

SalonBook.com

CIS 499 SENIOR PROJECT DESIGN DOCUMENT

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PROJECT ABSTRACT

With this project, I will set out to create an online appointment book for hair and beauty salons. Customers will be able to log in and book appointments in advance at their salon of choice. Additionally, salons will be able to view the schedule online and book appointments into the database manually.

The project will harness Web 2.0 technologies to create a dynamic, database-backed web application. I plan on using a relational database implementation to store and retrieve appointments and customer data.

The target audience for this product will be salon owners as well as the general salon-going public (skewed female). In the same way OpenTable has revolutionized the reservation-making process for restaurants, this project will apply online scheduling to the hair and beauty industry.

Project blog:

<http://jrothdesign.blogspot.com/>

1. INTRODUCTION

SalonBook.com will bring clients and salons together more efficiently and more often. The website will allow clients to make hair and beauty appointments 24 hours a day. The system will also allow salons to input appointments manually in addition to viewing and printing real-time schedules.

1.1. Significance of Problem or Production/Development Need

The emergence of online scheduling applications has made the appointment-making process easier and more efficient for both consumers and businesses. While this concept is certainly not novel, it has not yet been applied to many fields, one of which is hair and beauty salons. Many busy adults do not have the time or forget to call to make

an appointment during business hours, and thus would benefit greatly from an on demand appointment scheduling application. Furthermore, many salons are still using pen and paper appointment books, which is inefficient for the salon and the stylists. This also deprives salons of customer databases that can provide invaluable information capable of improving customer service and customer retention. An online appointment book solves these issues and links clients to salons in a much more accessible and efficient way.

1.2. Technology

HTML

MySQL

PHP

JavaScript

WAMP

Fling

Open Laszlo

1.3. Design Goals

1.3.1 Target Audience.

The audience for this project will be hair and beauty salon managers, as well as the general population of salon goers.

1.3.2 User goals and objectives

There are two distinctly different users for this application.

Salons will be able to create an account for their business, and add salon services and stylists to the account. Salon managers and receptionists will be able to view, download, and add to stylists' schedules online. They will also be able to view client history (prior visits).

Clients will be able to create a personal account, search salons by location, and book appointments with a salon of their choosing (with the option of specifying a particular stylist). Clients will accumulate points with each booking, which they can track and eventually redeem for a salon voucher of monetary value.

1.3.3 Project features and functionality

The online schedules can be accessed up to two weeks in advance for appointments. Salons will be able to download schedules for each stylist in simple, printable format. Automatic confirmation emails will be sent to both the client and the salon when an appointment is made or cancelled. Reminder emails will be automatically sent out to clients before upcoming appointments. The site

will be very intuitive and user friendly to appeal to a primarily middle-age audience.

2. Prior Work

OpenTable.com is the leading online reservation system for restaurants. OpenTable installs its proprietary Windows-based software on restaurants' computers. The software is connected to the Internet and communicates with OpenTable.com in real time as customers make and cancel reservations. The PC software maintains a database, which the website can manipulate through the Internet.

There are two well-known and practiced methodologies for implementing a data-intensive web application. The first is to use a relational database (like MySQL), which stores data in tables. Such databases make search and sort operations easy and fast.

The second method would be to form a pseudo-database from a collection of text files. These files can be created, stored, and read as though the information were in a database. This implementation makes search and sort operations more difficult and inefficient than a relational database; however it may be a more realistic choice if such sacrifices in efficiency are minimal.

3. PROJECT DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

3.1. Algorithm Details

User Session:

- User authenticates him/herself, thus beginning the session.
- User searches for an appointment based on location, service, and time. (name of salon optional).
- Database returns all matching salons with availability at or around the requested vicinity and time.
- User selects their appointment of choice (time and salon), and an appointment is made in the database.
- System sends out a confirmation email to the user and the salon.
- User can view and/or cancel the appointment (Cancel sends another email out).
- User logs out to end session.

Salon Session

- Salon authenticates to begin session.
- Salon can view schedules by day, service, and stylist.

- Salon can print schedules for individual stylists or entire schedule.
- Salon can schedule an appointment for a client in the same fashion as described above.
- Log out ends salon session.

3.1. Target Platforms

3.2.1 Hardware

PC with Internet connection

3.2.2 Software

Any of the 'big five' web browsers.

4. WORK PLAN

4.3.1. Project Milestone Report (Alpha Version)

By this milestone, the Alpha version will consist of a rudimentary scheduling application that is capable of making an appointment (from user input) into a database. The Alpha version will include a thorough review of relevant literature and a preliminary implementation.

4.3.2. Project Final Deliverables

tbd

4.3.3 Project timeline

1/30 Decide between file reading and relational database implementations. Achieve an understanding of this process as it will relate to my project.

2/20 Alpha Version complete.

3/6 User sessions enabled with log in/out.

4/1 User interface complete; scheduling application completed.

4/15 Host Beta version on Fling for testing.

5/1 Project and Presentation completed.

4.3.4 Gant Chart

tbd

5. REFERENCES

OpenTable.com