SUStays Project Charter

Objective

To develop and implement SUStays, a comprehensive platform for student housing. This platform aims to streamline the process of finding suitable accommodations near educational institutions by offering advanced filtering and roommate-matching capabilities.

Vision

A revolutionary platform that transforms the student housing industry by making housing search efficient, precise, and user-centric, leading to improved student life and academic performance.

Purpose

To address the challenges students face in finding appropriate housing options close to their colleges or universities by providing a specialized platform tailored for student needs. Also, to provide a solution to the prevailing challenges students face when searching for accommodations from matching with compatible roommates to finding housing within their budgets and preferred locations.

Description

SUStays is a dedicated platform for student housing that offers advanced filtering options and a roommate-matching system. Unlike general-purpose platforms, SU Stays focuses on student-specific needs, ensuring they find housing that matches their preferences and requirements. SUStays will be an intuitive platform, available both as a web and mobile application. It will cater specifically to students, offering features that simplify the housing search and match-making process.

High-level Scope & requirements

The project encompasses the development and deployment of a student housing platform. Key elements include:

1. User Profiles: Students can create and customize their profiles, detailing their preferences.

2. Advanced Search: Filters for price, location, room type, amenities, etc.

3. Matchmaking Algorithm: Connects students with compatible roommates based on shared interests and preferences.

4. Integrated Messaging: Enables communication between potential roommates and landlords.

5. Reviews & Ratings: For landlords and properties, ensuring transparency and trust.

High-level duration & effort estimates

The project is estimated to take 6-8 weeks for completion, spanning phases from analysis to training and support.

High-level schedule and major milestones

1. Analysis and Design (1-2 weeks)
2. Development (2-3 weeks)
3. Testing and Debugging (1 week)
4. Implementation (1 week)
5. Training and Support (1 week)

High-level budget

Estimated budget: $150,000 (This includes software development, testing, marketing, and other overhead costs.)

High-level assumptions

1. The student community will readily adopt and engage with the new platform due to its unique features tailored to their housing needs.
2. Integration with other systems (such as payment gateways or university databases) will be smooth and without major hurdles.
3. There will be a continuous and reliable stream of housing listings and updates to maintain the platform's relevancy and accuracy.
4. All primary stakeholders, including educational institutions and housing providers, will offer their full support throughout the project's lifecycle.
5. The platform will be able to comply with all regional and national regulations related to housing, data privacy, and online transactions.
6. The platform's infrastructure will handle the expected surge in users, especially during peak academic seasons.
7. Users will actively participate in providing feedback, which will be crucial for the platform's iterative improvement.
8. The necessary security measures, both in terms of technology and policies, are feasible and can be implemented to protect user data.
9. Third-party vendors, especially for services like hosting or payment processing, will provide consistent and reliable service.
10. The student housing market dynamics will remain relatively stable during the project's development and initial launch phase, without any unforeseen disruptions.

11. Essential resources, both human and technological, will be available and accessible throughout the project's duration.
12. Initial marketing and outreach efforts will be effective in generating interest and initial user registrations.
13. The economic environment, especially related to student housing and educational sectors, will remain stable, ensuring consistent project funding and user interest.

High-level constraints

1. The project has a fixed budget, which may not accommodate unforeseen expenses or scope changes.
2. The platform must be launched before the next academic year starts, providing a strict deadline for completion.
3. The project will utilize a predefined set of technologies, limiting potential features or integrations that are incompatible with this stack.
4. There might be periods where key personnel or resources are unavailable due to other commitments or constraints.
5. Strict adherence to data protection regulations might limit some functionalities or require additional development time.
6. The platform might have a limited number of integration points with other systems, potentially hindering seamless data flow.
7. Certain project phases or decisions might require approval from multiple stakeholders, leading to potential delays.
8. Initially, the platform might cater to students from specific regions or institutions, limiting its broader appeal.
9. Due to server or infrastructure limitations, there might be a cap on the number of simultaneous users the platform can support.
10. Limited time and resources might constrain the depth of training provided to end-users or internal teams.
11. The time to gather and act on user feedback might be constrained by the project's phases or timelines.
12. Commitments to certain third-party vendors might limit the flexibility to switch or upgrade services rapidly.
13. If integrating with older systems, there might be limitations in terms of data transfer rates, compatibility, or feature support.
14. Initially, the platform might support a limited set of languages, constraining its accessibility to non-native speakers.
15. Economic or industry-specific downturns can constrain potential investments, partnerships, or expansion plans.

High-level dependencies

1. The project's success is dependent on timely feedback from stakeholders, availability of technical resources, and collaboration from the data analytics team.
2. Integration with map services for location-based search.
3. The deployment of the platform might depend on the prior setup and configuration of servers, databases, and other IT infrastructure components.
4. The platform's launch might be dependent on obtaining necessary permits, licenses, or regulatory clearances, especially concerning data privacy.
5. The functionality of SUStays might depend on seamless integration with payment gateways, social media platforms, or other external systems.
6. The platform's official launch might depend on coordinated marketing and promotional activities.
7. The training phase's commencement might depend on the completion and availability of training materials and modules.

High-level risks

1. Platform Adoption: Even with a functional platform, there's a risk that students might not adopt or use SUStays as expected.
2. Data Security Breaches: With students sharing personal data, there's always a risk of data breaches or hacks, leading to potential lawsuits and loss of trust.
3. Regulatory Changes: New or updated regulations related to housing, data privacy, or online platforms could impact the project's direction or viability.
4. Competitor Response: Existing housing platforms might quickly develop similar features, making it harder for SUStays to gain a competitive edge.
5. Technical Glitches: Bugs or technical issues after launch could tarnish the platform's reputation and deter users.
6. Budget Overruns: The project could exceed its allocated budget, causing financial strain or requiring scope reductions.
7. Flawed Roommate-Matching Algorithm: The algorithm might not always match roommates as accurately or effectively as anticipated, leading to user dissatisfaction.
8. Infrastructure Downtime: Any downtime of servers or IT infrastructure can hamper user experience and trust.
9. Vendor Unreliability: Third-party vendors might not deliver services or products on time or as per the expected quality.
10. Delayed Project Timelines: The project might face delays due to unforeseen challenges, pushing the launch date.
11. Intellectual Property Disputes: There might be claims or disputes regarding the originality or ownership of the platform's features or underlying technology.
12. Unforeseen Operational Costs: Post-launch, the operational costs could be higher than estimated, impacting profitability.
13. Resistance to Change: Students used to traditional methods of finding housing or using existing platforms might resist transitioning to SUStays.

List Of major stakeholders and their respective high level role & responsibilities

1. Project Manager: Overseeing project execution, budget, and timeline.
2. Technical Team: Designing, developing, Testing and implementing the system.
3. Data Analytics Team: Data collection and analysis.
4. IT Team: Providing necessary hardware and software support.
5. Students (End-users): Providing feedback and requirements.
6. Educational Institutions: Possible collaboration and support.
7. 3P Payment gateway vendors: Required for Payments gateway setup.

Project Organization Chart

1. Senior Management
    1.1 Project Sponsor
        1.1.1 Project Manager
            1.1.1.1 Technical Team
            1.1.1.2 Data Analytics Team
            1.1.1.3 Marketing Team

Project Team:

1. Siddharth Asati
2. Vrushali Ravi Lad
3. Sampada Regmi
4. Indraneel Milind Timare

Name of the Project Sponsor

Prof. Michael Larche