Gourmet Online Directory

by

Ms. Patcharee Thunnipat

A Final Report of the Six-Credit Course
IC 6998 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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Project Title   Gourmet Online Directory

Name   Ms. Patcharee Thunnipat

Project Advisor   Rear Admiral Prasart Sribhadung

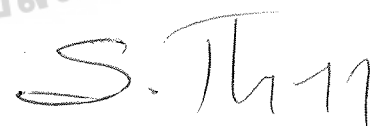Academic Year   November 2002

The Graduate School of Assumption University has approved this final report of the six-credit course, IC 6998 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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(Rear Admiral Prasart Sribhadung)
Advisor

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Member

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(Assoc.Prof. Somchai Thayarnyong)
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November 2002

ABSTRACT

This project studies the development and implementation of an electronic commerce site, gustocorner.com, an online directory website for gourmet and cooking lovers.

Gustocorner.com is formed as a content site that focuses on providing restaurant information, food recipes, printable discount coupons and restaurant news to food lovers community. This website do not sell any products online because most Internet users in Thailand are not familiar with buying online. They mainly access the Internet only for searching the information. Therefore, the website' s revenue will come from selling banners not selling products.

The report analyzes the current situation of food industry and competition in Thailand for online and offline restaurant information. The website' s design, strategies and financial plan are also discussed to demonstrate how it can survive and fight with the competitors.

This project addresses and analyzes factors that can influence the website development. The results of this study would pave the way for the reader who wants to be online. The writer hopes that this report can serve as a useful reference. If you have any queries or any suggestion please send to pthunnipat@hotmail.com.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I. INTRODUCTION

The growth and diversification of the food service industry is part of the Industrial Revolution, including the introduction of new technologies, foods, and consumers. Demographic and social changes have also contributed to the diversification of the food service industry by creating or identifying new consumer groups with their own desires or needs. By tailoring their menu, prices and décor accordingly, food service operations can cater to consumers defined by age, type of household, income, education and geography.

During this century, there has also been a rapid increase in the number and types of institutions providing food services. These include hospitals, schools, universities, hotels and resorts, factories and office complexes. Through travel or exposure to the many books and magazines about food, consumers are becoming better educated and more sophisticated; educated consumers provide a market for new food and cuisine.

Although some consumers may frequently visit a particular restaurant because of its chef or owner is a celebrity or some restaurants are riding high on a fashion, most consumers choose a restaurant whether it be a fast-food burger place or an elegant French restaurant because it provides quality food at a cost they are willing to pay for.

Food and dining industry are now a needed business for the Internet as most audiences, especially expatriates, travelers and vacationers, always ask for restaurant recommendations to help them make dining out plans. That is why we have decided to develop gustocorner.com which is a site that focuses on providing relevant content as an online directory of restaurants ranging from well-known food shops on the sidewalk to the five stars kind. By surfing our website, the users will spend much less effort to seek for places that suit their requirements.

Gustocorner.com will be the center for food and cooking lovers. The site offers recipes, menu ideas, meal preparation tips, news and instant discount coupons that are ready to be used as soon as users print them out. With full content and a powerful search engine, users will be attracted to the site as their primary source of all meal planning needs.

1.1 Objectives

The followings are the objectives of Gustocorner.com:

(1) To design and build an online source of food information for gourmets and cooking lovers.

(2) To design and incorporate database with web design.

(3) To design and build an online source of food information for food and cooking lovers.

1.2 Keys to Success

As a start-up company, we must focus and work hard to create acceptance for ourselves. The keys to our success are:

(1) Provide accurate web content and maintain a close watch on our customers' needs. People are more likely to bookmark our site if it contains good quality content that's of use to them.

(2) Keep web content such as recipes, news, events or special promotions up-to-date. Website should be updated on a regular basis, like daily or weekly.

(3) Create appealing and easy-to-find informative website.

(4) Effectively develop promotional activities to create the awareness of site existence to target customers.

(5) Own and operate an opt-in email newsletter. It offers the quickest time to market and fastest results of any marketing vehicle.

1.3 Mission

Gustocorner.com' s mission is to improve public exposure of the restaurant businesses by providing accurate and up-to-date content within the website where customers who want to dine out or even cook by themselves can search for all meal planning. By covering all their specific needs it is hoped that users will be attracted to the site as their primary source, accessing it for all their needs instead of getting these information through competitive sites, cuisine magazines or by word of mouth.

1.4 Scope of the Project

The scope of this project includes:

(1) Online directory of Thai restaurants ranging from well-known food shop on the sidewalk to the 5 stars kind.

(2) Cooking information such as recipes, menu ideas, meal preparation tips.

(3) E-newsletters to subscribers.

(4) Instant discount coupons.

1.5 Deliverables

The deliverables of this project are as following:

(1) Project Introduction.

(2) Current Situation Analysis.

(3) Web Design Development.

(4) Website Strategies.

(5) SWOT Analysis.

(6) Financial Analysis.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Overview of Electronic Commerce

Electronic commerce is where the business transactions take place via telecommunications networks, especially using the Internet. It describes the buying and selling of products, services and information via computer networks. The infrastructure for electronic commerce is a networked-computing environment in business, home, and government.

Electronic Commerce is going to be a part of everyday business life. As we enter the new millennium, we experience one of the most important changes in our lives, the move to an Internet-based society. One of the most significant changes is in the manner we conduct business, especially in how we manage the market places and commerce.

Every week there is new improvement being announced in the technology, equipment is getting cheaper and the reach of the Internet is widening through TV as well as PC access. The present relatively low levels of purchasing on-line cannot be used as an excuse for inaction. They are a temporary state of affairs while the technology improves and the investment poured in during the mid-to late 1990s begin to bear fruit. The middle of this decade will be a key period in the development of Electronic Commerce. Business will be more capable state to exploit the new medium and find new sources of advantage and business growth with target customers.

Electronic Commerce revolution goes on, changing our everyday lives and the shape of business in the future. We are fortunate enough to be alive and witnessing a revolution as profound as any that mankind has experienced to date.

Electronic Commerce will become a significant global economic element within 10 to 20 years. Networked computing is the infrastructure for Electronic Commerce,

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and it is rapidly emerging as the standard computing environment for business, home, and government application.

2.2 The Benefits of Electronic Commerce

Few innovations in human history encompass as many potential benefits as electronic commerce does. The global nature of the technology, low cost, opportunity to reach hundreds of millions of people, interactive nature, variety of possibilities, and resourcefulness and rapid growth of the supporting infrastructures result in many potential benefits to organizations, individuals, and society. These benefits are just starting to materialize, but they will increase significantly as electronic commerce expands. It is not surprising that some maintain that the electronic commerce revolution is just "as profound as the change that came with the industrial revolution."

Benefits to Organizations

(1)   Electronic commerce expands the marketplace to national and international markets.

(2)   Electronic commerce decreases the cost of creating, processing, distributing, storing, and retrieving paper-base information.

(3)   Electronic commerce allows reduced inventories and overhead by facilitation "pull"-type supply chain management. In the pull-type system the process starts from customer orders and uses just-in-time manufacturing.

