

Michael Reddy
April 17, 2007
Online Ride Board: Purdue University

**Online Ride Board
Purdue University**

**RIDE
N'SEEK**

**Online Ride Board
Purdue University**

Prepared for

English 106, First Year Composition
English Department
Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN

By

Michael Reddy
First Year, Management Major

Title: Online Ride Board: Purdue University

By: Michael Reddy

Abstract: There is a transportation problem at Purdue University (herein, Purdue). Many students find it difficult to leave campus for trips. Possible reasons for this are: safety concerns, cost, inconvenience, or lack of interest in travel. It is apparent that there is a problem since students and faculty find it difficult to leave campus, according to my poll of 30 students and faculty. This can cause potential students to be deterred from attending Purdue University. If the problem is not solved, the situation will only get worse as parking space becomes more limited.

My solution consists of an online ride board. It will incorporate simple navigation, ease of use for all, search functionality, user centered design and incorporating a graphical user interface. The website will be constructed by Sormfront production. Itap will then host the site. The site will be used, updated and run by Hail.Purdue.edu. The first step will be to implement a pilot system using Purdue faculty and students. The goals of an online ride board sponsored by Purdue are to encourage students to carpool and find cheaper transportation conveniently.

Michael Reddy
30, April, 2007

MEMO

TO: Allen Brizee
From: Michael Reddy
Date: 4/30/07
RE: Audience analysis for the Problem-Solution Report

Introduction:

I will analyze my audience pertaining to the problem of transportation for Purdue students and why it is important for Purdue to work to solve this problem. Through my preliminary research, I have obtained information that shows a need for new transportation options at Purdue. My survey showed that most people would find an online ride board helpful for a variety of reasons and stated that they would use it if it were in existence. The survey also points to a lack of knowledge of current ride board options. Many students surveyed found transportation a key issue. The interview with Heather Owen showed her distrust of a physical ride board and her willingness to adopt an online ride board if certain safety precautions are taken. I will propose to Purdue Student Government that an online ride board be instated. In addition to the main reader's, many others will read the document since it will be online.

Decision Makers:

The decisions makers are both Itap¹ and Purdue Student Government². Itap will be commissioned to run the website. The actual creation of the website will be through Stormfront production, often used by Purdue. The website will then be handed over to Purdue Student Government to manage. If accepted by both parties, the online ride board would be implemented and will advertise this object to the students of Purdue.

Stakeholders:

The stakeholders are the people directly and indirectly affected by the implementation of an online ride board at Purdue. The primary stakeholders are Purdue students and Faculty who use the ride board. This population constitutes the directly affected proportion. Indirectly the implementation will affect family, friends, and all others visited while using a ride found by the ride board. As a result, the implementation of an online ride board will help Purdue students find cheap rides. I feel that through an online ride board Purdue will accommodate more students the ability to travel.

¹ Information Technology at Purdue University, Computing resources for Purdue Students

² Equal access information to undergraduate/graduate/faculty at Purdue University, student governing body at Purdue University

Shadow Readers:

The shadow readers are those reading the report that have no direct relationship to the problem. These people consist of readers in Greater Lafayette and theoretically anyone in the world through the Internet.

April 26, 2007
Purdue Student Government
Purdue Union, West Lafayette, IN, 47906

Dear Purdue Student Government,

Without a car: Purdue Students and Faculty may be stuck on campus or pay for expensive travel arrangements. For example, one month ago many students stayed on campus during spring break while most of them wanted to go home. To address the problem, Purdue Student Housing placed a ride board in the Union allowing students to find or post a ride. The ride board was inconvenient, inaccessible, unsafe, and unsatisfactory for a large campus. Additionally, some Purdue students maintain private online ride boards, but they are confusing and unorganized, and in most cases go unused.

Although there are many ways for Purdue students to get home for breaks, many of them are costly. Examples are: \$55 one-way from Purdue to Chicago by Express Air Coach, \$250 from Lafayette to Philadelphia by train, \$45 roundtrip to Indianapolis by Lafayette Limo. To avoid these costly measures, I suggest combining the strengths of Purdue Student Government with the convenience of an online ride board. While there will no doubt be problems, this system is preferable.

Purdue needs a non-profit ride board that benefits the students and faculty. The best option would be a Purdue sponsored online ride board. Purdue can address the issue of safety by requiring students and staff to use their ID. In addition, each driver and rider can create a profile where feedback can be added. All activity will be stored in an online database making it easy to trace a route if an incident is reported. To make the website usable, a custom search engine will be designed. To advertise the ride board more effectively than previous attempts, Purdue can publicize it through online announcements and BoilerTV. We need to work together to make traveling from Purdue easier, so let us make this a priority by modifying www.hail.Purdue.edu to include these additions.

