ESLP-AWP Semester Outline

Organization: A Woman’s Place, Merced, Ca

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Executive Summary

Engineering Service Learning - A Woman’s Place (ESL-AWP) is a service learning program dedicated to helping and aiding the development of A Woman’s Place (AWP) organization in Merced, CA, and throughout the Central Valley. Our main objective this semester for A Woman’s Place was introducing new technology to the organization. We are currently developing a project for A Woman’s Place that will support the foundation of their information systems.

A Woman’s Place is located in the Central Valley, aiding battered women by providing shelter, aiding women through pressing charges on abuse, helping women through tough times, and more. It also serves as a hotline for women, in times of peril.

In the process of aiding A Woman’s Place, we have completed a prototype that will support their communication needs. Through working on ESL-AWP, our group found team work and organization as key roles to working on Service Learning and in future careers. To accomplish our goals, we visited A Woman’s Place many times, and helped organized funding for them. We also found time to work together.

For the technology sector, we helped them setup their PC’s that they received via donations, organized an online site for them, and also created business profiles for business cards in the future for them. As for the organization of A Woman’s Place, we are in the process of creating a system for filing the assault charges on women, and also a system of online access to the
organization’s site. A Women’s Place was altogether a good experience with a great incentive; aiding battered women.
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Introduction

Last spring the UC Merced service learning team assessed the current computer network set up of AWP's main office in Merced. While we evaluated the past network set up we noticed some areas where we could make the efforts of AWP staff more efficient and effective. AWP organizes appointments and coordinates between different organizations and offices. To help streamline this process we want to develop an online website that would allow the AWP staff to collaborate more effectively. We would like to develop the website using a content management system called Plone. Plone is extremely useful and has many advantages. Plone is completely customizable in how it looks and functions. Another benefit is that it is an open source program and therefore does not require use of funds that are needed elsewhere in their programs. The purpose of the Plone website is so that AWP members could have the possibility of looking up contact information by obtaining an assigned password and user name. The Plone site would be available online, making it easier for members to login from any computer with an internet connection. Two available options that are presented in the completion of this project are, using an existing server that we would be able to install, and the second would be to designate another computer as the server and installing Ubuntu server addition. This would eliminate the down time of the existing server while we are installing and developing the programs.
Description of Project Tasks

The objective of this service learning team is to continue on the path that was set by the pioneer service learning team of last semester to generate a detailed understanding of the goals, focuses, and structure of AWP, and assist them in improving their communication system, and obtaining new technology and developing knowledge to take the most advantage of it. The project is approached from the angles of Hardware and Software component. The team members are presenting multiple software and hardware options to AWP. Implementing any of the options that is chose by AWP will significantly enhance the efficiency in electronic communications of the organization. The team came with the idea of creating a prototype database where the AWP personal and clients could get access to get contacts more efficiently and organized. The database would have the same use that a business card, but in a greater size and simpler. The search for a contact would be base in: the name of the person, their occupation, department, and the name of the company.

AWP of Merced uses a portion of their time scheduling and coordinating between the people they work with and others outside their offices. In order to streamline this process the service learning team has developed an online system allowing contact information to be readily available from any internet connection. Our team began this process by researching an open source software called Plone. Plone is a program that was developed for creating and managing online content. Using Plone our team was able to create new content types or Archetypes. Our archetype was designed to store information about a
person or affiliate similar to what is presented on a business card. In order to do this first we established what fields were relevant to AWP and then using a Universal Modeling Language (UML) model we entered the fields into a pseudo template and specified how the fields should be displayed on the website. For example one of the fields of importance was with what AWP department was the person associated with. This information would be presented as a selection list that allowed the person filling out the form to select multiple departments if the case required.

After the fields were modeled using UML we then passed the file to a program called ArchGenXML that generates the archetype. The archetype is then installed to a Zope server. The archetype is not system specific so it will work on any Plone site regardless of where it was developed. Since, our client AWP does not have a server that we could implement our prototype on, our team decided to ask for money to buy a computer that would be our designated development server. The development server would allow Service learning teams in the future to continue to work on developing a database to store client information. The development server could also become a staff member’s computer when the project becomes too demanding for the old server.

