Innovation and Concept

MAJOR
PROJECT
PROPOSAL

Presented by

Shane Hagan

Interactive Multimedia Design Year 4

{ 11737801 }

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1.0 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank **Chris** and **Judith** for their expert tutelage throughout the last 12 weeks. I would also like to thank all those in **IMD Year 4**, in particular my **close mates**, for their suggestions, help and critique throughout the first semester.

2.0 - INTRODUCTION

The first few weeks of term were difficult for me. After one year's freedom from University whilst on work placement, it was difficult getting back into studying and class tests etc. I also found that I did not possess any inspiration for my design work. I can only explain it as a design blockage. Eventually, I got through the turmoil and began to put my head down and work hard. As the weeks passed, I knuckled down and worked harder and harder. As a result, I became more focussed towards my work for Innovation and Concept.

3.0 – RATIONALE

3.1 – Aim

My project aim is to design and build a student informational website, focusing on the **student survival guide**. This "student survival guide" will be a one-stop website on information for students and tackling some issues that may affect students living away from home perhaps for the first time.

The project will take the form of a fully functional website which will include interactive content, including a map of central Belfast. The website will take a **comical approach to student life**. However, such important issues such as sex, STDs, drugs and alcohol etc, will have light hearted humour, but backed up with a serious "**stay safe**" message. It is important that the website does not look as if it is endorsing unfit advice, or encouraging the user-group to commit unsafe actions.

3.2 – Why a Student Survival Guide?

Good question! From the beginning of the University year, I have wanted to do some sort of student informational website for my major project. In the early stages of the semester I was thinking far too big, perhaps one of the reasons for my lack of inspiration. After a "Chris Consultation", it was confirmed that I was thinking too much on a "grand" scale. I needed to go back to the drawing board and focus on one particular area.

After much "head-wrecking" or brainstorming, I finally decided on a **Student Survival Guide**. Initial thoughts were of a website that would give fresher students a brief induction to student life in Belfast. Obviously this would best suit students who have not studied in Belfast before. My next thought was how do I make this site of interest to students who already live and study in Belfast?

3.3 – Target Group

The market that I shall target is principally students, fresher in particular, although it should appeal to a broad range of students who will find information of use.

I know that when I first started my University "career" in 1998, I did not know what to expect when I reached the big smoke, Belfast. At that time, when I was searching the Internet for some helpful guide on student life, I was unable to find information of value. When I decided to undertake this major project and carried out some initial research, I was amazed to find that there is still no useful guide to (student) life in Belfast for fresher students.

4.0 – SITE DESIGN

4.1 – Content

The Student Survival Guide (S.S.G) will consist of mixed content, including text, images, animation and an interactive map. Although the website is informational in nature, it should and will not be over populated with text.

A straight to the point comical approach, with a serious message underpinned, is the order of the day.

4.2 – Typography

With thousands of royalty-free and paid-for fonts readily available from the Internet, it can appear to be a very daunting task to select appropriate fonts to be used on the website. It is important that I do not over style the website, since it is intended that the site background moves in the direction the user points the mouse – easterly and westerly directions only.

To this end, page headers and "comical" advisory notices will be displayed as a trendy typeface and all other text will assume a slightly formal typeface.

4.3 – Colourisation

Perhaps one of the hardest decisions I have made thus far is deciding upon the colour scheme of the **S.S.G** website. In order for me to make the S.S.G memorable, the website will need to be colourful, eye catching and funky to name a few. The correct

mixture of colour will be very important in achieving this. The diagram opposite are the colours I plan on using, consisting of three solid colours and one of the solid colours with the opacity lowered.
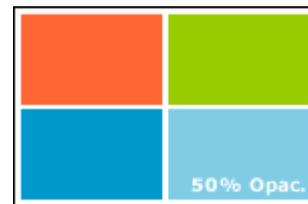
4.4 – Graphics

It can be too easy to use up "white space" with images on web pages that contain very little text. Imagery will be important for the S.S.G website to break-up the monotonous nature of text and to aid putting the "**stay safe student**" message across visually in some sections of the site. Although, imagery will be used wisely since the background of the site will be animated.

It is hoped that any imagery used on the website will be my own photography and most likely modified using a graphical software package.

