

CATS



Project: CATS Fast Ferry

Duration: 2 months

URL: www.thebreeze.com



Short Description

An online reservation system was developed where the user could book and view his order and the Admin could complete orders, print tickets and so on. The website that was developed was appealing with full information about the ferry services and pictures revealing the pleasant experience. The website is preceded by a fast paced Flash intro showcasing the unique travel experience.

Need

Canadian American Transportation Systems, LLC is a Fast Ferry service between Rochester, NY and Toronto, Ontario. The service is "high speed", operating at over 50+ MPH, accommodating approximately 750 walk-on passengers, up to 220 cars and up to 10 trucks and buses.

The need was to develop an online reservation system and a website. Also, we needed to incorporate the functionality by which a user would be able to purchase

gift certificates and sign up for the newsletter. The website was required to be attractive, presenting comprehensive information and building up hype through contests, events and pictures of the ferry being built.

Challenges

Netsmartz has developed many challenging projects successfully through the expertise of its workforce. CATS Online Reservation system required many tasks- big and small. Some were more challenging while others less so. They are listed below:

- To incorporate all required functionalities such as booking, Credit Card Transaction etc. in a way that booking could be done smoothly.
- An Admin section for the reservation system with different relevant functions like changing fares etc.
- Online purchase of Gift certificates.
- Newsletter section where the user could sign up to receive a newsletter. A template was created where the Admin could add/update/change newsletter contents on a regular basis.
- The virtual tour section allowed the user to view video clips of the various areas of the ferry, for example: dining halls, lounges, theatres, breeze bars, deck area etc.
- Pictures of the ferry were required to be changed on a regular basis.
- Schedules and discount schemes were to be changed very often. So the system was developed keeping in mind these changes.

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Solution

A website was created for Canadian American Transport for their new ferry service from Rochester to Toronto. Besides being unusual in terms of layout and graphics, the website encased an online reservation system for passengers who wish to book a trip from Rochester to Ontario and vice versa. The user could book a trip online giving details of the type of fare, mode of payment and currency details apart from passenger details and other important trip details. Credit Card transactions were securely implemented using Verisign.

The website was preceded by a striking Flash intro showcasing the exciting experience of riding the ferry. It revealed to the user that being aboard the Fast Ferry was a unique travel experience, offering amenities and ambience worthy of a mini cruise ship. The website contained details of everything from planning a trip, schedule, points of departure, commuter fares etc.

The website also contained the details of the Rochester Terminal and Toronto Terminal with driving instructions, guide map and even parking details for the travelers convenience. The details of the services available on the ferry are also an integral part of the website. This includes the onboard restaurant and bars, 2 movie theatre rooms with giant plasma screen televisions, wireless internet access, duty free shopping, business class lounge etc.

The reservation system involved different functionalities and features that came into play depending on who used it- the user or Administrator. For example, the user

would be allowed to book and view orders whereas the Admin should be able to complete orders, print tickets and so on. Apart from booking, another feature that was to be added was the Gift Certificate functionality that would allow the users to purchase Gift Certificates online for themselves or for their friends. Users can also view special deals and packages offered by CATS partners.

Technologies Used

- Programming languages: ASP.NET, VB.NET, HTML
- Database: SQL Server 2000 with service pack 3
- Platform: Dot Net Frame Work
- IDE: Visual Studio.Net2003, Dreamweaver, Adobe Photoshop, Flash
- Web Services: .Net Web services using SOAP protocol
- Documentation: Microsoft Word, Microsoft Visio

Benefits

- The website created a lot of hype.
- The website contains complete information regarding the tours, schedules, services, rates, and everything related to bookings.
- The design was contemporary and appealing.
- The reservation system developed was user friendly.
- The customers can make fast reservations.
- Bookings made at CATS are completely secure.
- Credit Card transactions were securely implemented using Verisign.