School of Computer Science
Course 15-391

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Final Consulting Report

Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra

Ponthep (Vincent) Sethiwan

Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra

Student Consultant, Ponthep (Vincent) Sethiwan
Community Partner, Craig Johnson

I. Background Information

Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra (PYSO) was founded in 1946 for the purpose of providing educational opportunities and the finest orchestral training for young musicians between ages 14-21 in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. The organization consists of two staffs, Craig Johnson and Eve Goodman. It is located in Heinz Hall, Downtown Pittsburgh. The staffs are proficient with computer programs such as Microsoft Office. PYSO organizes one rehearsal for the members once a week and on average three concerts each year. The staffs are constantly working to achieve the organization's mission statement:

> *The mission of the Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra is: To teach and inspire musical excellence through orchestral training, to perform in premier venues, and to cultivate audiences for classical music.*

II. Consulting Tasks

PYSO is currently suffering a lot of menial tasks, the major problem resides on the time spent on answering phone calls for ticket and time spent mailing out the tickets to each requestor's address. There are approximately 2,500 tickets to mail out for each concerts and that incurs a lot of time and postal costs. An E-Ticket system will help eliminate the cost of printing tickets and the time spent on mailing tickets out. The ticket requestors will fill out online request forms which will automatically store their demographics into the database. The server will then send a copy of ticket to the requestor's email where they can print it out.

III. Outcomes Analysis and Recommendations

- The E-Ticket system has successfully resolved the problem of excessive phone calls to request for tickets.

- The E-Ticket system reduced the amount of tickets the staffs have to deal with, from 2,500 to 500.

- CP can always refer to the organization's web designer if any problem arises.

Creating a Facebook account for the PYSO group will prove very useful to the organization. That is because not only that the staffs will be able to look up the members' information, but it allows the staff to post announcements and notifications for the members as well. This will foster the PYSO members' network and as well as promoting the organization to other facebook users.

Posting performance videos on youtube.com is another feasible future implementation. The CP will not have to worry about budgeting for this additional function because the service is free of charge. It will also allow members to view and/or study their past performances within no time instead of having to come to the PYSO office and request for a copy of the video recording. Because the youtube website has laid out very clear instructions on how to post videos on the website, the implementation is simple.

Community Partner

Craig Johnson

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http://www.pyso.us

About the Consultant

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Vincent is a sophomore in Information System.

Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra

Student Consultant, Ponthep (Vincent) Sethiwan
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I. About the Organization

Organization

Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra (PYSO) was founded in 1946 for the purpose of providing educational opportunities and the finest orchestral training for young musicians in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. It is an independent youth orchestra that is affiliated with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra since 1962. PYSO is currently comprised of approximately 85 musicians, ages 14-21. PYSO presents concerts at Heinz Hall, Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, Carnegie Music Hall and various outreach locations. PYSO is a very well known youth orchestra program which has won awards in national and international competition and was selected as one of the top six youth orchestras in the United States to participate in the 2002 National Youth Orchestra Festival. PYSO is also constantly looking for talented individuals, however they find it very challenging to find individuals with enough commitments.

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Facilities

The PYSO is located in the Heinz Hall. Craig's office is located in the administrative section of the building. The office is only accessible via an elevator and the elevator is accessible through two entrances, each with very high securities. The facility composes of one small-medium size room (about 30x30 sq. ft.). The room and the way into the building are only accessible by personal with key cards. Only Craig and Eve, Craig's assistant, use the room.

Programs

PYSO is constantly looking for more talented youth musicians in the Pittsburgh metropolitan area. The organization organizes a weekly rehearsal schedule for its members. Around twice or three times a year, PYSO organize concerts in Heinz Hall. Audiences will need a ticket to attend the concert. The tickets can be requested for free of charge by calling or e-mailing. The PYSO also held international concert tours from time to time, in countries such as Scotland, Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Hungary, and Czech Republic.

