

KickStarter Webpage

INTRODUCTION

Project Image: 1024x576 16:9 aspect ratio



Project Title: Word by Word: A Vocabulary System for Language Learners

Description: A webpage giving foreign language learners the opportunity to expand their vocabulary through multimedia and quizzing functions.

Category/Subcategory chosen: Technology > Web

Project Location: Annville, PA, USA

Funding duration: 30 days

Funding goal: \$500,000

REWARDS

Donation Amount	Reward
\$20 or more	Thanks! You'll be granted access to three months of our premium system.
\$50 or more	Thank you for your support! You will receive a T-shirt and will be granted access to six months of our premium system. Please indicate your T-shirt size when selecting this reward option. We will ship anywhere in the world, but shipping rates will apply.
\$100 or more	You rock! We appreciate your support so much. You will receive a T-shirt and will be granted access to one year of our premium system. Please indicate your T-shirt size when selecting this reward option. We will ship anywhere in the world, but shipping rates will apply.
\$300 or more	You're awesome! Thank you so much for your support. You will receive a T-shirt, be granted access to two years of our premium system, and your name will be placed on a page of our website giving our official thanks to our donors and sponsors. Please indicate your T-shirt size when selecting this reward option. We will ship anywhere in the world, but shipping rates will apply.
\$1,000 or more	You're an incredible human being, and we appreciate the amount you're willing to give to support our project. You will receive a T-shirt, be granted unlimited access to our premium system, and your name will be placed on a page of our website giving our official thanks to our donors and sponsors. We will also send you a personalized and signed letter as well as an extra surprise to thank you for your contribution. Please indicate your T-shirt size when selecting this reward option. We will ship anywhere in the world, but shipping rates will apply.

STORY

Project Video:



Project Description:

Word by Word is an integrative system for foreign language learners which teaches vocabulary in the user's chosen language. After taking a pre-test to determine prior knowledge of the language, users will learn the vocabulary through written and aural methods indicated on word pages. Through a quizzing function, they will be tested at regular intervals to determine how the information is recalled versus simple recognition of the terms. This vocabulary system is advantageous for language learners over regular language learning programs due to working with the user's pre-existing knowledge rather than forcing every user through a pre-calculated approach.

Project History:

Word by Word was created by three students for their senior project in a digital communications Capstone course at Lebanon Valley College in Annville, PA. It was designed as a response to these students' unsatisfactory experiences with other language learning platforms. While many of these platforms taught vocabulary, they failed to fully consider the cultural synonyms and alternatives that came with the acquisition of language. From this standpoint, project manager Malia Waltman and developer Dan

Bennett decided to create the initial model of a system which would consider these synonyms and alternatives, with Michaela May later joining the team as the project's editor.

Word by Word's system is derived from the competency-based learning model, which evolves from the demonstration of knowledge being tested and the reinforcement of positive learning techniques. Questions created for the quizzing function of the system will allow for individual learners to display where they are at in retaining vocabulary, and users will always be able to learn at their own pace and at the level they succeed best in.

In September of 2019, the initial two-person team determined the best potential business model of the system and began to work on a branding scheme which could be enticing for potential customers. The creators wished to stress Word by Word not as a language learning program but as one for vocabulary acquisition.

Throughout the next several months and with the addition of a new team member, rounds of testing and questioning were done to ensure that Word by Word was viable, desirable, and feasible for the communities of interest (language learners and higher-ups in education) to partake in.

Starting in January of 2020, the team began to put together a website which acted as a fully functioning prototype for what the system could look like. Level one words were picked out, questions were written for the quizzing function, and word page content was put together and laid out. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic starting in March, the team was forced to reconsider how some of the project could be done, transferring ideas from back-end development to working almost entirely from the front-end due to not having access to databases. Working entirely from a digital standpoint, the team finished testing of the final prototype in mid-April, completing in time to present their results to Lebanon Valley College's annual Inquiry Symposium.

While the project was not completed conventionally, Word by Word has still been able to maintain its initial goal of expanding people's vocabularies in the tests that have been run, giving it a promising run for its future.

Project Timeline:

While much of the webpage has been developed at the start of the campaign launch, there is still much to be done before the whole project can officially be released to the public. This is where your contributions will come in and help us with moving forward!

Initial test runs of Word by Word determined that this system was one that was desirable by the target population of language learners and by foreign language professors who would be implementing this system in their classrooms. Testing of the system's viability and the feasibility of its creation has also proven successful.

We have completed much of the research components in terms of vocabulary acquisition and best learning practices. Our next step will be to consult language professionals and consultants to ensure accuracy of the respective languages and to develop word lexicon. From these consultations, content for each language will need to be gathered and coded into each respective database of words, with each word having its own word page to have tailored content for as well.

The team has run competitive usability tests to learn how to differentiate Word by Word from its direct competition, evaluating which elements from these programs captured the learners' attention, assisted in their understanding of the individual words, and afforded learning of these methods. Results from these tests were implemented into what Word by Word's current model stands as.

The system front-end development of the website, including landing pages, word pages, teacher pages, and word quizzes has been created. Much of what will need to be done moving forward is the integration of database back-end development, in which each individual user's personal learned vocabulary lists are held. Because each user stands at a different learning level and learning speed, the database back-end development will be necessary to ensure that progress is effectively saved.