4.5 – Site Architecture

The proposed **Student Survival Guide** (S.S.G) content will include the following sections:
- About S.S.G
- Contact information
    - Useful telephone numbers such as advice lines
    - Contact/Feedback Form
- The Student Survival Guide
    - Living away from home
    - Eating
    - Alcohol
    - Study
- Culture
    - Alcohol
    - Drugs
    - Sex
    - Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)
- Links
- Interactive Guide
    - Interactive Map
    - Boys section
    - Girls section
- Site Info
    - Copyright and disclaimer notices.

4.6 – Technology & Coding

With a range of technology at "your" fingertips these days, I intend on employing a range of software applications to design and develop the S.S.G. Such technologies include **Dreamweaver** for overall site layout; **Flash** for the creation of the animated background; **Fireworks** for graphics editing and **PhotoShop** for image manipulation and special effects.

During the early weeks of research I had mentioned that I may consider using ASP or PHP for coding the website. Since I have decided to use Flash for the creation of the main part of the website, these programming

languages will no longer be an option, as the coding used in Flash is **ActionScript**. In saying this, there will be a form included within the contact information section and this may involve some other language.

5.0 – INNOVATION

The Student Survival Guide (S.S.G) website will play an integral part in the Innovation of my major project. The website background will have the capability of moving in an easterly or westerly direction according to the position of the mouse pointer. In itself, the **website is innovative** and when this effect is "pulled off" successfully, it should keep visitors busy for a while. This will also encourage site visitors to explore the depths of the website and entices them to engage in a **user experience**. The user experience that I create is imperative if I want to succeed in attracting new visitors to the website and encouraging past visitors to return.

5.1 – Interactive Map

As part of the innovative qualities of the project, I intend on creating an **interactive map** of the centre of Belfast. The map will highlight many pubs; clubs; cash points; off-licences; bus and train stations and more. (*Full list available from Week 11 of Design Diary*). The map will also incorporate the two (key) characters I intend on using to support the "Stay Safe Student" message. The characters are suitably named **Naughty Nurse** and **Dishy Doctor** - not wishing to appear sexist!

The interactive map will have the following capabilities:

- Zoom controls,
- Navigational controls (North, South, East and West),
- Info boxes upon object (mouse) roll-over, and
- Hotspots - clickable objects such as a pub or train icon.

5.2 – Random Recipe Disaster

To add some quirkiness to the project, I came up with this idea! It is a known fact that many students do not feed themselves correctly whilst at

University, my-self included. No wonder I look forward to going home at the weekends! That and the washing of clothes!

The background to this idea is that the user is confronted with several drop-down menu items and he/she will select from a list of food items. Once the "**go get dish**" button is depressed an image of a "fancy" dish is displayed. The user must then take a note or print out the list of selected food items and create the healthy dish.

5.3 – The Sexes – Boys v Girls

Even at this late stage, I still have some ideas running around my head on what I would like to achieve in this section of the website. The main principles are that there are two sections – **4 Boys** and **4 Girls**. The 4 Boys section would include content such as "Girls don't like boys who…" and chat-up lines you really shouldn't use. 4 Girls will be similar in nature, but with the addition of "**Bitch Slap!**" Bitch Slap is a quirky section about "come-back at you" lines in case any verbal girl fights happen on a good night out.

6.0 – TIME MANAGEMENT

One of the most critical undertakings of any major project is time management. It is crucial that I keep to a time frame and draw up a plan of action. To this end, I have created a time frame chart to illustrate when each of the different stages - design, development and testing - should be complete. *See Appendix 1.*

7.0 – CONCLUSION

In conclusion, my intention is to produce a Student Informational website – the Student Survival Guide. A website targeted specifically at fresher students, but will appeal to all students. The website will be innovative and provide the user with a memorable experience.

APPENDIX 1 – TIME CHART

P1   Finalise site architecture
P2   Design main site
P3   Design interactive map
P4   Design any page headers & banners

P5   Populate website with content
P6   Populate interactive map with content
P7   Add functionality to interactive map
P8   Develop remainder of interactive guide
P9   Allow one week for overrun (possibly two)

P10   Site Testing
P11   Complete Report