Thai-Buddhism Online

by

Mr. Arjapong Yarnmunilert

A Final Report of the Six-Credit Course
IC 6997 E-Commerce Practicum

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science
in Internet and E-Commerce Technology
Assumption University

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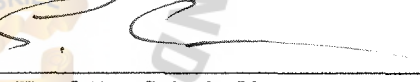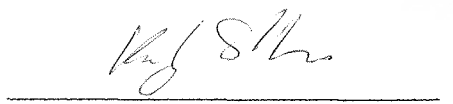Assumption University

March 2004

Project Title: Thai – Buddhism Online

Name: Arjpong Yarnmunilert

Project Advisor: Rear Admiral Prasart Sribhadung
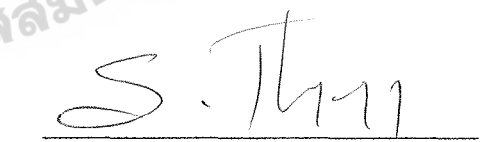
Academic Year: March 2004

The Graduate School of Assumption University has approved this final report of the three – credit course, IC 6997 E-Commerce Practicum, submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Internet and E – Commerce Technology.

Approval Committee:

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(signature)	_(signature)_
(Rear Admiral Prasart Sribhadung)	(Prof. Dr. Srisak Charmonman)
Dean and Advisor	Chairman
(signature)	_(signature)_
(Dr. Ketchayong Skowratananont)	(Assoc.Prof. Somchai Thayarnyong)
Member	CHE Representative

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ABSTRACT

This report outlines the design and construction of Thai-Buddhism Online web site in detail. The report contains 7 main sections; Background of Thai – Buddhism Online, Internet technology, Buddhism, Marketing plan, Web site development, Financial Analysis, and Conclusion and Recommendation. Background of Thai – Buddhism Online section covers the goal of the web site, key to success, and why going online is necessary. Internet technology section covers history, growth, benefits and Internet users. Buddhism section covers history of Buddhism, problems with Buddhism in Thailand, and the role of the Internet with Buddhism. Marketing Plan section analyses the target customers, Online and Offline strategies, and SWOT analysis. The web site development section covers the structure of web site, and also shows each page in the web site plus a brief explanation of each page. Financial Analysis analyses the cost - benefit of the web site.
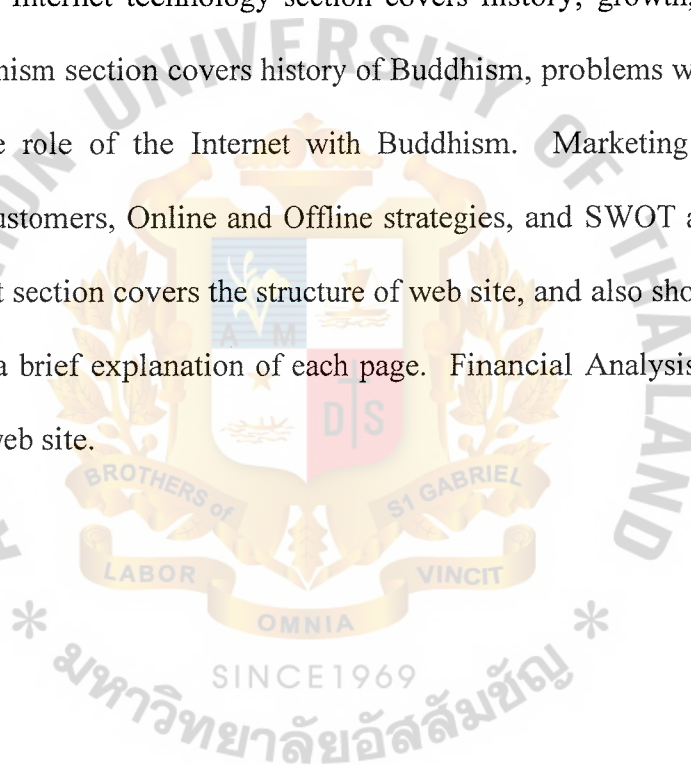
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1.1   Background of the project

One of the reasons why the writer is interested in creating Thai-Buddhism web site is because he wants to see Thai people become more interested in Buddhism. Since Thailand is a Buddhist country, it is very important to encourage all Thais to follow the teaching of Lord Buddha. In Thailand, we have many Buddhist temples all over the country but the writer is not sure if people go to these temples to learn Dhamma or they go there for other purposes. The majority of Thai people are Buddhists. But the question the writer has is; do Thai people practice and follow the teaching of Lord Buddha strictly? The writer believes that if Thai people understand the true meaning of Buddhism and follow the teaching of Lord Buddha strictly, Thailand would be a better place with fewer problems. Another reason for creating Thai – Buddhism Online is that the writer wants to spread Buddhism to foreign countries so that they can appreciate the philosophy of Buddhism and the teaching of Lord Buddha.

In general, Buddhism is a way of finding peace within oneself. But with the fast pace and high stress of modern life today, many people do not have time to find peace within them. People are very busy with their life nowadays and the busy life that we have is the one that causes all of us not to have peace within ourselves. The writer understands this very well, and this is another reason why he decided to create Thai-Buddhism web site to help people find peace within them. The writer hope that Thai-Buddhism web site will be helpful not just Thai people but also other people around the world.

1.2 Objective of the project

The objective of this project is to design and develop a web site that can provide information about Buddhism. We want this web site to be a place where everyone can learn about Buddhism and be able to apply what he or she learns to his or her daily life.

1.3 Scope of the project

The project has two parts: (1) a prototype web site and (2) a final report

(1)   A prototype web site with the following information: Home, What is Buddhism, Buddhism's Beliefs, Basic Teaching of Buddhism, Meditation Method, Member Area, Question Area, Activities, About Donation, and Us.

(2)   A final report will cover the following topics:

    (a)   Background of Thai Buddhism Online - Why going online is necessary, Goal of Thai Buddhism Online, Key to success, Advantages and disadvantages of the web site.

    (b)   Internet Technology - History of the Internet, Growth of Internet, Benefits of Internet, Internet in Thailand.

    (c)   Buddhism - Buddhism and its history, Main schools of Buddhism today, History of Buddhism in Thailand, Problems of Buddhism in Thailand, Role of Internet with Buddhism.

    (d)   Marketing Plan - Market target, Online strategies, Offline strategies, and SWOT analysis.

    (e)   Web site Development - Web site structure chart and, web pages.

    (f)   Financial Analysis – Expenses and Revenues of web site, Break even graph, benefits of Thai – Buddhism Online.

    (g)   Conclusion and Recommendation.

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1.4 Deliverables

(1)   A final report in detail covering the scope mentioned above.

(2)   A prototype web site.

II.   BACKGROUND OF THAI – BUDDHISM ONLINE

2.1   Why going online is necessary

The writer feels that going online is necessary because everything that we see nowadays is available on the World Wide Web. The Internet is one of the fastest growing technologies right now. The writer believes that it would be a big mistake if the writer decides not to go online. In order to spread the teaching of Buddhism to people all over the world, a web site must be created to reach people throughout the world. This is the reason why the writer created Thai – Buddhism Online web site. The writer feels that it is not enough to spread the teaching of Buddhism through television, radio, and newspapers. The writer must take advantage of the Internet technology. Without the Internet technology, it would be very difficult to reach people throughout the world. Having a web site available on the Internet not only can reach people in Thailand but also people in foreign countries. This is one thing that the writer really like about having his Thai – Buddhism Online web site available on the Internet.