Staff

The organization has a workforce of two fulltime staffs. CP manages the music library, find new donors, and manage the website. Both CP and his assistant manages list of members and emails along with alumni. CP has been employed for about 6 years and is very experienced on his task. They are looking to hire one more part-time employee. They use Lotus Notes to manage and send emails. Their server is the same one as Heinz Hall's and this was recently set up three to four months ago. They use Microsoft Office for word processing and other tasks. They have a list of alumni on their website and it is hard to manage using excel.

Technical Environment

The organization does not have a large technical environment. In the office, there are three Ethernet outlets, three PCs (one using Pentium III 660 MHz and the other is around 800 MHz). They use the Heinz Hall's network and gain internet connection from there as well. The PCs in the office have Windows XP as their operating system (the OS were upgraded by the staffs from Heinz Hall). Two are used by CP and his assistant and another one is obsolete. The PCs that they are using are all donated. The CP is looking to replace his computer in the near future. They use their website for sending out announcements to the members and their parents. They also use Microsoft Access to manage a contact list. However, this is not done efficiently.

Technical Management

The organization does not have any kind of technical management. CP is responsible for buying new equipments. If something breaks down (which has never happened) the CP is responsible to find a place to fix it. After the CP has gotten all the information on where to fix it and how much it would cost, he will pass down the task to his assistant where she would execute that task. CP backs up all documents in his My Documents folder in to a ZIP drive at the end of each week.

Technology Planning

The organization does not have any kind of technology planning because they are a workforce of two and they rarely use anything other than their computers to check/send emails and for updating their website.

Internal and External Communication

There are oftentimes that Craig and Eve have to work together on a task. These tasks include updating their user contacts which is in Microsoft Excel format. When either of them makes chances to an Excel file, they often forget to notify the other of the change, resulting in inconsistent and unnecessarily duplicated files. There is also no mechanism to ensure data security. Staffs have online (browser based) email accounts along with their account on the PYSO server. The staffs use Lotus Notes to connect to the PYSO to retrieve emails. Their website is regularly updated by using Dreamweaver. During peak period (days that are close to a concert) there will be a lot of phone calls requesting for tickets and the hits of their website will increase tremendously. They are also wasting a lot of time mailing tickets out in hard copies. They published one magazine annually in the past, however it had to be discontinued due to lack of attention on the magazine.

Information Management

Information such as members contact information is managed by the CP and his assistant electronically. The organization also uses QuickBooks to manage their finance. All information is usually stored electronically and mostly in Excel and some is duplicated on Access. This is because the assistant is aware of the benefits of Microsoft Access and thus trying to learn it, however she does not have enough knowledge to take advantage of it right now and ended up just entering the data into Access just hoping they can be utilize in the future.

Business Systems

The organization keeps tracks of their cash flow by using QuickBooks. There is no other major business system.

II. Scope of Work

Task 1. E-Tickets

The CP and his assistant are spending a lot of time dealing with menial tasks such as mailing out hard copy tickets. PYSO usually held three Heinz Hall Concerts each year, however this is not definite and there are years which they perform 5 – 6 concerts. Usually there are around 1500 – 2000 people attending each concert and the attendance has been constantly increasing each year. Currently individuals who want to attend a concert must call in, send an e-mail requesting for tickets, or write hard copy mail to request for tickets. Despite the three options that people have, about 80% of the total requests were done by phone. This creates a big problem for Craig and Eve during the prime time of ticket request, which is 2-3 weeks before the concert. During these weeks, the phone will ring every 3-4 minutes, which prevents Craig and Eve to do other things except answer the phone. Craig and Eve then have to record down the requests. They take notes for the names, telephone numbers, address, and the number of tickets that they are requesting. After recording the data onto an Excel spread sheet, Craig and Eve then have to put tickets into envelopes and then print out the street address and glue it onto the envelope. On average, they will be mailing out around 1000 envelops, each consisting about 5 tickets. This process takes up a lot of time and energy to do and in a long run, prevents them from utilizing these time to write new proposals and think of new activities, thus impeding them from achieving the mission statement.