Sincerely,
Michael Reddy

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“I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance in the completion of this assignment. All work contained herein is my own. All referenced work is cited correctly.”

Introduction

The purpose of my problem-solution report is to address the problem of transportation at Purdue University. Since Purdue is an isolated campus the problem is large. The campus is an isolated campus since there are no major cities within walking distance, and is a sparsely populated region. The current options for transportation at Purdue are too expensive for most students. The goal is to find a safe, cheap and convenient way of travel for Purdue students and faculty.

The solution to this problem is for Purdue to revamp hail.purdue.edu an online ride board at Purdue assessable to all Purdue students and Faculty. It is sponsored by Purdue, giving it the authenticity it needs to be safe. The actual site development will be done by Stormfront productions who has developed Purdue sites in the past. The hosting for the site will be Itap. Hail.Purdue.edu will update the site and have control over the content of the site. Through my research, the total cost for implementation of this plan will cost \$1,700 dollars startup, as well as \$30 a year for hosting. The process from the beginning planning stages to the end product will be less than 6 months.

As a reader of this document, you can help institute my plan by either promoting it to the decision makers or if you are a decision maker, passing my plan.

In my next section, I will operationally define the main terms.

Definition

In order to limit the scope of my research, it was imperative to operationally define the main terms of my report. These main terms consist of Transportation, Ride Board, and the scope to which I will be examining.

1. Transportation:
 - a. Travel from one destination to another by automobile
 - b. Does not concern international travel
 - c. Does not concern travel modes other than by automobile
2. Ride Board:
 - a. Online database where students and faculty can find other students and faculty to share a ride to and from a given location.
 - b. Nationwide, but will start more regional. Will spread locally, then statewide, then all of the Midwest, then nationally.
3. Scope: Purdue students and faculty
 - a. Does not include community of West Lafayette, IN or any other people not directly affiliated with Purdue University

After defining the problem to its basic components, I will provide background information about the problem.

Background

As Purdue expands, the need for transportation increases. This is due to more cars on campus, more international students, more willingness to travel, and breaks. With more students willing to travel, the options for inexpensive transportation have become limited.

The first factor, which contributes to the problem, is that Purdue is a isolated campus. Since Purdue is one hour from any airport many students find it hard to get there. Most attractions outside of campus are hours away. The only way for Purdue students without cars to get to these attractions are through friends who may or may not be interested in going to the same place.

The second factor consists of the cost of transportation. Although there are ways to get home, many of them are very costly. For example, the Lafayette Limo webpage states that a one-way trip from Purdue to the Indianapolis airport is \$25 and a roundtrip ticket is \$45. (Lafayette Limo online, cost section) The Express Air Coach home page states that a bus ride to O'Hare International Airport in Chicago is \$55 one way. (Express Air Coach online, Cost section) Even trains are expensive. The Amtrak homepage states that a round trip ticket from Indianapolis to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania costs over \$250. (Amtrak online, Cost section) Purdue students have access to Lafayette Aviation where there is a Budget rental car agency. However, according to the Budget homepage the minimum rental age for customers residing in the U.S is 21 years old. Renting a car is useless for the majority of undergraduate students who are under 21 years old. (Budget Rental Car online, Rental fees) The costs of the various alternatives are too expensive for most students.

	Shuttle Purdue → Indianapolis Airport	25\$ one way 45\$ round trip
	Bus ride Purdue → Chicago Airport	55\$ one way 110\$ round trip
	Train from Indianapolis	Over 250\$ roundtrip to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
	Car rentals	You have to be 21
Need for cheap alternative		 RIDE N' SEEK

The third factor is that Purdue does not sponsor any transportation options. While the city has set up a great system for college students to get to local areas such as Wal-Mart and the Tippecanoe mall, this does not extend into other areas. City Bus operates for too few hours during the weekend. According to the City Bus homepage, it does not operate most routes on the weekend. City Bus is an important reference since they are the prime mode of transportation for students on campus. The problem is that during the weekends and during breaks from school, Purdue, in essence, shuts down. People who don't have a ride home often become stuck on campus. For example, many international students become stuck on campus for breaks.

The fourth factor is that as a freshman one is not allowed to have a car on campus. As a freshman, it is a rule that we are not allowed to have a car on campus. According to the Purdue Housing and Food service homepage, "Frequently Asked Questions" freshman are not allowed to have cars on campus. Depending on the area where one lives, some sophomores may not be able to register for cars either. (Purdue Student Housing "FAQ", Question # 13) This creates a dilemma for underclassmen when we need rides off of campus. But, not all about Purdue's transportation system is limited.