By having Thai – Buddhism Online web site available on the Internet, it gives opportunity for those who are not Buddhist a chance to explore Buddhism in more detail, especially those who live in foreign countries. Because Buddhism is not the most well – known religion, therefore, it is necessary to create a Buddhism web site to make people in foreign countries aware of Buddhism's existence and that the teaching of Lord Buddha are practical and useful.   In fact, people in foreign countries are beginning to appreciate Buddhism, therefore, it is very necessary to have a Buddhism web site like Thai – Buddhism Online available to everyone throughout the world.

2.2 Goals of Thai – Buddhism Online

The main goal of Thai – Buddhism Online is to provide basic understanding of Buddhism to anyone interested in this topic. The web site is created to offer information about Buddhism that is clear, simple and easy to understand. Everything in Thai – Buddhism Online web site is clear and easy to understand. The writer understands very well that some of the concepts in Buddhism are very complex and difficult to understand. In the writer's opinion, difficult concepts belong to those who have advanced skill. As a result of this, Thai – Buddhism Online web site will not provide any difficult concepts to confuse people. The writer believes that basic concepts are suitable to ordinary people. It is very important to learn basic teaching of Buddhism first and then move on to the next level if interested. The writer could have written everything about Buddhism in his web site. However, he realizes that it is impossible to put everything in one web site because there are too many really interesting topics to learn in Buddhism.

The other goal is the writer wants to see Thai people especially the younger generation become more interested in Buddhism. This is one of the reasons why the writer created Thai – Buddhism Online. Since the younger generation will be the future of the country, they need to understand their religion and the significant of it. Thai people are not the only group of people that the writer is targeting. People in foreign countries are another group of people that the writer wants to see them show their interest in Buddhism. According to the research, some people in many foreign countries have already shown their interest in learning about Buddhism. This is a good news for Thai – Buddhism Online because this web site can help foreign people learn more about Buddhism depending on what they want to do with Buddhism.

2.3 Key to success

The writer believes that the key for Thai – Buddhism Online web site to be successful will depend on 2 major factors. The first factor is content & overall design of the web site and the second factor will be the marketing strategies. Content in the web site is really important. A good web site must contain content that is easy to read and understand. Content must also be well – organized and easy to follow. It is not too difficult to create a web site but it is not easy to create a well - organized web site. A successful web site is the one that contain good content, uses appropriate font style, color, and other appropriate features. If the web site is not well – organized and does not use appropriate color and font style then the web site may not be successful. The overall design of a web site is very important thing to consider along with the content in the web site. A web site that is not organized and has poor design will frustrate visitors and make them go away to other sites.

The other key factor to success is marketing plan. Marketing is a really important key to success in everything. Marketing is one of the important keys to success for E – Commerce web site and also other web sites that try to get attention from visitors. Without good marketing plan, it is going to be very difficult to be successful. The writer must use the right marketing strategies if he wants to see his web site become successful. For the marketing plan, what the writer has to do is he must find out the market targets, conduct SWOT analysis, use advertising techniques, and other appropriate marketing strategies. The writer will talk in more detail about his marketing plan for his web site later in the report.

2.4 Advantages and disadvantages of Thai – Buddhism Online

In this section, the writer lists some of the advantages and disadvantages that he sees from his web site.

Advantages of the Thai – Buddhism Online are:

(a)   The web site is attractive looking.

(b)   The content in the web site is easy to read and understand.

(c)   It is very organized.

(d)   Visitors will have an easy time navigate through the web site.

(e)   Finding information in the web site is very easy.

Disadvantages of Thai – Buddhism Online are:

(a)   The web site is new to the market so it will take time to acquire enough customers.

(b)   There is no chat room for immediate interaction.

(c)   No multimedia features.

(d)   No links to other sites.

III. INTERNET TECHNOLOGY

3.1 History of the Internet

The Internet is a worldwide system of computer networks. It is a network of networks in which users at any computer can, if they have permission, get information from any other computer. The Internet is one of the most important developments in the history of both information systems and communication systems because it is both communication and information system. The Internet was started by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1969 as a network of four computers called ARPANET. The goal was to link a set of computers operated by several universities doing military research. The original network grew as more computers and more computer networks were linked.

Today the Internet is a public, cooperative, and self – sustaining facility accessible to millions of people worldwide. Physically, the Internet uses a portion of the total resources of the current existing public telecommunication networks. Technically, what distinguishes the Internet is its use of a set of protocols called TCP/IP (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol). The intranet and extranet make use of the TCP/IP protocol.

3.2 Growth of the Internet

The Internet has continued to grow at a dramatic pace. Nobody knows exactly how large the Internet is. But researchers suggest that there are about forty million servers and four – hundred million people on the Internet, both of which are growing rapidly. In the mid – 1990s, most Internet users were young adult under the age of thirty – five years old. Interestingly, most of the Internet users tend to be male. But as

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the Internet matures, its typical user becomes closer to the underlying average in the population as a whole. In fact, the fastest growing segment of Internet users are retirees.

The World Wide Web has evolved as a main component of Internet. It is a powerful medium to deliver on – demand, just in time information. The web has undergone tremendous growth in the past several years. While there were approximately 100 web sites in 1992, today there are more than 200,000 web sites. There were fewer than 30,000 Internet linked computer network two years ago, today there are more than 90,000. In 1980, there were about 300 Internet host computers, today there are more than 10 million. The amount of information on the Internet doubles every year, the web grows by 300,000 pages every seven days.

According to the research, the number of Internet user have been growing rapidly in every part of the world from Asia all the way to Europe. The research have suggested that Asia Pacific will become the largest region with approximately 242 million Internet users by the year 2005. In the near future, Internet users in Asia will account for 25% of all Internet users in the world. So the future of the Internet will rely heavily in Asia.

3.3 Internet users in Thailand

Thailand is still a agricultural country not a technology country yet. However, the number of Internet users are rising every year since the arrival of the World Wide Web.
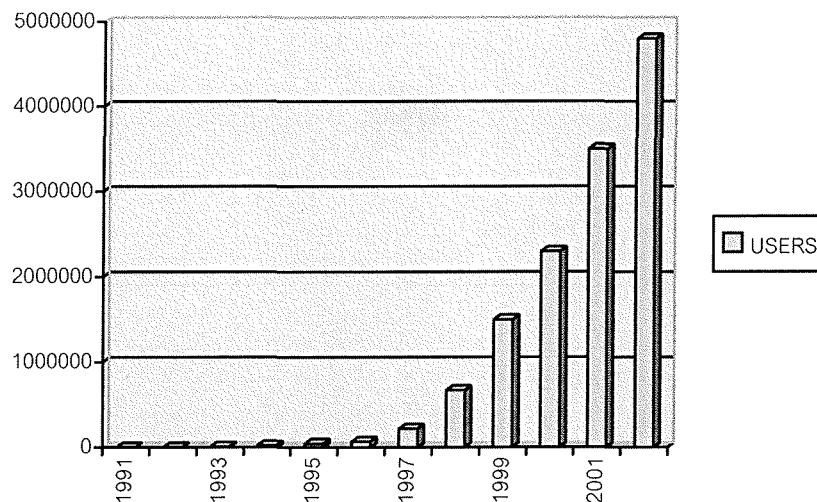
Source: Nectec

Figure 3.3.   Internet Users in Thailand.

