Client Relationships – A Proven Approach

Rebecca Cumberlege **Jaimie Green** **Tony Clear**

School of Computer & Information Sciences
Auckland University of Technology
Auckland, NZ
tony.clear@aut.ac.nz

The success of any project is proportional to how well the system meets the client's requirements. The client for the capstone project who is the sole proprietor of an Online Talent Agency, (Background Talent, http://www.backgroundtalent.com/index.php) has high expectations and a strong understanding of business fundamentals.

The business domain and therefore the client's needs are constantly evolving, and the online aspects of the system in a rapidly changing environment make it a first in this competitive market. These project characteristics led to our decision to use a customised version of the Feature-Driven Methodology (Pressman, 2001, Luca, 2003).

FEATURE-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

Feature-Driven Development (FDD) methodology breaks the requirements into reasonable 'features' whereby each feature should take no more than two weeks to finish. The version of FDD we implemented in this project was slightly modified to accommodate our needs as web developers by incorporating features of familiar methodologies.

The first step would be to get the design specifications approved by the client, then a test plan would be created and coding could begin. Every four features are incorporated into a release, meaning the client could then use this new functionality. The features encompassed in a release are decided by the client, based on their priorities at that time.

The advantage of using this methodology with the current system, which is based on updating an existing website running on a Linux-based server, using PHP, Javascript and MySQL, is that it is flexible for the client. Decisions, priorities and needs all influence which features are included in a release, ensuring client satisfaction. One disadvantage of FDD is that some features may require others to be implemented first as a foundation. This may restrict the flexibility of feature selection.

CONCLUSION

Overall, using the Feature-Driven Development methodology has improved the relationship between our client and us, by allowing the client to consider priorities and goals when planning each release, and accordingly change their requirements specifications as the business evolves. The delivery of functionality constantly throughout the project time frame is another advantage. It also allowed us, as developers, to better estimate the time cost of each feature, allow for project creep, and to therefore have better control over the project as a whole.

References:

Luca, J. D. (2003). *FDD - Feature Driven Development*. Retrieved 26 May, 2004, from http://www.featuredrivendevelopment.com/

Pressman, R. S. (2001). *Software engineering. A practitioner's approach*. McGraw-Hill: Singapore.