Gerri Holden Ministries
Executive Summary

Student Consultant, Kate Stepp
Community Partner, Gerri Holden

I. Background Information

The mission of Gerri Holden Ministries is to provide academic programs to all age groups, provide professional training and development to teachers and tutors, provide a writer's program for youth and adults, and to provide training and equipping programs for Christian leaders. The organization does not currently have a ministry headquarters, making it very important for Dr. Holden to have a presence on the world wide web so that she can still provide a resource of information for the public to access even without a physical headquarters. After losing her previous site and site manager Dr. Holden was able to get a temporary site going with the help of a friend, but was unable to update the site and make it useful for her intended audience. Entering this partnership, Dr. Holden hopes to create a professional-looking, user-friendly website that she is able to update and maintain herself and that includes some advanced capabilities such as online payment for products, events, and donations.

II. Consulting Tasks

Task 1. Design a New Look and Layout for the Site

By designing a new look and layout for the website, we will be able to create a more professional atmosphere and give those interested in the ministries more confidence in the organization. This confidence will lead to more partners/donors for the programs as well as more participants in the programs offered.

Task 2. Teach Dr. Holden How to Maintain the Website Properly

After suffering one website downfall after the loss of a staff member, it is crucial for the next site design to be fully updatable and maintainable by Dr. Holden herself.

Task 3. Implement PayPal, Calendar of Events, and Purchasing Options for the Website

Dr. Holden is hoping to enhance the website with more functional capability such as online registration, payment, and event planning. Doing so will allow her to more effectively and efficiently collect donations and funding, disperse information about her events, and allow those interested to easily and confidently sign-up for programs and events.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

Task 1. Design a New Look and Layout for the Site

The website is now functional for updating events and accepting online payments, is more graphically appealing, and user-friendly. The website is a large part of Gerri Holden Ministries

because it holds the majority of the information and content for events, programs, and tutoring tools. Now that the site has a clear way to navigate the information and includes teaching content for the programs, it is accessible to its audience and can be used for its intended purpose. Additionally, now that Dr. Holden is able to personally update and publicize events and the site has the capabilities to accept donations and payments, the capacity is increased to reach more people and put more money back into the development of further programming. Although the current design has achieved what we intended to achieve, the risk lies in the maintenance of the clean site structure and layout as changes are made and new material is added.

Task 2. Teach Dr. Holden to update the website herself

Dr. Holden added all of the content for all of her programs, and was able to add the homepage features with some guidance and assistance from the consultant. Part of Dr. Holden's mission is to reach a wide audience, and by utilizing the world wide web, she is now able to do so. The outcome is sustainable because Dr. Holden has made a large effort to create the content herself and to do all of the modifications so far on her own. One risk to sustainability could exist in keeping pages linked correctly as new content and new pages are created.

Task 3. Implement PayPal, Calendar of Events, and Purchasing Options for the Website

After designing the site and updating the site content, we configured and implemented PayPal payment options for several events on the site as well as a donation option. We then added the PayPal Shopping Cart feature to allow for the purchasing and payment for books that Dr. Holden has for sale on the site. Finally we added a dynamic calendar of events using Google Calendar that allows Dr. Holden to easily add events to a graphical calendar without editing any html or using any web editors to do so. This outcome is easy to sustain since there is help and support through the PayPal and Google Calendar sites, and since most of the maintenance is handled on the respective site instead of in the html code which can get confusing.

Recommendation 1. Re-organize files relevant to web content

Try to mirror the layout of the website in your folder structure on your computer so that when you want to publish information to the web, you will know where to look on your computer for information.

Recommendation 2. Go through the site looking for design inconsistencies

Go through the content pages and examine the layout of each page in relation to others. Strive for a feeling of continuity and consistency.

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Community Partner

Dr. Gerri Holden
consultholden@aol.com

Gerri Holden Ministries
http://www.gerriholden.org

About the Consultant

Kate Stepp
kstepp@andrew.cmu.edu

Kate is a senior in Computer Science. She will begin working as a software engineer for FactSet Research Systems in July.

Gerri Holden Ministries
Final Consulting Report

Student Consultant, Kate Stepp
Community Partner, Gerri Holden

I. About the Organization

Organization

The vision of Gerri Holden Ministries is to inspire, influence, encourage and motivate others to fulfill their total potential and purpose. Their mission is to provide academic programs to all age groups, provide professional training and development to teachers and tutors, provide a writer's program for youth and adults, and to provide training and equipping programs for Christian leaders.

Facilities

Currently, Dr. Holden does not have a ministry headquarters, but intends to move into a new office/building later in the Spring. Details of the move have not yet been confirmed.