As you can see from the graph above that Internet users in Thailand keep on rising every year. The writer believes the number of Internet users in Thailand will continue to grow as long as the Internet technology still exists. Most of the Internet users in Thailand are young people. About 68% of Internet users in Thailand are people between the age of 15 – 30, and male users tend to use the Internet more than female. The main reason of using the Internet is sending/receiving E-mail messages, downloading files and web surfing.

3.4   Benefit of the Internet

The Internet is becoming the principal platform of electronic commerce and other things because it provides so many benefits. The writer can think of at least 5 benefits that the Internet can give:

(a)   Connectivity – the value of the Internet lies in its ability of easily and inexpensively connecting so many people from many places all over the world. The Internet's global connectivity and ease of use can provide

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companies with access to business or individuals. Companies can link directly to suppliers, business partners, or individual customers at the same low cost, even if they are halfway around the world. Internet gives the opportunities for the businesses to find new sources for their products and services because of information flow.

(b)   Reduce communication cost – Internet technology can reduce communication costs by allowing companies to create virtual private networks as low cost alternative to private WANs. It also reduces the cost of fax, phone and mail by using E-mail.

(c)   Lower transaction cost – Businesses have found that conducting transactions electronically can be done at a fraction of the cost of paper-based processes.

(d)   Reduce agency costs – the cost of managing employees and coordinating their work by providing low cost network and inexpensive communication and collaboration tools that can be used on a global scale.

(e)   Interactivity, Flexibility, and Customization – Web pages have capabilities for interacting with viewers that cannot be found in traditional print media. Companies can use E-mail, chat rooms, and electronic discussion groups to create ongoing dialogues with their customers, using the information they have gathered to tailor communication precisely to fit the needs of each individual.

IV.   BUDDHISM

4.1   Buddhism and its history

Buddhism is a complex system of beliefs developed around the teachings of the Buddha, whose name was Siddhartha Gautama.   In fundamental Buddhism, the emphasis is on seeing truth, on knowing it, and on understanding it.   The emphasis is definitely not on blind faith.   The Buddha was not a god and there is no concept of a creator. The teaching of Buddhism is really on "come and see".   Buddhism is rational and requires personal effort.   Each individual is responsible for his or her own liberation from pain and suffering.   Buddhism advocates no dogmas, no creeds, no rites, no ceremonies or sacrifices. Buddhism is not a system of faith and worship, original Buddhism was less like a religion than like a set of intellectual and psychological practices.   Buddhists seek to make Buddha's teachings available to whoever is interested.   People are free to make as much or as little as they want to. Buddhists do not try to convince other people to adopt their religion.

Siddhartha Gautama was born some 2.500 years ago as a prince in a kingdom around the border area between India and Nepal.   At the age of 29, desiring to know the path that leads to the ending of all pain and suffering, he renounced everything from the world, becoming a homeless ascetic, vowing to find the way to true ultimate reality.   At the age of 35, by way of total focus of his entire being on reaching his goal, he accomplished his purpose and attained the realization of perfect wisdom.   It is the teaching of the Buddha that is the foundation of Buddhism.   While born in what is now called India, Buddhism spread to China, Korea, Japan Tibet and South East Asia where it combined with the native traditions of each place.   Thailand, Burma and Sri Lanka claim to be the most direct offsprings of Buddha's vision.

4.2 Main schools of Buddhism today

After the Buddha's death, his followers split into a number of factions, each with its own interpretations of the master's teachings. Within 200 years two major traditions emerged. The two major schools, Theravada and Mahayana, are to be understood as different expressions of the same source. This could, in some very remote ways, be compared to Catholicism and Protestantism. You will not find any animosity, not as in other religions, between the two main schools. The basic difference between the two streams is in how they see life and the teachings of Buddha. A third form of Buddhism, Vajrayana or the diamond vehicle, is also found in Tibet.

Theravada, also known as the smaller vehicle, focus on the emancipation of the individual through his own efforts. On the other hand, Mahaynists, stress salvation through a life of good work. The older tradition, Theravada, is also known as the Way of the Elders. It is the most orthodox school of Buddhism. It is still the main tradition in countries as Burma (Myanmar today), Kampuchea (Cambodia today), Laos, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The Mahayana school, the larger vehicle, is found in China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Tibet and Vietnam. It is more of an umbrella that encompasses a larger variety of schools: the Tantra school found in Nepal and in Tibet, the Pure Land sect found in China, Korea and Japan to the Ch'an and Zen Buddhism, more of a meditation school, found in both China and Japan. The Mahayana approach as a larger number of adepts because they decide to interpret the teachings of Buddha in a more accessible and liberal manner than the Theravadists.

4.3 History of Buddhism in Thailand

It is widely believed that Buddhism came with Indian traders and settlers who for seven hundred years, frequented the shores of South East Asia. The early settlers brought both Hinduism and Buddhism, as evidenced by numerous images of Vishnu,

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Shiva and Buddha found in early sites in Thailand. Animism antedated both Hinduism and Buddhism in Thailand and has survived till today, mainly in the form of spirit shrines in doors, yards and business premises (houses of spirits). By the 6th century AD Buddhism was well established in south and central areas of what is now Thailand. The Mons of southern Burma adopted Theravada Buddhism at an early date and thereafter influenced the religious history of Thailand by invading the central valley of the Chao Phaya river. They left numerous stupas and a distinctive style of Buddhist image. Later as the Thai moved south from Yunan (Southern China) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they came in contact with this form of Buddhism. When they set up the Thai Kingdom of Sukhothai, about 1238 AD it was with Theravada Buddhism as the state religion. Never having to suffer the influence of colonial powers, Thailand was never subjected to the assaults of missionaries of all kinds or imposed Western influence.

4.4   Problems with Buddhism in Thailand

Buddhism in Thailand today is not the same as it was in the past. The arrival of technology like the Internet and the way people follow western culture's lifestyle are some of the reasons why the gap between Thai people and Buddhism is getting bigger especially in the younger generation. According to the survey, students see Buddhism as one of the most boring subjects. This attitude comes from an outdated curriculum and inappropriate environment. The problem here is Buddhist curriculum in schools has not been updated since 1990, and the way schools teach Buddhism to students is not effective enough. Even though there have been many attempts to strengthen Buddhist studies by having monks teach them, students have still not been convinced to learn more about the Buddhism.

The school environment is the barrier obstructing the student's ability to realize the importance of what Buddha taught. School administrators seem to concentrate on

how to develop and improve their school's standing rather than the development of their teachers and students. These problems have to be addressed to get the younger generation to realize that such knowledge is a key in helping to develop themselves. Instead of teaching Buddhism using rote method, the curriculum should focus on the major aspects, working out teaching methods that best suit the differing age groups. A core concept of Buddha's teaching is the meaning of Dhamma, so this must be strictly addressed since it is the heart of the matter. If students can understand the meaning, it will help open the door to other aspects of Buddhism. In this day and age, a majority of students do not understand the meaning of Dhamma.

