Database Replacement Project for Non Profit Art Organisation

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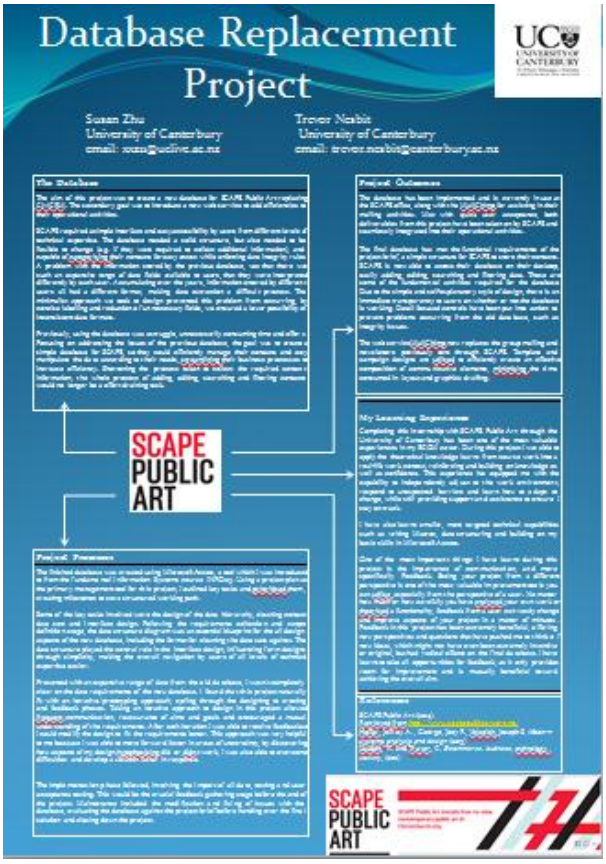
ABSTRACT

This poster presents a summary of a 3rd year Information Systems internship that was completed for a Non Profit Art Organisation in Christchurch. The project involved updating and replacing the database that was being used to manage events and clients contact information.

The poster presents an outline of the project that was worked on as well as the processes and outcomes of the project. The learning of the student is also presented with this including the reinforcement of theoretical content with practical experience; adapting to change; the further development of technical skills including the writing of macros and structuring data in Microsoft Access and development of communication skills and being able to see different perspectives.

Keywords

Internship, Database, Communication



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1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

Students completing the Information Systems major in the Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Canterbury are able to complete a 30 point internship course (INFO330 – Applied Information Systems Project), that requires the student to complete a 200 hour work based project and complete other associated academic work. This poster presents an outline of the project, the processes that were undertaken as well as the learning outcomes for the student.

2. THE PROJECT

The aim of this project was to create a new database for SCAPE Public Art replacing CiviCRM. The secondary goal was to introduce a new web service to add efficiencies to their operational activities.

SCAPE required a simple interface and easy accessibility by users from different levels of technical expertise. The database needed a solid structure, but also needed to be flexible to change (e.g. if they were required to collect additional information), and capable of categorising their contacts for easy access while enforcing data integrity rules. A problem with the information stored by the previous database, was that there was such an expansive range of data fields available to users, that they were interpreted differently by each user. Accumulating over the years, information entered by different users all had a different format, making data extraction a difficult process. The minimalist approach to design prevented this problem from occurring, by concise labeling and reduction of unnecessary fields ensured a lower possibility of inconsistent data formats.

3. PROJECT OUTCOME

The database has been implemented and is currently in use at the SCAPE office, along with the MailChimp for assisting in their mailing activities. Met with quick user acceptance, both deliverables from this project have been taken on by SCAPE and seamlessly integrated into their operational activities.

The final database has met the functional requirements of the project brief, a simple structure for SCAPE to store their contacts. SCAPE is now able to access their database on their desktop, easily adding, editing, searching and filtering data. These are some of the fundamental activities required for the database. Due to the simple and self-explanatory style of design, there is an immediate transparency to users on whether or not the database is working. Detail focused controls have been put into action to prevent problems occurring from the old database, such as integrity issues.

The web service MailChimp now replaces the group mailing and newsletters previously sent through SCAPE. Template and campaign designs are utilised to efficiently create an effective composition of communicative elements, minimising the time consumed in layout and graphics drafting.

4. STUDENT LEARNING

The learning of the student is also presented with this including:

- The reinforcement of theoretical content with practical experience.
- Adapting to change.
- Technical skills including the writing of macros and structuring data in Microsoft Access.
- The importance of communication and being able to see different perspectives.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The project was completed successfully and was deployed to the satisfaction of the clients and the student was able to apply and develop skills in a real life environment with these being consistent with some of the literature regarding similar projects [1],[2],[3].

6. REFERENCES

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