Programs

Gerri Holden Ministries is in the process of developing several programs. Dr. Holden is working to develop an Urban Tutor program that will offer educational and instructional material for college transition, pre GED & pre SAT training, general tutoring kindergarten to adult, and parents as tutors. She is also working to develop the Writer's Café which will offer writing clinics and a Young Urban Writers club. Additionally, she is putting together materials for Christian training, and is working on a Foundations Academy for grades K through 3.

Staff

Gerri Holden is the director and sole dedicated staff member of her organization. She has some volunteer help from her sister and her friends to help with marketing and creating fliers for events.

Technical Environment

The technical environment is essentially Dr. Holden's Toshiba laptop. She uses Microsoft office currently, and will be using Microsoft FrontPage which she has installed on her machine. She uses AOL for email, and she uses Microsoft Image Editor for editing pictures and graphics. Dr. Holden uses a USB drive for back-up transfer. She currently has a web-hosting plan with godaddy.com.

Technical Management

Dr. Holden no longer has the assistance of a trained webmaster, so she would like to learn to update and manage her website independently. There is a temporary site that exists currently, but it not what Dr. Holden wants for a long-term website.

Technology Planning

Dr. Holden would like to utilize web capabilities such as online registration for events, online sales for books and teaching material, online courses (cyber school), and general information about her

organization. One important goal in planning is to learn the process of updating and maintaining the technology that is implemented.

Information Management

Information is managed via Dr. Holden's laptop and external USB drives. She keeps contact information in AOL and keeps event information and program documents on her hard drive and USB drive.

Internal and External Communication

Since Dr. Holden is the sole leader of the organization, she is responsible for making major decisions. External communication, including communicating with partners and program participants, is mainly handled via email as Dr. Holden is a very busy individual. The organization relies heavily on email communication and website information to distribute information about events, programs, products, and services. Dr. Holden once had a functional website which was useful for the organization, but was managed by an external webmaster and saw its demise when the webmaster decided to leave the organization. Dr. Holden is hoping to learn what it takes to manage the upkeep of the website on her own.

Business Systems

Dr. Holden is hoping to set up processes for Partner relationships for donations and sponsors for her organization.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. Design a New Look and Layout for the Site

Previously, the majority of the information about Dr. Holden's Ministries was located online on her website. After losing the staff member dedicated to the maintenance and upkeep of the website, it has now become simply a placeholder providing contact information to reach Dr. Holden. The site design and layout are unprofessional and do not portray a strong presence for the organization. By designing a new look and layout for the website, we will be able to create a more professional atmosphere and give those interested in the ministries more confidence in the organization. This confidence will lead to more partners/donors for the programs as well as more participants in the programs offered.

Task 2. Teach Dr. Holden How to Maintain the Website Properly

After suffering one website downfall after the loss of a staff member, it is crucial for the next site design to be fully updatable and maintainable by Dr. Holden herself. She admits that she will likely find someone to help her maintain the website in the future, but would like to know enough to manage in the absence of any other technical assistant.

Task 3. Implement PayPal, Calendar of Events, and Purchasing Options for the Website

Dr. Holden is hoping to enhance the website with more functional capability such as online registration, payment, and event planning. Since these items are more complicated to implement and manage individually, we will find external applications/services that will help Dr. Holden manage these capabilities. Doing so will allow her to more effectively and efficiently collect donations and funding, disperse information about her events, and allow those interested to easily and confidently sign-up for programs and events.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

Task 1. Design a New Look and Layout for the Site

A particularly clear way of presenting results is to incorporate a bulleted list. They can succinctly present:

The previous version of *www.gerriholden.org* is now changed and transformed into a more graphically appealing, user-friendly, and functional website. The website design was planned out and implemented using Microsoft FrontPage, and the navigation for the site was re-organized into a more intuitive and easy to follow navigation scheme. The website is now functional for updating events and accepting online payments. In the past, Dr. Holden was not able to make updates to the site and the site was not configured to accept online payments.

Previously, Dr. Holden used a web hosting plan that had a 10-page limit. This limited the way that the page could be laid out and navigated. By trying to include all the site content on 10 pages, the site became cluttered and difficult to navigate. By changing the hosting to a size limited space instead of a page limited space, we were able to give the page much more flexibility and implement the navigation that we wanted to implement. The site is now broken down into main category tabs with sublinks for each main category. This gives the site a much more structured way to find and view the information. We've also eliminated the distorted and distracting graphics that the previous site included. We have changed these images to be correctly proportioned and more tasteful in graphical appearance.

