

SCPA 510 Project Proposal

David Mason <vid_cedproject@zooid.org>, January 2009

Introduction

The Concordia Community Economic Development (CED) Graduate Diploma includes an eight-month project or internship within a CED initiative. As an experienced software developer, I would like to support or develop an Internet based project to support a CED organization and its members. I am experienced in the user-centered software development process and would like to work directly with constituents to define and test the effectiveness of this project. The project must be defined by a geographically specific community (eg a region of Montreal).

Article 16 of the Montreal Charter includes the phrase “*To foster participation by citizens in municipal affairs,*” I am particularly interested in projects that enhance access and participation in community affairs.

Project description

The intent of this project is not to provide a set technology project, rather outline possible elements of a project and work with stakeholders to define and implement a project. Following is a list of types of Internet focused projects which can be situated in a CED organization or relevant community.

- Government interface - obtain government data and make it more accessible, or provide additional analysis in an interactive system.
 - obtain re-usable data by contacting agencies or “screen scraping” Web-based public data
 - better notification of events of interest
- Extending services to under-served - disabled, marginalized, language
 - distributed peer translation (Boston project for Chinese residents)
 - mapping for disabled community - sidewalk construction, data from City of Montreal
- Economic or environmental concerns - web sites to allow participation, highlight and promote community elements.
 - creative resources / problem solving
 - collaborative walking tour/historical wiki (fitness, accessibility tie-in)
- Fostering communications - collaborative calendars, event management, wiki, dialogue and consultation.
 - develop “volunteer in my area” interface based on location and interests.
- Research - determining where communities are at with regard to technology use, and what they are looking for.

A document roughly describing different kinds of internet based interventions is available at http://ced.zooid.org/wiki/Internet_interventions

Project Objectives

The course's objective should be “Simple, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time-bound.” Personal learning objectives for this project will be:

- Use the project as a context to make connections and learn about applying technology in

Montréal CED communities. For example, how receptive or enthusiastic are these communities, and what are their primary motivations.

- Use project management and software development approaches to ensure project goals and term are well defined and communicated as they develop.
- Help enable a community in a way that contacted members positively react to, such as better information systems, ways to communicate.
- Analyze and document successes and failures.

Process

Steps leading to a specific project:

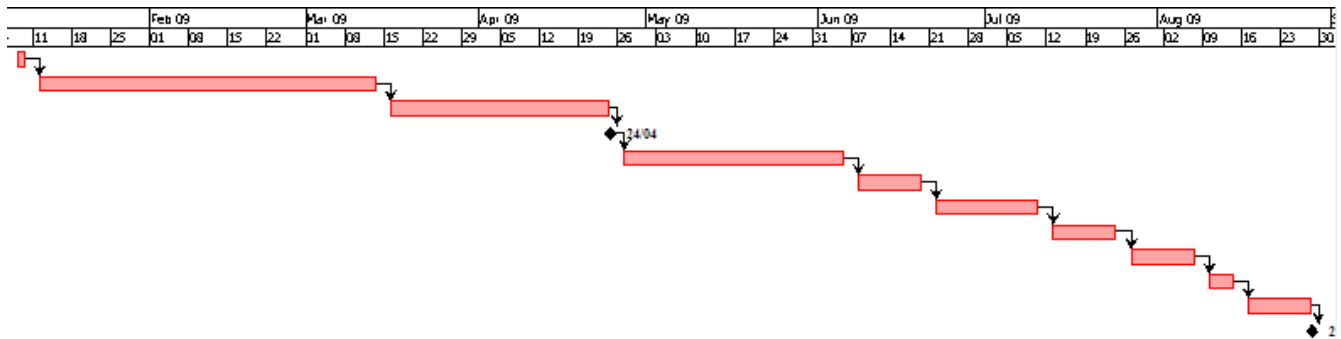
1. Familiarize self with the websites of these groups, read through the Montreal Charter.
2. Set up meetings with potential organizations (see Appendix A), connecting individuals and interested parties to explain project and ask for feedback and select setting.
3. Work with group to identify needs and opportunities around information use. Build in specific, measurable goals that can be used for impact assessment.
4. Design and propose iterative development process that allows adequate time for "hand-off" of any resulting work. If there are any possibilities for ongoing collaboration or "stage 2", follow up after full completion of stage 1.

Project process:

1. Engage and discuss the project with community stakeholders. Determine needs and goals through focus groups.
2. Create a prototype application, test the prototype in usability testing, and refine until completion.
3. Deploy final work if appropriate, document successes and failures of project for course evaluation.

I am committed to work approximately 32 hours per month until August 2009, for a non funded project. Following is a rough project timeline:

Item	Days	Start	Finish
Plan submission	2 days	Jan 8, 2009	Jan 9, 2009
Meet potential groups	45 days	Jan 12, 2009	Mar 13, 2009
Identify and meet with stakeholders for focus groups	30 days	Mar 16, 2009	Apr 24, 2009
Identify main project goals	0 days	Apr 24, 2009	Apr 24, 2009
Prototype 1	30 days	Apr 27, 2009	Jun 5, 2009
Usability 1	10 days	Jun 8, 2009	Jun 19, 2009
Prototype 2	15 days	Jun 22, 2009	Jul 10, 2009
Usability 2	10 days	Jul 13, 2009	Jul 24, 2009
Prototype 3	10 days	Jul 27, 2009	Aug 7, 2009
Documentation & Deployment	5 days	Aug 10, 2009	Aug 14, 2009
Reporting and wrap up	10 days	Aug 17, 2009	Aug 28, 2009
Project complete	0 days	Aug 28, 2009	Aug 28, 2009



Risk mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Project scope may be too large or vaguely defined.	Select an easily defined, obviously useful goal with a definite beginning and end appropriate to the timeline.
Project may not be properly described to stakeholders or may not fulfill their goals.	Ensure throughout the process that everyone is on the same page and the expected result is very well understood. Use agile, iterative process with focus groups , usability, examples, mockups, early prototypes.
Who will have access to the resulting project - will it always benefit the community?	Ensure community is prepared to utilize work, and is properly supported.
Resulting work may be difficult to maintain by organization.	Ensure it uses standard design, is open, and is as easy as possible to host. Work with an organization such as communautique.qc.ca for an ongoing support arrangement.

Appendix A - Relevant past projects

These are relevant projects I've participated in:

- 1993 - First public ISP in Toronto with significant community
- 2001- 2009 - Lead technologist in public consultations, including Canada's first public public engagement project on foreign policy - <http://dataparc.com/projects/www.foreign-policy-dialogue.ca/> (international award winner)
- 2006 - Develop patient access to their record and collaborative care (ongoing)