It is going to be a big challenge to encourage the younger generation in Thailand to become interested in Buddhism. Nowadays the younger generation are more interested in entertainment and technology but not Buddhism. The writer once heard his mother complained that young people no longer go to the temple. In the past, temple used to be the center of the community. Teenagers always went there to meet especially friends. But now they meet in shopping malls instead of temples. They see the temple as a place for older people. Parents must encourage their children to go to the temple and learn more about Buddhism. Schools and temples must also help to improve the situation, ensuring comfort and peace so students can enjoy learning. These days many schools aim to build modern buildings without any space for practicing Buddha's philosophies, while temples have become more private places, just being an area for holding Buddhist ceremonies. Without change, the younger generation is going to grow up preferring shopping malls rather than the peace of learning what Buddha has to offer.

The other major problem concerning Buddhism in Thailand has to do with the Buddhist monks. Thai people are now beginning to loose faith in Buddhist monks

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because of their inappropriate behavior. Buddhist monks are supposed to be the ones with high standard moral but inappropriate behaviors and illegal activities that they have done have made Buddhism in Thailand look bad. Not all Buddhist monks in Thailand are bad. There are good monks in Thailand but the problem comes from the bad monks who interpret Buddhism for their own benefit.

These problems must be solved as soon as possible before the situation gets out of control. The government must understand that this is a serious issue and it will take time to solve the problem. The government has to find the way to bring back Buddhism to Thailand. The writer believes that one of the ways to do this is to promote Thailand to be a Buddhist country by organizing many activities related to Buddhism. Buddhism's holidays are the days that activities must be held in order to make people realize the significant of Buddhism. The other way to make the younger generation become more interested in Buddhism is to make students learn about Buddhism in every level from kindergarten to University. However, the way teachers teach the subject must be effective and suitable to the students, otherwise it will not work.

4.5   Role of the Internet with Buddhism

As the writer mentioned earlier that the Internet is the fastest growing technology right now and it makes sense because the number of Internet users has been increasing everywhere in the world. The number of Buddhism web sites is increasing as well. These Buddhism web sites come from various countries like Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, India, Tibet, Great Britain, United States, and other countries. It is a good indication that Buddhism is getting more and more popular worldwide. One of the reasons this is happening is because of the Internet technology. Without the Internet, it

is really difficult to reach people all over the world. In Thailand, the rapid increase of Thai language Buddhism web sites has not only helped independent Buddhist studies, but it has also been a place for people to meet and form community. The writer has seen quite of few Thai language Buddhism web sites on the Internet during his research. He is confident that these sites will be visited because they all look good and contain a lot of useful information. However, the writer feels that useful information from these web sites will never decrease the importance of monks as role models for Buddhists. The writer believes that anyone can get information from computer but not inspiration. Although it is important to have Buddhism web sites on the Internet to spread the teaching of Buddhism, but relying too much on the technology is not a good choice. Monks have to see themselves as preachers or disseminators otherwise their role could be replaced by technology.
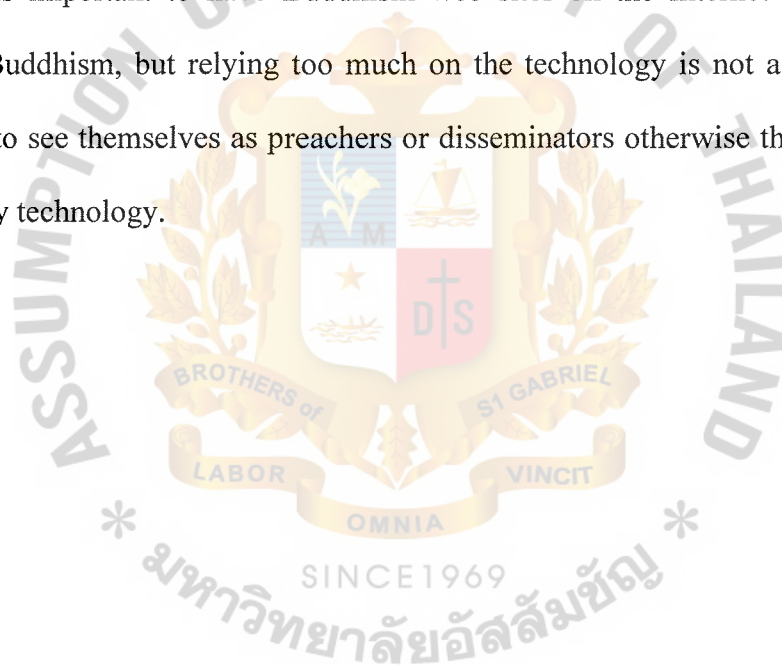
V. MARKETING PLAN

5.1 Market Target

Table 5.1. Target Groups.

	Geographic	Demographic	Psychosocial & Behavioral
Target Group #1	Thailand	Age 20-50, male & female, medium – high income, educated, single & married	Moderate – high rate of Internet usage, open – minded, interested in Buddhism
Target Group #2	Asia, Europe, America, Latin America, Africa	age 20-50, male & female, low – high income, educated, single & married	Moderate – high rate of Internet usage, open – minded, interested in Buddhism

From the table above, Target group #1 are those who live in Thailand. In this group, people are aged between 20-50 years old and can be both men and women, single or married. Income level could be moderate to high. This group must be educated and open – minded. The most important thing is they must be interested in Buddhism otherwise it is worthless to join Thai – Buddhism Online Group. This group must also have experience using the Internet especially browsing the web and using email.

For target group #2, they are foreigners who live outside of Thailand. The description of this group is similar to target group #1. The only difference is the income level. For target group #2, income level could be low to high because public access to the Internet is quite good especially in America and Europe. Low - income people in First World countries are educated and their computer literacy is quite good. In Thailand, low - income people cannot afford to buy computers and their computer knowledge is very poor.

5.2 Online marketing strategies

Conducting Online marketing is very important and there are 4 strategies that Thai – Buddhism Online will use:

(a) In order to make the site well known to public, Thai – Buddhism Online will submit site to popular search engine such as, yahoo, MSN, google, infoseek, alta vista, web crawler, excite, and other popular search engines in Thailand like sanook.com.

(b) In order to get more people to come to the site, exchanging links with other web sites which have similar content is a must.

(c) If allowed to do, place appropriate banners inside Buddhism web sites especially the ones created by Thai to promote the web site.

(d) Do direct E-mailing by inviting people who visit the web site to sign up for email newsletter.

5.3 Offline marketing strategies

Offline marketing cannot be overlooked because they are as important as conducting online marketing. The following 4 strategies will be used:

(a) Participate in all exhibitions or events related to Buddhism to promote the web site.

(b) Create leaflets and distribute in the follow areas: shopping malls, temples, bus stops, skytrain stations, and other places where target customers congregate and are possibly seeking information.

(c) Advertise in appropriate magazines and newspapers.

(d) If the above strategies fail, try other creative approaches to see if they work.

5.4 SWOT Analysis

Strength

The writer believes that Thai – Buddhism Online web site has several strengths that need to be discussed. One of the strengths has to do with the overall design of the web site. The writer feels that the web site is very well designed and very organized. This makes it easy for the reader to read through the web site. The second strength has to do with the use of font and color. The writer believes that he is using the right color and font style for his web site. It is important to use the right color and font style because inappropriate color and font style can give the readers a hard time, and when the reader is having a hard time reading through the web site, they will likely stop reading the web site.

Another strength that the writer wants to talk about is the information he presents in his web site. All the information in Thai – Buddhism Online web site is easy to understand. The writer knows that some of the topics in Buddhism are very complex and difficult for ordinary people to understand. This is the reason why the writer must select appropriate topics for ordinary people.