The fifth factor is that current ride board's are not adequate. In the past, there has been a ride board system set up in the lower level of the Purdue Memorial Union. It incorporates a simple posting of ride requests on a physical board. It is an easy, simplified approach to finding a ride home. One problem with the physical Ride Board system at Purdue is that it is not used anymore. One reason for this is because it was inaccessible or inconvenient for most people: this board is not large enough in size to host the large student population at Purdue.

With hail.purdue.edu there is no set process to help find rides. One has to search around randomly opposed to having a usable search box. This site incorporates no safety features meaning the driver/rider has limited information about the person. It does not require a Purdue ID to authenticate the person. (Technical writing, 54) Hail is a current ride board system that offers a user to post or request a ride. The system requires a user to have a username and password for protection reasons. A problem associated with the website is that too few people post rides. Most Purdue students are unaware that the site even exists. (www.Hail.Purdue.edu, Main Page) In addition, the board is confusing and unorganized according to Anderson's usability standards. There is no set process to help find rides. One has to search around randomly opposed to having a usable search box. Most posts are not responded to by a driver making the board ineffective.

Another site Purdue students set up is Purdueonline.com that is forum-based. This site was established independently of Purdue and therefore lacks credibility. Few people use the site. There are only about ten posts per month. The site incorporates few safety features. This board is also confusing and unorganized. I came to this conclusion using Anderson's book. (Technical writing, 54) He states that a site must be easy to navigate and must have the content easily assessable. This is certainly not the case since the content is hidden in unorganized sub folders.

(Purdueonline.com, Main Page) For example, the graphic below illustrates the unorganized fashion of a forum-based system. It shows the difficulty of searching for a specific ride.

Orientation					
	Introductions (1 Viewing) Meet & Greet - Introduce yourself	The Lodge Apartments Meet and... by researchtech 11-08-2006 02:15 AM	107	1,598	
Campus					
	Boiler Up (12 Viewing) General discussion about anything, current events. Anything goes here (may offend some people)	New Ads Plz by PurdueDoubleE Today 10:13 AM	1,142	24,774	
	Events & Night Life (2 Viewing) Know of something going on? Want to throw a block party? Talk about bars, breakfast club, etc.	Official Lounge One Thread by meisha 02-28-2007 01:27 PM	229	3,176	
	Apartment & Housing Reviews Discuss your experiences with off campus housing	Community Rentals by helotheeworld 02-26-2007 11:55 PM	59	240	
	Classifieds (16 Viewing) Buy or sell used or new stuff. Sub-Forums: Only Textbooks , Roomates & Sublease , Carpool Rideboard	Goo Goo Dolls Tickets (\$20... by map Today 10:03 AM	2,881	9,298	
	Class & Teacher Reviews Want to recommend a class or teacher, or warn the masses	favorite/least favorite... by complich8 Yesterday 11:25 PM	67	502	
	Schoolwork (1 Viewing) Need help on an assignment? Use this forum to discuss classes	Tutoring by nash007 Yesterday 04:16 AM	178	1,094	
General Discussion					
	Entertainment (1 Viewing) Discuss music, movies, TV	Britney Spears finally flips by SeaWolf Today 09:55 AM	287	4,128	
	Computers, Internet, & Tech (4 Viewing) Have a computer question or problem? Ask right here.	What do you do to protect... by complich8 Yesterday 11:31 PM	416	4,725	
	Religion, Philosophy, & Politics (15 Viewing) Open-minded discussions about anything you care to believe in...	Gentlemen we may have a... by mthed4 Today 09:39 AM	1,058	18,116	
	Dating, Sex & Relationships (4 Viewing) Sex Stuff, Relationship Problems, Tips and Tricks	hoob jobs at Purdue by nikster521 Today 01:13 AM	217	7,179	
	Sports Discuss all sports-related things here	Does Purdue get into The Big... by meqabass31	139	1,663	

Soap box 2.0 is a forum-based system devoted to finding rides for Lafayette students. It includes blogs, groups, photos and podcasts. It has an effective calendar making it easy to pick travel dates. It requires a user to sign in using a password. Soapbox 2.0 has many problems with it, and there have been no posts to the website yet. This is may be caused by a lack of awareness by students. It is not reputable with people since no one currently uses the website. (Soapbox 2.0, Main Page) The image below illustrates the lack of posts by any Purdue students.

