

Black Tech Nation

Executive Summary

Community Partner

Kelauni Cook

Student Consulting Team

Eliza Li

Michael Becker

Peace Pius

Background

Black Tech Nation is a non-profit organization that aims to build an ecosystem of resources and a culture that fosters connections for black technology enthusiasts in Pittsburgh. It was founded by Kelauni Cook when she discovered that there was a great disconnect between the black community and technical resources. She found that not only were black people very underrepresented in the technical industry, this issue was perpetuated by a lack of data on black professionals in technology. Wanting to build a digital platform where black technologists could find a community they strongly identified with, Kelauni founded Black Tech Nation. Recently, working with local governments in Pittsburgh, they were able to pass the Black Tech Agenda to push companies to diversify hiring. They are currently focusing on a digital web platform to create a strong identity connection with these black technologists and tech adjacent professionals, whom they call “Black Unicorns”. Ultimately, Black Tech Nation strives to be a resource for funding, gain national partnerships, and become an educational resource for Pittsburgh. These goals are encompassed in their mission statement: *“Gather. Connect. Affect”*.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

Black Tech Nation’s old information system left much room for human error. Each member that signed up to receive emails had to be manually put into a spreadsheet, a laborious and error-prone process. The various documents and platforms they use made accessing information frustrating and difficult. Furthermore, Black Tech Nation had no perception of user engagement and user interest in various events they hold, largely due to the lack of a centralized database. With no understanding of their digital community’s composition, a disconnect between members and the organization was created.

Project Vision

We wanted to create an advanced member tracking system to monitor, automate, and centralize information on their user base. This system would allow the administrator to query and filter the data in meaningful ways, giving administrators the capability to understand the user base. The information gathered from filtering could then potentially be presented to sponsors/partners. Our solution would be fully integrated into the WordPress site that a hired contractor develops.

Project Outcomes

Our solution allows members to sign up and automatically be added to a centralized database and allows members to edit their own records. The client no longer needs to manually enter members data into an excel spreadsheet. With the centralized database, our client can execute custom filters on the user base and gain insight to the composition of Black Tech Nation's digital community.

Project Deliverables

In total, our solution produced 5 new pages, including sign-up, login, edit-record, confirmation, and backend list pages. Although our solution has been published on WordPress, it has not been linked to the main site yet as our client is in the process of a complete site remodel and does not wish to link our solution to the site until it is complete. Once the BTN WordPress site has been completed, our solution can easily be deployed by adding a new page.

We have also included a thorough set of plugin documentation and training materials to help the maintainer and user of our solution navigate our solution.

Recommendations

We recommend that the client continues to work with Carnegie Mellon IS students to implement more complex user data analytics. Being able to analyze the data with more advanced data analytics tools (other than the filtering given by our solution) would be beneficial to understanding the user base. This would also be useful information to present to investors.

Additionally, we recommend that the client integrates MailChimp with the Participants database plugin, so emails can easily be sent to users in the database.

Student Consulting Team

Eliza Li served as project manager. Eliza is a third year Information Systems student with a concentration in computing. She will be interning at YCharts this summer as a Software Engineering Intern.

Michael Becker was the technical lead. Michael is a third year Information Systems student with a minor in Human-Computer Interaction and a concentration in computing. He is currently interning at the US Steel Digital Studio Team.

Peace Pius was the client relations manager. Peace is a third year Information Systems student with a minor in Business Administration and a concentration in computing. She is currently interning at the Nucor Steel Decatur as an Information Technology intern.