(4)   The pull-type processing enables expensive customization of products and services, which provides competitive advantage to its implementers.

(5)   Electronic commerce lowers telecommunications cost.

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Benefits to Customers

The benefits of electronic commerce to customers are as follows:

(1)   Electronic commerce enables customers to shop or do other transaction 24 hours a day, all year round, from almost any location.

(2)   Electronic commerce provides customers with more choices; they can select from many vendors and from more products.

(3)   Electronic commerce frequently provides customers with less expensive products and services by allowing them to shop in many places and conduct quick comparisons.

(4)   Electronic commerce allows quick delivery of products and services in some cases, especially with digitized products.

(5)   Customers can receive relevant and detailed information in seconds, rather than days or weeks.

(6)   Electronic commerce makes it possible to participate in virtual auctions.

(7)   Electronic commerce allows customers to interact with other customers in electronic communities and exchange ideas as well as compare experiences.

(8)   Electronic commerce facilitates competition, which results in substantial discounts.

Benefits to Society

The benefits of electronic commerce to society are as follows:

(1)   Electronic commerce enables more individuals to work at home and to do less traveling for shopping, resulting in less traffic on the roads and lower air pollution.

(2)   Electronic commerce allows some merchandise to be sold at the lower

prices, so less affluent people can buy more and increase their standard of living.

(3) Electronic commerce enables people in rural areas to enjoy products and services which otherwise are not available to them.

(4) Electronic commerce facilitates delivery of public services at a reduced cost, increase effectiveness, and/or improve quality.

2.3 The Limitations of Electronic Commerce

The limitations of electronic commerce can be grouped into technical and non-technical categories.

Technical Limitations

The technical limitations of electronic commerce are as follows:

(1) There is a lack of system security, reliability, standards, and some communication protocols.

(2) There is insufficient telecommunication bandwidth.

(3) The software development tools are still evolving and changing rapidly.

(4) It is difficult to integrate the Internet and electronic commerce software with some existing applications and database.

(5) Vendors may need special web servers and other infrastructures, in addition to the network servers.

(6) Possible problems of interoperability, meaning that some electronic commerce does not fit with some hardware, or is incompatible with some operating systems or other components.

Non-Technical Limitations

The major non-technical limitations are as follows:

(1)   The cost of developing electronic commerce in-house can be very high, and mistakes due to lack of experience may result in delays. There are many opportunities for outsourcing, but where and how to do it is not a simple issue.

(2)   Though technically improving, the customers perceive these issues as very important and therefore the electronic commerce industry has a very long and difficult task of convincing customers.

(3)   Customers do not trust an unknown faceless seller, paperless transactions, and electronic money.

(4)   Many legal issues are as yet unresolved, and government regulations and standards are not refined enough for many circumstances.

(5)   Electronic commerce is still evolving and changing rapidly. Many people are looking for a stable area before they enter into it.

(6)   Electronic commerce could result in a breakdown of human relationship.

(7)   There are not enough support services. For example, copyright clearance centers for electronic commerce transactions do not exist, and high-quality evaluators, or qualified tax experts are rare.

III. CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

For the existing food service industry, people can gather the information about restaurants from food magazines, or word of mouth. This is inconvenient because they have to spend some money to buy magazines or even have to visit the restaurant to taste by themselves. Therefore, we develop gustocorner.com in order to gather these contents as an online directory where they can access anytime through the Internet to get needed information.

3.1 SPELT Analysis

Social and Cultural

The Thais enjoy dining out whenever they have the chance. They always spend their food budget away from their home. There are many reasons as to why they always choose to eat out. For example,

(1) People who live in the big cities such as Bangkok and face daily traffic jams and time limitations are unable to return home at normal meal times. So they have more demand for quick and convenient foods.

(2) There are many restaurants established to serve consumers who live in Thailand. They provide more varieties of food such as original Thai food, Japanese food, Korean food, and Indian food. Therefore, people are stimulated to try new foods or drinks in different restaurants.

(3) The desire to have someone else prepare, cook, serve meal and wash up most certainly influences some peoples' s decision to eat out.

(4) People may choose to impress their guests by taking them out to a fashionable or expensive restaurant. This is for both personal and business reasons.

(5) People love to celebrate their special events such as anniversaries, job-promotions and birthdays by eating out.

Political

Thailand's electronic commerce business has moved at a very slow pace due mainly to lack of political, commitment and shortcomings in bureaucratic cooperation electronic commerce and internet initiative by previous government. We are now waiting for the outcome of information technology policies set out by the government to improve electronic commerce infrastructure in Thailand

Economic

Thailand's economic growth is affected by government plans, if the situation is stable, the trends will be positive for setting up an online business especially about food and restaurants that are the basic need for everyone.

Legal

Although the Internet has been in Thailand for a long time, electronic commerce business is currently still a toddler. The implementation of essential electronic commerce laws has been slow.

Technology

Electronic commerce infrastructure in Thailand is not as developed as the other countries. Most Thailand users use the Internet at the speed of 56kbps. The speeds of 64kbps, 128kbps or higher are becoming available to home users and to small and medium enterprises. Internet service fees have gradually been reduced as part of promotion campaigns. This will encourage people to spend more time online.

IV. WEB DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Gustocorner.com will be initially developed with few technical resources. Thai hosting provider, NetDesignHost will host the site and provide the technical back end.

4.1 Website Outline

Home Page: is the point from which our site branches into more specific levels of information, with visible links to the other sections of the site.

(1)　Search system. This service will help the visitors search for restaurant information by name, by cuisine type or by area in Bangkok

(a)　The visitor can put the restaurant name into the box, then click the "Go" button, the information of a needed restaurant will appear.

(b)　Browse by cuisine: the visitor can select one of the cuisine types that are available in the list box. Once they click the "Go" button, they will see a list of all available restaurants under such cuisine in alphabetical order.

(c)　Browse by area: the visitor can select a specific area in Bangkok that is available in the list box. Once they click the "Go" button, they will see a list of all available restaurants located in that area in alphabetical order.

They can also click on the restaurant name for more information such as brief atmosphere, menus hours, location, contact information, suggested menu and accepted credit cards.

(2)　Recipe Section – offers recipes for cooking lovers.

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(a) Recipes of the day: provides new recipes for every day of the year.

(b) Find Recipes: provide food category links that the users can click into their preferred menus such as soups, desserts, seafood, salads and vegetarians.

(3) Cooking Basics Section – offers food tips and tricks, and food terms that are designed mainly to increase their cooking skill.

(4) Events Section – provide updated news and events.

(5) About us – this section provide background of the company so the visitors can get to know us more. This will help them to get acquainted with us.

(6) Contact us – the visitors can give their feedback and comments to us by clicking this link.

4.2 Front End - what you see onscreen.

Most internet users currently access the Web from their computer at modem speed 56.6k or less, so the user interface design should be as simple as possible, though still looking professional. We use orange color but different intensity.(ex. bright orange or dull orange) to design web pages because this color represents joy and stimulates feelings of socialness. Graphics will be kept to a minimum in order to keep download times short. The user interface of gustocorner.com needs to:

(1) Display a lot of content information in as a simple manner as possible.