The screenshot shows the Soapbox 2.0 website interface. At the top left is the Soapbox 2.0 logo. A navigation bar includes links for Home, Blogs, Groups, Photos, Polls, Podcasts, and Categories. On the right, there is an 'About' link. The main content area is titled 'The Lafayette College RideBoard'. On the left side, there is a 'User login' form with fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:', a 'Log in' button, and a 'Secure login' link. Below the login form is a 'Get creative' section with a 'create content' link. Further down is a 'Browse archives' section with a calendar for March 2007. The calendar shows the following dates: 1 (Su), 2 (Mo), 3 (Tu), 4 (We), 5 (Th), 6 (Fr), 7 (Sa), 8 (Su), 9 (Mo), 10 (Tu), 11 (We), 12 (Th), 13 (Fr), 14 (Sa), 15 (Su), 16 (Mo), 17 (Tu), 18 (We), 19 (Th), 20 (Fr), 21 (Sa), 22 (Su), 23 (Mo), 24 (Tu), 25 (We), 26 (Th), 27 (Fr), 28 (Sa), 29 (Su), 30 (Mo), 31 (Tu). Below the calendar is a 'Home » groups' breadcrumb. The main content area displays 'No posts in this group.' in a green-bordered box. Below this message, it says 'Submitted by kheraja on October 4, 2006 - 4:17pm.' and includes a 'printer friendly version | 735 reads' link and an 'XML' icon. At the bottom right of the main content area, it says '(categories: travel)'.

In the next section, I will discuss the initial research needed to produce this problem-solution report.

Research Methods

In order to understand Purdue student's transportation needs I examined the need for an online ride board at Purdue through both exploratory and empirical methods which include data collecting such as surveys, interviews, and online sources (visual rhetoric, websites) to come to my conclusions. It was necessary to research the options that are currently available to students. From my sources, I came to the conclusion that there is a problem of transportation for Purdue students and staff to travel off campus.

To gather my research, I began by exploring the problem and the possible solutions.

Exploratory Methods

During my exploration process I came across many sources that helped me understand the problem and the available solutions.

I used Paul Anderson's book titled Technical Communication to provide a concrete ethical analysis of usability. It helped answer my questions on what users need and want from a website. It is credible since the book is both up to date and written by a scholar. The main audience of this book is scholars and website designers. The purpose is to make a usable website.

I found cost information from Amtrak, Budget Rental Car, Express Air Coach, CityBus, and the Lafayette Limo. This source outlined the costs for students to ride Amtrak. I was searching for the costs of this type of travel for students. It is credible since they publish their own costs. The audience is people searching for traveling options. It helped me establish a cost basis for different transportation options. These sources gave me a set price that a ride board would have to compete with.

I researched different websites that offer ride boards for Purdue. Hail.purdue.edu provided me a view of one type of ride board available to students. It showed me the lack of a fully functioning, and usable ride board system. It, however, is a ride board supported by Purdue University. The audience is Purdue students looking for rides home or Purdue students looking to drive another student.

Purdue University "Help Desk" located at www.purdue.edu/helpdesk outlines the ride board that they say is currently implemented at Purdue University. My purpose was to learn more about the Purdue ride board and its features. I wondered what the pro's and con's of the physical ride board. In reality through physical observation the board no longer exists in the Union.

Purdueonline.com is a ride board currently used by Purdue students. It has many usability flaws that lowered its overall credibility. This site is dedicated to Purdue students searching for a ride home and for Purdue students who are looking to drive people home.

Purdue University Housing "Frequently Asked Questions" explained who can bring a car on campus. I used this source to find which students can park on campus. I found that no freshman and some sophomores couldn't park on campus. The audience is Purdue students researching campus policies regarding cars on campus.

Soapbox 2.0 provided information on a current ride board system in place at Purdue. I found this website while searching for ride boards that Purdue students use. This ride board has very little credibility or reputation with Purdue students since no has yet posted to it. This site is designed for Purdue students looking to find rides home. The main audience of the site is Purdue students searching for rides.

Stormfront productions development page showed me the costs of website production. This site answered my questions regarding the costs of producing a ride board online. It is a credible

production company since Purdue uses them. The audience is anyone who wants a company to create them a website.

After researching the problem and the possible solutions, I searched for answers using survey's and interviews.

Empirical Methods:

I started off my research by surveying the class to gain insight into the need for more transportation options at Purdue and to gain a more balanced view of the Purdue population. I surveyed 28 students and faculty at Purdue University. I built my data by counting the responses and then producing averages.

I interviewed Heather Owen from Purdue Memorial Union. She took over the job of Sarah Solloway, who was in office at the time of the removal of the physical ride board in the union. I conducted the interview on April 22nd 2007 in her office at 2:30 pm. I came prepared with a specific list of questions for her to answer.

Survey

I surveyed 28 randomly selected Purdue students to take part in my survey. The survey included forced answer and short answer questions.

1. The average cost for Purdue students to travel home
2. If students carpool.
3. Knowledge of a ride board in the Union
4. The difficulty of getting home
5. Willingness to use an online ride board
6. Reason would not use online ride board

In the next section, I will explain the results of the survey.

