

Festival and Travel Planning Network

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Abstract

Travelers who interested in often use the internet (World Wide Web) as research medium because many websites post festival and traveling information such as festival, scenic spots, resorts, and local restaurants. However, without an organized research medium, many people who interested in culture discover the difficulty of focusing on research or making a choice from the massive festival and travel-related categories and sites. This paper describes and integrates a website with many festival and travel-related functions into one platform called Festival and Travel Planning Network. This platform allows easy access for users to obtain various festival information, city travel, restaurant, and hotel guidelines in Taiwan. This network automatically helps travelers to plan their tours and find accommodations by simply selecting by their interests of festival visits and hotel types on the website. The Festival and Travel Planning Network also provides online traveling suitcases allowing members to bookmark their favorite travel spots. The Festival and Travel Planning Network website is http://140.131.84.199/holiday/index/index_e.htm. For maximum quality, display resolution should be set at 1024×768. As for technical support, the website uses Internet Information Services as the web server and ASP.NET 3.5 as the web application framework. The database server is performed by SQL Server 2008 to organize and manage data. The webpage graphic and animation designer used Ulead PhotoImpact X3 and Adobe Photoshop CS5 and Flash CS5 as design tools.

Keywords

Festival and travel, Platform, Online trip planning, Online traveling suitcase, Bookmark travel spots.

Introduction

A traveler who interested in culture planning a trip normally arranges a schedule compact together with local ceremonies and festivals. As a result, not every scenic and culture visit is able to satisfy every sight-seer due to lack of interest or time. The internet and media are the primary channels to obtain traveling and learning festival information such as the website introduction, television report, magazine introduction, as well as traveling blogs. Many individuals rely on the internet for tour guidelines. However, individual travelers who interested in culture must collect a variety of information on the festival, local restaurants, scenic spots, and lodgings. The process of collecting information is chaotic and time consuming since most sites have similar information. It is redundant to reorganize from these repetitive sources.

This research describes a festival and travel planning platform in Taiwan called Festival and Travel Planning Network which integrates many local culture and travel-related functions into one platform. This platform distinguishes into four areas in northern, central, southern, and the eastern Taiwan. This platform allows easy access for users to obtain various festival, travel, restaurant, and hotel guidelines in one website. The web address is http://140.131.84.199/holiday/index/index_e.htm. For maximum quality, display resolution should be set at 1024 × 768.

The Festival and Travel Planning Network approach

The Festival and Travel Planning Network provides some primary functions: The Festivals Information, Travel Schedule Plan, Scenic Spot, Accommodation Guideline, Restaurants Information, Online Games, and Members and Discussion.

The “Festivals Information” distinguishes into the four categories: Traditional festivals, temple festivals, aboriginal rituals, and new festivals according to different rituals and ceremonies by the North, Central, South, and East area of Taiwan. “Travel Schedule Plan” helps travelers to plan their tours and find accommodations according to their personal interests of festivals and preferences. Section 2.1 has more explanation on this function. The “Scenic Spot” recognizes North, Central, South, and East areas of Taiwan as the major terms. It then subdivides these areas into small categories such as night markets, famous scenic spots, amusement parks, historical landmarks, humanities art, and shopping malls. For hotel selection and lodging information, travelers may refer to The Festival and Travel Planning Network platform’s “Accommodation Guideline.” The platform’s “Restaurant Information” provides dining locations such as, different types of cuisines, subject dining rooms, all you can eat buffet, vegetarian food, and best locations for a midnight snack. “Online Games” is the option to provide the website visitors experiencing some essences of local festivals by online animation games. “Members” contains user’s profile and password, password retrieve, and bookmark My Suitcase. My Suitcase is an online traveling suitcase allowing members to bookmark their favorite traveling sites, restaurants, and lodging spots. Section 2.1 has more explanation of this function. “Discussion” allows visitors and members to post comments and ratings.

As for system technical support, the platform uses Internet Information Services as the web server and ASP.NET 3.5 as the web application framework. The database server is performed by SQL Server 2008 to organize and manage data. The web page graphic designer used Ulead PhotoImpact X3, Adobe Photoshop CS5, and Flash CS5 as image and animation editing suites.

