

Information methods assignment



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FEEDBACK| | | CIS11 Information Methods Assignment 2 Scenario C - Travel
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The purpose for this report examines opportunities, benefits and design
requirements of a system to replace the existing manual system currently in
operation. Research was undertaken into the necessity, benefits and

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ramifications of not moving forward to new service delivering necessary information that will keep the organisation at the for front of the travel industry. This examination was based on existing industry research, internal evaluation of needs and other publicly available materials based on the current and future delivery of services to the travel industry.

The findings of the report identify many benefits to the business which can be used to improve the service delivery to our current and future customers by providing more informative choices, improvements which enable sales staff to provide more relevant information based on customer needs and expectations. In the process of investigations into a proposed travel agent system it became evident that it will be necessary in the near future to move towards an online presence incorporating information delivery and booking capabilities to supplement out existing business module of service delivery.

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opportunities to improve the operations of business through development of
new systems to replace the current manual system of planning, providing
information and selling holidays to resorts available in the Pacific Islands.
The proposed design takes into account human computer interaction
principals (HCI) as is clearly demonstrated in the mock up examples, detailed
information on relationships between entities and the elements within the
entities is also prepared for discussion.

The design of the system attempts to add additional functionality and
incorporate opportunity for expansion. Information Gathering In order to
understand the requirements of the proposed system we have perused the
documentation supplied which outlines the current available data to be
implemented into the system. While investigating the Coral Seas Vanuatu
brochure to ascertain information requirements. It is clear that with good
design the system can not only record data and provide information for the
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current requirements, it can also incorporate future growth in relation to other holiday destinations.

Further the system could in the future allow access from an online portal by providing the data for potential online clients worldwide therefore broadening the sales potential, it must also be considered that without moving in this direction the long term viability of the organisation may be in doubt “ The internet is an information source that may well diminish the importance of travel agencies” (Frias and Frias 2008) from 2002 till 2004 of tourists arriving in Spain who purchased holidays through a physical intermediary showed a decrease of 5. 7% (IET, 2004).

These are our initial investigations which need to be supported by extensive discussions with all stake holders however we believe that these are the foundations for further analysis of requirements. In the process of investigations we have identified the following critical data recording requirements necessary to perform the desired outcomes. The information required to be recorded includes location, attraction, accommodation, room and facility information in addition we have identified more growth potential for the system by adding a country entity.

To provide additional and more powerful search functionality we have also included a number of other categories such as attraction type and hotel chain by doing this we are can enable staff to filter information according destinations which have for example wind surfing available and with a preferred hotel chain such as Travel Lodge. The benefits to the organisation in building this system would be reflected in the service that sales staff could

provide to potential customers by providing more relevant and informed options to customers.

It would enable new staff who are not knowledgeable in relation to different holiday destinations to provide informed and specific information back to customers relevant to their personalised requirements. It would reduce the cost of training new staff and make them effective earlier. Information can be made available at multiple locations via the internet as required and when updated would be instantaneous (Frias and Frias 2008) page 164 , if desired with additional work could enable to ability to sell holidays online reducing the work load of face to face staff.

By providing the online option your business would become more widely recognised and putting customers in direct contact (Vich-I-Martorell, 2003).

The core of the data capture requirements are the Attraction and Accommodation entities however to provide meaningful and relevant search options a number of other related data is required to be recorded see appendix 1 for a schematic layout of the entities.

Each entity has a unique attribute called ID which forms the basis of the relationships between entities, where one entity is related to another there will be an attribute which makes the link as in this example the Country entity has an id attribute and location entity has a attribute called Country ID which relates directly to a specific data set from the Country Entity. As can be easily seen the Entity which the relationship referred to makes up the first part of the attribute name and ID makes up the standard part of the attribute name in all cases.

For a detail list of entities and their attributes see appendix 2 through 12.

With this scenario your staff would be able to search all locations from a specific country and would ensure that data remained consistent. The unique relationship key would be allocated by the system therefore making it simple and reliable. In the situation regarding image entities it is necessary to have a separate entity where there could be a number of images for an individual entity such as accommodation.

In situations where there is only a need for one image the image is included in the primary entity such as key chart which has a single image associated with it for usability purposes. Entity Overview Attraction The attraction entity is one of the key components of the system, when tourists are making decisions about their travel requirements they want to know what they can do when visiting a specific location. By having the attraction entity information can be available for each attraction in any location and by location.

