at the bottom of the browser window. The “Gnomes” page will feature the current holiday theme offerings with links to the product sub-pages to continue shopping. The holiday specific pages will have a featured product with all other gnomes currently available. The “Contact” page will have a contact form. The “About” page will describe the business history. The “Tradition” page will explain the origins and use of these home décor item.

## WEB HOSTING

The site will use web hosting services that support HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and integration in to an e-commerce service. Since I expect variable levels of traffic depending on the time of year, a service that has the flexibility to adjust cost appropriate to the sites traffic level could be financially beneficial. Additionally, since the site will be e-commerce focused, the need to have an SSL secure site is absolutely necessary. Since I do not have any experience in managing or setting up this type of site security, I would want to choose a provider that offers managed SSL services.

As for the type of web hosting service the site would need, PCMag outlined several options that are present in today’s market: Shared, VPS, Dedicated, Cloud, WordPress, and reseller. Because the sites traffic will be variable throughout the year a VPS hosting solution would be its best option initially. Although, just like the need for flexibility as the business grows, a hosting service that can adjust to its needs would be particularly important.



For the domain name solution, both “gnomeshop.com” and “stuttgartgnomes.com” are available according to GoDaddy.com, which are natural choice since the first is memorable and the second is the name of the business. The “gnomeshop.com” option is significantly more expensive (\$4,588 + \$18.99/year) and may not be an option for my client. The alternative has no domain purchasing price, but instead just a modest monthly fee. If my client could afford the initial investment in the “gnomeshop.com” domain, I would highly encourage them to do so as it offers a more commercially viable presence.

## **MARKETING**

For search engine optimization, I will leverage descriptive title, heading, and meta tags on each page ensure crawlers can easily interpret the site’s content. I would also want to take advantage of the Google search console to ensure the site is being properly indexed and more readily discoverable. According to Moz.com this requires a few preparatory steps like site verification and account linking to access. Having these tools will allow me to more deliberately manage how the site appears in search results. Lastly, I would cross-link all the business’ social media accounts with the site to ensure exposure on multiple platforms.

## **SECURITY**

Since the site will have an e-commerce component, initially it makes more sense to have customer transaction data managed by a service versus hosting that data with the site itself. Using a popular and recognizable service like Shopify or PayPal can also increase the sites legitimacy and assuage customer concerns over fraud and identity theft. Initially it may not be necessary to host customer accounts/logins, limiting the client’s exposure and cost for personally identifiable information data retention, and instead simply request a customer’s order number and email when they want to track their order status. However, in the long term, it would increase the business’ legitimacy to have customer accounts to track orders and make future purchases faster for repeat customers. In this model, the hosting service will have to be capable of providing secure storage solution for customer data/accounts.

### References

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