The platform structure and online function

The current platform for the Festival Travel Planning Network access includes the main page, about the festival, travel plan, Scenic Spot, Accommodation Guideline, Restaurant Information, Online Games, Members, and Discussion. The current site map of Festival and Travel Planning Network platform is shown in Figure 1.

The Festival and Travel Planning Network has two primary online functions, which are “Travel Schedule Plan” and “My Suitcase” which are specifically designed for members only.

“Travel Schedule Plan” helps tourists to plan their tours and find accommodations according to their needs and preferences. Members may simply select the areas of Taiwan, days of the tour, lodging type, and their interests of scenic visiting types. After submitting their selections, the platform will then present tour guidelines and lodging information in a choice of one or two scenic spots of the morning or the afternoon tour schedule, respectively. Members may click on the “Details” function to look up details and information on selected scenic spots or hotels prior to finalizing their decision. If a member is not satisfied with the outcome, “Traveling Schedule Plan” can be re-generated until the plan meets his or her needs and preferences.

“My Suitcase” is an online traveling suitcase allowing members to bookmark their favorite spots by clicking “Add to My Suitcase” button after seeing the detail traveling spots, lodge, and restaurant information. Members can directly access to “My Suitcase” from “Members” to review and revise previous bookmarked spots. The bookmark content of “My Suitcase” remains in the platform of Festival and Travel Planning Network even if members are logged out of the system.

The flow chart for using the platform

Figure 2 is a flow chart of using the Festival and Travel Planning Network. Visitors are not only allowed to view the “Festival,” “Scenic Spot,” “Accommodation Guideline,” and “Restaurants Information” and play “Online Games” but are also allowed to post messages in “Discussion” access. The platform members are allowed to add or edit their “My Suitcase” and use “Travel Schedule Plan” online function, as well as posting their messages and comments in “Discussion” access.

Webmasters are also known as the website administrators of whom are responsible for answering questions as well as change and manipulating any comment or messages posted by visitors and members. Webmasters are also in charge of maintaining and developing the platform website.

Platform Design, Management, and Maintenance

The platform website is a source for people who plan to travel north, central, south, and the east area in Taiwan. The main page of the Festival and Travel Planning Network is posted with new ceremonies and news that attracts website visitors to participate in these events. The website needs to be maintained regularly in order to keep it updated and trendy. More of the disadvantages of the online e-community management are that the members and enterprises have the lower search costs to easily compare the information from similar entities. Furthermore, the members of the online community may expect more and more up-to-date information about products, orders, etc., (Fischer, 2002). Therefore, the content of platform should be up-to-date and events on the website must be current.

Website visitors and members frequently contact webmasters directly via email or message board for answers to their inquiries. Webmasters are also known as the website administrators of

