EPICS

EPICS@BUTLER Project

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Dossier

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Abstract

The goal of our team was to improve functionality and usefulness of the EPICS website. Our team modernized the website based on input from end users and through comparison to other EPICS websites. Aside from appearance, increased functionality, including the ability for team leads to edit specific pages and upload WSRs, was added to the site. All information available to prospective and current students about EPICS is now available on the page.

Objective

Our client, Dr. Linos, requested certain criteria for the website:

1. Surveys to clients, current and prospective students, and faculty to gain input on what the website needed.
2. The ability to update WSRs and have client updates on the website.
3. A way to submit project requests from potential clients.
4. Overall improved appearance.

Our objective was to complete all of these goals, and add any other improvements to the website that end users suggested.

Design

The team decided to user Wordpress, as the usability and access to plugins made it easier for the team to deliver a finished product that met the

specifications on time. After ascertaining input from end users through the use of surveys, the team decided on a Customizr theme, as it allowed the team to personalize the page without wasting unnecessary time coding a brand new theme in Wordpress PHP. The following items were the pages that the team decided to add:

1. Home page
2. Current Students
3. Prospective Students
4. Affiliates
5. Submit a Project
6. Contact Us
7. Advisors
8. Current Projects
9. Former Projects
10. National EPICS

The team also decided that a slider, with images of the Computer Science Department and EPICS, should be included, as well as other features that would be aesthetically pleasing without detracting from the information that the website provided.

Implementation

The most time consuming part of the website was information gathering, as the previous website held little to no useful information. Therefore, we decided to break the pages down and assign them to individuals in charge of providing information to the site. As follows:

- Kyle Werner
  - Former Projects
  - Affiliates
- Michael Ketiku
  - Advisors
  - About Us

- o Current Projects
- Jacob Scheib
  - o Students
    - ▪ Current and Prospective
  - o Current Projects
  - o Submit a Project
  - o Contact Us

Once all the information for the pages had been gathered, the team got to work on the aesthetics of the website, agreeing on a format the was easily readable, accessible, and making sure that an end user did not have to hunt for any information with more than two clicks of the mouse.

Functionality

1. Prospective clients now have a form that they can submit to propose a project. This form is linked to epics@butler.edu to forward to the current EPICS professor.
2. Team leads now have access to individual pages, where they can update progress on the projects, upload WSRs, and basically use as the wikis previously were. Only team leads and the current EPICS professor have access to these pages.
3. A Contact Us form has been added to the page for any person to ask questions to the current EPICS professor. This will allow students or clients with questions to easily submit their questions, knowing that the current EPICS professor will receive and respond to their question.
4. Team leads will have access to edit public Current Project pages in a predetermined format, ensuring that the information on the page stays up-to-date.

Future Work

There is plenty of room for improvement on the page. The new webmaster, Jacob Scheib, will work to make sure that all of these improvements, and future improvements, will be added to the page. These include:

1. Access for clients to login to the EPICS site and add comments on their project's private page for the team to then implement.
2. A live-chat function in case a client cannot come in and meet with the team. This will allow clients and teams to communicate on the spot if need be.
3. A new, updated EPICS video including interviews with advisors, team leads, and clients. The video will be around 2:30 minutes, so that it will be informative without being overbearing.
4. A template for teams to design their prospective public pages for the Current Projects section.
5. A way for sponsors to donate to the EPICS cause, most likely using PayPal or some other ecommerce method.
6. A GitHub database for PHP and other code, allowing teams to utilize former team code if they get stuck on a particular "red flag."