

WELCOME TO THE SHOW

Taming the Wild, Wild Web with Online
Application Processes:
Resident Advisor Online Applications

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Questions to keep in mind

- Can you apply these ideas to your area?
- Which of these concepts will work in your environment?
- What will it take to adapt this solution?

About WWU

- Bellingham, WA
- 14,000 graduate and undergraduate students
- 4,000 on-campus residents
- Residence Life staff
- 300+ RA applications including returning and summer positions



Past Paper Process Problems

- Wasted Resources
- Accuracy and Efficiency
 - Data Entry
 - Reports
 - Scoring
- Staff Workload
- Feedback about Process
- Student Needs



Getting Started

- Paper application process
- Dynamic student data
 - GPA, Gender, Contact Info
- Understand the users - students and staff
 - Observation, Research, Surveys, Group Feedback
- Challenge the existing process

Getting Started cont.

- Provide year-round process information
 - Update FAQ continuously
- Remember long-term goals while implementing short-term solutions
- Explore programmer resources

Applicant Needs

- Status site
- Process information
- Communication with Residence Life staff

Administrative Needs

- Understanding needs of Search Secretary, Search Coordinator, and Resident Directors
- Access to real-time student information
- Scoring
- Reports
- Process management tools



Building the Application

www.housing.wvu.edu/ra_search

- Start small and simple
 - e.g. survey tool, web form
- Look for existing software
 - Open source
 - Web frameworks
 - Language libraries
- Design for application with administrative needs in mind

Programming Principles

- Use an Object Oriented, modular design
 - Allows for future reuse of similar components
 - Ensures flexibility for future features
- Research utility libraries for your language
 - PHP -> PEAR, Python -> modules, etc.
- Web frameworks
 - PHP: Zend, Cake, Code Igniter
 - Python: Django, Turbogears



Programming Principles

- Explore integration of 3rd party software
 - Content management tools like TinyMCE or Drupal
 - Report generators
 - Survey tools
- Don't reinvent the wheel
 - Save time otherwise spent on coding and debugging

End Results of Current Process and Future Planning

- Limitations
 - Losing one-on-one interaction
 - Overcoming technology limits
 - Site Maintenance

End Results of Current Process and Future Planning Continued

- Benefits and Future Planning
 - Increased overall communication
 - Ability to analyze information of students who do not complete the application
 - Online reference forms and interview scoring
 - Moving to a system where there will be little to no changes year-to-year.

Q & A

Do you have any questions for us?