(2) Main menus are always on the top and the left side of every page, users will not get lost while surfing in our site.

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(3) A consistent front-end user interface on all applications built for the content. Users should always know how to browse efficiency and find relevant needed information.

(4) Fast loading non-graphic intensive pages. Most web surfers do not have time to wait for fancy graphics or Shockwave of Flash technology.

(5) To create impression so that people will use and return to the site.

4.3 Back End - behind the scenes

Back End Features:

(1) Web hosting with 99.99% uptime. We will host the site at Net Design Host because it is Thai Hosting that provide hosting service to many websites.

(2) Statistics to determine: page views, unique users, banner impressions, sponsorship impressions and clickthroughs. Will initially be provided by Nedstat Pro Service.

   (a) Restaurants database that is easily browsed and searched.

(3) Ability to provides FTP (File Transfer Protocol) access from anywhere.

(4) Back-end application to support e-newsletters and a robust email alert system.

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4.4 Resource Requirements

Hardware Requirements

We initially use only one computer to develop gustocorner.com. The table below shows all the list of hardware using to create this prototype website.

Table 4.1 Hardware Specification.

Hardware	Details
Processor Type	Intel Pentium III
Processor Speed (MHz)	800
RAM (MB)	128
Hard Drive (GB)	20
CD-ROM Speed	36X
Monitor Size (Inch)	14"
Modem Speed (Kbps)	56
Diskette Drive	3.5" 1.44 MB
Scanner	HP Scan Jet 5300C
Printer	HP Laser 2100NT

Software Requirements

Software section is very important to develop website. The table below is the list of software requirement for creating gustocorner.com.

Table 4.2.   Software Specification.

Software	Description
Personal Web Server	Making personal computer to work as web server
Adobe Golive	Use for designing layout of web pages
Adobe Photoshop	Use for editing and decorating images
Homesite	Use for writing html and asp code
MS Access	Use for managing database

Future Development

Future development will be assessed after the website has been launched and tested. It is hoped that the site will be popular enough to include an area for online selling.

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GUSTO CORNER .com ™

:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events :: Kitchenware

welcome to gustocorner

Your site for restaurants information, great recipes, meal ideas and cooking advice.

restaurant name

by cuisine ::
please select ▾

by area ::
please select ▾

go

► FREE COUPONS!

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Restaurants for today

Basil ::
A highly cosmopolitan, trendy Thai restaurant serving the best "home style cuisine" and beverages using natural and fresh products of Thailand. Contemporary decor and design. more>>
For reservation: (66) 02 6531083

Recipes of the day

Mushroom soup ::
a satisfying homemade soup that blends the earthy flavor of wild mushrooms with a rich and creamy stock. more>>

Side Banner
100x100 pixels
B.500/week

Side Banner
100x100 pixels
B.500/week

Side Banner
100x100 pixels
B.500/week

Side Banner
100x100 pixels
B.500/week

Side Banner
100x100 pixels
B.500/week

Stretch Banner
450x60 pixels
B.650/week

Events

Asian Night Buffet:: Every Friday at Pathumwan Princess Hotel
Bakery & Coffee Fair' 02:: Oct.4-Nov17,2002 at Verasu
Bread & Wine Exhibition:: The Siam City Hotel
A Night to Remember:: The new promotion at No.43, Cape Hous...more>>

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⊙ subscribe now!

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Figure 4.1.   Homepage of Gustocorner.com.

GUSTO CORNER .com™

:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events ::

Restaurants guide

looking for unique places? ...for your loved one?...for your friends?...for farewell or welcome?

restaurant name ::

[   ]

by cuisine ::

[please select ▼]

by area ::

[please select ▼]

(go)

[▶ FREE COUPONS!]

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Basil :: The award-winning Thai restaurant, a highly cosmopolitan, trendy Thai restaurant serving the best "home style cuisine" and beverages using natural and fresh products of Thailand. Contemporary decor and design.

For reservation: (66) 02 6531083

Open Daily:	Lunch 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.
	Dinner 6:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.
Except:	Public holidays
Location:	Sheraton Grande Sukhumvit
	250 Sukhumvit Road, Bangkok 10110 Thailand :: map

Sunday Jazzy Brunch Buffet 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

What's on ▶▶

Food with Beans@basil

Come and enjoy the tasty exotic Thai cuisine with beans. "Bar-yeer" deep fried yellow bean on tamarind sauce with chili sauce and fresh vegetable "Som tam tuaw"

String bean salad with tomato carrot and tamarind sauce "Salad tuaw ruammit" Mixed bean salad thai style "Krathong thong tuaw tord"

Available during September 12-30, 2002 for lunch and dinner

Home :: Sitemap :: About Us :: Advertising :: Contact Us

Figure 4.2.   Web Image Showing Search Result of Basil Restaurant.

GUSTO CORNER .com ™

:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events ::

Restaurants guide

looking for unique places? ...for your loved one?...for your friends?...for farewell or welcome?

restaurant name ::

[   ]

by cuisine ::

[please select ▾]

by area ::

[please select ▾]

(go)

▶ FREE COUPONS!

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Cafe swiss :: Start the day with fresh bircher-muesli served at the breakfast buffet. Cheese fondue, raclette, and veal emincee with rosti; Bourguignome fondues include Australian beef and salmon, New Zealand lamb, pork and shrimp along with a unique Swiss chocolate fondue

For reservation: (66) 02 233 5345

Open Daily: Lunch 12:30 p.m.-2:30 p.m.

Dinner 6:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m.

Except: Public holidays

Location: The Swiss Lodge

250 Convent Road, Bangkok 10500 Thailand :: map

Sunday Jazzy Brunch Buffet 11:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

What's on ▶

Food with Beans@basil

Come and enjoy the tasty exotic Thai cuisine with beans. "Bar-yeer" deep fried yellow bean on tamarind sauce with chili sauce and fresh vegetable "Som tam tuaw"

String bean salad with tomato carrot and tamarind sauce "Salad tuaw ruammit" Mixed bean salad thai style "Krathong thong tuaw tord"

Available during September 12-30, 2002 for lunch and dinner

Home :: Sitemap :: About Us :: Advertising :: Contact Us

Figure 4.3.   Web Image Showing Search Result of Café Swiss Restaurant.

GUSTO CORNER .com™

:: Restaurants :: Recipes :: Cooking Basic :: Events ::   10/16/02 :: 23:30:56

cuisine at home

special recipes, meal ideas and cooking advice...simply do it yourself!

restaurant name ::

[_____]

by cuisine ::

[please select ▾]

by area ::

[please select ▾]

[go]

[▶ FREE COUPONS!]