Weakness

There are some weaknesses in Thai – Buddhism Online web site. Although the web site looks nice and very well organized, there is still room for improvements. One of the weaknesses the writer sees is that there are no links to other web sites. It will be a good idea to have links to other Buddhism web sites so that people can surf other Buddhism web sites to make comparison among many Buddhism web sites. Another weakness for the web site is there will be a limited group of people reading this web site because this web site only talks about philosophy and basic teaching of Buddhism. The other weakness is the web site does not offer immediate interaction for discussion.

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Even though the web site has question area section for people to ask questions about Buddhism, but this may not be good enough. It would be better if people can do online discussion. But in order to do online discussion, there must be enough customers to participate in the discussion.

Opportunity

The writer can see good opportunities for his Thai – Buddhism Online web site to become successful. Although the web site is new to the market, it does not mean that it cannot grow. According to the research, the numbers of web sites on Buddhism have been increasing in the past few years. The increase in Buddhism web sites has not only helped independent Buddhist studies, but it also brings people to meet and form a community. This clearly shows that Buddhism is gaining more popularity. For Thai – Buddhism Online web site, the writer believe it has potential to grow if using appropriate marketing strategies. However, good marketing strategies alone may not be enough, other factors must be included also, such as the help from government to encourage everyone to understand the significant of Buddhism, and how it can solve problems both individually and socially.

Threat

As the writer has mentioned earlier that Thai – Buddhism Online is created to help people gain basic understanding of Buddhism. As a result of this, there is no competitor for Thai – Buddhism Online web site. Therefore, the threat does not come from competitor because there is no competitor to compete with. However, the threats come from computer hackers and viruses. Both hackers and viruses can do a lot of harmful actions to organizations and home – users. Every year organizations and home – users are the victim of hackers and viruses. The threat from viruses is getting more and more serious everyday. There are many kind of viruses nowadays and the danger from these viruses are real.

Computer hackers are another threat that we all must be really careful because they have the ability to steal privacy information and do other harmful things. The writer is very concerned about the threat from viruses and hacker so he must be sure that his Thai – Buddhism Online web site is secured and protected from all the threats. Therefore, the web site must be using all the necessary security tools such as firewall, anti – virus system, and other important tools to fight against all the threats. The issue of security is one of the most important things when dealing with the Internet so we cannot ignore hackers and viruses.

VI. WEB SITE DEVELOPMENT
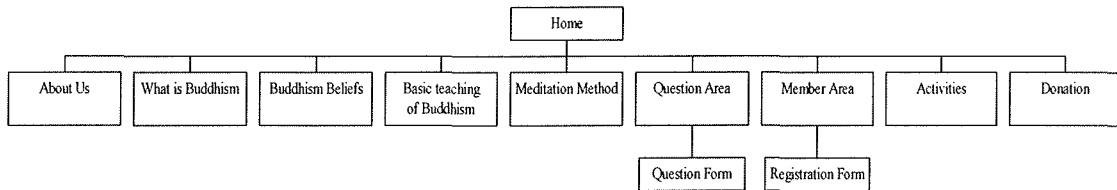
6.1 Web site structure

Figure 6.1. Web site structure of Thai – Buddhism Online (all sections).

The flowchart above of Thai – Buddhism Online demonstrates that there are 10 pages on the web site: home, about us, what is Buddhism, Buddhism beliefs, basic teaching of Buddhism, meditation method, question area, member area, activities, and donation. However, there are 2 pages that have form for visitors to fill in. Details of each page will be provided in this section.

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6.2 Home Page

The home page is the one that visitor will see first. This is the main page of the web site telling visitors the intention of this web site. On the left side of the page, there are 8 topics that visitor can choose to read. The web site also invites visitors to join Thai – Buddhism group by clicking on the members area.

Figure 6.2. Home Page of Thai – Buddhism Online web site.

6.3　About us

This page explains why Thai – Buddhism was created along with goal of Thai – Buddhism Online. This page also contains address, email, fax number, and phone number for visitors to contact.

Figure 6.3.　About us page.

6.4 What is Buddhism

This page explains what Buddhism is all about along with history and founder of Buddhism.

WHAT IS BUDDHISM

Buddhism is a collection of teachings of an Enlightened One,the term Buddha meaning Enlightened or Awakened and referring to the one who has discovered the Dhamma and has established what is called Buddhism. This system of teaching and practice has one distinguished characteristic in that it is not based on,and therefore has transcended,the realm of emotion. The founder of Buddhism is Buddha Shakyamuni.He was born as a royal prince around 624 BC in India.In his early years he lived as a prince in his royal palace but when he was 29 years old,he retired to the forest where he followed a spiritual life of meditation. After 6 years he attained enlightenment under Bodhi tree. The Buddha had exercised the faculty of Wisdom to its utmost degree,thereby developing his Insight to the highest state of perfection over known to man. The Dhamma is the result of his discovery through his own exertion and was proclaimed out of compassion for all sentient beings.

The fact that the Dhamma is his discovery,and not his creation,leads to another fact that it is the monopoly of none,being open and universal for all who take pains to do what he had done in order to become what he had been. After his Enlightment the Buddha had spent 45 years wandering through the length and breath of India preaching to people to all castes and creed,with only 4 hours for repose and the remaining 20 for an indefatiguable selfless service. This is why his teaching have become so divers and voluminous that according to some sources they were said to consist of 84000 topics.
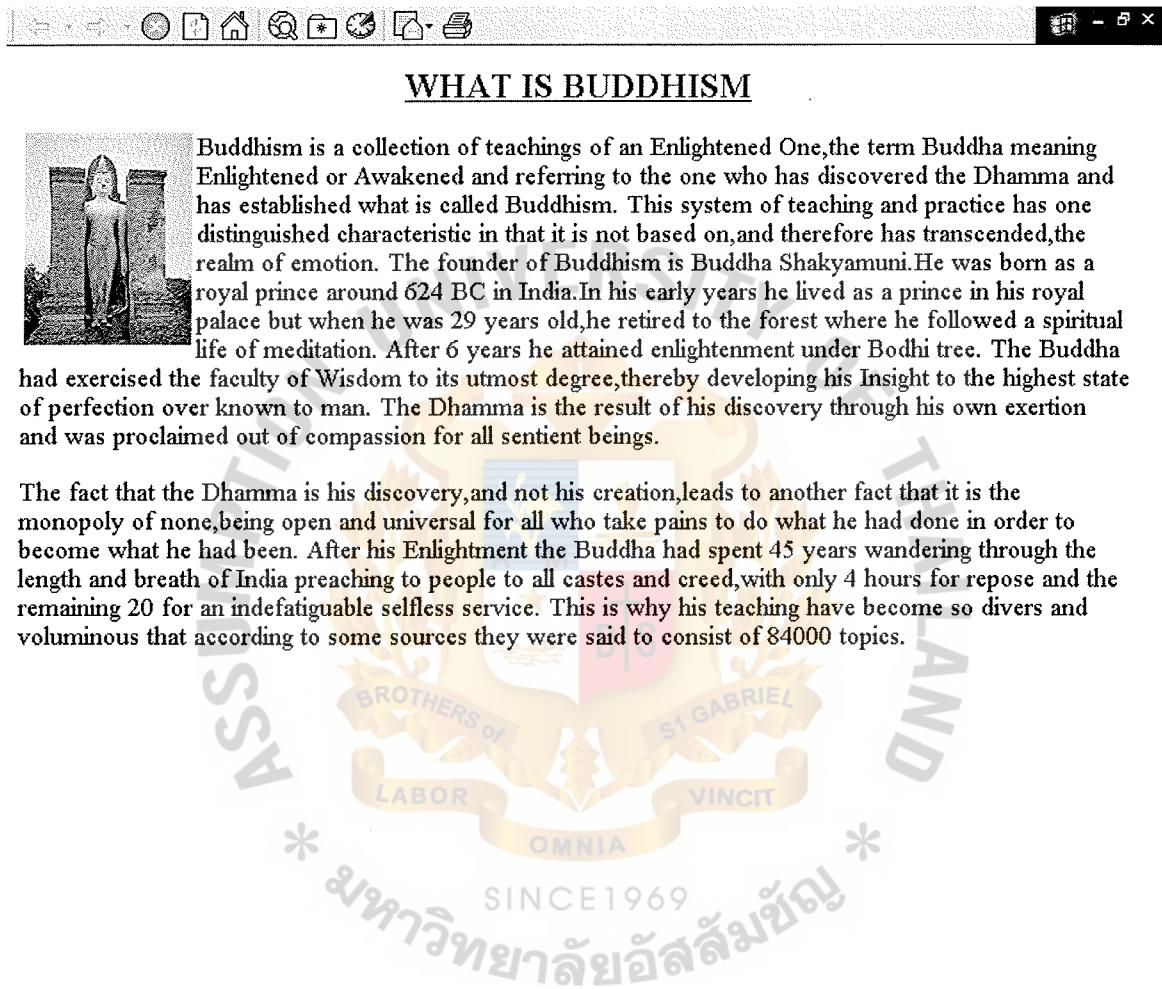
Figure 6.4.   What is Buddhism page.