III. Outcomes and Recommendations

Task 1. Develop an E-Ticket System

The Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra (PYSO) holds free concerts for 2 – 3 times annually. Though the concerts are free, tickets are still needed in order for one to attend. I have worked with my CP, the director of PYSO, Craig Johnson to develop an e-ticket system. The e-ticket system was developed by using HTML, Java Script, PHP, and MySQL which will allow the requestors to request and print their tickets online.

Outcome 1: E-ticket system has reduced the time and money spent on printing and mailing out tickets.

The e-ticket system that was developed throughout the consulting period has saved a lot of time for Craig and his assistant on printing and mailing out hard tickets. The system is divided into three major parts. First the ticket request form (Appendix A), which will allow the requestors to input their contact information corresponding to the numbers of tickets that they wish to request along with other important information such as their name, email address, and phone number. These data are then put into the database on the server when the requestors submit the form. The form then takes the user to a new page asking whether the user wishes to donate to the organization via PayPal (Appendix B). This approaches the third part where the server will send an email to the requestor containing a link to the tickets and as well as a PDF file containing the tickets, just incase the server is down.

Before the e-ticket system was implemented, on average PYSO had to print 2500 tickets in order to be mailed out. However, after implementing the e-ticket system, PYSO only have to order 500 tickets to be printed and they still have approximately 100 tickets left after the concert because most of the users changed to use the new online ticketing system. This saved them a lot of money (nearly $500) on postage and printing out the tickets.

Outcome 2: Helped reduced the number of phone calls requesting for tickets during the peak period which are usually 2 – 3 weeks prior to a concert.

Before the system was implemented, the phone will ring consistently every 3-4 minutes, Craig and Eve had no choice but to unhook the phone lines just to reduce the amount of stress and work that they were overwhelmed with. After the system was implemented, the amount of phone calls dropped dramatically to approximately one call every 30 minutes as reported by Craig.

Outcome 3: Craig acquired knowledge about the web server and client.

Because of its complexity, the e-ticket system requires at the very least a basic programming skill. Craig, however, had never taken any programming past nor writes a program, therefore it is critical that he acquires some basic understanding of html, java scripts, and PHP, which are the language used to develop the e-ticket system. This is done to ensure that Craig does not get lost when an unexpected error arises or when he seeks help in the future.

I have also documented a brief diagram for Craig to refer to incase he has forgotten about the function for each language, to ensure sustainability. Also I directed him to various resources, such as the book about HTML Programming for Dummies, to serve as a future reference.

Outcome 4: CP is aware of who to contact if problems ought to occur in the future.

Craig has worked with the organization's designer, who is experienced in web programming and web design, for at least two years. Hence, Chris is a valuable resource who can help Craig in the future if unexpected technical problem arises. I have also sent out the source code of the e-ticket system to Chris to review. Chris has reviewed the e-ticket system and claimed confidence in operating and maintaining the system.

Outcome 5: Craig understands the concept of database and knows how to manipulate the data within

Because the online ticket request form cannot validate every data from the user, therefore there is a risk that the user has made an unexpected error while entering the data. When Craig sees this, he must be able to get access into the database and correct or delete those values. Therefore it is crucial that Craig knows how to manipulate the data.

To do this, I have introduced Craig to phpMyAdmin, the GUI version of MySQL which is a lot more user friendly than operating MySQL in the Windows Command Prompt. To ensure that Craig does not forget how to operate phpMyAdmin, I have documented a step-by-step procedure on how to do this.

To further confirm Craig's ability, he has exemplified that he can create new databases, new table, search for records, and manipulate/delete records by just referring to the documentation.

Making the e-Tickets more independent to each concert audiences

The tickets that the e-ticket system generates are all the same. This allows requestor to print out multiple tickets and give to other people. Though this is a very sensitive aspect in paid ticket systems, it is not in free ticket systems. Especially in the case of PYSO where the audience does not fill up the seats in Heinz Hall (total of around 2500 seats, usual attendance is around 2000 audiences).