The website is a large part of Gerri Holden Ministries because it holds the majority of the information and content for events, programs, and tutoring tools. Previously, this information was hard to find and hard to navigate and thus was unable to reach its audience and was unable to fulfill the mission of the ministry of providing academic programs to all age groups, providing professional training and development to teachers and tutors, providing a writer's program for youth and adults, and to providing training and equipping programs for Christian leaders. Now that the site has a clear way to navigate the information and includes teaching content for the programs, it is accessible to its audience and can be used for its intended purpose. Additionally, now that Dr. Holden is able to personally update and publicize events and the site has the capabilities to accept donations and payments, the capacity is increased to reach more people and put more money back into the development of further programming.

Although the current design has achieved what we intended to achieve, the risk lies in the maintenance of the clean site structure and layout as changes are made and new material is added. As websites grow, they tend to lose the initial clean, easy to navigate layout. It will be a challenge to remember to keep the information simple and neat and keeping it from becoming cluttered.

Task 2. Teach Dr. Holden to update the website herself

Dr. Holden has successfully learned the essential skills to update her website on her own. Accessible at *www.gerriholden.org*, you can see the website that Dr. Holden has helped to design, and has added much of the content herself. Dr. Holden added all of the content for all of her programs, and was able to add the homepage features with some guidance and assistance from the consultant.

Previously, when Dr. Holden needed to get an update to the website, she had to wait several weeks for her webmaster to get around to making the changes. Now, Dr. Holden has the capacity to make the changes and updates herself in her own time, and knows how to publish the changes to the web immediately.

Previously, Dr. Holden had all of the content for her programs in print form and would distribute the material as best that she could. Now that Dr. Holden is able to upload the tutoring material and information via the internet, it is more accessible to her students and those interested in the programs that she offers. Part of Dr. Holden's mission is to reach a wide audience, and by utilizing the world wide web, she is now able to do so.

The outcome is sustainable because Dr. Holden has made a large effort to create the content herself and to do all of the modifications so far on her own. Dr. Holden comes to consulting meeting with new pages created and then asks questions about how to make them better and how to make adjustments. This process has allowed her to become more confident with making adjustments to her website on her own. Dr. Holden has also mentioned that many other professors that she works with at Carlow University also use FrontPage for website design, so she feels confident that if she has questions in the future, she will have a support group to help her.

One risk to sustainability could exist in keeping pages linked correctly as new content and new pages are created. Linking can be a difficult concept with a large number of pages, and sometimes links go in the wrong place or reference the wrong page.

Now that Dr. Holden feels confident with making changes and updates to her own website, she has begun to ask more questions about how she can add more features and add more appeal to her website. Dr. Holden decided that she would like to create html email newsletters and event announcements so she was also able to learn how to import webpages made in FrontPage into outlook to send to her email marketing lists.

Task 3. Implement PayPal, Calendar of Events, and Purchasing Options for the Website

After designing the site and updating the site content, we configured and implemented PayPal payment options for several events on the site as well as a donation option. We then added the PayPal Shopping Cart feature to allow for the purchasing and payment for books that Dr. Holden has for sale on the site. Finally we added a dynamic calendar of events using Google Calendar that allows Dr. Holden to easily add events to a graphical calendar without editing any html or using any web editors to do so.

Previously, there were no capabilities to accept online payments on the website, so allowing site users to pay online using a credit card instead of mailing checks is a large increase in convenience for site visitors. The dynamic calendar of events allows the visitors to view all of the events coming up for the month as well as scan through the upcoming months to view events. By allowing visitors to see all of the events, it is hoped that this will generate more interest in events and bring more participants and sponsors to the events.

This outcome is easy to sustain since there is help and support through the PayPal and Google Calendar sites, and since most of the maintenance is handled on the respective site instead of in the html code which can get confusing.

Through using these add-on site features, Dr. Holden has begun to find other features in Google Calendar that she would like to eventually harness, such as the event guest list that allows you to send automatic reminders to users who have signed up for events and hold discussions about events.

Recommendation 1. Re-organize files relevant to web content

It can be confusing to have several different folder schemes and locations for storing content. Try to mirror the layout of the website in your folder structure on your computer so that when you want to publish information to the web, you will know where to look on your computer for information.

Recommendation 2. Go through the site looking for design inconsistencies

Now that the content is in place and easily accessible, it could use a little polishing. Go through the content pages and examine the layout of each page in relation to others. Strive for a feeling of continuity and consistency.

Recommendation 3. Look into other websites that could be used for photo album storage instead of trying to create your own

Since web space on the hosting plan is limited, it would be best to look into other photo-sharing websites. Perhaps you could look into Google's Picasa program since you have already created a Google account for the events calendar. There are also other sites you could look at such as flickr.com that allow you to upload your photos and store them for free.

About the Consultant

Kate Stepp is a senior in Computer Science with a minor in Multimedia Production at Carnegie Mellon University. She will be working as a software engineer for FactSet Research Systems in Norwalk, CT starting in July of 2008.