Costs and a description would be available to assist the sales staff in providing informative and relevant information. See appendix 2 Attraction Image You will be able to add multiple images of each of the attraction type for each location entity with a description of each image. Images would be stored on the system using the word attractionimage id and the element id value as the file name eg “ attractionimage1. jpg”. See appendix 3 Attraction Type

The attraction type entity will enable search and grouping capabilities to the system which will enable staff to present customers holiday destinations

based on the type of attractions they are interested in as opposed to going to a destination and then finding what attractions are available. See appendix 4 Accommodation This entity is also integral to the operation of the system, when tourist go on holidays their accommodation is one of the most important choices they will make and can have a big influence on their satisfaction with the holiday and your organisation.

By understanding the customers accommodation needs your sales staff will be able to find the appropriate accommodation arrangements. Each Accommodation data set must be related to a single data set in the Hotel Chain entity even if the Accommodation entity does not belong in a chain, you will simply call the Hotel Chain the same name as the Accommodation entity. See appendix 5 Accommodation Image You will be able to add multiple images for each accommodation entity with a description of each image. Images would be stored on the system using the word accommodation image and the element id value as the file name eg “ accommodationimage1. pg”. See appendix 6 Room The room entity is related to the accommodation entity, all different room types will be listed here for each accommodation entity and information relating to a description, cost and beds. There will always be only one single entry in the Accommodation data set for each Room data set, however there may be many rooms to each accommodation data set. See appendix 7 Entity Relationship Diagram Room Image You will be able to add multiple images for each of the room package types for each accommodation entity with a description of each image.

Images would be stored on the system using the word roomimage and the element id value as the file name eg “ roomimage1. jpg”. See appendix 8

Hotel Chain This entity will allow your sales staff to search tourist destinations where a specific hotel chain exists in situations where customers have a preference for a specific hotel chain. Only accommodation and locations where the specified hotel chain is present will be listed. See appendix 9

Facility This entity list details of available facilities for each accommodation option in the accommodation entity, examples could be swimming pool, estaurant. You can add one image to each facility data set. See appendix 10

Key Chart The key chart entity is a list of all possible facilities available, where each accommodation place has a facility when adding the accommodation entity information your staff would assign from the list of facilities appropriate to the accommodation. This will assist in keeping the information consistent and save on input time. The icon/image associated with the specific key chart description will be name keychart followed by the record set ID eg. Keychart1. jpg See appendix 11

Country

By having the country entity information regarding to accommodation and facilities can be filtered according a selected country. See appendix 12

Country Image You will be able to add multiple images for each country entity with a description of each image. Images would be stored on the system using the word country image and the element id value as the file name eg “ accommodationimage1. jpg”. See appendix 13

Region By having a region many locations can be attributed to this region therefore being able to provide a detailed list of accommodation and attractions grouped together by the region that the locations are assigned too.

When there is a cluster of small towns (locations) in a specific area it will enable the sales staff to provide this information easily such as customer questions like “ what else can I do or see in the area” . In the event the location does not belong to or associated with any region in a meaningful way it would be necessary to create a region data set with the same name. See appendix 14 Location The location entity contains information about each town/location/village and allows accommodation and attractions to be filtered and grouped according to each location.

Data will be consistent and reliable as each accommodation and attraction entity will be associated with a specific location by the location id which is allocated by the system at the time the data records are added to the database by the appropriate staff member. See appendix 15 Mock Up Screens All screens will have the standard windows functionality including minimize, restore down, maximise and close. All icons will have hover capability where the user hovers over the icon and feedback will be displayed to assist the user as with standard windows functionality. Icon Legend

The icon on the Home screen will show the above guide for the icons used in the system, the first 7 icon functionality is described in the appropriate section. The following information applies to the common functionality associated with the system. When viewing a list of information where there could be a number of pages you are able to navigate through the pages in a number of ways. Firstly when clicking on one of the alphabetic characters the system will jump through the list until it finds the first occurrence of an

item starting with that character, this only applies where the column heading has a Sort Order Icon next to it.

When clicking the filter icon next to an element of information all information rows are filtered out with the exception of data sets that match the filter selection. The Previous icon will page back one page from the current information being displayed The Print button will print the information from the current screen. The Previous Menu icon will take the user to the menu that was used to access the current information. The Exit icon will close the system down and return to windows. The Next Screen icon will show the next available screen of information.

Main Menu Screen (Home) The home screen has five choices represented icons, the top three icons from left to right have the following functionality. By choosing the tool icon a sub menu will be displayed which enables an authorised person to manage the data that is the foundations of the system such as entering and managing accommodation resort information which is shown to sales staff. The globe icon opens a new graphical menu screen which enables sales staff to choose a country by clicking on the country shape.

