

The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh

Executive Summary

Community Partner

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Student Project Team

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Background

The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, located in Greenfield, is a multi-purpose hub for education, events, art, and more. Its mission is to inspire engagement with the history of the Holocaust and to connect with it today. Some of their goals are to connect with other victimized groups, use art as a communication tool, and maximize their impact by working with teachers to develop diverse curricula.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh provides several programs to the community of Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas. Their programs focus on educating the community about more than just the crimes against the Jewish people during the Holocaust while using non-traditional pedagogical methods to communicate the history of the Holocaust.

Many of their programs rely on intimacy and do not use technology. We felt that trying to bring technology into one of these programs would be a mistake. However, we discovered opportunity when introduced to one of their most unique programs, a serious comic book re-telling the stories of Holocaust survivors. Since this comic was something that was unique to the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh and a program that the staff at the center was keen on expanding, we thought that this would be an excellent program to work with and help grow.

Project Vision

Readers of the Holocaust Center's comic book series, ChutzPow, explore more than just a story. The stories told in ChutzPow also have a historical context. Our project aims to provide readers around the world a way to explore ChutzPow in a digitized manner while also presenting historical context, facts and other annotations. Our team aimed to not only educate readers through the stories of ChutzPow but to additionally create a fun and interesting experience that was more than just a scanned copy of the comic book.

Project Outcomes

The platform we built provides an intuitive, seamless avenue for staff at the Holocaust Center to create and showcase the collection of stories and artifacts they have about the Holocaust. In terms of technology, we created a responsive web app that takes enables admin to create and edit stories with a few clicks and provides general users a more engaging way to interact with the history of the Holocaust. We followed a user-driven process consultation model to ensure honest feedback and open channels of communication. We maintained great rapport with the client through mutual trust and support; they have been excited about this platform as we have been throughout the semester.

Project Deliverables

We are delivering a mobile responsive web application deployed to Heroku that allows administrator to freely create and edit content in comics and annotations. The application will be accompanied by the appropriate documentation and automated test cases, and we will be providing brief training to staff about how Markdown can be used for more robust content customization for their annotations.

Recommendations

The project is focused on the delivery of the customizable online comic experience, which is a recommendation for how the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh can improve the outreach of Chutz-Pow and expand their focus of curating more educational resources for high school students. The customizable nature of the platform's design allows the client to publish new content with freedom in what content they choose and how they organize the educational resources.

Student Project Team

Kenny Cohen served as the SCRUM master for this project overseeing the development process as well working as a full stack developer on the project. Kenny is an Information Systems major with a minor in Software Engineering on his way to Apple to work as a Software Engineer.

Sean Park was the designer of the platform's structure and core experience. He was also a full-stack developer, mainly leading the development of the annotation feature. Sean is an Information Systems / Human Computer Interaction (HCI) major who is heading to Deloitte to complete his second internship in digital consulting.

Emily Porat led the UX/UI and frontend development portion of the project. She is a junior Information Systems major, minoring in Human Computer Interaction (HCI). She is interning at Deloitte this summer where she hopes to hone her interdisciplinary skills.