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Mushroom Soup ::

Ingredients ::

Saute:

4 T. unsalted butter

6 cups mushrooms, coarsely chopped

1 cup leeks, chopped (white part only)

1 cup kale, chopped

Add:

2 cups wild rice, cooked

1 t. fresh garlic, minced

Thicken with:

4 T. all-purpose flour

Blend in:

2 cups low sodium chicken broth

2 cups half-and-half

Add for Flavor:

2 T. fresh chives, chopped

2 T. fresh parsley, chopped

Salt and pepper to taste

Directions ::

Saute the mushroom, leeks and kale in 4 Tbsp. butter (5 minutes). Add garlic and wild rice. Saute until you start to smell the garlic cooking.

Add the flour, thoroughly stirring it into the mushroom mixture. This combination of butter and flour is called a roux (roo).

The mixture will become thick and lumpy. Don't be alarmed. Just keep stirring and cooking to remove the starchy taste from the flour. This will take about 3 minutes.

Slowly add the chicken stock and half-and-half. Use a whip to blend the liquids and ensure a smooth, creamy texture. As it heats, the roux thickens the soup.

When the soup is smooth and hot, add the chives and parsley. Season with salt and pepper to taste. For an even richer soup, stir in 1 Tbsp. of butter.

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Figure 4.4.   Web Image Showing Soup Recipes.

GUSTO CORNER .com ™

:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events ::

Cooking Basics

Your home for great recipes, meal ideas and cooking advice.

restaurant name ::

[   ]

by cuisine ::

[please select ▼]

by area ::

[please select ▼]

(go)

► FREE COUPONS!

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Making Simple Syrup
Simple syrup, also known as sugar syrup, can be made into a variety of thicknesses for a variety of different uses. Cooled thin syrup (3 parts water to 1 part sugar) is useful for brushing onto cakes to add a bit of extra sweetness and moisture...more>>
Making your eggs safe
Fear of salmonella, the food-borne bacteria responsible for gastrointestinal tract infection, shouldn't stop you from enjoying your incredibly edible eggs..more>>
Valentine' s Day Cakes
Chocolate bonbons and candy hearts are good for the less seasoned palate, but when "divine" are the words you're hoping to hear uttered from your lover's lips, it's the cake pan that needs to be put to work...more>>

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Figure 4.5.   Web Image Showing Cooking Basic Section.

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GUSTO CORNER .com ™

:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events ::

events & promotions

what's going on out there...

restaurant name ::

by cuisine ::

please select ▼

by area ::

please select ▼

go

▶ **FREE COUPONS!**

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

A Night to Remember at No.43::

features two special set menus. Try the two-course(B250) smoked salmon salad and black ink spaghetti with cuttle fish or shrimp salad and stuffed squid with boiled potatoes. The set menu comes with a complimentary glass of wine or a non-alcoholic drink

Vietnamese Impressions::

Vietnamese artist Thanh Van exhibit 13 oils-on-canvas to portray the beauty of Vietnam. Sep28.-Oct20., Silom Galleria Bldg., 919-1 Silom Rd., 02 266 5454

Sweetness of Tragedy::

Artist Denpong Wongsarot is exhibiting 17 oils-on-canvas of sweetness that might be found in the struggle of surviving in our city. Put some sugar on tragedy at Si-Am Art Space (1741-47 Rama IV Rd., www.siam.com).Through Sep 29.

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Figure 4.6.   Web Image Showing Events Section.

email: [＿＿＿＿＿＿]
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● grocery coupons   ● store coupons   ● free samples
● baby coupons   ● free stuff   ● online coupons

GUSTO CORNER.com™

:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events ::

welcome to gustocorner

Your site for restaurants information, great recipes, meal ideas and cooking advice.

restaurant name ::

[＿＿＿＿＿＿]

by cuisine ::

[please select ▾]

by area ::

[please select ▾]

[go]

▶ FREE COUPONS!

Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Contact Us

Gustocorner

479/339 Soi Suthiporn,
Dindaeng, Huaykwang
Bangkok 10400

Feedback

Do you have suggestions or comments?

Let us know!

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Figure 4.7.   Web Image Showing Contact Us Page.

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NEW! **Check out our Coupons Online!**

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☐ PRINT FREE COUPONS

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:: Restaurants :: Recipies :: Cooking Basic :: Events :: Kitchenware

Newsletter

Subscribe to Gustocorner E-Newsletters

restaurant name

by cuisine ::

please select ▾

by area ::

please select ▾

go

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Recipes Collection

:: Appetizer ::

:: Soup ::

:: Salad ::

:: Beverage ::

:: Seafood ::

:: Pasta ::

:: Vegetarian ::

:: Barbeque ::

:: Kids ::

Receive and Reply to your confirmation email!

We've sent a subscription confirmation email to zzzz_apple@yahoo.com , which should be arriving in your email inbox soon.

After you receive the email, you need to reply to the email to confirm your subscriptions. You will not be subscribed until you reply to the confirmation email, so don't forget!

If you do not receive the confirmation email, it might mean that you incorrectly entered your email address. If so, come on back and try subscribing again. If you still are having problems, send us an email at webmaster@gustocorner.com

Home :: Sitemap :: About Us :: Advertising :: Contact Us

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Please review our Legal Notice and Privacy Policy.

Figure 4.8.   Web Image of Response Page.

This response page will be shown after the users input their e-mail address to subscribe our e-newsletter
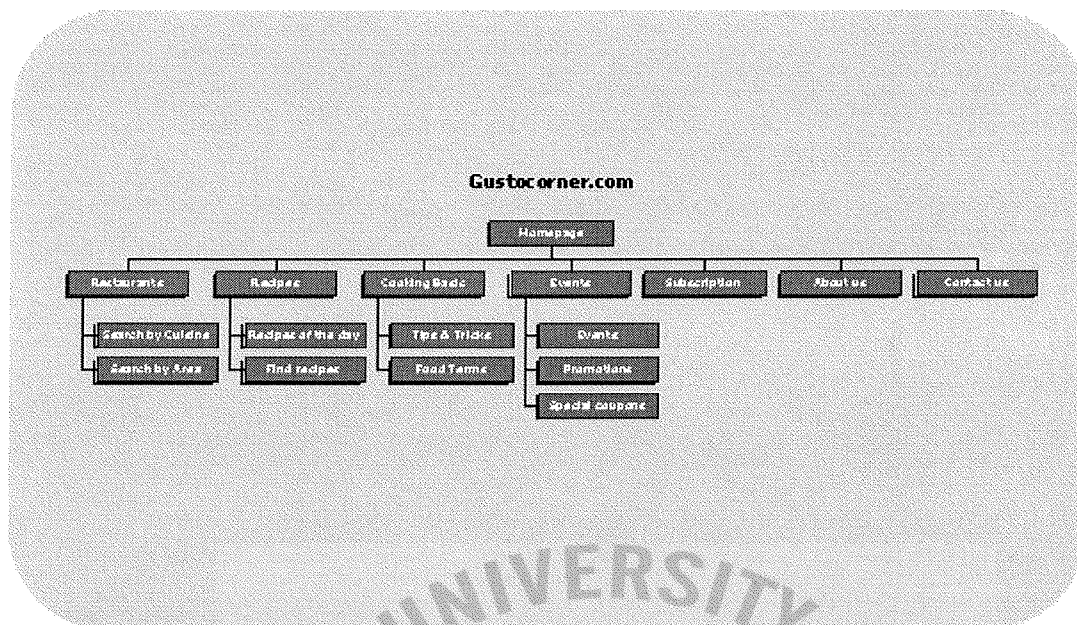
Figure 4.9.   Web Image of Sitemap.

