

Project Plan

Tim Cooper (40986856) & Brendan Lidster (41006005)

1. Output, Clients and Outcomes

Outputs

MyNewFavourite.Biz, which is a web based social networking community where users will be able to search, review and suggest the best business for each others needs. MyNewFavourite.Biz in the short term will look to service just the Brisbane region but it is our plans to eventually expand and provide this service to all of Australia. Business ratings will be solely determined on the users experience with the particular business and we feel that this will provide us with an advantage over competitors.

Clients

Primarily our user base is going to be people who are in need of a reputable business and as such our user base is going to be vast and varied. We also aim to encourage users who have a genuine interest in online social communities.

Outcomes for us

There are many outcomes that we wish to achieve (personally), these include:

- Develop a web application from start to finish
- Develop and understanding of online social communities
- Develop a greater understanding of CSS, web standards, structure, coding practices and design elements.
- Networking / Collaborating with real world people

Outcomes for MyNewFavourite.Biz

There are many outcomes that we wish to achieve for the business, these include:

- Develop a respected business that people know they can trust to provide informed information about businesses in the Brisbane region.
- Develop a social community that actively participates in rating and reviewing businesses in the Brisbane region.

Outcomes for our users

There are many outcomes that we want MyNewFavourite.Biz to achieve for its users, these include:

- Provide users with a means to make an informed decisions about businesses they wish to use.
- Provide users with a means to rate and review a businesses performance so that other users can make an informed decision.

2. Quality Specification

Users

Users will be able to make informed decisions on which businesses they use via several different methods. Once the user has logged into our site they will be presented with their 'homepage' from which they are able to:

- see each and every business that they have rated and reviewed
- search for a business
- rate and review a business from the search
- businesses that have been recommended to you by your friends
- what businesses your friends have rated and reviewed since the last login

By offering so many methods in which an informed decision can be made it is hoped that a suitable business is selected.

Businesses

- Businesses will be rated on users experience them. A businesses rating will be average of the total ratings that it has received and will be displayed as 'X/5'.
- The higher the rating the better the business (generally).
- From this information a user is able to gauge whether or not they feel that this businesses is suitable for their needs.

3. External Factors

Strengths

Brendan

- Experienced in business oriented website design
- Visual design orientated
- Content Production
- Time management skills

Tim

- Code (Ruby on Rails, PHP)
- Structure
- CSS
- XHTML
- Microformats
- Time management skills

Weaknesses

Brendan

- Code (Ruby on Rails, PHP)
- Structure
- CSS
- XHTML
- Microformats

Tim

- Visual design
- Content production
- Experience in business oriented website design

How we intend to manage our weaknesses

Fortunately for us, both of the creators (Brendan and Tim) have separate interests and abilities and that these interests and abilities complement each other, whatever Tim lacks, Brendan strives in and visa versa. This partnership was chosen because we both knew that we had strengths and weaknesses in different areas and that we both were determined to see this idea to the finish.

Opportunities

We feel that there is a significant gap in the market to allow our idea to flourish. Currently there isn't anything like this available for the Brisbane region and the only thing that comes close is the 'word of mouth

concept' (where one person tells someone else 'X businesses' is a good business et cetera). MyNewFavourite.Biz gives people a chance to further the 'word of mouth concept' by reaching possibly everyone in Brisbane, Australia and the world.

This assignment gives both of us a chance to further develop our skills as web designers, developers and content producers. By creating a SWOT analysis we are able to determine what we are strong / weak at and work towards those strengths giving ourselves the best opportunity to create the best web app that we possibly can.

Threats

The biggest immediate threat to the development of our project is time. We intend to manage this issue by implementing the development process in phases; achievable milestones that can be marked off and evaluated before any further development progresses.

Currently there are no immediate threats - from our research there are no other websites that are providing the same kind of experience that we are for the Brisbane region. There are however other specialty rating and reviewing website that only service a particular niche, for example restaurants - we feel that we wont be hindered by these niche sites because they are only focused on their niche not the bigger picture.

A more long term threat to the projects success is the encroachment of similar ideas on the potential user base. This will be managed by attempting to stay abreast with current social networking trends, offering the best experience possible to the user.

4. Expectation Management

Expectations of the business:

- Ratings and reviews will be written by community members (users) and will be made available to all other members as soon as the rating / review is published. Although the rating / review is immediately available to the public it will still undergo a screening process to ensure the creditability of our business as a means of distributing current, relevant and correct information.

Expectations of the user:

- Users will be encourage to not only search for businesses that they wish to use but to also participate in rating and reviewing businesses that they use. We intend to make this process as simple and unintimidating as possible in the hope that users will feel that they are not just a passive member of the community but also a contributing member.
- A user will rate and review a business fairly and in a civilized manor (no foul language, racism etc). This will be managed by a screening process where each and every comment will be read by an administrator. Obviously this is not a long term solution but it is something that we are going to have to implement int he short term. In the long term a system will be set up to monitor these kinds of things.

How might we negotiate changes in the product:

Changes in the project will be easily negotiated because we are fairly agile in our development. Development happens in stages, and it will be easy to add or subtract parts as necessary.

Meetings with our users:

Users will be invited to try out our application in its development stages as a means of user testing to make

sure that we are on track. Users will help guide us to create a better working website.

5. Work Plan

Currently we have an extremely ambitious work plan that involves getting a partly working application up and running within four weeks, with testing and documentation occurring in the last two weeks.

Weeks 6 – 8: Work towards completing a barebones application.

- Users - signup / login / logout
- Ability to add / rate / review business
- Ability for users to search for a business
- Fully styled layouts (CSS and XHTML)
- Time to complete tasks: These processes are core to our application becoming a success so we intend to throw as many hours as possible towards creating it as possible. Creating models and the interactions between them are really complex tasks and more than likely it will take the full 2 weeks (if not longer) to implement them.

Weeks 8 -10: Work towards creating an administration section.

- Screening processes for user comments / user ratings and reviews / business additions
- Time to complete task: This task is a lot less time consuming than the last because all the infrastructure is set up, we're just integrating another step. This process will still consume at least 10 hours (including testing).

Weeks 11 & 12: User testing and documentation

- User testing of our application
- Ironing out any bugs / issues found
- Possibly implementing some of the suggestions from the user testing
- Writing up the documentation of the process.
- Time to complete task: User testing and feedback will take around 2 days and depending on the results of the tests will determine how long we have to spend fixing up the problems / issues. Documentation is a process that will happen all throughout the semester, so it will just be a basic compile and edit.

6. Resource Requirements (time and money)

Time: Because this assignment is fairly ambitious, it is going to take majority of the semester to complete. Being both fully aware of this, we intend to adhere to our work plan to ensure we complete the project on time.

Money: Thankfully this assignment is fairly inexpensive. The programming languages that we are using are all open source (Ruby on Rails for the infrastructure, Javascript for the visuals and XHTML and CSS for page structure), the testing and developing environments are all owned by us (testing and development will occur on our laptops) and the only people that we have to pay wages to are ourselves – so it comes down to a very inexpensive project. The one expense we had incurred so far has been the acquisition of our domain name (mynewfavourite.biz) for US\$15.00 for a year. Hosting will be another issue that we have to think about in the near future, we have sourced out prices and are currently looking at a basic package from Dreamhost.com for US\$7.95 a month for 2 years.