Survey Results

1. Cost:
 - a. In order not to skew the average cost I limited the question's response to 100 dollars. This made it so people who had to fly home would not drastically skew the results. The average cost for the sample group is \$68 dollars.
 - b. It became clear the people with the highest costs used a private transportation agency to go home. The average cost of students who used a private agency to go home was \$78 dollars.
2. Carpooling:
 - a. Of the 28 people surveyed 8 have paid a Purdue student to drive them. This constitutes 28% of the participants.
 - b. Of these 8 individuals the average price paid was 22 dollars. This is \$46 dollars below the average cost.
3. Knowledge of Union Ride Board

- a. Of the 28 people surveyed 6 know that a ride board existed in the union. This constitutes 21% of the individuals surveyed.
- 4. Difficulty of traveling home
 - a. 6 very easy
 - b. 5 easy
 - c. 9 neutral
 - d. 7 difficult
 - e. 2 very difficult
- 5. Yes-15
No- 14
- 6. Reason would not use online ride board
 - a. Unsafe- 4
 - b. No need- 10

Interview- Heather Owen

The first person I interviewed was Heather Owen, Purdue Student Government Coordinator. She took over the job of Sarah Holloway in 2004. Sarah ran the ride board during its existence in the Union. Throughout the interview, I was able to get a sense of distrust in all ride boards. She was fully in favor of removing the physical ride board from the union due to its lack of safety features, checks and balances, outdated nature, police very against it, renovating pappy's required the wall space, and lack of need. When asked if anything was reinstated in its place she stated that "Purdue Student Government took it over and created Hail.Purdue.edu". When asked if she was aware of a grassroots movement by many Purdue students creating their own ride boards, she was not aware. I asked her to comment on the hail.purdue.edu website in order to gain further insight into its usability, design, and safety. She stated, "no it is not user friendly". She then stated, "Not very usable, confusing to figure out how to post, no links to ride board". She then boldly stated, "Not user friendly, Period" and that "Students do not use it because of this". She felt the information was not safe enough since anyone can sign on to the website, and a lack of exchanged information.

I then asked her to comment to fix the online ride board to solve her concerns. She stated she would be in support of a Purdue sponsored ride board if, "it had things in place to monitor who was going where, a database, usable, and should be overseen by the police department". She also wanted the website to be strictly limited to Purdue students and faculty. She stated that, "An exchange of information is needed to ensure safety".

Interview- Mary Lucas

After interviewing Heather Owen it became clear that it would be necessary to contact Purdue Student Government to further research hail.purdue.edu. I then had a quick interview with Mary Lucas, the secretary for Purdue Student Government. I asked her what she thought about Hail.Purdue.edu. She stated that, "no one uses the website", and that, "the site is sitting dormant". I then asked her for solutions to fix these problems. She stated, "Advertising, and make the website more usable".

In the next section I will discuss my recommendations to solve the problem.

Recommendations

I recommend that Purdue revise Hail.Purdue.edu in order to make it more usable and raise awareness. Currently Hail.Purdue.edu is too confusing to use. Very few people know that the site exists.

Academic institutions usually stay with what is known and has been used in the past. Because of this, I recommend that instead of starting another ride board that we continue to use Hail.Purdue.edu as the web domain. This offers cost savings, and a Purdue sponsored ride board.

Through my research it became clear that a lack of knowledge of the ride board options accounted for much of the lack of use. In order for any ride board system to work it would need to be advertised. The Purdue website has various advertising options through Purdue directly. A possible option would be to submit announcements to the Boiler Television Network. We would have the announcement in the form of slides that continuously play. We will put links on Purdue's web page providing access and advertisement to Purdue students directly. (Boiler Television Network, Advertising) Another option to raise awareness will be to place flyers throughout the campus before breaks to raise awareness.

There are two main safety concerns. One risk that we cannot respond to is the fact that car accidents sometimes happen. Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to alleviate this risk. There are many solutions to the other safety problems that exist. These problems include the lack of knowledge one has before driving with someone, and the risk of assault by the other individual. People can then be sure that only Purdue students or staff is posting rides by requiring a Purdue ID. User feedback will help insure quality. After people ride with the student they will post feedback. This is similar to eBay's selling strategy of allowing a user the ability to rate a merchant. The outcome of this would be that more people would be willing to ride with people who have positive comments. A way to record information for all rides would be to set up a database. All completed arrangements could then be electronically stored, where one can then review the route, the people involved and all other information.