Gustocorner.com is designed to be viewed at 800x600 resolution. Layout is designed to be cool and easy to view. We use orange color in different intensity to design our website because orange is the color of joy and creativity. It also stimulates feelings of socialness.

V. WEBSITE STRATEGIES

Gustocorner.com site will focus on providing restaurants and food information to everybody who wants to make dine out plan or one who loves to cook by themselves.

Gustocorner.com will have a fast loading and extremely friendly user interface to encourage users to browse and click through as many pages on the site as possible. It needs to have well-designed website that at the same time is in keeping with the trends in user interface design. A site that is too flashy, or tries to use too much of the latest Shockwave of Flash technology can be over done, and cause potential clients to look elsewhere for other online food sites. The key to the website strategy will be combining a well designed front end with a back end capable of browsing system and the value of offered information.

5.1 SWOT Analysis

Industry and competitive analysis for Electronic Commerce entails monitoring, evaluating, and disseminating, information from the external and internal environments. Its goal is to identify the critical factors that will determine the success of the project. A popular way to conduct such an analysis is to start with environmental scanning using SWOT analysis that is an acronym used to describe particular strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

The external environment consists of opportunities and threats that are outside the organization and are not typically within the short-run control of top management. These can be related to the corporate strengths and weaknesses in a four-cell matrix that is referred as the SWOT matrix.

Internal Factors External Factors	Strengths (S)	Weaknesses (W)
Opportunities (O)	SO Strategies Generate strategies here that use strengths to take advantage of opportunies	WO Strategies Generate strategies here that take advantage of opportunies by overcoming weaknesses
Threats (T)	ST Strategies Generate strategies here that use strengths to avoid threats	WT Strategies Generate strategies here that minimize weaknesses and avoid threats

Figure 5.1.   SWOT Matrix.

Understanding the strength, weakness, opportunity and threat (SWOT) of Food and Dining Industry environment and competition is key factor for project' s survival and growth. To understand our target audiences' behavior we must first analyze the industry environment. With this in mind, we can proceed to make a SWOT analysis as following:

Strengths

(1)   The name of www.gustocorner.com is easy to remember and represent visitors that our website is one-stop site which provides tremendous information for gourmets and cooking lovers free of cost. This will encourage them to visit our website once they need restaurant information.

(2)   Our storefront is always open for people who look for free information twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

(3)   We provide information in the English language so that the expatriate community can understand the contents too. Besides most of the Thai community using the Internet are well versed with the English Language.

(4)   As we are information provider and advertise on the Internet, we do not need to stock any physical products thus reducing the storage cost.

(5)   Gustocorner.com has precise and updated database. Customers will get the reliable information.

(6)   Gustocorner.com will be specifically designed to support customers needs and demand. They can search for restaurant information by the areas or by food types.

(7)   Gustocorner.com will use cooperative strategy by joining with other parties to gain the competitive advantages. For example, some cuisine magazines which do not have their own websites may exchange our banner space with their new recipes.

(8)   Gustocorner.com targets specific interest groups by providing unique and specialized information to niche market. So, we can perform more efficiently than other search engines.

Weaknesses

We are new web site that provide restaurants information. Customers may not know us at the beginning when compare to other methods i.e. printed media or television.

(1)   Our restaurants database now can cover only Bangkok and some provinces in the metropolitan area.

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(2) Inadequate budget for expensive promotion strategies or marketing gimmick. We cannot afford to hire expert site designers or consultants to map out an online strategy. Gustocorner.com may get lost in the crowd on high-traffic Internet.

Opportunities

(1) If we can create sufficient traffic, sponsorship from restaurants, food manufacturers or even hotels will be attracted to the site thereby creating revenue.

(2) Gustocorner.com can make money by carefully targeting niche buyers for their products, even if their niche consists only of people in domestic area.

(3) Online advertisement on our Website is cheaper than traditional medium and the trend of online advertising revenue worldwide has constantly increased since 1995. This is good opportunity for our web site because our revenue will come from online advertisement.

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Total Online Advertising Revenue 1995 - 2002
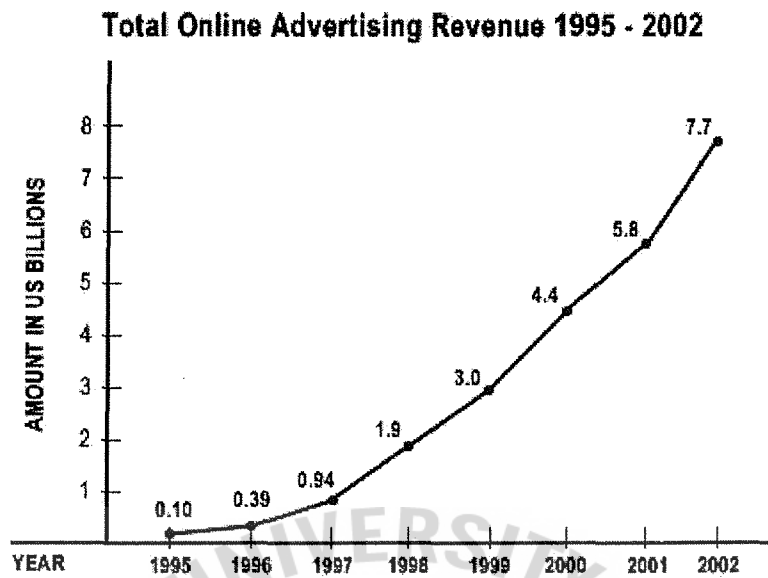
Source: Jupiter Communications

Figure 5.2. Total online advertising revenue 1995-2002.

Threats

(1) Thailand has inadequate legal, regulatory framework, and telecommunication infrastructure.

(2) Our database and customer records can be attacked by hackers who want to destroy websites because they think it is fun or want to show the world that they are smarter than everyone else.

(3) Most Thai people are not online today. Our target might not be online, or only a small part might be.

5.2 Strategy Formulation

Strategy formulation is the development of long-range and strategic plans for the effective management of environmental opportunities and threats, in light of corporate strengths and weaknesses. It includes examining or redefining the mission of website by specifying achievable objectives, developing strategies, and setting implementation guidelines for the project.

Gustocorner.com's strategy is to make food and restaurant information easier to find for web site visitors by using a specialized search engine. We will differentiate ourselves by providing up-to-date strong database in English language for our customers.

To address their needs and capitalize on them, strategies to approach the market should be considered first. We will provide feedback form for the visitors to suggest and show their opinion about our web site.

Market Segmentation

Our target market can be divided into two groups that are Internet users and restaurants, who provide us the sponsorships. Internet users will visit our website to search for cuisine information and also create traffic to our site. The more the site can attract them the more they hit through our site, and the more they are attracted to our site the more revenue we will get from advertising.