6.5 Buddhism Beliefs

This section briefly explains basic beliefs of Buddhism such as the law of karma, birth, and rebirth process. It explains in an easy way for ordinary people to understand.

Figure 6.5. Buddhism Beliefs page.

6.6 Basic teaching of Buddhism

This is a very important section in the web site because it contains many valuable teachings of Buddhism, such as the 4 noble truths, principles of success, how to spend money, and other interesting topics.
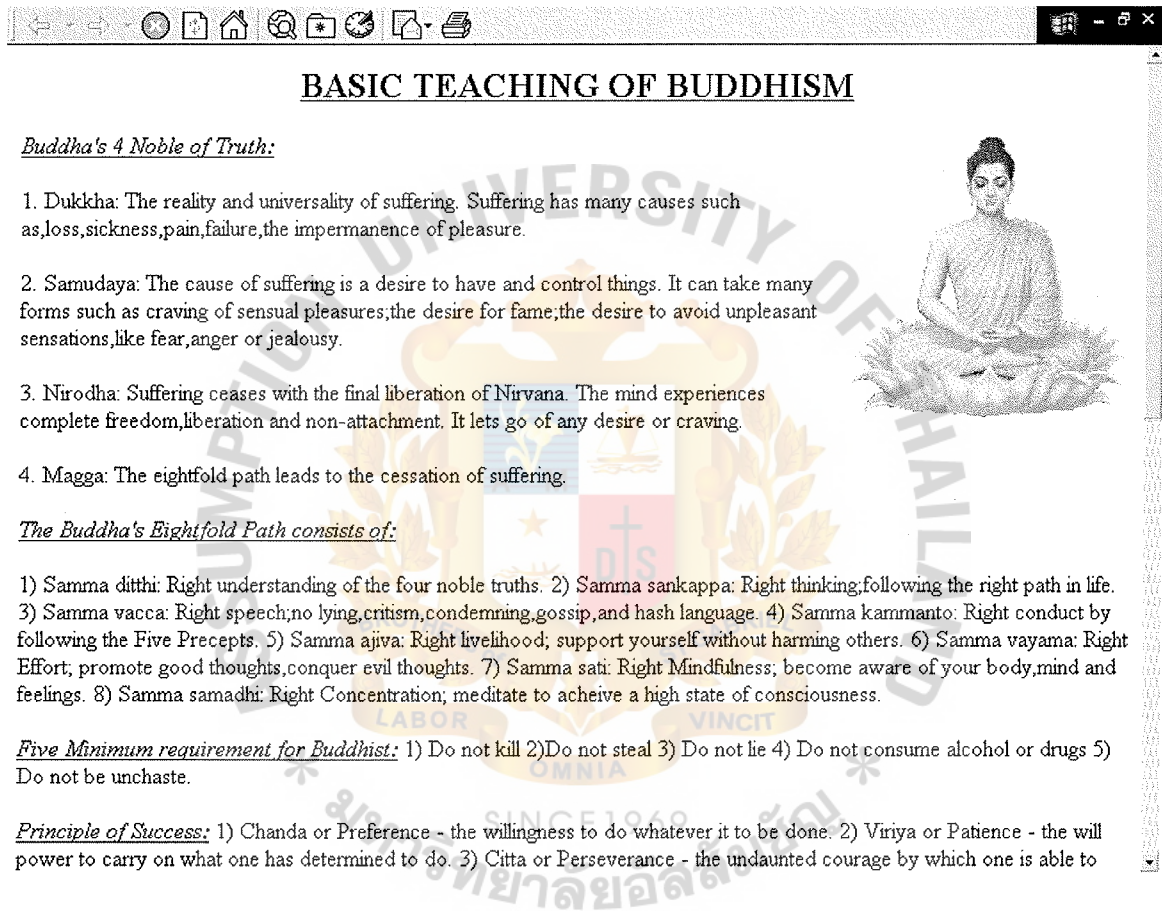

Figure 6.6. Basic teaching of Buddhism page.

6.7 Meditation Method

This is another interesting section of the web site. This page teaches people how to meditate properly.

MEDITATION METHOD

In Buddhism,practicing meditation is very important. People meditate to calm their mind. In our busy life today,our mind are not calm. When we have a calm mind,we will feel peaceful and our performance in every task will improve. In this section,you will learn how to meditate properly. To mediatate in the right way,you need to follow the instruction below:

Sit in a stable position on the floor or on a chair. Your back should be straight. The hands should be held loosely on the lap with the right hand resting on left hand. Close your eyes and focus the mind inwards. Be aware of the abdomen-the rising and falling only which accompany breathing. Focus attention on a point about 2 centimeters above the navel on the surface of the skin. Mentally observe this point as you breath naturally and freely. When inhaling,as the point on the abdomen moves out and up,acknowledge,"rising". when exhaling that same point will seem to move back toward the spine and down,acknowledge "falling". Do not try to control the movements but be aware of them as they occur naturally.