As we have created our team website for A Woman’s Place, we have encountered several problems with the establishment of our security, but they have been facilitated with the tutorials that are provided by the Plone website. The default roles that are included in the security setup of Plone include; member, manager and reviewer. These roles could be setup by the person who
assumes the owner position which is known as one of the automatic roles. The other automatic role included the anonymous member, which is for viewers who are not a member of the website or are not logged into the site. They are able to view the website but are restricted to view certain files that have been established by the owner.

The following includes some of the group roles with their provided task. Members can create or modify only their own documents, in which they can create new keywords that they are forced to use on existing ones. But most importantly, a manager can promote a member to owner or reviewer for a number of certain folders or the entire website. Some of the manager’s capabilities include, adding or altering users, adding keywords, publishing/revoking or modifying content. The manager could also assign local roles to users or promote them to another specific level. One of the sole abilities that the manager has is the responsibility to change templates for the website. Now when a person assumes the owner role, they have full ownership of the website, giving them the possibility to create co-owner folders which have other people as owners just within those restricted folders. The last role is the reviewer, which enables a member to edit or publish content, but this member is restricted to creating new content and playing with local roles.

In order to adapt to the addition of members, roles can be changed for the desired people, and even new groups can be added, which can be similar those that are included in the default setting of Plone security. Plone also enables members to have simultaneous roles to adjust to their abilities in the work setting.
and give them permission to do certain tasks that might be prohibited with the use of only one role.

As a reference, our local website is made up of five members in which we all have simultaneous roles. But our main roles being used are owner and manager, because this enables us all to modify text and add folders for the of addition information. One of the problems that we have been faced with in the security category is adding members that are not part of the UC Merced system. The team has found out that since our website is part of the UC Merced server, members that are added have to have a UC Merced login name and password, this is do to the ldap configuration. Our plan for A Woman’s Place is to provide them with their own server so that they could add their own members as needed and set their own security roles to help with their environment. This is helpful for AWP because they will be able to restrict certain people from viewing important files, as one is able to do by changing the security of Plone.

In addition to the primary project of creating a directory prototype, the team was given a secondary task which was to setup ten computers donated to the AWP. The team found that the computers came equipped with software already installed. The team had to do a certain amount of maintenance and troubleshooting on the computers at the AWP location along with documenting specifications, products installed and any problems with the computers. Over all the AWP team had the task of doing everything necessary to make each computer work efficiently and be useful for each of the A Woman’s Place personnel.
The team presented what we have done over the last few semesters to AWP’s Board of Directors to request for funds to purchase a computer. The Board of Directors then approved our request and managed to allocate some money. The team then did some research into what would be the best buy for the money. Since this was going to a server we did find is beneficial to purchase a monitor or operating system. The Zope server application is cross platform allowing the team to use Linux when the development server is purchased. The team recommended to buy XSERIES 306M SS which was about $668 before tax. Once we have the development server we will be able to install the OS and Plone. Then we will be able implement our current and future projects.
Project Planning

Overall Project Schedule

Team Continuity Plan
1. Setup the new server with Linux along with the Application Server (Zope) and install Content Management System (Plone).
2. Design security hierarchy.
3. Implement the Directory Information System.
4. Test the Directory.
5. Write user documentation.

Project Roadblocks

This semester, Service Learning-A Woman’s Place (AWP) had four main problems to deal with; money, time, computers, and also security for the AWP
website. Our group needed money to provide a server for the AWP center at Merced, CA. This was to help them build their website, and the organization isn’t as high on funding, so we desperately needed to collect funding to help develop their website, and also with their profiling system. Our group also had trouble with meeting times since each member had a different time schedule in which they could volunteer to go down to AWP. The organization also received PCs donated to them this semester, and we had to figure how and when to set them up. Finally came the security for their website which is still undergoing construction, certain files should only be accessed by staff members, and so we must setup a security system to restrict people from accessing those files.

**Expected Outcomes**

Demonstrate the Directory prototype, ESL-AWP website will be up and running so that ESL-AWP team can start organizing information to aid their client organization who in turn will create more access for battered women. We also expect to have completed the prototype being developed for them. AWP will then have a network system to work with for their data and files.
Team Organization

Drew Tilley: Team leader
Rafael Grenados: Webmaster
Martin Sanchez: Communications specialist
Alex Chow: Recorder

References

Organizations
A Woman’s Place, Merced, CA, headquarters

Online sources
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