To create high-traffic, we must know the characteristics of the Internet surfers that will help us design marketing and advertisement plans. Personal characteristics and differences are unique to individual customers. Consumer demographics such as gender, age, marital status, educational level, occupation and household income provide an indicator of buying. Internet usage profile such as Internet access options and access cost can show their online capabilities.

The following are the demographic factors that our site will take into consideration:

(1) Age - between 25-45 years old.

(2) Gender - both male and female.

(3) Educational level - well educated customers who have Internet background and English knowledge.

5.3 Marketing Strategies

Online marketing will be critical to gustocorner.com. It will be the best way to spread the news about our website and let our target market both Thai and foreigners know about our website.

We will start with a few key online initiatives:

(1) We will develop partnerships with as many restaurants as possible in exchange with their discount coupons.

(2) We will develop partnership with food magazines that do not have websites in order to exchange their content with some banner spaces on our site.

We will develop a unique viral online marketing program to get customers to spread the word to all of their friends. We will motivate customers to participate by letting them know that for each member that registers through them, we will them give a special gift.

5.4 Marketing Mix

Product

Gustocorner.com provides information of restaurants in Bangkok and recipes for food and cooking lovers. Our product is an online content so customers can use our search engine system to search for useful information.

Price

Gustocorner.com will not charge the customers who search for the information but we will charge the restaurants and food manufacturers who place an advertisement with our website.

Place

Gustocorner.com connects cybersurfers with restaurants, food manufactures, and individuals that have same interest about food. We provide web surfers with a portal for gourmet and cooking information where they can virtually search for it 24 hours a day, every day of the year.

Promotion

Promotional strategies are very important to create awareness of gustocorner.com. For the starting period, we will reach targeted groups of people through search engines or Websites that have a customer base similar to our site. We have paid for advertising on some popular food sites such as www.gourmetthai.com, www.healthandcuisine.com and www.mcdaeng.com which are the most popular and can attract more visitors everyday.

Advertising on magazines such as "Elle Decoration", "Gourmet & Cuisine" and "BK Magazine" is necessary in order to create awareness of our website.

5.5 Site Positioning

Gustocorner.com is positioning itself for food and cooking lovers who require an abundance of restaurants or cooking information. We provide these customers with accurate and updated contents in English version, so will act as a starting point for their search for information for making dine out plan, that may save them the time and money. Unlike other online food sites, we will also start an online catalog of complementary products for lovers by the year 2003.

5.6 Web Traffic Plan

Traffic building is critical factor to website success. The best site may be a wasted resource if it is not used. Generating traffic can be expensive and difficult because it is a critical managerial challenge for webmasters.

The first step in a website traffic plan is to make sure that our site is easy to find by new users. This requires careful attention to our domain name strategy. How our website is listed in the main directories and search engines and how our site is publicized in traditional marketing literature. These steps can effectively create online traffic growth to our website. Alliances and paid advertising are important traffic building steps, especially for online commerce sites. Banner ads and buttons on ad-supported websites are the most visible of these approaches because they can well attract new users to our site.

Visit duration is a good measure of user value. Online newspapers and e-magazines (or e-zines) have found that the duration of time a visitor spends reading a story or an online section is a reliable measure of the value the visitor attaches to the material. Visitors who spend a lot of time in a content area usually rate it highly. If the value of the current page is high, visitors keep going, the higher the value of a site, the longer the duration of visits. If the value of a page is below, then they stop and exit our website because they have limited tolerance for inappropriate material before abandoning their visit. So the longer the visit, the higher the page quality must be for the visit to continue.

The selection of domain name is one of the most important strategic for creating traffic. Domain names are the addresses that customers use to find our website or particular web page. They are closely connected to the branding and positioning strategy of a site. Poorly chosen domain names can hinder web efforts, while a well-

crafted domain names can build traffic and reinforce other business activities. Domain names have long-term consequences for many web actions. They shape the entire framework of web activity and set the stage for the more tactical and incremental activities. Once chosen, they can be difficult to change.
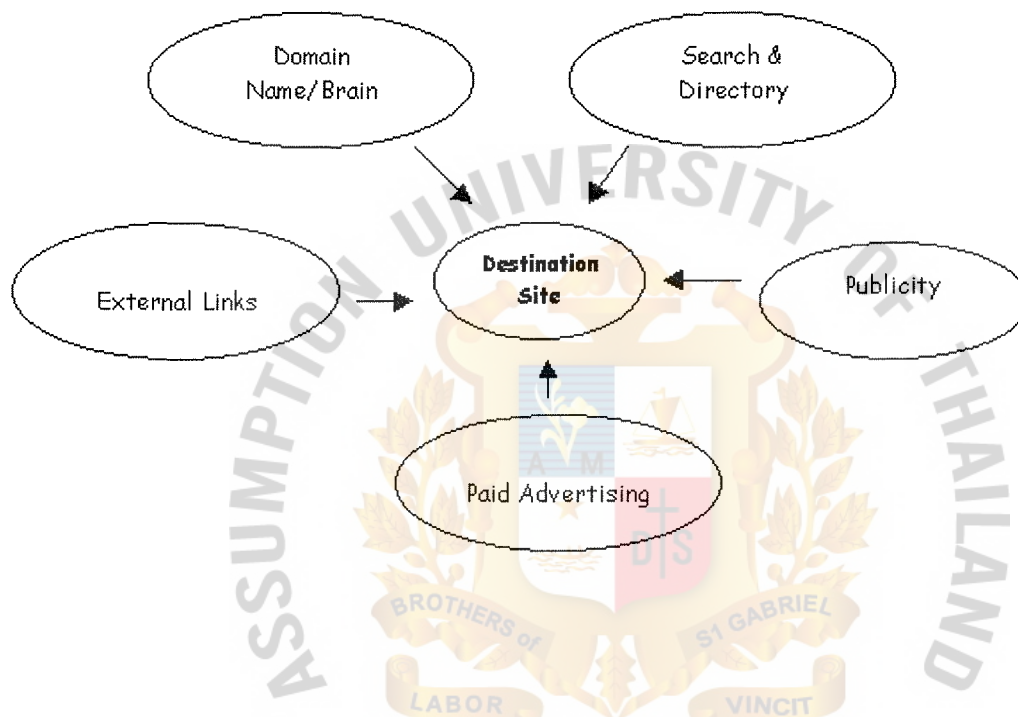
Sources of Traffic

Figure 5.3.   Source of Traffic.

To make our website easy to find online, we choose www.gustocorner.com that is easy to remember and recognize. "Gusto" means zest or enjoyment in doing or having something and "corner" means point or meet. It can represent visitors that our website is the place where they can find information about food and restaurants.

Table 5.1.   Basic Guidelines for Effective Domain Names.