While practing meditation,if a sound occurs,acknowledge it. Once the sound is no longer disturbing,gently return to the exercise's objective-focusing on the rising and falling movement of the abdomen. Similarly,if there is a smell,acknowledge it. Thinking is dealt with in the same way. When you become aware that you are thinking,at that point,acknowledge it. When physical sensations or emotional feeling distract you from the exercise,simply acknowledge them and allow them to pass. The length of meditation exercise is up to you. Timing does not have to be exact. However, you should try to meditate everyday for at least 5 minutes.
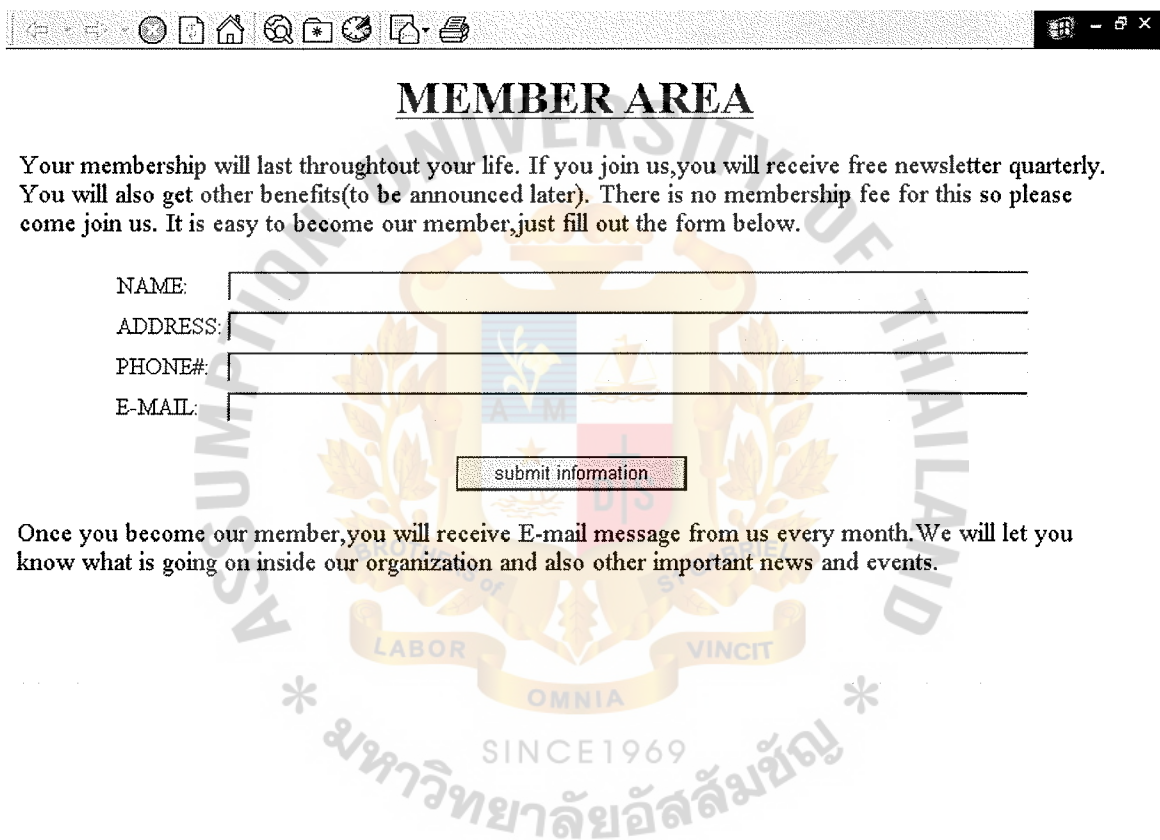
Figure 6.7.   Meditation method page.

6.8 Question Area

This section is for anyone who wants to ask questions concerning Buddhism. A form is provided to write question. For those who wants to ask question, they must be sure to include their name and email, otherwise the question cannot be answered.

Figure 6.8. Question area page.

6.9 Member Area

This is a place where visitors can join Thai – Buddhism Group. For those who want to become our member, they must provide information in the form. There is no membership fee and member will get benefits such as, they can participate in activities, receive newsletter, and other benefits.

Figure 6.9. Member area page.

6.10 Activities

This page lists all the activities of Thai – Buddhism Group that happen during the year. Members will be informed of the details of each activity through their email.

ACTIVITIES

Welcome to Activities section! Thai-Buddhism Online Group have group activities for members to paticipate every year on the following day:

New Year's Day - January

Makha Bucha Day - February

Songkran Festival Day - April

Wisakha Bucha Day - May

Asarnha Bucha Day - July

Buddhist Lent Day - October

Loy Kratong Day - November

We will email you the detail of each activity and only members are allowed to participate in our activities. So if you are not a member yet and want to have fun with our activities,please register with us in member area section.

Note: You are welcome to propose any activity that you would like to do. It does not have to deal with Buddhism directly but it must be appropriate and useful to members.Hope you all will have fun with all activites.

Figure 6.10.   Activities page.

6.11 Donation

This is where people can make donation. Both member and non – member can make donation at anytime. Making donation is optional not a requirement, and the amount of donation is up to customers.

DONATION

This is a place where you can donate money to us.The amount of money you want to give us is up to you.We really appreciate your contribution to us and we will be using your money in many positive ways.

If you would like to make donation to us,you can do so in 2 easy ways.The first way is write us a check to Thai - Buddhism Group.The second way to pay is also easy.All you have to do is transfer your money to our bank account.If you have question about the payment mothod please call us at 02-252-6352 or you can send us email at info@thai-buddhism.org.We will be happy to give you information on how to make donation to us.

Note: Due to security issue on the Internet,we do not have online payment system available to you.We prefer to use offline payment system and we hope you do not mind this.We apologize for those who prefer to make payment online.However, if the Internet is more secure in the future, we will consider using online payment.
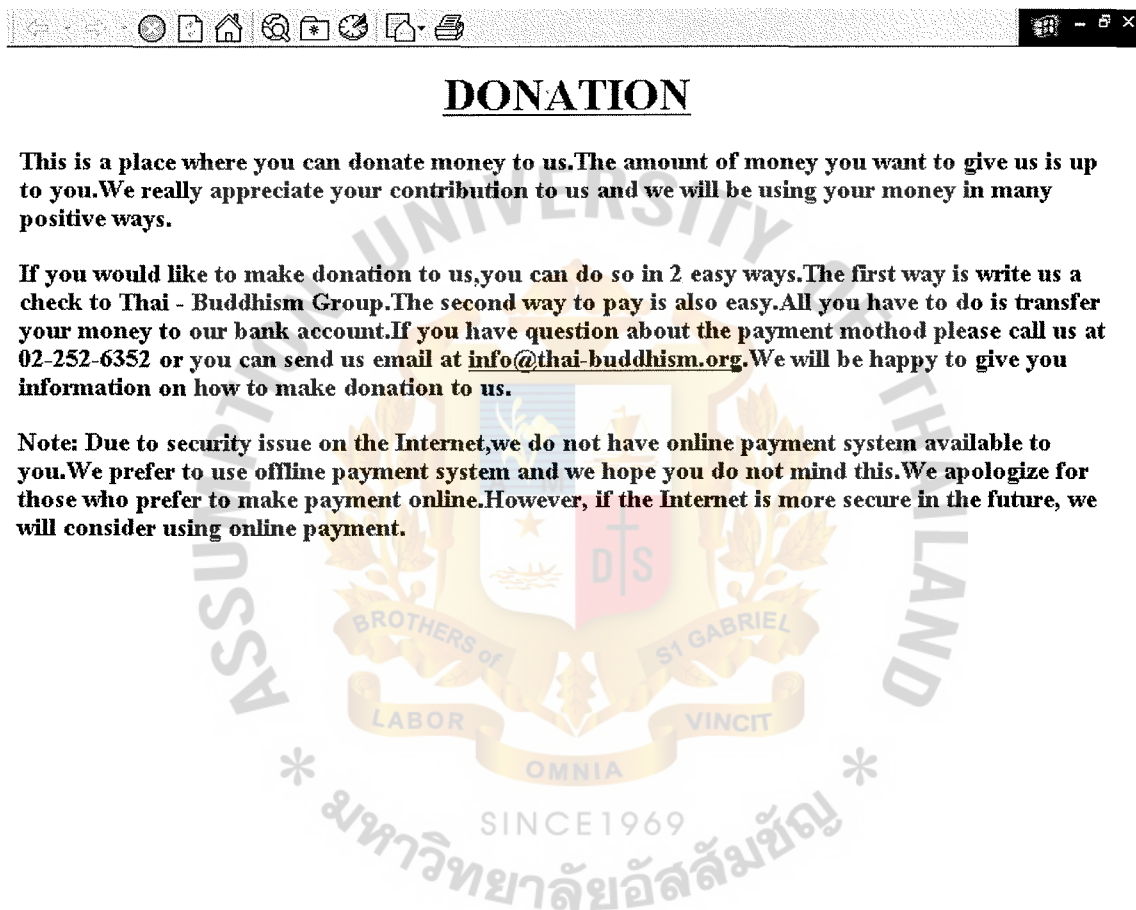
Figure 6.11.   Donation page.