Thought the problem is not a big threat to the organization, however it can creates a big threat to the accuracy of data in the database.

    a. **Example:** An audience requested one ticket and printed out 10 times.
        i. The database will record the person as requesting only one ticket.
        ii. The person actually came with ten people.
        iii. Hence, the person's record in the database is inaccurate.

In order to solve that problem, the requestor's name and e-Ticket can be embedded onto the ticket output. Adding the requester's name and an incrementing ID number to the e-Ticket will make the ticket distinct to each audience. Though, the ushers who collect the concert tickets at the door will not be checking whether the name of the person matches the name on the ticket (because it is too complicated and time consuming), but it is suffice just to provide a psychological relationship of the tickets to each corresponding audience.

    a) Due to the limitations of PHP, it is not possible to edit a picture file directly, however this is possible by using an add on called "MagickWand for PHP" located on http://www.imagemagick.org/script/api.php#php
    b) The add-on is free to use and will allow PHP to "insert descriptive or artistic text in an image"
    c) Contact Pair Networks and ask whether they have this plug-in installed onto their server, and if not whether it would be possible for us to install it onto their server.
    d) Contact Chris to implement this function.
        iv. If Chris does not know how to do it, he will know who to contact.

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Ponthep (Vincent) Sethiwan,
Student Consultant   May 4, 2007

IV. Additional Recommendations

1) Using Facebook to create PYSO contact group

Before the first mentor group meeting, I was very confident that my main project for PYSO is going to be to create a user contact account on the PYSO server so that will force the members to create their own contact database on the PYSO website. This will save time for Craig and Eve when a new member enrolled into the system as well as creating a member space for each member to foster the PYSO member network. This idea was however discontinued after my project mentor, Virginia (Ginny) Mertz, questioned me about the usefulness of the data collected this way. After discussing critically with Craig, we found that the process will be to complex and the user contacts acquired in that manner will not be as important as the benefits from the E-ticket system, therefore it was discontinued.

Facebook is a free online social networking service which is widely used throughout various universities in the US as well as various other countries. It allows each individual to create their own account on the Facebook website and connect to your friend who has an existing account. Facebook has a very interesting function called "Group" which will allow any member to start a group. The creator of the group can select members who are allowed to be in the group. Craig can make use of this function by creating a Facebook account and creating a group called PYSO. On the PYSO group page, there is a space for messages (called the "wall") that any member of the group can post on. There is also another function called "Events" which allows the user to post any up coming events and show it to all of the members in the group. Craig can definitely make use of this function and send out announcements to the members. This way, Craig can also retrieve the members contact information when ever he needed it by just logging on to his account and click on the name of the member that he wishes to see their contact information.

Craig will first have to notify all the members that they are required to have a facebook account, if they do not already have one, they must go sign up for one and let Craig know. Craig then will have to set up his facebook account. He can easily do it by:
- Going onto the facebook website:
  o *http://www.facebook.com*
- Click at "Register" block that is located slightly to the left of the middle of the screen.
- Fill out all of the required information in the form and click "Register Now!"
- A confirmation e-mail will be sent to your email account, check your e-mail and confirm your account by clicking at the link in the email.
- After confirming your registration, you can start adding PYSO members by entering their name and last name onto the search field located on the upper left hand corner of the page.
- Create a Group, by clicking on "Group" located below the search field.
- Click at "Create a New Group", and enter all the required information and make sure to select the radio box called "This group is closed."
- Click "Create Group" and start adding members to the group.
- If Craig experiences any difficulties he can look at the "help" page, located at the bottom right corner of the page, or contact facebook technical support by e-mail or phone. If the technical support provided by the website is still unclear on the issue, he can also ask Chris.

2) Using YouTube to post concerts videos

In the initial CP meeting, Craig told me that he wants to include a video streaming function on the PYSO website so that the members can view their past performance online. Currently, for a student or a parent who wish to view the past performances, he/she will have to come to PYSO office and check out a copy of a recorded video. Craig is also responsible for checking and keeping track of these recorded videos. It is an unnecessary for Craig to be responsible for these menial tasks. Therefore, Craig wishes to upload all of these videos on to the website so that the members can view them from home without having to check them out. The problem is, however, left unattended because video streaming will require a much bigger bandwidth cap size, thus resulting in a much more expensive cost of web-hosting service.

