

Presente Latino Magazine

Executive Summary

Community Partner

Maria Manautou Matos

Student Consulting Team

Lexie Rodriguez

Preethi Surapaneni

Evan Zeng

Background

Maria's mission is to share resources with Latinos, empower their community, and elevate the quality of life of Hispanics in the region. She currently runs a Latino magazine called Presente but aims to create a new way for Latino business owners to engage with potential customers. Therefore, she began work on Plaza Pittsburgh. Maria works alone on Presente, aside from hiring freelance writers for various publications, and will also work alone for Plaza Pittsburgh.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

People currently search Facebook to find Latino-specific services with limited success, and business outreach happens through word-of-mouth, making it difficult for Latinos to find resources most relevant to them. Families new to the area struggle the most, as the lack of community slows their ability to integrate into local society. Also, existing business directories cater toward a wide audience rather than Latinos, many of whom are blocked by a language barrier from using other services. Solving this issue would make it easier for 24,000 Pittsburgh Latinos ([census data](#)) to find resources and adapt to Pittsburgh life.

Project Vision

The overall project vision that both Maria and our team has is a business directory called Plaza Pittsburgh that is catered towards Latinos. People will be able to use the directory to search for Latino-specific services, such as a hair stylist that specializes in Latin styles. It also provides a way for businesses to obtain more exposure, whether through a free listing or through a paid listing with advertising capabilities.

A business directory with search functionality is the best solution that addresses our users' problems. A dedicated business directory presents information in a succinct structure, making it usable for almost anyone, making it an effective solution.

Project Outcomes

We implemented many actions typical of a business directory into a Wordpress site hosted on Wordpress. Features include a directory index page with search parameters, a form to create new listings, and a backend component for editing listings. Maria can approve listing requests from business owners, and she has added 63 businesses to the directory already.

Google Maps was integrated to allow users to view businesses by relative location. Maria can set up custom, rotating advertisements with our integration of a plugin called Adsanity. For text-heavy pages, we added Spanish for those who have trouble understanding English.

In order to handle payments on Plaza Pittsburgh, we created a general process using Google Forms and WooCommerce. The process to request a featured listing or advertisement starts with a Google form, from which Maria can begin a structured conversation rather than respond to a poorly structured or translated email. Woocommerce then handles payment information so Maria can accomplish payments through the site rather than a third party.

Project Deliverables

Our main final deliverable is a business directory with the features listed in the outcomes section. Accompanying the directory, we have supporting documentation for setting up and changing settings for each component of the site (Directories Pro, Google Maps API, Woocommerce integration, Adsanity) as well as documentation for issues and troubleshooting help.

Recommendations

For Maria to sustain the progress that we made so far, the biggest recommendation we have for her is to look through our documentation and practice the steps for important tasks like adding a listing, creating advertisements and featuring a business. This will help save time when she runs into issues later on with using WordPress.

A future team can work on attracting users to the site by making posts about the business directory on various social media platforms and groups. Setting up external advertising for the website would support Plaza Pittsburgh's mission and reach the broader Latino community. They could also work on providing a way to distinguish high featured listings and medium featured listings.

Student Consulting Team

Lexie Rodriguez acted as the client communicator. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems with minors in Business Administration and Human-Computer Interaction. She will work as a Design Intern this summer at PNC and will pursue a career in Design or Geographical Information Systems.

Preethi Surapaneni acted as the project manager. She is a third-year student majoring in Information Systems. She will be interning at Amazon this summer as a Business Intelligence Engineer and is looking toward a role in data analytics for the future.

Evan Zeng acted as the scrum master. He is a fourth-year student majoring in Information Systems with a minor in Computer Science. He will be working in big tech after graduation in a software engineering role for the foreseeable future.