By choosing the surfer image a list of attraction / activities categories will be displayed which allows sales staff to find holiday locations based on a specific attraction / activity type. The bottom two icons are the exit option and icon guide help screen. Data Management Menu The Manage screen provides options to manage all information available to the system.

Countries Selection Menu By clicking on a country shape a new menu will

appear providing a graphic view of destinations to choose from much like this screen. Destinations Menu

When choosing a destination a list will be available showing resort / accommodation information for that destination. Locations List The sales staff are able to click on one of the items to show a full brochure style screen for the selected resort / accommodation choices. Staff are able to filter information to a specific location if required. Accommodation Resort Information The accommodation / resort information is displayed in a format similar to a travel brochure which makes it very presentable when showing customers and easy to read.

Attraction / Activities Category List The attraction / Activities category list enables sales staff to find destinations that provide something specific according to customer needs or interest. Attraction / Activities List by selected Category Sales staff are able to identify locations where activities / attractions are that meet customer interests and find out additional information. Having identified the preferred option it is then possible to provide information regarding accommodation based on the activities selected. HCI Principals

In the design principals presented we have incorporated consistency, visibility, feedback and constraints. Visibility: The user of the system is presented with large easy to use and well located icons that make the system intuitive to use. Results lists are displayed one screen at a time so users do not need to scroll down pages to find the desired information. They can use the logically located next page and previous page icons to display

more information or choose the alphabet list to jump to the particular location of information they desire.

The information displayed is well presented with rows of information displayed in different colour and lines between each data set. Feedback: The proposed system will provide feedback to the user in a number of ways, it will use standard windows hover features that will display information when the user hovers over an option with the mouse, information about the number of pages of information and the current page will be displayed when looking at lists, when hovering over country and location graphic the system will provide feedback on what item is currently been given prominence.

Consistency: There is a consistent design established in the layout of the system with icons located in the same region of the screen throughout, icons are standardised in relation to there functionality and the listed information is provided with the same look and feel and presented with the same options, choosing to sort, filter or print information is the same from one screen to the next.

Affordance: The system implements principals of affordance as stated by Norman (1988) which refers to the “ perceived and actual properties of the thing” utilising large buttons for selection which invite the user to click on them, presenting familiar icons ; graphics such as maps to users in an industry which are familiar with and the use of graphics that offer association between actual and perceived functionality such as the home button which has common and accepted functionality worldwide independent of the language spoken.

Affordances are the perceived and actual properties (mainly functional) that determine how an object can be used. Constraints: are placed on the user by limiting the available choices available to the user and limiting the available information to those choices, within list screens the next or previous buttons will not be selectable if there is no further information to show. The design of the proposed system takes onboard key aspects of usability enabling the necessary interaction for people involved with the system to easily locate the required information necessary to do their jobs.

The ways this is achieved is by including a number of key HCI design principals including learn ability which is demonstrated in the simple and recognisable button and graphic choices presented to the user allowing them to make intuitive logical choices based on what they perceive the icons and graphics to mean even to users who may not be computer literate. Simple buttons such as next, previous and home are all easily recognisable options which are standard functionality in browsers, logical sequence of screens makes the system easy for the most inexperienced user.

As the system is designed with meaningful graphic representations such as the world and location maps easy to understand icons and buttons logical representation of data users of the system who may not use it regularly would easily be able to understand what is necessary to find the information required. The proposed system adds extra utility than is presented with the current manual system in that it provides easier ways of locating information based on varying methods. As stated by (Albrecht Schmidt 2005) " a product can be used to reach a certain goal or to perform a certain task.

This is essential". The system full fills the functionality of the existing manual based system and adds additional utility in the form of sorting, filtering and locating information based on the needs of the customer, information can be centrally controlled to ensure integrity and reliability. Semiotics Analysis Definition Semiotics is a way of looking and understanding the world around us and understanding the things we see using the signs that are available, signs can be represented in many ways visually, through sound and objects, peirce categorises the signs into Icon, Index and Symbol.

Semiotics is categorised into three areas Semantics " Relation between signs and the things to which they refer; their denotata, or meaning" , Syntactics " Relations among signs in formal structures" and Pragmatics " Relation between signs and the effects they have on the people who use them" (Wikipedia 2011). Pragmatic Intention The Corel Seas Vanuatu brochure primary function is to persuade potential customers that Vanuatu is the place to go for your holiday and these are the choices of resorts to stay at, it present an image of lovely tropical islands, plenty of sunshine, lovely beaches and excellent choice of resorts to stay at.