By uploading their existing videos onto the website *www.youtube.com* will allow the members or anyone to freely look at their video. This would accomplish two major purposes. Because posting a video on youtube is free, PYSO will be able to achieve the goal of posting videos online so that the members can view it. Increasing the ease of access to the performance video will encourage more members to review their own performances and thus contributing to PYSO mission statement of expanding the musical talents. The second major objective is that by posting videos on youtube and exposing it to the public's eyes, PYSO will gain a bigger level of publicity. This will subliminally encourage the young talents musician to try out for PYSO.

Posting videos on youtube.com is not a complicated task. Craig will only have to sign up for a youtube account and he can start uploading the videos on the website. The website has laid out a simple detailed procedure of how to post a video onto their website.
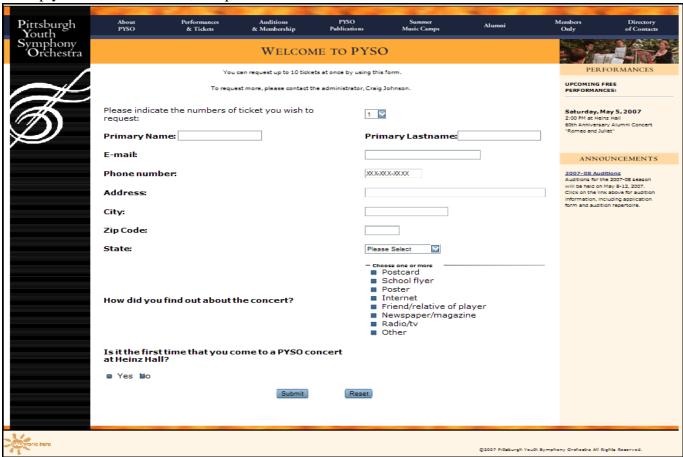
- o First go to *www.youtube.com* and on the top you can easily see a link called "Sign up," click on that link.
- o The website will take you to a sign up page which you will have to fill out the account type you wish to sign up for and along with other demographic information. Fill up all required fields.
- o Click Signup, and the website will send out a confirmation e-mail to you. Check your e-mail and click at the link that is in the e-mail from youtube.
- o Enter your username and password that you have entered in the "Signup" page and you are done!
- o If Craig encounters any difficulty in posting the videos onto *www.youtube.com*, he can always contact their technical support by e-mail or phone. If the technical support provided by the website is still unclear on the issue, he can also ask Chris.

About the Consultant

Ponthep (Vincent) Sethiwan is a sophomore in Information Systems at Carnegie Mellon University. He will be starting a website project with his two other colleagues in the summer and will be interning in one of the top five major banks in Thailand.
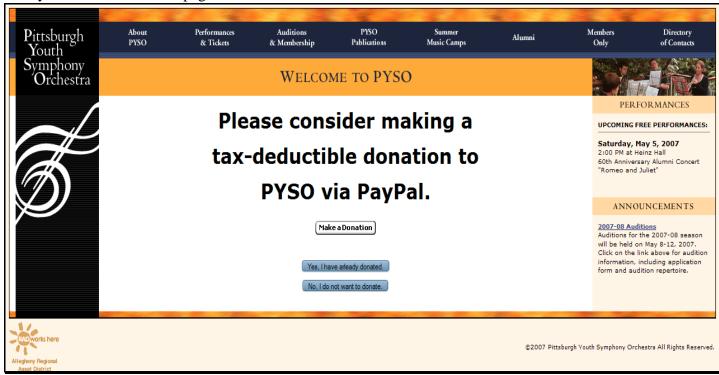
Appendix A.