Domain Naming Goals	Benefits
Obtain a Category Domain: Ex: www.cooking.com	If a small or little known firm can secure a category term, it may be able to launch an effective online business.
Avoid Domains Challenging to Encode: Ex: www.siam2u.com	Avoid confusing and hard-to-keep straight domain. Domains should be memorable from both visual and sound cues. Consumers may need to store this in memory from a radio or billboard ad.
Avoid Long and Complicated Domains from Third-Party Hosting Arrangements: Ex: www.viaweb.com/museumcompany/	Third-party hosting should not be an excuse to avoid domain registration. This will cause a problem with user recall.
Avoid Automatic CGI Clutter-Especially for the Homepage: Ex: www.thispage.com/cgi-bin/xj9z	Some systems store the location of the originating page as a keyword in the address. This can confuse users, limit word of mouth, and look strange.
Register Related Items and Common Typos: Ex: www.mcdonalds.com, www.bigmac.com, www.goldenarches.com	The cost of registering domain names is trivial compared to the cost of acquiring traffic. Registering related names, and even common typographical errors, helps build traffic and prevent brand dilution.

The strategic of managing our portal presence involves classifying our site with the proper keywords, descriptors, and categories. This is especially important for directories that group sites into specific classification systems. Working with the directories to make sure they properly locate our site can provide high traffic growth.

To maximize our website' s chance of being listed in response to queries to the Internet search services, gustecorner.com will include words such as food, restaurant, cuisine, cooking, gourmet, nutrition, drinks, eating, dining, menu, recipe, meal, breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack, dessert, or refreshment in keywords portion in META tags in order to give our site a better change of being indexed more effectively.

Publicity, promotion and word of mouth are also powerful approaches to traffic building. Some events can make a site famous overnight and cause it to receive millions of visits a day. Search engines, directories, external website links, and e-mail are important web techniques for building visibility and traffic. Another method of paid traffic building is advertising in traditional media. Some leading sites are finding that television, radio, print, and billboard advertising are productive and attractive ways of encouraging visits.

5.7 Traffic Forecast

For gustocorner.com the most important traffic measurement is page views as related to our revenue from selling banner spaces. We will measure page views on each separate page that we serve (Restaurants search, Recipes, About Us, Contact Us, and Promotion Page) in order to shows advertisers, investors, and sponsors the value of the users and to determine which page can create more traffic to our site.

As we will expand our content and products offerings, we will also want to measure how many users download our discount coupon, and how many users sign up

for our newsletter. This area of the site will take time to develop, but will serve to measure the word-of-mouth and brand identity that we plan to build within the food service industry.

VI.   FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

This section offers a financial overview of Gustocorner.com as it relates to our website and online marketing activities. We will address break-even information, sales forecasts, expense forecasts, and how those link to our marketing strategy. We do not have enough data to make seasonal adjustment in sales revenues at this point and we expect that the growth in sales will mitigate seasonal trends. This is an area that we will watch as we gather additional data, customer feedback, and experience.

6.1   Break-even Analysis

With fixed costs of THB 6,500 per month at the outset we need to bring in THB 9,000 of advertising revenue in order to break-even on our website costs. We plan on reaching this break-even goal by the end of the first year of Gustocorner.com's existence. We expect to be profitable in the second year of business.

6.2   Expense and Contributions

As with the break-even, we are projecting very conservative cost of sales and gross margin. Our cost of sales should be much lower, and gross margin higher, than in this projection. We prefer to project conservatively so that we make sure we have enough cash.
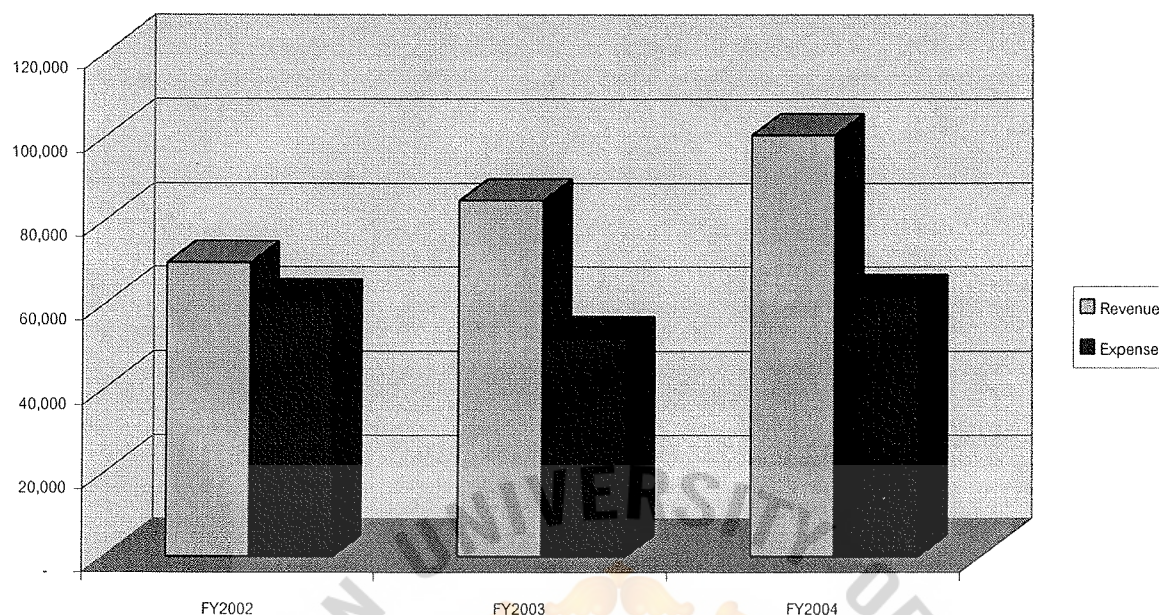
Figure 6.1.   Revenue vs Expense Yearly.

Table 6.1.   Revenue vs. Expense Yearly.

Expense budget

	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004
Revenue	70,000	85,000	100,500
Expense			
Website development	8,000	5,000	10,000
Advertising and promotion	20,000	45,000	45,000
Expensed equipment	30,000	-	5,000
Expensed software	-	-	-
Website maintenance	2,000	2,100	1,600
Miscellaneous	1,000	-	500
Total website expenses	61,000	52,100	62,100
Profit	9,000	32,900	38,400

VII. CONTROL

Tracking and follow-up is critical to making the website work. We will have weekly meetings to review schedules, particularly the milestones, and establish ongoing budgets and additional programs. The key is not to create an inflexible plan, written in stone and ignoring new development, but to keep a live plan for which we can make course corrections as needed.

7.1 Organizational Implications

Gustocorner.com will use the expertise of its founder to create the initial website, front-end templates, and back-end forms. We may hire technical person to responsible technical problems and improve back-end system.

7.2 Risks and Assumptions

The primary risks of the website include:

(1) We do not receive traffic to provide a service or bolster customer loyalty through the site.

(2) Another company gets more funding and goes to market with a food commerce site.

(3) Revenue does not cover costs and results in a cash drain on the business.

Gustocorner.com Assumptions:

(1) There is a cooking lover community that is ready to take on Gustocorner.com services, and get our business started.

(2) The total number of Internet users will increase in Thailand.

(3) The growth of online advertising will be upward in 2003.

