



## **ENSE 271 Project report-out & lessons learned**

### **Team name & members**

Team Coruscantiens

- Jacob Chapman
- Feras Daghmoush
- Ria Chevli
- Zhuo Chen

### **Project sponsor**

Dr. Tim Maciag (ENSE 271 Lecturer)

### **Business need/opportunity**

IABC is an organization that acts as business communicators which helps business/individual leaders learn, network, and grow by promoting it ethically. Business communicators that help other businesses give guidance and mentoring, find that it is key for them to make their website look accessible and pleasing to users. By increasing the interaction of IABC users, this will have a direct reflection on improving the overall user experience. Offering communication between the two in the form of a user feedback section will be beneficial to IABC. Us developers would prefer to keep into consideration the likes / dislikes of the IABC board of directives about their website and try to construct an MVP (Minimal Viable Product) simultaneously will provide ease of use to users. IABC looks forward to serving users in a way that they think people need. Their people as users need an easy way to tunnel through their website to gather adequate information and have a satisfactory experience.

## Reflections on project planning

For this course, our NorthStar customers are the IABC administrators / executives. The carry over customers are the IABC members who will be accessing the website for the information they require, as well as the companies who associate with IABC.

Throughout this project, our assumptions made were that we would be using WordPress as our final product implementation tool. As well, we assumed that Adobe XD would be the tool used to create Hi-Fi prototypes. While developing on WordPress, we assumed we would be using Amazon LightSail as our main server host for collaboration. We also assumed we would use a public GitHub repository for all published documentation and application demos. These tools would help us create an MVP for our customers.

In terms of constraints, there were several. The first was that due to the pandemic, we were forced to have virtual meetings which were conducted through zoom. Another constraint was that we had limited time to meet with the IABC customers. We also had a budget as stated by the IABC to be limited. These constraints were all considered when creating our final product.

From our affinity diagrams, we concluded that for our clients we would have a one-line navigation bar that would encompass all relevant topics, reduce the number of sub pages, improve social media display, make fonts more attractive, have improved functionality for job and event postings, and have a mobile version as well. The IABC emphasized heavily on having a cleaner navigation and reduce the number of cluttering that the website currently has. From our empathy map, we noted what our customers thought, saw, heard, and said about their current website. The IABC thinks / feels their website is messy, confusing, complex, old-fashioned, and they feel overwhelmed. The IABC sees complicated text, unorganized navigation bars, and cluttered sub pages. The IABC says they post jobs manually, get redirected to same pages, and that people end up not choosing IABC Regina due to the lack of interaction. IABC's gains (measure of happiness) comes from wanting more interaction, getting help from experienced officials who can grow their business, and being an eagle eye for other businesses. IABC's pains (frustrations) are that they are not technically inclined individuals, and that they use third party systems for payments and events, which can compromise security.

In our initial user story map (USM) from activity 1, we proposed we would have 5 main backbone epics which comprised of having two-way communication, easy navigation, sign in and sign up, updated layout, improved functionality, and updated event and career page postings. As time went on, we received feedback from our customers and requirements changed. Thus, in activity 2 we re-evaluated our USM to a more condensed version. We removed some functionality, for example the sign in and sign-up features were discarded as our NorthStar customers thought that there was no need for it. In activity 3, we stayed true to our customers envision and had hi fidelity sketches which reflected our USM and thus went on to creating a final version in WordPress. In our lo-fidelity sketches, we proposed to have 4 pages that would have all information required for users. Also, we would have a consistent header and footer across all



pages. For the events page we proposed to have a timeline style too. In our findings, we found from our customers that the IABC likes light and simple navigation, few pages, would prefer to have lots of information on a single page, no chat box, are hesitant towards timeline, ease of simplicity, and making the unknown known. This feedback drove our Hi fidelity prototypes. The feedback received from the Hi-fidelity prototype was that the IABC loves the mobile and desktop concepts, “go to top” functionality, accordion style display, use of anchors, breaking up text with colors or lines, and justified left text. They are skeptical about arrows that go back, boxes on pages, and forms on site.

