

Student-Community Web Development Collaborations

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Introduction

Many non-profit organizations and small businesses lack the knowledge and resources to create a web site that would effectively attract potential clients. Web developers to help can be found but they may be expensive and/or poorly trained to create web sites that are based on sound planning and implementation techniques. Students at a local community college can help meet that need by volunteering their time and talent.

The Project

In my class, students soon learn that the overall process of developing a web site is not just creating web pages and linking them together in hopes that the web site will serve its purpose. Before they are assigned the project, they have already been through about two thirds of the class material and they have learned that a useful web site is only possible after the planning phase has been successfully completed. The planning phase consists of defining the purpose (intent) and the target audience (users/visitors) of the web site. Other important details of good planning include sketching the navigation structure or organization of the web site, determining the content and navigation of each web page, and sketching the layout of each page in the web site.

In this project, the planning phase and implementation phase steps will be briefly but carefully reviewed, and a community web site project, from tips on contacting interested businesses to planning and creating the web pages and web site, will be explained. The completion of the project is based on sound planning and implementation techniques.

Among the steps that the students had to go through to complete the project included: create a list of local businesses to contact and ways to contact them; identify one local business that is interested in the project; collect all needed data (logo, images, etc.); sketch the navigation structure; determine the content and links for each page; sketch the page layout for each page; and finally create the web site.

Author Summary

George Kontos, Assistant Professor, teaches in the Business Division at Bowling Green Community College of Western Kentucky University at Bowling Green, KY. He received his undergraduate mathematics degree from University of Athens, Greece, his Masters in Computer Science from University of Texas at Austin, and his doctoral degree in Education from University of Houston. He has taught for about 25 years both at the graduate and undergraduate levels, 18 in the United States and 7 abroad. The last 15 years he has been teaching a mixture of face to face and online classes.

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