Although much of the marketing and branding will be done in house, more work will begin to be done on promoting the system and encouraging more people to sign up. This will be done mainly through social media campaigning, news releases and other similar prospects.

From here, the team members will work to keep up with system maintenance and updates and to provide support via customer service.

BUDGET

Development Cost:

System Research and Design: \$50,000

UX designers to design system with language professionals that is beneficial, and research that is proven to increase word retention.

Language Professionals/Consultants: \$5,000 per professional

Native language speakers to design language system and develop word lexicon. Suggested to have at least two per languages when developing a new language system.

System Content Development: \$10,000 - \$15,000 per language

Personnel needed to craft and gather all content for each word in lexicon to be coded into the database of words.

System Content Copyright: \$5,000 per language

Purchasing or licensing of any external media content on word pages.

System Front-End Development: ~\$62.50/hour per developer

Development of the website including landing pages, word pages, teacher pages, and word quizzes.

Database Development: \$10,000

Development of the database that will hold each individual user's personal learned vocabulary lists

Fixed Cost

System Servers: \$2,000

Upfront cost of purchasing a mid-level small business server with 32GB RAM and 2x500GB SSD.

Server Housing: ~\$30.24/month

Monthly cost for supplying server with power, cooling, and internet.

Domain Name: \$70 up front, \$5/month

Cost of purchasing wordbyword.com, includes upfront fee for retrieval of the parked domain and monthly cost of the domain name from a domain hosting website.

Variable Cost

Server / Hardware per 5 users: \$1000

Independent Institutional Sales Representative Commission on gross sales: 5%

Independent sales representatives who work part-time and on a contract basis

Staff Salaries: \$40,000

Two staff members to start off with low salaries. Most likely our team members taking salary to cover living expenses, in order to dedicate full-time work on the business.

Marketing/Brand Budget: \$2,500

Small budget to pay for materials and advertisements, as most if not all marketing will be completed in house.

System Maintenance and Updates: 15%-20%/year of overall development cost

Estimated annual cost for identifying bugs, fixing errors, improving functionality, and updating the website

RISKS AND CHALLENGES

One of our main challenges will be competing with other language learning systems and the systems offered by textbook publishers. While the industry is very competitive, it is more so in the individual learning systems. The most competitive market would be the textbook publishing language learning systems as they already have a well-established curriculum and brand with institutions. Word by Word will also be competing with other well-established language learning systems and study apps.

Buyers must see the value in the system in order to purchase, whether monetarily with our premium model or simply with their time and effort. With large amounts of alternatives and low switching costs from free systems to textbook paired systems, they can easily switch systems if they decide to do so.

The main threat of substitutes would come from a lack of understanding of Word by Word being offered as a vocabulary system, leading users to rather see it as a flashcard or language learning system.

PROJECT FAQs

I've never learned a foreign language before. Will I be able to work with this program?

Absolutely! Word by Word is meant for foreign language users of all learning levels. Its ease of use provides a platform that is simple to understand and navigate no matter how much vocabulary you already know in your target language. You will start by taking a pretest testing your current vocabulary skills. The system will then tailor your first set of words to learn based on your current knowledge, which can range from nothing to near fluency.

What are the benefits of your premium model?

While the premium model is not necessary to purchase in order to effectively work with the system, it does offer incentives. It will allow you to learn vocabulary in more than one language, study without the timer if you choose, arrange words into your own subcategories to study from and much more.

How much does Word by Word cost?

The regular version is 100% free. You can study an unlimited amount of vocabulary in one language, practice with specific words you are struggling with most and compete with your friends, amongst other benefits. If you would like to upgrade to our premium model, in which the benefits are detailed above, you will receive a 30-day free trial, after which the premium model is 10 dollars a month. You can also cancel this model and return to the regular version of the system with no repercussions.

Why should I trust that this system works?

Word by Word features an adaptive learning model that focuses on actual vocabulary retention. Our team has done extensive research, much with actual test subjects, into vocabulary learning practices and have adapted our system to best suit those practices.

ABOUT US

Malia Waltman is a senior Digital Communications student at Lebanon Valley College with a concentration in business technology, also majoring in international business. She serves as the project manager for Word by Word, developing the brand identity, writing the majority of research reports, maintaining a schedule for the team, and being the main line of communication between the team and outside prospects.

Dan Bennett is a senior Digital Communications student at Lebanon Valley College with a concentration in design, also majoring in art and visual culture. He serves as the main developer for Word by Word, working with front end code for the entirety of the website as well as creating the project video and communicating the brand identity through appropriate design elements.

Michaela May is a senior Digital Communications student at Lebanon Valley College with a concentration in design, also majoring in English. She serves as the editor for Word by Word, writing copy such as research reports and proofing all released documentation. She also wrote the content for the ten word pages and for the questions and answers within the quizzing function.

While this is the first project the three of us have collaborated on, we have worked as classmates for the past several years and were excited to be presented the opportunity to work together this year. This is a project we have worked hard on over the last year, and we are pleased to be able to present it in its fullest form.

Social Media

- @WordbyWordVocab on Twitter and Instagram
- Word by Word on Facebook

Location

- Annville, PA

Website URL

- digicom.lvc.edu/wordbyword