A major problem is that the hail.purdue.edu remains to be unusable. A book titled Technical Communication, written by Paul V. Anderson describes usability. According to Anderson, there are three elements that make a up a usable website. First, the site must be complete, containing all information that the readers require is there. This is done through grouping and creating a easy to navigate hierarchy. Second, the site must be task oriented, meaning that it is oriented around its readers and supports the readers' performance of the tasks as fully as possible. Third, the website must be accessible allowing readers to locate the information they want quickly. (Technical Communication, Page 54) This information helps create a definition for usable and makes it easy to decide what is usable. We will follow these specific rules when creating the new hail.purdue.edu website. We will create a search bar, and a simple to use webpage. The webpage will allow for the individual to pick between seeking a ride and posting a ride. There will be a listing of different city destinations in alphanumeric order. Once you pick a city, the website will

prompt you to pick the certain dates that you are looking for. This will help keep the website organized.

After interviewing Heather Owen from Purdue Student Government it became clear that the most important step would be to revamp the website. As she stated, Hail.Purdue.edu is not very usable, and at times can be very confusing to post. Her recommendations are in line with mine. She specifically stated that we should, “provide links, search bars, a database to monitor activity, and an exchange of information. Mary Lucas suggested that we make the site more usable. All of the features described by both woman are planned to be added to the current Hail.Purdue.edu.

Mary Lucas and Heather Owen felt that a possible problem is a lack of knowledge of the problem. To solve this problem I have drafted two flyers to be posted around campus. The flyers eventuate the main points by telling the reader to go to Hail.Purdue.edu. By spreading knowledge of Hail.Purdue.edu it will cause more students and faculty to participate. Currently, most students do not know that hail even exists.

Certain steps will need to be taken to see the solution from start to finish. The first step is to give Purdue Student Government the problem solution report so that they have the opportunity to provide feedback. We will then have meetings to iron out the specific details of the plan. After we have determined the exact plan it will be necessary to contact Stormfront Productions to receive a price quote for the web design work to be done. Once the quote is back we will need to do a cost/benefit analysis on the specific additions to the website previously described. Once we have come to a consensus we will have stormfront begin the design. After design is complete we will set up a test group to make sure that all possible problems are removed from the system. Once all problems are found and diagnosed, the site will be opened to all of Purdue students and faculty.

In the next section, I will be discussing the budget.

Budget

The costs for the University to create a ride board system online will be minimal. The cost of developing the web site would be the biggest expense. The website would take about thirty hours to create costing Purdue approximately \$1,000 according to Stormfront productions. Purdue Student Government, the current provider of Hail.Purdue.edu, will absorb the costs. Stormfront has been delivering website products to Purdue. (Stormfront Productions, Costs) This makes them relevant to Purdue. The cost is minimal when compared to the benefits for Purdue students and faculty. A minor cost expense will be printing the flyers required to advertise the new ride board. This cost will be variable depending on how many we print. The cost to print a color flyer is .12 a page through Purdue’s library’s. The costs for the students will be drastically reduced since students are driving students in a non-for profit environment. The average cost for a student to be driven to Chicago is \$15. This is according to preliminary research of various sites such as hail.purdue.edu, and purdueonline.com.

In the next section, I will be discussing the timeline that needs to be followed to accomplish the solution.

Timeline

The solution will have multiple stages of implementation once Purdue Student Government receives this problem solution report.

1. Problem-Solution report received by Purdue Student Government officials
2. Discussion of findings between myself and Purdue Student Government officials.
3. Contact Stormfront productions for quote to implement changes to hail.purdue.edu
4. Test the ride board with select small group of students
5. Advertise the ride board
6. Wide spread implementation of the new ride board

	May	June	August	Septemeber	October	November	December
	2007						
PSG Receive Problem solution report							
Findings discussion between myself and PSG							
Get Stormfront productions quote							
Test ride board with small group of students							
Advertise the ride board							
Implementation of Hail.Purdue.edu							

In the next section, I will discuss myself.

Staffing

Michael Reddy:

While in Boy Scouts I excelled with my leadership abilities. My first leadership position was being a patrol leader who was responsible for about twelve scouts. During this experience we excelled above the large group. From there I became the ambassador between the scouts and the adult leadership. During this term I helped accomplish the goals of both the scouts and the adults. From there I became Assistant Scoutmaster for the entire troop of 100 people. From there I

began work on my Eagle Project. I organized a project to benefit Mount St. Joseph a home for mentally retarded women. I had over 45 people in attendance to my project where I had them build four benches, ten birdhouses, mulch, weed, and plant over 1,500 bulbs.

Last summer I worked at the Barrington Area Council on aging in Barrington, IL. This is a non-profit organization dedicated to helping older individuals by providing assistance in a variety of ways. I helped organize and implement community events, direct the senior meal program, as well as assisted in implementation of technology at their office.

