Principled Design: Design for the Real World > We Advance University

Class Description

Design For the Real World: Principled Design for We Advance University

The class will give students an opportunity to work as a design and development team on a real project to develop an online community to bring information and resources to women in Haiti. Design principles and methodology will be learned within the context of this work. The project is an online portal that seeks to address the needs of Haitian women and create a platform for empowerment and knowledge sharing.

Students will develop innovative prototypes around:

**Content**: educational and entertainment, listing of resources, emergency alerts, marketplace

**Delivery**: best practices for open source platforms, text messaging, online radio, mobile theater, scalable model that can be applied to other countries

**Engagement**: strategies for attracting users, creating partnerships, spreading the word

The project is in an early stage and students will have the opportunity to significantly contribute and shape its direction, overall structure an content.

By the end of the term students will present their work to the 'client', that is the primary stakeholders of We Advance University: led by the NGO We Advance (http://weadvance.org/) and Femme en Democratie (http://fed.org.ht/) with support from the State Department.

Regular feedback from the project’s stakeholders will be an important part of the class and students will be expected to develop ideas that are viable and can be implemented.

Class projects will be developed on the basis of core principles and a methodology that will be introduced in the first few weeks of the class, along with background material and research, framed in terms of strategy, technology and its implications.

**Week 1**
Introduction to the class and We Advance University, key stakeholders, partners, problem formulation, project goals. Members of Femme en Democratie and We Advance University will be in the first class.

**Week 2**
Focusing on some of the themes introduced during Week 1; background on Haiti, women’s issues, landscaping and analysis, overview of similar initiatives,
stakeholders analysis, understanding barriers, opportunities, success criteria and project benchmarking.

**Weeks 3 & 4**
Vision and portal sections:

1. Resources /Listings
2. Education
3. Entertainment
4. Emergency Texts
5. Marketplace
6. Experience & Connections

How can the above areas be developed? What ideas can be generated for each section in terms of:

1. Content Development (partnerships, user developed content, feeds)
2. Delivery (computer, mobile, community centers, village “theater”)
3. Engagement (rollout strategy, engagement model, communication)
4. Strategy & Technology; opportunities for content, delivery and engagement

**Week 5**
Student teams develop their concept and present it to class along with a high-level viability and implementation plan.

**Week 6**
Additional research and project development; preparing presentation for key stakeholders.

**Week 7**
Mid term review – presentation of ideas and progress to key stakeholders (We Advance, Femme en Democratie, US Ambassador to Haiti)

**Weeks 8-13**
Teams continue to refine their ideas and develop the work

**Week 14**
Final Presentations to key stakeholders