Below is an example of the "ticketRequest" page which contains a form asking for various demographic inputs from the user. The form is validated by using Java Scripts which checks for empty fields, email format, and phone number format.

Appendix B.

This is an example of the page that follows the ticketRequest form, asking the user to make a donation. The user can click at the button called "Make a Donation" which will take the user to the PayPal secured donation page.

Past Community Partners

4 Kids Early Learning Centers
Addison Behavioral Care, Inc.
Alafia Cultural Services
Alcoa Collaborative
Allegheny County Housing Authority
Allegheny General Hospital Pastoral Staff
American Association of University Women
Animal Friends, Inc.
Animal Rescue League
ASSET, Inc.
ASTEP-Grace Memorial Presbyterian Church
Auberle
Bedford Hope Center
Bedford Initiatives
Bethany House Ministry
Bethlehem Haven
Bishop Boyle Center
Bloomfield-Garfield Corporation
Borough of Crafton
Boys & Girls Club of Duquesne-West Mifflin
Boys & Girls of Wilkinsburg
Braddock Carnegie Library & Community Center
Braddock Redux
Brashear Association, Inc.
Breachmenders
BTC Center
Calliope: The Folk Music Society
Career and Workforce Development Center East
Carnegie Library of Homestead
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh
Carnegie Science Center
Center Avenue YMCA
Center for Creative Play
Center for Hearing and Deaf Services, Inc.
Center of Life
Central Academy
Central New Development Corporation
Child Watch of Pittsburgh
Children Youth Ministry
Children's Museum
Christian Life Skills
Citizens to Abolish Domestic Apartheid
Community Day School
Community House
Community Human Services Corporation
Community Technical Assistance Center
Competitive Employment Opportunities
Conflict Resolution Center International
Consumer Action Response Team
CONTACT Pittsburgh
Creative Nonfiction Foundation
Dance Alloy
East End Cooperative Ministries
East End Neighborhood Employment Center
East End Neighborhood Forum
East Liberty Development
East Liberty Presbyterian Church
East Side Community Collaborative
Eastminster Child Care Center
Eastside Neighborhood Employment Center
Education Center

Every Child, Inc.
Fair Housing Partnership
Faison Development & Opportunities Center
FAME
Family Services of Western PA
Family Tyes
First Charities/First United Methodist Church
Friendship Development Association
Garfield Jubilee Association, Inc.
Gateway to the Arts
Girl Scouts - Trillium Council
Glen Hazel Family Reading Center
Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank
Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council
Greenfield Senior Center
Guide Runners
Gwen's Girls
Hazelwood Senior Center
Hazelwood YMCA
Heritage Health Foundation
Hill House Association
Hill/Oakland Workforce Collaborative
Himalayan Institute of Pittsburgh
Hope Academy of Music and the Arts
Hosanna House
Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania
HUB Downtown Street Outreach Center
Hunger Services Network
Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers
Jane Holmes Residence
Jewish Family & Children's Service
Jewish Residential Services
Joy-Full-Gospel Fellowship After School Program
Just Harvest
KidsVoice
Kingsley Association
Lawrenceville Development Corporation
League of Young Voters
Light of Life Family Assistance Program
Madison Elementary School
Manchester Academic Charter School
McKees Rocks Terrace
McKeesport Collaborative
McKelvy Elementary School
Mental Health Association of Allegheny County
Message Carriers
Methodist Union of Social Agencies
Miller Elementary School, Principal's Office
Mon Valley Initiative
Mon Valley Providers Council
Mon Valley Resources Unlimited
Mon Valley Unemployment Committee
Mon Yough Community Services
Mount Ararat Community Activities Center
NAACP National Voter Fund
National Alliance of the Mentally Ill
National Association of Minority Contractors /
  Black Contractors Association
Negro Educational Emergency Drive
New Beginnings Learning Center
New Penley Place

Past Community Partners (continued)

