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E-COMMERCE WEBSITE USING WORDPRESS

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ABSTRACT

E-commerce is the process of selling and buying goods through the internet. Businesses have seen the benefits of using the internet to increment the number of customers and at the same time reduce their operations expenses. Therefore, IT companies are developing e-commerce platforms that can be used by any kind of business, from entrepreneurs to big companies. Content Management Systems are programs that allow the users create and update their websites without requiring strong programming skills. Some content management systems, such as WordPress, have increased their functionalities in order to allow their users create e-commerce site. The aim of this thesis was to create the e-commerce site BrownBoyGraphics. BrownBoyGraphics is an online sticker store that will sell various products that are included in our sticker store. Thus, it was required to create a site which handles online payments and multilingual content. The thesis report includes the theoretical information about e-commerce, content management systems and it describes the development process of the e-commerce site. The result of this thesis was a responsive e-commerce site. Although the site was not tested in physical devices, it was tested through a website that simulates the screen of different devices.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

What is WORDPRESS? WordPress started in 2003 when Mike Little and Matt Mullenweg created a fork of b2/cafeblog. The need for an elegant, well-architected personal publishing system was clear even then. Today, WordPress is built on PHP and MySQL, and licensed under the GPLv2. It is also the platform of choice for over 42% of all sites across the web. The WordPress open source project has evolved in progressive ways over time — supported by skilled, enthusiastic developers, designers, scientists, bloggers, and more. WordPress provides the opportunity for anyone to create and share, from handcrafted personal anecdotes to world-changing movements. People with a limited tech experience can use it “out of the box”, and more tech-savvy folks can customize it in remarkable ways. Most of content management systems are made of two components, the content management

application (CMA) and the content delivery application (CDA).

The content management application function is to allow the user create, change and remove the content of the site. On the other hand, the content delivery application is in charge of rendering the website with the content introduced by the user.

WordPress plugins

A plugin is a program that is installed in WordPress in order to add more functionalities to the site. It can help the users create a slider or even transform their website into an e-commerce site without needing to code it. The programming language used to create a WordPress plugin is PHP, but other languages, like JavaScript, can be used to create more complex plugins. (Wordpress.org 2015c, cited 24.05.2016.) WordPress includes two plugins that are already installed, but it is possible to add more plugins that are developed by the WordPress community.

In case the users have previous experience of PHP language, they can develop their own plugins as well. The plugins can be easily install or remove through the dashboard. It is also possible to do it manually by using an FTP client software. Plugins can be deactivated or deleted. It is important to know the difference between these two options. When a plugin is deactivated it means that it is not available to the user, but the plugin is installed on the website. On the other hand, in order to completely remove the plugin from the site, then it needs to be deleted. Plugins can be deactivated or deleted. It is important to know the difference between these two options. When a plugin is deactivated it means that it is not available to the user, but the plugin is installed on the website. On the other hand, in order to completely remove the plugin from the site, then it needs to be deleted.

E-commerce plugins

Although WordPress has been used only for blogging purposes, currently is possible to use WordPress as an e-commerce platform. This can be done by adding plugins that extends the functionality of the website. At the moment there are many plugins that can be used to create an ecommerce site. Nonetheless, the most installed e-commerce plugins are “WooCommerce” and “wpcommerce”. Wp-commerce is the plugin that transforms a WordPress site into an e-commerce platform. This plugin allows the users to sell physical and digital products, manage orders, add products and handle payments. It can be download for free from the WordPress dashboard or through the WordPress site. Although the plugin can be used for free, there are some functionalities that requires the user to pay so they are available.

2. SYSTEM ANALYSIS

2.1 Scope of the Project

E-commerce has changed the way the people buy and sell products. More people are starting to notice the benefits of having an e-commerce site to increment the sales of their product and get customers from other countries. There are also risks that are needed to be considered before starting an e-commerce site. Nonetheless the demand for e-commerce site has been increasing, which invites software companies to create e-commerce platforms that are affordable for all kind of users and are simple to implement. Therefore, content management system, like WordPress, have expanded their functionalities in order to cover the need for that kind of users.

2.2 Identification of Need

The chosen e-commerce platform for developing the BrownBoyGraphics was WordPress. In order to use WordPress as an e-commerce platform, “wp-commerce” was required to be installed. This plugin provided the required functionalities to process a transaction from the client. In order to accept online payments from banks, a payment service provider that was compatible with them was required.

2.3 Preliminary Investigation

BrownBoyGraphics site was developed in two phases. The goal of the first phase of the project was to work on the look of the site. The second part of the project consisted on adding the functionalities of the site. This was done by installing and configuring the required plugins. Also the Checkout gateway was integrated during this phase.