While at the same time it promotes the feeling of seclusion and privacy, many of the pictures show deserted beaches and resorts or just a couple sitting by the pool. While promoting relaxation and privacy it also attempts to show that there are many activities and fun adventures to be had for those who are more active and attempts to create the tropic island feel to the brochure by including pictures of local inhabitants and lots of palm trees and empty beaches. Syntactic Structure

Corel Seas uses red as a primary background colour which conveys the feeling of warmth Jacqui Howard says the colour represents “ love, passion, heat” which is Marc Green PhD confirms, there are the many photos of blues skies, white sands and green tropical plants to create a feeling of a tropical paradise. Fonts used for headings is a fun font again using the warm red colour to further create the impression of warmth. The initial summary of the coral seas blurb is in blue the colour of the sea or sky which fits with the theme and intent of the brochure.

Words such as soothing and ambiance set the mood for the brochure and create images in the readers mind of relaxation and self indulgence. The brochure attempts to be informative in providing information about each resort and destination, it attempts capture all price level markets by using the words “ all dreams and all budgets”. Language Tools Analysis The brochure makes use of clear short sentences which have simple headings to attract attention and convey a message. Each point is laid out in its own paragraph with adequate space for readability and to grab the readers attention.

Some words used in the brochure may not be clear in there context for some cultures such as the sentence “ happy to forgo some of the more luxurious touches” and uses of words like mingle and tranquil could also present issues of understanding for some cultures. The use of nationally recognisable symbols are used such the heart and knives and forks to represent honeymoon and restaurants however the symbol utilised for the wedding packages and free of charge activities may not be clear to all cultures. The

use of dates in the terms of conditions leaves no room for ambiguity. Critical Thinking and Global Implications

The tourism industry has many positive impacts on the communities where tourism exists creating employment opportunities where in some cases few existed requiring people to move to more favourable areas for employment, also creating revenues for business and government in these regions enabling the build infrastructure that also serves the local communities. Other benefits include a diversification of industry in regions that do not currently have diversity (Santana-Gallego etl, 2011), where farming exists additional opportunities exist to sell produce through farmers markets (Tourism Queensland 2010).

In poor countries overseas dollars coming into the country provide a valuable source of funds and overseas visitors can expose local people to new cultures and help create a more racially tolerant society. While there are many benefits from tourism to the local economies there are also negative aspects which course problems including a transfer of resources away from other industries including agriculture ; industrial and clashes of culture or a loss of culture.

Where there is an attraction to the indigenous art and crafts by tourists the locals can begin to treat these as just goods and eventually dilute the cultural significance of these items and changed to meet tourist demands. Reluctance of tourists to accommodate local traditions and behaviours can force communities to change to accommodate the tourists. Dress standards of western cultures can vary with more traditional countries causing conflict

or dilution of beliefs and finally tourist can sometimes treat locals like animals in a zoo taking pictures and being disrespectful causing resentment (i to i Volunteering).

When taking into account the negatives and the positives aspects of tourism to the local communities the overall benefits out way the negatives, however with better consideration, understanding and respect the negative aspects can be reduced by embracing the local culture and traditions using tourist operators that promote this concept and making choices that do not create conflict. Conclusion

The design of the travel agent system provides new efficiencies and features that are not available using existing methods to service customer needs, areas such and search and filter capabilities, brochure printing, remote update of information via the internet. It also identifies the necessity to move towards an online presence which with proper design, utilising the right platforms will enable the capability to be added to this proposed system at a later stage, failure to pursue this in the future could have significant implications to the growth of the business moving forward.

The design principals are based on sound research and endeavour to encourage productivity, reduce training times and facilitate staff in achieving the best outcomes for the business and its customers. Appendices Appendix 1 - Appendix 2 - Entity Attraction details Appendix 3 - Attraction Image entity details Appendix 4 - Attraction Type entity details Appendix 5 - Accommodation entity details Appendix 6 - Accommodation Image entity

details Appendix 7 – Room entity details Appendix 8 – Room Image entity details

Appendix 9 – Hotel Chain entity details Appendix 10 – Facility entity details

Appendix 11 – Key Chart entity details Appendix 12 – Country entity details

Appendix 13 – Country Image entity details Appendix 14 – Region entity

details Appendix 15 – Location entity details Appendix 16 – Data gathering

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