Northside Coalition for Fair Housing
Northside Institutional Children Youth Ministry
Northside Leadership Conference
OASIS Senior Center
Opera Theater of Pittsburgh
Operation Better Block
Orr Compassionate Care Center
Outreach Teen & Family Services
Parental Stress Center
Pennsylvania Biodiversity Partnership
Pennsylvania Low Income Housing Coalition
Peoples Oakland
Phase 4 Learning Centers, Inc.
Pittsburgh Action Against Rape
Pittsburgh Citizens' Police Review Board
Pittsburgh Foundation
Pittsburgh Health Corps
Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network
Pittsburgh Mediation Center
Pittsburgh Social Venture Partners
Pittsburgh Toy Lending Library
Pittsburgh Vision Services
Pittsburgh Voyager
Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra
POISE Foundation
Program for Health Care to Underserved
 Populations
Project Educate
Providence Family Support Center
Radio Information Service
Reading Is Fundamental Pittsburgh
Regional Coalition of Community Builders
River Valley School
Rodef Shalom
Rodman Street Missionary Baptist Church
Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh
Rosedale Block Cluster
Sacred Heart Elementary School

Rx Council of Western PA
Salvation Army Family Crisis Center
Sarah Heinz House
Schenley Heights Community Development
 Center
Second East Hills Social Services Center
Sharry Everett Scholarship Fund
Sixth Mount Zion Baptist Church
Southwest Pennsylvania Area Health
St. James School
St. Stephen Elementary School
Sustainable Pittsburgh
Thomas Merton Center
Three Rivers Center for Independent Living
Three Rivers Youth
TLC-USA
Turtle Creek Valley Council of Governments
Tzu Chi Wen Chinese School
Union Project
United Cerebral Palsy
Univ. of Pittsburgh - Division of Applied Research
 and Evaluation
Urban League of Pittsburgh
Urban Youth Action
Ursuline Services
Vintage Senior Center
Weed & Seed Program, Mayor's Office
Wesley Center
West Pittsburgh Partnership
Wireless Neighborhoods
Women's Enterprise Center
Working Order
YMCA McKeesport
YMCA Senior AIDE Center
Youth Fair Chance
YouthBuild
YWCA Bridge Housing
YWCA of McKeesport

Community Partner Information FAQ
(continued from back cover)

7. What does it cost to be a Community Partner?

The cost for participating in this experience is your time and your commitment to follow through as agreed. As leaders of community organizations, we know your time is of premium value. Those who have made this investment of time have reaped returns many times over.

8. What does the Community Partner have to offer Carnegie Mellon students?

- Students learn to structure unstructured problems. Community organizations are complex environments with complex problems. Your organization provides excellent environments in which to practice the art of structuring problems.
- Students come from different cultural backgrounds and most have never been in a nonprofit organization. They are practicing how to communicate across cultural differences and across technical knowledge differences. They need to be able to make mistakes and learn from them. Community partners provide a supportive relationship in which students can take risks and learn about how to communicate, how to relate, and how to maintain professionalism.
- Students get the opportunity to practice process consulting. They are learning that expertise is only as valuable as the ability to help others solve authentic problems. You provide a context in which students can practice these skills.
- We've found that Community Partners are very appreciative for the students' assistance. There is nothing more rewarding than to experience your efforts as valuable and rewarding for others. You provide that experience for students.
- Finally, you offer a glimpse into career opportunities in the nonprofit arena. Students learn to appreciate those who work in the nonprofit sector, and they grow to appreciate the role and function of community organizations. We hope this appreciation not only informs the choices they make in life, but also encourages them to care and give back to the community throughout their professional careers.

9. How do I become a Community Partner

Contact an instructor, Joe Mertz or Scott McElfresh. Send your contact information: name, title, name of organization, address, phone, fax, location of organization and your interest in being a Community Partner. You will have a telephone conversation and possibly an on-site visit. All organizations are considered, though preference is given to organizations providing services to a low-income community or a community at risk for falling into the "digital divide."

