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OpenDemocracy
Project Plan
Version 0.9

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Revision history

Date	Version	Description	Author
26.09.11	0.1	Initial draft	MS, JG
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Project overview

1.1 Product Vision Statement

OpenDemocracy will be a community-based hybrid between direct and representative democracy. The main purpose of this system is to allow for a more transparent decision making process in different institutions and communities. Raising public awareness of current policy decisions will hopefully spur people to get more involved in matters relevant to them than presently.

The core of the system is a database containing issue-related data. Archiving data and wisdom relating to earlier decisions enables users to understand the reasoning and history behind current and prior policy. If a user doesn't comprehend or disagrees with current reasoning, he/she can create an open discussion about the issue, and have direct open communication with users, representatives and decision-makers.

The system will be delivered to a new political party acting firstly in the Finnish national and local government. The sole intention of this party is to put the OpenDemocracy system into use and available to the citizens. If the system becomes implemented in the government's decision-making process, the next step would be to lobby for implementation in the EU and UN.

The system will present categorized data and decisions to its users. For each category, the user can opt to assign his vote to "experts" of choice, whose votes will be strengthened by a weighted value specified by the user. If the user's opinions differ from his/her expert, the user can override the vote with his/her own opinion. This system will allow for a more dynamic decision making process and (hopefully) the results will more closely reflect actual opinion.

1.2 Project deliverables

The deliverables of this project are

- Project plan
- Technical Documentation, including
 - Requirements part
 - Design part (Class diagrams, CRC cards etc.)
 - Implementation part
- User documentation
- Business plan
- Implementation

1.3 Budget and resources

The project uses personal computing resources and the Amazon S3 cloud.

Project organization

The project is led by the project manager, Mikael Sand. The project manager is responsible for the planning and organization of the project, as well as the communication with the customer. The project manager is the leader of the team assigned to the project.

The team has additionally the following roles:

Sushil - Databases/Servers

Josef - Systemdesign/Web

Anup - Technology/APIs

Fredrik and Ann-Marie – Communications/Relations/License/Documentation

Activities and milestones

1.4 Activities

1.4.1 Technical feasibility analysis

The data which has high integrity and security requirements needs a thorough analysis of the possible cryptographic solutions. The database implementation will also need further analysis to accommodate scaling up to many petabytes of data. As the system will be built from scratch, no dependencies exist, hence all other technical aspects seem feasible. Considering the collective experience of the team, we are certain that all implementation details can be handled properly.

1.4.2 Requirement analysis

System requirements

To allow for transparent functionality expansion later on, modularity is an essential requirement of all components in the system. Web interfaces should be RESTful to have good prerequisites for scaling.

User requirements

The user interface should be as self-explanatory and intuitive as possible. Minimal, if not none, training is a critical requirement for the system to succeed.

Performance requirements

The system should be able to scale to global proportions. Scalability is a crucial factor when the system expands. This should be taken into consideration while deciding programming language(s) and database type(s).

Maintenance requirements

The system will be designed in a manner that allows users within the system to maintain it to a large extent. Our aim is to make the system self-organizing from a maintenance point of view, but surely testing and benchmarks will be needed before the system scales by several orders of magnitude. But an organization will also be put in to place to take care of future developments. The organization would have a manager dedicated to coordinating further developments. The possibilities of making a university course dedicated to development of open-source projects, e.g. OpenDemocracy, although outside the scope of this course, should be researched.

Security requirements

Voting results are sensitive data. How the results are stored should be taken into consideration when implementing the system. Anonymous users' votes are naturally not traceable, the anonymous accounts will be uniquely identified by public/private keys. Validated users can choose to be able to change their public votes if new critical data surfaces or have their vote stay anonymous/secret. All the possible cryptographic solutions still haven't been evaluated properly and we will need to communicate with experts in mathematics, cryptography and political science.

Legal requirements

Licenses should be chosen/written in a way that allows non-profits and democratic communities to use the system freely for any purpose. A separate business license should also be drafted when we have a clear picture of the commercial potential of the system. If legal issues surface, we have external legal expertise at our disposal.

1.4.3 Design

Cross-platform, open-source, open standards and user-friendly. And excellent.

1.4.4 Implementation

Vaadin
 CouchDB?
 PostgreSQL

1.4.5 Quality assurance (including testing)

JUnit? If not tested, does not work!

1.5 Tasks

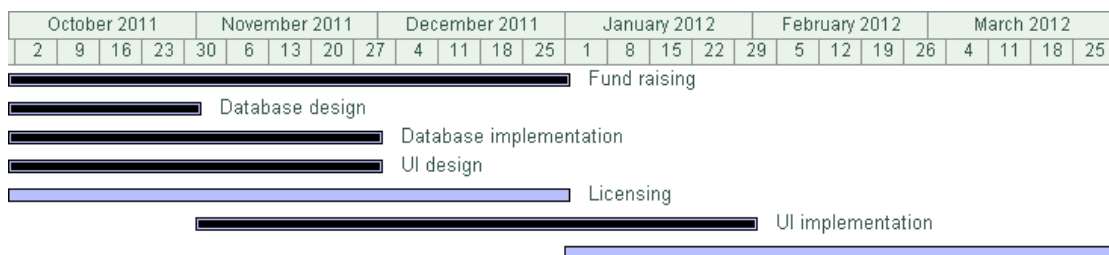
Fund raising
 Database design
 Database implementation
 UI design
 Licensing
 UI implementation
 Smart-phone application (if we have time)
 Live-CD bootable image for independent load balancing/mirroring (if we have time)
 Documentation

Each activity typically includes several tasks. Provide here the list of all the tasks involved. However, during the project, it is recommended to use a task management system such as JIRA (for this course JIRA is provided).

1.6 Milestones

M1 01.11.2011 Databases implemented
 M2 01.12.2011 First UI alpha
 M3 01.01.2012 Closed beta for university and government e-mails
 M4 01.02.2012 Closed beta using invitations
 M5 xx.03.2012 Public beta published (probably at ICT showroom)

1.7 Schedule



Quality assurance

Ann-Marie and Fredrik will take care of the Quality assurance.

The quality assurance will be performed inside the team. The specifications are reviewed by the customer, the design is reviewed in internal meetings.

The quality managers are responsible for generating a Test Plan and for the guidelines related to white-box analysis during the project. The quality managers are also responsible for the Quality assurance phase of the project.

Risks

High	Availability of the resources. If the system usage starts growing fast we might have some scaling problems.
High	Dependency. Not enough government data is available in proper open standards.
Medium	Political. People might not start using the system.
Medium	Security. User integrity compromised.
Low	Timing. Deadline not met.

Tracking

1.8 Project team meetings

Team meeting agendas and minutes will preliminarily be stored at <http://opendemocracy.wikidot.com/> and the opendemocracy account in <http://app.yamlabs.com/meetings> Continuous discussion will take place in the #opendemocracy channel on the irc://chat.freenode.net server. A mailing list has been set up at opendemocracy@freelists.org

1.9 Time tracking

Time tracking and project management will be taken care of inside <http://opendemocracy.rule.fm>

All work hours used for the project should be recorded. The hours are recorded on ½ hour accuracy and categorized according to the following job types:

Meetings, research, management, analysis, design, implementation, testing, documentation.