

**Recommendation Report
for the SEBEL Project**

Technical Communication

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Team TechBlue

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Introduction

As the BLUE team we are recommending that SEBEL create a new website. After reviewing the SEBEL website, we came to a conclusion as a group that there is not enough information or structure on the current website. Most of the pages are still under construction. One of the most important parts of the website is the donation area, which is a key element in achieving the overall goal of building the school.

Background

Haiti was the world's first black-led republic and the first Caribbean state to achieve independence. However, it has been plagued by political violence for most of its history. Some of the main impacts to the nation have been decades of poverty, environmental degradation, violence, instability and dictatorship, which has left Haiti as the poorest country in the Americas and one of the poorest countries in the world. (Haiti: The Economy 1989)

Haiti is a place where education is not the first thing on people's mind. In Haiti, the only way young people get a chance at an education and a good future is by having enough money to pay for their schooling. There are not many kids in these schools, but there are a lot of foundations that are trying to raise money to send more kids to school.

Haiti's low-income, peasant-based economy faced serious economic and ecological obstacles to development in the late 1980s. Because of the country's abundant supply of low-cost labor, manufacturing became the most dynamic sector in Haiti during the 1970s. Tourism is a potential source of foreign-exchange earnings, and it expanded rapidly during the 1970s, but declined during the 1980s as a consequence of political and health problems such as AIDS and very little in the way of a medical infrastructure. There is a large difference in health between the wealthy and poor in Haiti. This is shown even more than that in the 1980s, an estimated one percent of the population received forty-five percent of the national income. (Haiti: The Economy 1989)

Requirements

As a group, we were trying to come up with a more realistic goal that could help the school now, rather than trying to get books or computers that would just sit in storage until the school is actually built. We feel that a solid website would be a good foundation to help get more attention to the project of building and maintaining a school. The goal of raising \$3.2 million dollars to build the school is a daunting one but not impossible. The plans do not require that the whole school be built at once. There are phases of the plans that can be added on as the school begins to grow and develop. The main goal is to get a

place for students to stay, and class rooms for the students to learn in. To do this, we are going to set up a website that has the following criteria:

- Come up on the first page of search results for related keywords.
- List in appropriate web directories.
- Linked from other Haitian websites/portals.
- Ease of use for Wells or his other partners in the future.
- Utilization for future Technical Communication group projects.

To start, this website server is being provided at no cost to SEBEL by Haydur. What is important is that the web-host for the server is reliable, and with a toll-free support line it will be cost effective for the organization to use if there are ever any problems with the website. With the server provided, the website will be able to handle a large amount of traffic. The video that SEBEL has already produced can also be put on the website, to facilitate this the video can be hosted on other websites not only allowing more space for the site itself but also disturbing the video to a wider audience and giving the foundation a larger demographic that it may reach.

The website will be powered by Movable-Type, to make it easier for Wells and the other workers at SEBEL to update and maintain the website. This is very similar to a blog and hence very easy to use and update. Not only that, but also with this system the website can be customized in any way that makes it look more professional. With so many different people working for SEBEL the easy access for each update that takes place will allow the updates to happen quickly and uneventfully. Each update also will be posted simultaneously in RSS format to different news and blog websites; all this will be done by Movable-Type.

The most important part of the website is the donation section, this will be powered by Paypal and will allow donations to be made either from the website itself or through a new e-mail address, donations@educatehaiti.org, to donate from there home using there own Paypal account. And with each donation, SEBEL will be notified by an e-mail so that they would then be able to accept said donations. Just with any other Paypal account, it will allow a no-fee transfer from Paypal to the SEBEL bank account.

Alternatives

One alternative to setting up a website would be to petition organizations that donate books. In order for the school to get started, the SEBEL foundation is going to need textbooks for its classes. There World Library Partnership is an organization that helps supply books all over the world. There are many training and volunteer programs that World Library Partnership (WLP) has used to develop information. WLP not only can supply books, but can also help train and teach the future educators of the school. The organization works globally; from setting up programs in Central America to teaching writing workshops in Africa (WLP 2000). They teach people how to start up their own

libraries and gather correct information to put in the library. Some libraries have even started by using homemade books.

On the other hand, since we are in an age of technology, there is another way to get what is called an e-book. Many universities have converted their libraries to e-book form. These new books contain every type of literature from classic British and American fiction to Shakespeare. They also include children's literature, and American literature. From the University of Virginia Library's E-text center they have distributed over 8.5 million free books (6.8 per minute every day for 21 months) "to over 100 countries from the oldest and largest public e-book library on the web" (UVA Library 1992). Each text is HTML accessible and can be downloaded as an "MS Reader E-book for the Microsoft Reader and a Palm-readable text for the Palm Reader."

However, we feel that we should incorporate this idea into our development of the new website for the foundation. Searching for charities and interviewing companies to see if they are willing to donate to our cause can be time consuming and result in a lot of dead ends. A solution that we feel can benefit us is to start our own book donation link on the website, so that if anyone feels they want to donate books they can go to the link and do so. This way we can attract schools, publishers, and other companies that want to donate their books.

Comparison

The biggest comparison with the new site would be the original SEBEL website. It is not finished. Everything is under construction. There are only a few things describing Haiti and the educational plans of SEBEL. There is nothing about the project of trying to build a school, only a diagram of what his dream is. We want to build a new site stating actually information on the education in Haiti, and make a huge part of the site about the new school project. Also there is absolutely no way people can make online donations to SEBEL.

Requirements

An area of concern is that when a search for the related keywords, such as "education in Haiti" or "Haitian charity" etc., the SEBEL website does not come up at all. What this means is that the only way people are going to go to the site is if they already know about the foundation, but one function of the new site will let more people know about the foundation and its mission.

The layout of the site is almost suggest that the organization is not legitimate, that will discharge people who do find the site not to return to look at what little information is available. The few that are interested in the organization have no way of finding more information because there is no contact information for Wells or anyone else involved with SEBEL.

Another organization that we thought would have a similar website layout might be the Red Cross. As it turns out the home page is well laid-out and contributes to the accessibility of the entire site. The site also clearly defines its mission and what they are endeavoring to do to complete that goal. In their donation section they offer several different types of donations including money stocks and even airline miles. Also, their site is easily searchable with a built-in engine that allows easy access to all parts of their site (Salvation Army).

Summary

It is our recommendation as a group that SEBEL and Wells create a new website that would allow at least the following features:

- Collection of donations online – this would be a good start for the collection of the funds that are needed to start this project.
- Listed featured donors – this would be a list of the highest donors as long as they agree to have this information public.
- Up-to-date progress reports of the project – it gives those who donate some place to read what their donations have accomplished.
- Provide basic contact information of SEBEL and Wells – if people have more questions about the projects that they may be donating to they could be answered by directly contacting the organization or even Wells himself.
- Provide detailed background information on Haiti – this would show that Haiti does not deserve this kind of poverty, just as no country truly does.
- Provide information on SEBEL.
- List SEBEL's accomplishments.

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