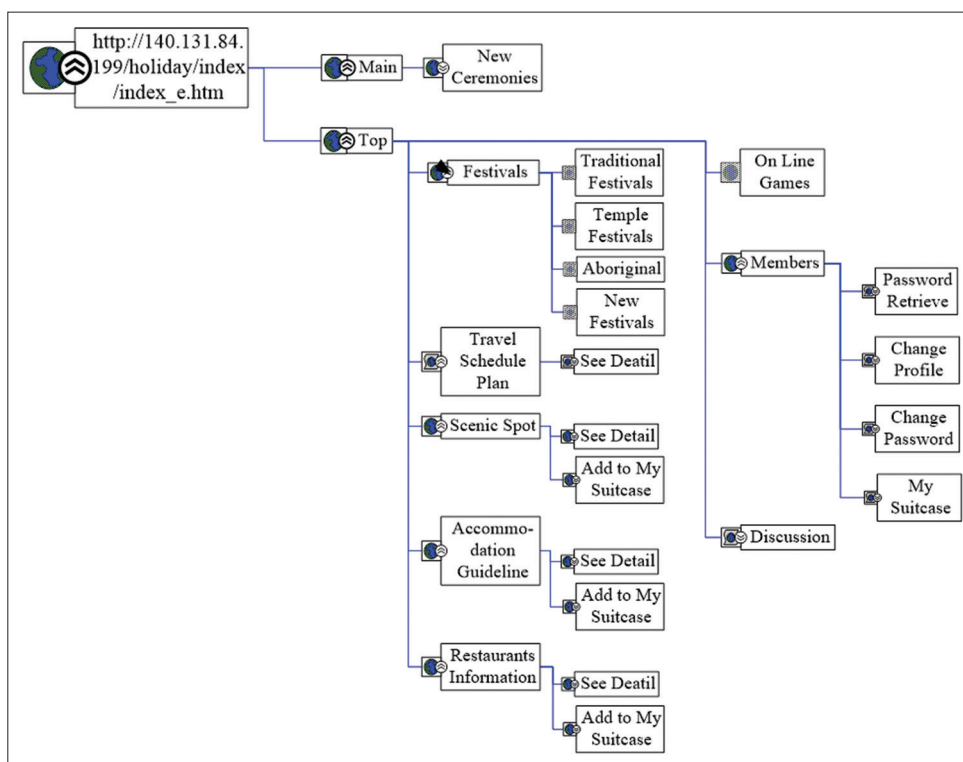


Figure 1: The site map of Festival and Travel Planning Network

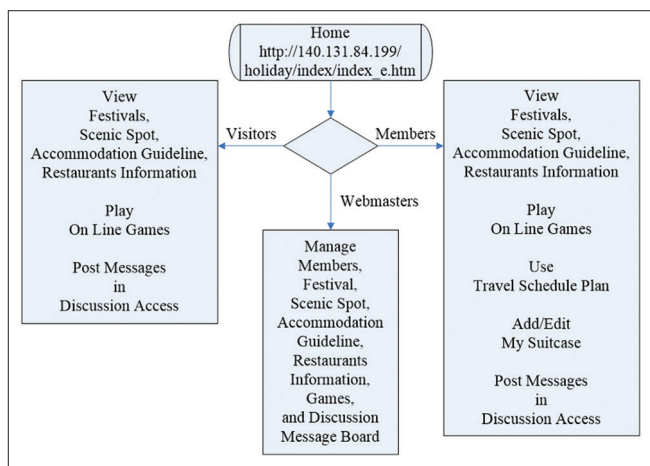


Figure 2: The flow chart of using the Festival and Travel Planning Network

who are responsible to answer questions. Webmasters are also responsible for reviewing error reports and revising webpage bugs.

Protecting platform from losing data or moral reasons, the process of changing and manipulate any comment or messages posted by members as well as backup current data and historical web based evidence is a necessary step to severe consequences in potential security and legal battles. Preventing hackers from hacking member accounts and securing confidential information is also critical. Not only does this have a direct influence on the rating of the website, it can also result in lost of members if security is executed poorly.

Future Work

Expanding the popularity of the Festival and Travel Planning Network will be continued to execute to increase members. One future objective is to expand popularity by raising the website search engine ranking. The technical aspects include containing the most important keywords from its corresponding page in the title bar and containing the most important keywords that potential customers would use to find this website on a search engine (Buresh, 2007). Search engines pick up a lot of keywords and information on what people search for. Therefore, the analysis of visitors' most important keywords used on the platform still requires future work.

It is important that visitors also find what they are looking for to avoid visitors giving up the research or leaving the website. Another future objective is perfecting the experience for users that navigate the platform.

In order to retain visitor interest and regular visits of members, yet another future objective of the platform is that the website should be always up-to-date and enhanced with state-of-the-art features, contents, and events.

Conclusion

This paper has given a detailed description and summarization of the platform of Festival and Travel Planning Network, which integrates many festival and travel-related functions into one platform. "Travel Schedule Plan" and "My Suitcase" are two primary online functions specifically designed for members only. "Travel Schedule Plan" helps members to plan their trip and lodging online. "My Suitcase" allows members to bookmark their favorite scenes, restaurants, and accommodations.

For retaining visitor interest and regular visits of members, the content of the platform website must be maintained regularly and always up-to-date.

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