While at Purdue I have been involved in various clubs and organizations such as: Management Information Systems where I am the Vice President, SMC Business Case Challenge where I won third place, speech and debate where I won 2nd place speaker, and actively involved in Purdue Innovations. While at Purdue I have attained Semester Honors and am currently on the Dean's list.

While researching for this problem solution report I explored the hypothesized problem to ensure that a real problem exists. From there I looked for solutions to the problem. All data was built in an ethical manner, and all sources have been cited.

Now that I have discussed the problem, and solution I will conclude.

Conclusion

Purdue needs a revamped ride board for various reasons, included in such reasons are the inefficiency of the old ride board. Hence, an inevitable demand for a better system. Finding transportation to specific destinations can be very complicated and expensive since, private companies such as Lafayette Limo, Express Air Coach, and Amtrak all charge high fees, freshman can't have cars on campus, and limited parking tickets for upperclassman.

The system currently in place by Hail.Purdue.edu is neither accessible nor large enough. This website has very low demand due to lack of publicity by Purdue Student Government. Few people post rides and few people are seeking rides through this website. Hail does not provide any safety features. The website is very much unorganized and unusable.

An effective ride board system is more than an opportunity; it is a necessity for Purdue. An online webpage assures a more direct connection between the rider and the passenger allowing for easier ride matches, and a very large network of people. Since the transportation costs will be split between the people in the car the costs will be low.

The website will be changed in a few key ways. Firstly it will be designed to provide two categories of information. The first is where the drivers will post their offer. The second is where the riders look to find rides home. We will provide search bars and an easy to navigate system to compare and find the best match. The payment will be easy and direct through boiler express.

The system will afford higher security standards. The site will be restricted to staff and students with Purdue ID's. The system will allow for user feedback regarding the driver. Hail will now

offer broader access to rider and passenger information allowing for a safer ride. In case of a problem a review of the route will be possible through the database.

It is time that we take action and help correct the problem of transportation at Purdue University.

Decision maker: It is time that we enact this plan for Purdue students and faculty benefit.

Reader: Please assist in promoting my plan to the decision makers. To ensure this plan is enacted contact Purdue student government and ask that Hail.Purdue.edu is revamped according to this plan.

To get more information about this plan feel free to contact me:

Michael Andrew Reddy
73 Hillburn Lane, Barrington, Il, 60010
U.S.A

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Appendix A

Survey

Michael Reddy

Transportation at Purdue

1. How do you get home during breaks?
 1. Circle all that apply
 2. Rank in order of most used
 - i. 1=most 7= least
 - b. Bus
 - c. Train
 - d. Lafayette Limo
 - e. Plane
 - f. Car
 - g. Run
 - h. Other _____

2. How far do you live from campus?
 - a. 0-20 miles
 - b. >20-100 miles
 - c. >100-200 miles
 - d. >200-300 miles
 - e. >300-400 miles
 - f. >400 miles

3. How much money does it cost to get home?
 1. Include gas, paying a driver, etc.
 - a. \$0-\$20

- b. >\$20-\$40
- c. >\$40-\$60
- d. >\$60-\$80
- e. >\$80-100
- f. >\$100

4. Have you ever paid a Purdue student to drive you off campus?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

5. If yes to question 4, how much did you pay?
- a. \$0-\$20
 - b. >\$20-\$40
 - c. >\$40-\$60
 - d. >\$60-\$80
 - e. >\$80-100
 - f. >\$100

6. If no to question 4, why?
- 1. Circle all that apply
 - b. Unsafe
 - c. Hassle
 - d. Money
 - e. No need
 - f. Other_____

7. Did you know a ride board existed in the Union?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

8. Would you use an online ride board?
- a. Yes
 - b. No

9. If yes to question 8, why would you use it?
- a. Inexpensive
 - b. Convenient
 - c. Make new friends
 - d. Quick travel
 - e. OTHER_____

10. If no to question 8, why would you not use it?

- a. Unsafe
- b. Hassle
- c. Money
- d. No need
- e. Other_____

11. What class are you?

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior

12. I find traveling from Purdue to home_____?

- a. Very easy
- b. Easy
- c. Neutral
- d. Difficult
- e. Very difficult

13. How important was transportation options at Purdue when deciding to apply to Purdue?

- a. Very important
- b. Important
- c. Somewhat Important
- d. Not important

14. Please suggest ways you would solve transportation problems at Purdue?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____

