INN Placement Website

Jackie Campbell, Duncan Folley, Sally Paddock

The INN website was in desperate need of a re-vamp. Funded by the Institute of Enterprise the project employed 3 Innovation North students to undertake the development. The students designed, prototyped, developed and implemented the website within the aggressive time scale of three months – we wanted to be 'live' for September!

The new website has a stylish 'look and feel' in keeping with the INN site. It also has added functionality such as newsletters and student profiles. Initial feedback has been excellent. Additionally the enterprise money has allowed us to continue to employ one of the students to support and maintain the site for the year.

PROJECT CASE STUDY

Project Title:
INN Placement Website
Project Team:

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Abstract:

Work experience is a valuable experience for all students. It can be hard for students to find work experience and sometimes challenging for them to understand the job market. Students at Innovation North have an opportunity to undertake a Placement year between L5 and L6 and this is something we wish to actively promote, support and encourage. Innovation North had a website which held the details of the work opportunities, it was very dated, contained no images and was cumbersome to search.
The project was to create a new website for Innovation North students holding details of all work placements (short, long term, voluntary, paid). Specification for the site included search facilities, providing information and giving reflections from students who had undertaken work opportunities.
The website has been developed by three INN students. It has been live since September 2009.

Project aims:

The objectives of the project were:
- To create a website for Innovation North students to hold details of work experience placements;
- To encourage students to undertake work experience by providing a useful and informative resource.

Outputs

The Website went live at the start of September. It was available to students for the start of their academic year.

It can be viewed on: http://innplace.leedsmet.ac.uk/placement

It is a closed system – you require a login to access the site.

Impact

The site went live in time to introduce the new L5 students to it as part of their Placement process.

The administrative staff have quickly learnt how to post jobs and add information with minimum support. The website has been introduced to the whole faculty and often acts as a resource when examples of student experience or career history is required – such as at open days. Employers who are interested in employing an INN students are directed to the site (with a login!) to give them a better idea of our students and LeedsMet.

Evaluation

A focus group aimed to provide feedback on the initial website was help with a small group of students and staff. Typical comments were 'outdated', 'difficult to navigate', 'without any images it doesn't actually look like a website'. The same group was asked to comment on

the new website – the comments were all positive 'much better', 'I'm interested in looking at it now' and 'its so much easier to find the jobs now!'.

Additionally we monitored the use of the site using google tools. We found that around Christmas 2009 a number of users were being denied access due to incorrect logins. The teams e-mailed all students with the login details and placed a link to the website on all L5 x-stream sites.

Over one week in February the front page had 1554 hits. Half of them number going to the search page (731). Then 590 have looked at the computing section, 160 at music and 157 at media.

What Next?

The website will continue to be promoted and used by our faculty. Sally Paddock who is responsible for the Innovation North Website and who assisted enormously with the design of the system has offered to take over responsibility for the Placement website and incorporate it in the INN website. This means the site will continue to be developed and promoted alongside the INN website.

General Conclusions

The INN Placement website project was long overdue. A well designed, useful and marketable website that promoted and supported our students in undertaking work experience was vital, especially in a Faculty where the students are studying web development themselves! This website is flashy, easy to use and informative designed and developed by students for students!