

## **Market Research (Literature Review)**

Although DanceOnline.Com has many new features, every system has had some history to it. There have been other dance websites done in the past; now we will discuss examples of these sites.

Bustamove.com is a website that provides dance instruction over the Internet. It does this through videos, in which real dancers are replaced by cartoons. This is primarily done to reduce the size of the web page. Aside from selling videos this web page also has a section in which products related to dancing could be sold either by the website or by other customers that want to advertise their products on the site. In addition to this, the web site allows members to meet people from all over the country, by publicly displaying their contact information. It also enables interaction amongst the members by offering discussion rooms in which members could post and respond to messages. Finally, the web site allows members to search for dancing events around their local area and all over the country.

There are many advantages to bustamove.com. First, the quality of the videos is very good, considering the cartoons reflect the exact movements of real people without using too much memory. Secondly, the website allows anyone who visits the page to preview sample moves free of charge. This feature was included so that one can view the video formats and to attract potential customers. Still another option users have is a choice of dance instructions. The customers can either pick: “in-depth instruction”, “class structures”, or “move by move”. In-depth instruction provides the customers with a thorough instruction on styling while dancing. Class structures teach six beginner moves, hand placement, and how to put the moves together. Move by move instruction allows

the customers to choose only the moves they are interested in learning. Overall this website gives the users the option of choosing a method of instruction that best suits their preferences or needs.

Although bustamove.com has many advantages, it also has its disadvantages. For example, the text used in the web page is not professional. When a customer registers and receives a login name the message display on the screen is “You are now a bustamove member (which is, let's face it, pretty cool)”. The wording is aimed for teenagers and not for all users. Adults may not relate to some comments and might be discouraged to continue with their membership. There are also problems logging out of the system. There is no button that allows you to log out, or switch users; therefore the only way to do so is by closing the window and reopening it again. This can cause security and privacy issues for the customers.

Another disadvantage related to privacy is the fact that the web page keeps a directory of its members' demographical and geographical characteristics. This information is made available to all members through a search engine within the web page. Although this information is voluntarily given by the users and made public with permission, it can cause problems in the future when members receive “disturbing or non-pleasant” notes from other members. It could result in the cancellation of memberships and therefore loss of business. The shopping options can also create problems since products can be sold not only by the owners of the web site, but also by other members. People who buy the products that are advertised on the web page, might hold the website owners responsible for any losses or mishaps they might have with merchandise sold by individual members. One last disadvantage is the method of

payments available. If customers want to buy a video, they first need to purchase credits and then exchange those credits for the instructions they want. It is a tedious task that could be eliminated by allowing customers to pay with cash or credit card instead of credits. Also if customers no longer wish to purchase instructional videos they can not exchange their left over credits for money, so they lose their extra points. The credits in this case only benefit the owners of the web site and not the consumers.

Bustamove.com is a good model to follow as far as the technical requirements are concerned. The videos are well developed and reflect accurately the movements and steps of each dance. There are many options on instructional methods offered to the customers; therefore clients can choose the options that best reflect their needs. On the other hand, this web page lacks communication, security and privacy. Therefore to have a well-developed project we need to follow the technical skills used in this web site and improve on the organization, context, security and privacy aspects of this web page.

The second web site we considered is DanceTutor.com, which is a web site that uses full motion (30 frames per second) dance instruction video as its main medium for teaching. These videos are very smooth and use real people instead of animation. This gives the student the effect that he or she is watching real people in a real class, which heightens the learning curve. The site also uses still photos and text coincides with the instructional video. These documents are step-by-step instruction that the user is supposed to read as he or she is watching the video. The website does offer a very helpful FAQ section and also gives the user information on streaming video. This is very good cause it makes the use of the site much easier. This also lowers the amount of e-mails and calls the system admin will receive. Moreover, it gives the user a more secure

feeling which will make his purchasing decision much easier. The FAQ also gives information on the user CPU and what type of processor will be needed.