Send email to
instructors@tcinc.org
(email preferred)

Or call
Joe Mertz: 412.268.2540
Scott McElfresh: 412.268.4859

10. Caveats

- We do our best to ensure that students who sign-up for the class are committed to completing the class, however, occasionally, a student ends up withdrawing from the class during the semester. Typically, this happens when a student has under estimated the time they need for this class. We do our best to advise students so this does not happen. When it does happen, there is nothing we can do except to invite the Community Partner to participate in the following semester.
- The semester is short and the student has to do a lot of work in a short amount of time. For this reason, it is critical that you keep your scheduled appointments, do the work you agree to do, and maintain communication with the student. The student will need your feedback on reports quickly, often the next day. When we get to the final consulting reports, we will need fast turnaround time from Community Partners because we also need to get the reports published in time for the Community Technology Forum.
- If there is any chance that you think you will not be able to follow through with the requirements of this partnership, please wait until such time as when you are able to do it. Since the Community Partner is the focus for the student's learning, it is essential that the partnership be sustained for the semester.

Community Partner Information FAQ

1. What is the goal of the partnership in this course?

The goal of this class is to expand the capacity of the Community Partner to use, plan for, and manage technology, administratively and programmatically. The student is learning process consulting, project management, communication, relationship management, problem identification, and analysis.

2. As a Community Partner, what can I expect to happen?

Once you match with a student consultant, you will set a meeting schedule that you and the student will keep for the remainder of the semester. The student comes to your location for 3 hours a week. During this time you and the student work together. This is not an internship in which the student merely works on site. Rather, it is a consulting partnership in which you must work together to achieve your technology goals. The student facilitates a process that moves from assessment, to analysis of problems and opportunities, to defining a scope of work, to developing a work plan, to analyzing outcomes and finally presenting that analysis. As the Community Partner, you are the consulting client. You provide information and discuss that information with the student. But you are more than a client; you are also a learner. In process consulting the client "owns the problem" as well as its solution. The consultant facilitates the client in achieving that solution. The consultant doesn't "do for" the client. Rather, the consultant works with the client.

3. What types of activities are typically included in a scope of work?

Each scope of work is unique and depends solely upon the specific needs and opportunities of the individual Community Partner. Partnerships have focused on a wide range of activities, including: personal information management (how to use Windows, organize files, backup files, use various software packages, use time managers, use Palm Pilots and other personal information management tools, e-mail, etc.), developing a plan for how to train staff and how to incorporate knowledge and skill into job description, designing a local area network, implementing Internet connectivity, designing and developing a web site, determining effective data storage methods, analyzing the needs for an information database, designing and implementing a database, solving technical problems, designing a public community technology access center, determining the specifications for computers, developing disaster recovery plans, and more.

4. Who can be a Community Partner?

This course target individuals playing an administrative or programmatic leadership role within a community organization. Typically Community Partners are Executive Directors, Directors, Assistant/Associate Directors, Coordinators, and Managers. But, we make the selection based on the organization and the role that the individual plays within that organization, regardless of title.

5. Why do you focus on organizational leaders?

For an organization to use information technology effectively, its leaders must have a vision for how it can support the organization's mission, they must be comfortable enough to integrate technology into their personal work practices, and they must know enough to budget, staff, and subcontract appropriately. By partnering one-on-one with a student consultant, the leader has a unique opportunity to build that vision, comfort, and knowledge, no matter where they are starting from.

6. What are the requirements for being a Community Partner?

- Hold a leadership role within your organization.
- Have a computer in your office or one you could or do use in your job.
- Reliably meet with the student consultant 3 hours per week, every week, for about the 13 weeks.
- Come to an on-campus gathering 2 times during the semester. Once at the beginning and once at the end.
- Share information about your organization with the student consultant.
- Read project reports prepared by the student and give the student immediate feedback.
- Complete a brief response form after reading each report and return to the instructor.
- Keep a log of consulting sessions and send to instructors twice during the semester.
- Read the final consulting report. Give feedback to the student immediately.
- Make a brief presentation at the end of the semester (with the student) at the Community Technology Forum. (This is the 2nd on-campus gathering you are required to attend.)

(continued inside back cover)