THANKS FOR TAKING MY SURVEY☺

Appendix B

Interview with Heather Owen at Purdue Memorial Union

1. When did you take over Sarah Holloway's position?
 - a. 2004
2. Do you think that ride boards are necessary?
 - a. Better not to. In favor of getting rid of
 - i. Safety
 - ii. No checks and balances
 - iii. In favor of online
 1. PSG liked online
 2. Not needed or necessary for ride board
 3. Res. Halls do ride matching
 4. Do not know who getting with
3. Are you aware of the ride board that used to be in the union?
 - a. Any random person could fill out
 - b. 14,000 people a day
 - c. Tons of information received
 - d. Two cards: need a ride, or want a ride
 - e. Was started during hitch hiking era
 - f. ONLY included phone #, not email, etc... less info
 - i. Worlds changed
4. Why was it removed?
 - a. Safety
 - b. Outdated
 - c. Board needed changes
 - d. Renovating papy's and needed to be relocated
 - e. Police very against it
5. Was anything re-instated in its place?
 - a. Why or why not?
 - b. Hai.purdue.edu
 - i. PSG
 - ii. People ask about the ride board still

6. Did you know that many students have made personal online ride boards non-affiliated with Purdue?

-No I don't know

-Only know of hail, and res. Halls made for people within the hall

7. Have you ever visited Purdue's Hail.purdue.edu run by Purdue student government?

a. Yes

b. Did you like the design?

i. No not user friendly

c. How was its usability?

i. Not very usable

ii. Confusing to figure out to post

iii. Call over and ask how to use

iv. More user friends

v. Not user friendly. Period.

1. Students do not use it because of this

2. Not super easy to figure out what's what.

3. Not links to ride board.

4. Not easy

d. Safety?

i. Still not safe, since nothing in place to...

ii. Statement: Should exchange information

Purdue students Facebook instead

8. Would you be in support of a Purdue sponsored ride board?

a. If safe, if had things in place to monitor who was going where, database, usable, needs to be overseen by police department. Police has access to peoples records, history, etc.

b. Approved to be user of the site by police, etc.

c. PUID

d. Police

e. Name, contact, phone #, secondary contact

f. Exchange of information

9. You mentioned through e-mail that PSG wanted to take over the on-line ride Board. For how long did you have control over the ride board?

-Started in 60's and 70's

-Old maps of the country where you are going

-Which sections

-Some people used it, 100's USED to use it, 7 years ago used more

-Gradually declined

10. “so many student organizations, that it has grown by 250 student groups. More students involved. Not just here for classes. Very involved. Automatically getting contacts through people they know”

11. How would you make hail.purdue.edu more usable?

Hail.purdue.edu decision makers, possible to do suggestions, costs, etc. More usable ride board, safety: only Purdue people, profile of individuals. Search bar.

Appendix C

Interview with Mary Lucas at Purdue Student Government

1. Q: What do you think about Hail.Purdue.edu?

A: No one uses the site

It sits dormant

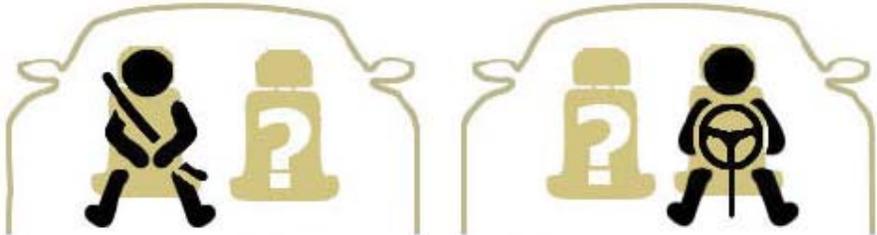
2. Q: Do you have any ideas to improve it?

A: Advertising

Make more usable

Appendix D

DO YOU NEED A RIDE HOME?



SEEK A RIDE

POST A RIDE

Hail.Purdue.edu

RIDE
N'SEEK



Appendix E



SEEK A RIDE



POST A RIDE

———— hail.purdue.edu ————

sign up for **RIDE
N'SEEK**



APPENDIX F

Writing log

Time spent: Michael Reddy

DATE	TASK	TIME
4/11/07	Draft of Survey	1
4/12/07	07 E-mail Purdue Union Board including response	:30
4/12/07	Empirical Map, Stasis theory	1:30
4/14/07	Outline	2:00
4/16/07	Usability research	:30
4/18/07	Memo, Abstract, Table of contents, and Page one	2:00
4/19/07	Initial research, survey	2:00
4/22/07	Interview, recommendations	2:30
4/23/07	2 flyers, advertising	2:30
4/24/07	Appendix	1:00
4/25/07	Empirical/exploratory/flyer/writing lab	3:00
4/26/07	Writing lab, correction	1:00
4/29/07	Conclusion, editing	1:30
4/30/07	Editing	1:45
		TOTAL:20 hours