Linking our class topics to our design ideas, we utilized the topic of interface design metaphors for our mobile and desktop versions for a home button. This concept helps make the unfamiliar familiar for the users. This helps our users understand that a home button would take them “home”. Another class topic is the concept of “Understandability” and in our desktop version, when a user would navigate from page to page, the header text would highlight the page they are on to indicate that they are on that page. The last concept is Discoverability, and we used various signifiers in our design. For example, our header has underlined text to *signify* our users that it is a clickable word. Our header and footer also *map* to different pages /websites.

## Reflections on project results

For the duration of this course project, we enjoyed having real life customers who we had the privilege of creating a website for. We enjoyed the milestone requirements and felt that they were able to be met on time. We also liked the technologies we explored, and the desirability they will have in our future projects. We disliked how many different technologies there were to learn with our time constraints. We felt that if we had more time to learn WordPress's functionalities, we could deploy a better product. We also, did not like how little time we had with our customers. We hoped for more time to spend and get more feedback.

In this project, we thought that distributing the work evenly for each milestone went well because it allowed for everyone to collaborate. We also thought that despite the feedback was not what our customers wanted, we adapted and changed our design ideas and "failed forward" in the process of the fast feedback cycle. We thought that our Hi-fidelity and lo-fidelity prototypes were not that good from the feedback we received. We had to change and adapt to many different ideas and made us feel weak as a team.

We felt that we were successful in translating our high-level ideas into a reality onto WordPress. That being our header, footer, and overall number of pages. From our sketches and designs, our proposed ideas were not what our customers liked, so we adapted to those changes and made our WordPress site close to that envision as possible.

From the course content relating to people-centred design, it was our motivator / ambition as we were taught that software is 80% people and 20% code. This was hammered into our brains in this course, and the project encapsulated that thought into our minds. Focusing on people first, and what their needs are, are what make a project more delightful as we are making software for them. As stated in the class, we are not the users.

In the future, what we would do the same is following the process of designing lo fidelity prototypes, then medium to hi fidelity prototypes, and finally a working product for our clients. This process allows for collaboration between developers and customers throughout the entire duration and will make a project more successful. What we would do differently is to combine other various processes to ensure that team cohesion is high. Not all processes work for everyone, so its crucial to find what is best for everyone on the team.

## WordPress themes and plugins

Theme chosen: *Sinatra*

Summary:

- User Rating: 5 Stars (out of 32 ratings)
- Last updated: April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021
- Active Installations: 20,000+
- Description: Lightweight and highly customizable multi-purpose theme that makes it easy for anyone to create their perfect website. Works well with Gutenberg block editor and favourite plugins.

Plugin Name: Gutenberg CoBlocks

Summary:

- User Rating: 4.5 Stars (out of 77 ratings)
- Last Updated: 3 weeks ago
- Active Installations: 400,000+
- Description: Adds additional blocks and true row and column building. Is powerful but lightweight. Adds functionality to WordPress editor without bloat.

Plugin Name: Menu Image

Summary:

- User Rating: 4.5 Stars (out of 106 ratings)
- Last updated: 3 months ago
- Active Installations: 100,000+
- Description: Easily add an image or icon in a menu item

Plugin Name: Ultimate addons for Gutenberg

Summary:

- User Rating: 5 Stars (out of 659 ratings)
- Last updated: 5 days ago
- Active Installations: 300,000+
- Description: Power up the Gutenberg editor with advanced and powerful blocks that help build websites easily.

Plugin Name: WPForms Lite

Summary:

- User Rating: 5 Stars (out of 8905 ratings)
- Last updated: 2 weeks ago
- Active Installations: 4+ million
- Description: Allows you to create beautiful contact forms, feedback forms, subscription forms, payment forms, and other types of forms.

Plugin Name: MetaSlider

Summary:

- User Rating: 4.5 Stars (out of 616 ratings)
- Last updated: 1 month ago
- Active Installations: 800,000+
- Description: Can create powerful, SEO-optimized slider, slideshows, carousels, or galleries.

Plugin Name: Jetpack

Summary:

- User Rating: 4 Stars (out of 1582 ratings)
- Last updated: ~ 1 day ago
- Active Installations: 5+ million
- Description: Security plugin that makes WordPress safer to use.