2.4 Project Planning

The process of development the e-commerce site was divided in two phases. The first phase of the project consisted in creating the look of the BrownBoyGraphics. This phase involved selecting and modifying the theme of the

BrownBoyGraphics. On the second phase of the project the ecommerce functionalities were integrated into BrownBoyGraphics, which consisted on installing and configuring the required plugins. This process is described in this chapter. WordPress offers a wide range of themes developed by the WordPress community. Most of WordPress themes can be downloaded for free. It is also possible to develop a theme from the scratch, which gives the developer of the site a better control of the theme. On the other hand, this requires more time to create the site. Before considering that option, the current themes that WordPress offered were checked. In order to search for a theme in WordPress, select the appearance section from the dashboard and

select the option Theme. From there click the button “Add new” and there it will appear the most popular themes available at the moment

3. SYSTEM DESIGN

3.1 System Architecture and Flow

An Entity Relationship Diagram (ERD) is a graphical tool to express the overall structure of a database. It is based on a perception of a real world which consists of a set of basic objects. An entity is a person, place, thing or event of interest to the organization and about which data are captured, stored or processed. - The attributes are various kinds of data that describes an entity. - An association of several entities in an Entity-Relationship model is called relationship.

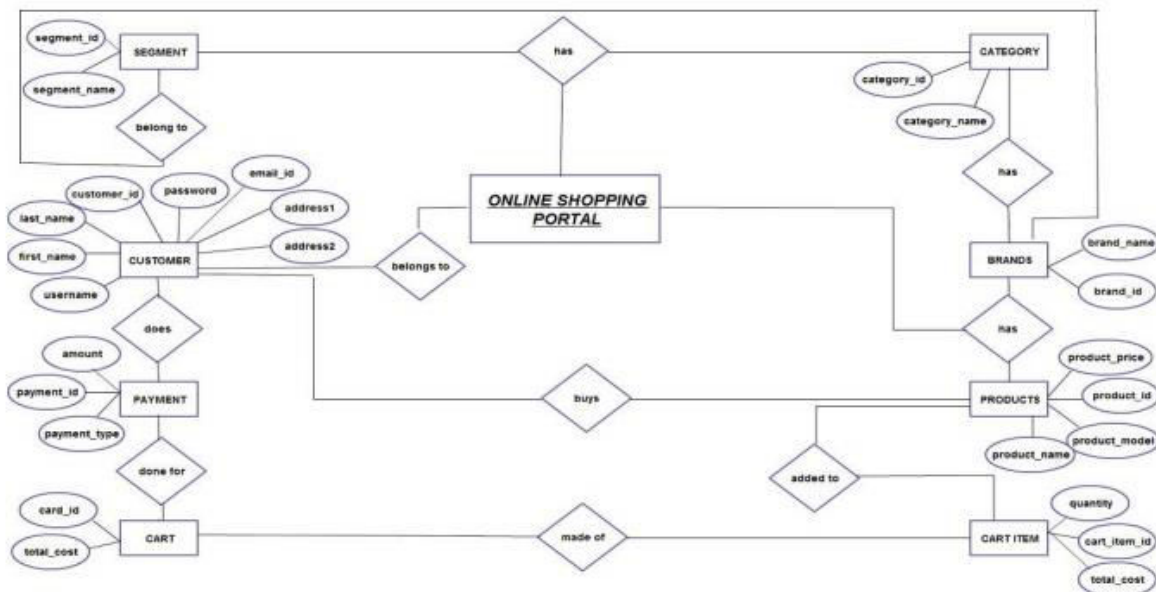


Fig. ER Diagram for Ecommerce Website Input and Output Design:

Input Design: Input Design plays a vital role in the life cycle of software development, it requires very careful attention of developers. The input design is to feed data to the application as accurate as possible.

So inputs are supposed to be designed effectively so that the errors occurring while feeding are minimized. According to Software Engineering Concepts, the input forms or screens are designed to provide to have a validation control over the input limit, & other validations. This system has

input screens in almost all the modules. Error messages are developed to alert the user whenever he commits some mistakes and guides him in the right way so that invalid entries are not made. Let us see deeply about this under module design.

Output Design: The Output from the computer is required to mainly create an efficient method of communication within the company primarily among the project leader and his team members, in other words, the administrator and the clients. The output of VPN is the system which allows the project leader to manage his clients in terms of creating new clients and assigning new projects to them, maintaining a record of the project validity and providing folder level access to each client on the user side depending on the projects allotted to him. After completion of a project, a new project may be assigned to the client. User authentication procedures are maintained at the initial stages itself. A new user may be created by the administrator himself or a user can himself register as a new user but the task of assigning projects and validating a new user rests with the administrator only.

CONCLUSION

E-commerce has changed the way the people buy and sell products. More people are starting to notice the benefits of having an e-commerce site to increment the sales of their product and get customers from other countries. There are also risks that are needed to be considered before starting an e-commerce site. Nonetheless the demand for e-commerce site has been increasing, which invites software companies to create e-commerce platforms that are affordable for all kind of users and are simple to implement. Therefore, content management system, like WordPress, have expanded their functionalities in order to cover the need for that kind of users. The chosen e-

commerce platform for developing the BrownBoyGraphics was WordPress. In order to use WordPress as an e-commerce platform, “wp-ecommerce” was required to be installed. This plugin provided the required functionalities to process a transaction from the client. In order to accept online payments from Finnish banks, a payment service provider that was compatible with them was required.

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