Neighborhood Learning Alliance

Executive Summary

Community Partner
Kashif Henderson
Student Consulting Team
Zhijie Gao
Julia Hou
Cara Savoy
Kevin Wu

.

Background

The Neighborhood Learning Alliance (NLA) is a non-profit organization focused on providing educational opportunities to predominantly African American and lower-income families. They offer programs for students from kindergarten through high school that focus on supplementary learning as well as higher education. Such programs range from before and after-school programs for elementary students to providing high school students access to college courses and internships during both the school year and the summer. Since 2016, over 700 high school students have attended college courses, and over 350 K-5 students are served annually, all through NLA's programs.

Project Description

Project Opportunity

The Neighborhood Learning Alliance faced consolidation, coordination, and cooperation issues due to its inadequate information management system. NLA purchased several information management systems to create centralized platforms for collaboration and communication. However, users still needed a convenient way to access them. The original website was also outdated and poorly designed due to no assigned staff member to maintain it. In order to solve these issues, NLA wanted to implement a centralized hub directing site users to the required resources and information.

Project Vision

Our vision was to build a brand-new website for NLA on WordPress and interface the website with each of the CMS they will be using. Potential students and parents would visit the website for an overview of the programs offered and access to the corresponding applications, hopefully, inspired by the site to apply for one of NLA's programs. The donors should also frequent the website to research the organization and complete their donations through MonkeyPod. The NLA staff would also access their management systems through the site.

Project Outcomes

The team developed and deployed a new website consolidating their technology stack. The new site routes every aspect of NLA's online presence through it, providing a central location for stakeholders to view or access information. In addition, because the client played a key role in providing feedback for the look and feel of the site's user interface at every step of the design process, the team was able to make sure to understand every decision made regarding the site and how the site was created and updated. The team was also able to develop a long-term plan for site maintenance, making sure the client had contact with an experienced WordPress developer as well as creating extensive documentation for the site for future reference.

Project Deliverables

The final project deliverables include the new WordPress website (and connected accounts), detailed documentation for the site (the instruction manual and design doc), and several technical documents, including: Lo/Mid/Hi fi Prototypes, Sustainability Options, and Color Palettes.

Recommendations

We have several recommendations for NLA, mostly centered on updating the website:

1. Hire a media intern or train existing students to regularly update website content.
2. Establish a regular, standardized procedure to update the website.

We also have suggestions for additional features that a future team could implement:

1. Optimize the website for mobile devices and adhere to responsive design guidelines.
2. Implement Single Sign-On for NLA's growing suite of platforms.

.

Student Consulting Team

Zhijie Gao was the Quality Assurance Manager and is a third-year Information Systems and Statistics major, with a minor in Science Technology Studies. He will be working with TCinGC this summer.

Julia Hou was the Client Relationship Manager and aided with project management tasks. She is a third-year Information Systems student with a minor in Human-Computer Interaction and will be interning with Warner Brothers this summer, and is interested in exploring game and digital media design.

Cara Savoy was the Project Manager. She is a third-year Information Systems and Linguistics major, with plans to go into EdTech in the future.

Kevin Wu was the Client Transition Specialist and Technical Lead. He is a third-year Information Systems and Computer Science major.