The web page layout is very poor and unprofessional. I feel this takes away from the content that this web site provides. When the site is first loaded there is a menu bar of sort. This menu bar is very unappealing and confusing, it gives the user too much information. Then the user must scroll down this brings up the member login window and the new user window. There is also an example of the type of videos that are available for download. As the user scrolls down more, the site displays the type of lessons that are available for purchase and also gives prices. This main screen has too much information presented and therefore gives the user “information overload”. This feeling of confusion could cause customers to go to other sites.

The website offers eight different styles of dancing. These eight styles are, Swing 1 (Beginning/Intermediate Jitterbug), Swing 2 (Intermediate/Advanced Jitterbug), Argentine Tango 1 & 2, Lindy Hop 1 & 2 and West Coast Swing 1 and Balboa. The site also claims that in the future they will have instructional information on the following styles of dance: Argentine Tango 4 (Nov. 15, 2002), Lindy Hop 3 (Late November) Salsa 2 (Late November), Waltz (December), Quick Step (Winter), Instruction for Weddings (Winter), Polka (Winter), and Hustle (Winter).

DanceTutor.com is run like any other type of e-commerce site that sells information. The user can look around and get a feel for what the web page has to offer. There are “sneak peek” pages for each style of dance. These sneak pages have a small video with a lower frame rate. It also includes some still photos with a small amount of instructional text. This is very helpful because, it allows the customer to get an idea of

what he or she is paying for and the quality of the content. The customer has three different payment options that they can choose from. These options are by major credit card, Pay Pal, or by check or money order. This is very good from a flexibility standpoint because it allows customers who may not have a credit card to still purchase their product; this does not limit their customer base to just credit card holders. DanceTutor.com overall is a good example of the instructional dance web sites that are out on the World Wide Web. This site with some cosmetic work can be a great website. The use of high frame rate video is a good edge on the rest of the market.

Salsadancesite.com is the last dance web site and it focuses on getting the users resources specifically related to dancing. As opposed to other websites that concentrate on instructing over the web, this site's objective is to inform people about what is available to them (e.g. books, sites, music). The website is broken down into several areas of focus: Dance Classes, Dance Videos, Music, Bands, Chat Room, Books and their Mall. All of these links are available for specific purposes.

In the "Dance Classes" area, the site provides a list of dance classes in the area as well as their hours of operation and their fees. The user can take down the contact information if they would like to find out more about the class. Under "Dance Videos", the user can choose from a selection of VHS tapes or online videos that are available through the site. This is for those people who are interested in an alternative to attending an actual class. The "Music" link has a collection of albums from famous Latin artists for the user to purchase. "The Mall" area of the page is strictly for item purchasing and selling. This is actually an advantage to the site because it gives people an opportunity to network with other people. If a person wants to find out information about a musician or

a band, they would simply click “Bands” and a list of links to pages with information on them would be found. In order to interact with people from different parts of the world, the user can utilize the site’s chat room. Here people from all over the world log in to discuss dance. Finally, salsadancesite.com provides a library of books that users can choose from if they would like to learn more on a particular dance or dance topic. All of these resources make the website very informational and useful for customers.

While very informative, Salsadancesite.com has its disadvantages. An important aspect of the site that seems to have been overlooked is the navigation. The home page has buttons that directly link you to another area but if you want to view the downloadable video clips, it is difficult to find. There are just too many different sections of the page for one to know where exactly they need to go. Although the web page does need sponsors to help support the site, there are too many advertisements throughout the web page. This can sometimes make it difficult for someone to focus on what they are looking for. In web page designing, the layout of the page is important so that users can navigate through the site with ease and accuracy.

In general the concept of this website is unique. It did not focus too much on teaching people how to dance over the Internet; rather it concentrated on providing information on dance. This is an advantage for people who simply want to find out information on dance. Conversely, the site would not be so useful for people who just want to learn new moves. A site that would combine both video clips and informational resources would be the ideal website for any type of user.

All of the websites that we considered in our project served as a good reference to develop a plan for the system’s requirements. In order for one to successfully carry out a

new project, there has to be a starting point. Our starting point was taking into account what has already been done.