VII. FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

7.1 Expenses

The following expenses contain both operation and marketing expense. Since Thai – Buddhism Online web site is a prototype, our first year total expense could be only estimate as shown below:

(1)   Hardware – 30,000 baht/year

(2)   Software – 10,000 baht/year

(3)   Domain name register – 800 baht/year

(4)   Web hosting fee – 2,400 baht/year

(5)   Cost of home page maintenance – 20,000 baht/year

(6)   Advertising & Promotion – 5,000 baht/year

(7)   Miscellaneous – 5,000 baht/year

Total cost = 73,200 baht/year

7.2 Revenues

Thai – Buddhism Online is not an E-Commerce web site, therefore, there is no buying and selling involved with the web site. However, the revenue that Thai – Buddhism Online receive comes from donation from customers. Although making donation is not required, but if customers have faith in Buddhism, they are welcomed to donate money to us. The writer is confident that those customers with strong interest in Buddhism will show their faith by donating money to us.

7.3 Forecast revenues & expenses during the first 3 years

Table 7.3. Total Investment and Total Income Forecasted for the First 3 Year.

Year	Total investment	Total income
1st year	73200	75000
2nd year	76000	76000
3rd year	77000	78000

The table above shows the projection of both total investment and total income during the first 3 years. Thai - Buddhism Online receives income from those who make donations to our web site. The amount of money from donation is up to customers, and the writer believes the amount of donation will increase because we expect the increase of customers after the first year. The reason that the writer believes customers will increase is because population all over the world increases every year. Also, the writer believes that both online and offline marketing strategies that the writer is using will bring enough customers and donation to his web site. Although Buddhism is not the most recognized religion in the world lately it has been gaining popularity from foreigners. The writer does not expect the total investment to go too high during the first 3 years because he estimates that web hosting fee, home page maintenance, and domain fee is unlikely to increase due to high competition among service provider. However, advertising and miscellaneous fees may increase a little depending on the situation.

7.4 Break even Analysis

Thai – Buddhism Online estimate the break even point will occur during the second year of operation.
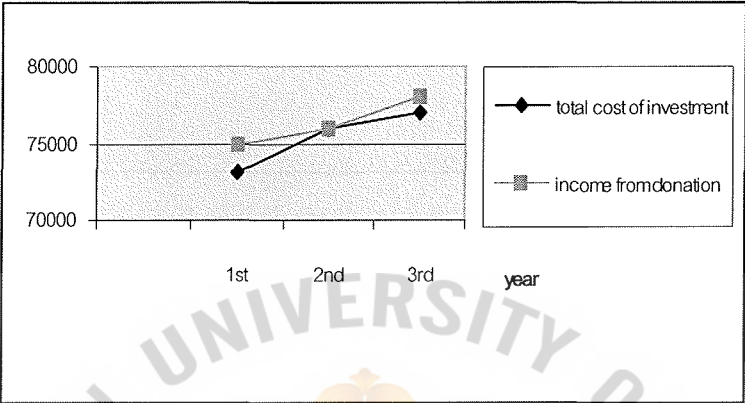

Figure 7.4. Break even graph.

7.5 Benefits of Thai – Buddhism Online

The writer feels that it is worthwhile to launch this web site because he believes that the web site can give benefits to people all over the world. Although it seems expensive to spend nearly 100,000 for non – E-commerce web site but if it has potential to help people then the writer should not feel discourage to do good thing. Benefits that people will receive from this web site is as follow:

(a) People can learn more about Buddhism.

(b) It helps Thai temples and other Buddhist groups in Thailand to spread the teaching of Buddhism. Helping Thai people learn about Buddhism is really important especially for the younger generation, who are the future of the country.

(c) By joining Thai – Buddhism group, everyone will be learning many useful things related to Buddhism, which help them understand life better and they can apply what they learn to help those who need help, and also help improve the society.

(d) Foreigners could come to Thailand to learn Buddhism in detail if they are really interested. When they go back to their country, they can spread the teaching to people in their country. This is good because what they learn not only helps them personally but also other people in their country.

(e) Other benefits could come later as the web site gain more customers and popularity.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusions

The writer would like to thank the Internet technology for giving Thai – Buddhism Online an opportunity to spread valuable teaching of Buddhism to all over the world. It is not possible to do this without the Internet. The writer feels that it is necessary to go online because the Internet is now part of our lives, and also provide so many benefits. The writer takes advantage of the benefits the Internet offer by creating Thai – Buddhism Online web site to spread the teaching of Buddhism. The web site offers not only the teaching of Buddhism but also other benefits such as meditation method, question & answer section, and group activities. The writer hopes that his web site will help both Thai people and foreigners understand and appreciate Buddhism's teaching and the significant of it. It would be nice to see people apply some of the things they learn from Thai – Buddhism Online to their life. We want people to get all the benefits they can get from Thai – Buddhism Online. The result of practicing Buddhism's teaching could also benefit society if it can help solve social problems.

In order for Thai – Buddhism Online to be successful, information in the web site must be easy to read, easy to understand, easy to find, and must be updated regularly. Marketing plan such as online and offline marketing strategies must be used intelligently. Also, we must target the right people to come see our web site. These are the keys to success that Thai – Buddhism Online has to do. The writer is confident that his web site is good enough to bring some success. The writer also feels that his customers will enjoy the benefits that Thai – Buddhism Online offer.

8.2 Recommendations

In order to improve the web site, there are 2 plans that Thai – Buddhism Online wants to achieve in the future. One of the plans is to have a chat room. The writer wants to have a chat room so that it can be a forum for discussion. However, there must be enough people to participate in discussion. It takes time to acquire a large enough customer base. Currently, Thai – Buddhism Online does not have enough customers to participate in chat room because the web site is still new to the market. But the writer is confident that his web site will have enough people to participate in discussion forum in the future because Buddhism is getting more and more popular worldwide.

The second plan for future is to offer books on various topics on Buddhism available for customers to buy. The writer feels that it is important to add a bookstore to the web site to supplement what the web site already have. In order to sell books online, a database is needed and must be created to keep track of everything. The writer believes that it is a good idea to have bookstore for people to check out so that people can read and learn more about Buddhism. These are the 2 plans that Thai – Buddhism Online wants to achieve and hopefully they will bring success to the web site.

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