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7.3 Contingency Plan

Our biggest uncertainty is the quality of design and database implementation we can do to attract the users. Our initial strategy is to rely on the expertise of the founder to develop the website design and database.

Hiring additional developers will be a critical element to our success. We may have to hire more staff to do web page development for us, this will change the cost structure.

We should be prepared for this contingency with a flexibility in the budget. The most important thing is that we end up with an excellent website. This is more important than any other consideration.

VIII. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Evaluation

Gustocorner.com needs to evaluate our plan to determine the feedback from the strategy. This is considered as an important function to develop on future strategies. As our aim is to guide the visitors to relevant information and our revenue will come from the number of traffic we can create, therefore we decide to use Nedstat service. By looking at their online reports every day, we are able to go on improving our site. By tracking what our visitors do, we are able to see immediately whether or not our site change has been successful. This helps us to serve the visitors even better and build their loyalty to the site.

The benefits Nedstat provides are as following:

    (1) Traffic reports: number of visitors per hour, day, week, month and year.

    (2) User profiles: which countries, which providers do your visitors come from.

    (3) Referrers: what links, search engines and keywords do visitors use to find you.

    (4) Technical reports: browsers, operating systems and screen resolutions.

    (5) Clickpaths: detailed data on how visitors move through our site.

    (6) Invisible measurement: no hit counter on our page.

    (7) Password protected data.

We can use this information to measure the success of a banner campaign and evaluate the efficiency of our strategic plan.

8.2   Conclusions

Gustocorner.com can offer accurate content to them within a few clicks so it is accepted as a favorite online source of food information for gourmets and cooking lovers as we can offer accurate content to them within a few clicks

Printable discount coupon and e-newsletter can attract visitors to revisit our website

Sponsor and restaurants will switch to advertise with us because we offer the low price of banner spaces and better approach to their target market.

From financial analysis in the first year will result our website to achieve 15% of net profit in the year to come

However, electronic commerce is still not working well because of many factors such as electronic law and intent to promote from the government. If the government pays more attention to find the solution, electronic commerce in Thailand will become more effective. If the current limitations are solved we ensure that people will use our service more.

8.2   Recommendations

To make gustocorner.com to be complete website that provides full service to our customers, we have plans to introduce online selling kitchenware and herbal ingredients by the year 2003.

We will start member activities such as cooking classes, parties for the site's members or sweepstakes to users who visit our website. We will also adapt our website to WAP technology in the future to allow customers to surf via their mobile phones.

APPENDIX   A

SAMPLE OF DISCOUNT COUPON

It' s the place to be..

MANTRA
42 Convent Rd.,Silom
Bangrak, BKK
Tel:026321632
Fax:026321900

GUSTOCORNER.COM

Print this page out and show it for 20% discount
(Valid for Food Only)

Figure A.1.   Discount Coupon for Mantra Restaurant.

SEEFAH

99 Fifty-five Tower,
Soi Thonglor, Sukhumwit,
Bangkok
Tel:026550251
Fax:022537806

GUSTOCORNER.COM

Print this page out and show it for 20% discount
(Valid for Food Only)

Figure A.2.   Discount Coupon for Seefah Restaurant.

APPENDIX   B

SAMPLE OF OTHER WEBSITES OFFERING ONLINE RESTAURANT
INFORMATION

Figure B.1.   Homepage of www.bkkmenu.com.

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GourmetThai
www.gourmetthai.com

การเงินธนาคาร และ gourmet & cuisine

Home | Recipes | Restaurant Reviews | Shopping | Cookbook | Wine | Beer | Whiskey
Soft Drinks | Events | Restaurant Guide | About Us | Contact Us | Subscribe

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Name

Street

Please select

Food
- Recipes
- Restaurant Reviews
- Shopping
- Cookbook

Beverage
- Wine
- Beer
- Whiskey
- Soft Drinks

Entertainment
- Theatre & Film
- Events

Restaurant Guide
- Bars & Club
- Chinese
- Italian
- International
- Japanese
- Seafoods
- Thai
- Vietnamese
- French

Promotion
- Privileged Card

สมัครสมาชิกวันนี้
รับสิทธิพิเศษมากมาย

Cuisine

การเงินธนาคาร

eCommerce

ฉบับตุลาคม

Welcome to Gourmetthai.Com

ขอต้อนรับสู่เว็บไซต์สำหรับนักชิมผู้มีรสนิยม ... ที่จะทำให้ท่านค้นหาร้านอาหารที่ชื่น ชอบได้อย่างง่ายดาย หลากรสนิยมตามสไตล์ที่ต้องการ ตลอดจนเรื่องราวต่างๆ มากมายที่เกี่ยว ข้องกับเทคนิคปรุงอาหารและการกินอย่างมีรสนิยม อาทิเช่น สูตรอาหาร น้ำผลไม้ เครื่องดื่ม ค็อกเทล ที่คุณสามารถทำเองได้ นอกจากนี้ยังเสริมภูมิปัญญานักชิมมือหนึ่ง ด้วยเทคนิคการ เลือกชิมไวน์ เบียร์ และวิสกี้ ตลอดจนแหล่งช้อปปิ้ง หนังสือเกี่ยวกับอาหาร แหล่งท่องเที่ยวและ บันเทิง... **พิเศษสุด!** ...ด้วยส่วนลดจากร้านอาหารชั้นนำมากมายที่เรานำมาแจกกันอย่างไม่ อั้น...เชิญสำราญกันได้เต็มที่ครับ...

Recipes

กุ้งผัดพริกหวาน

พริกหวานหาได้ไม่ยาก มีขายตามซุเปอร์มาร์เก็ต ตามตลาดสด พริก หวานชื่อก็บอกอยู่ในตัว เพราะพริกชนิดนี้มีเนื้อมาก รสหวาน นิยม รับประทานสดเป็นผักสลัด ถ้านำมาผัดต้องผัดแบบไฟแรงๆ เพราะ สุกง่าย ...

Restaurant Reviews

สถานีอาหารหัวลำโพง

"สถานีอาหารหัวลำโพง" เอ่ยชื่อห้องอาหารแห่งนี้ขึ้นมาอย่างเพิ่งเดา ว่าทำเลที่ตั้งอยู่ย่านสถานีรถไฟหัวลำโพงไปล่ะ จริงๆ แล้วห้อง อาหารแห่งนี้อยู่ถนนสุขุมวิทต่างหาก ที่นี่มีอาหารพื้นบ้านไทยสี่ภาค ที่เราๆ ท่านๆ ...

Shopping

ช็อกโกแลต

ที่รวมรสชาติหลากหลายบรรจุในกล่อง พร้อมมอบเป็นของขวัญสำหรับคนพิเศษ บรรจุ 16 ชิ้น ราคา 300 บาท จาก Confiserie

Wine

CINNAMON GROVE Rate 75
Chardonnay , 2000 , Murphys
California , U.S.A.
นำเข้าโดย บริษัท นิโคลัส บี.ธี. จำกัด

ไวน์นี้ให้สีเหลืองทองสวย สว่างสดใส กลิ่นแรกที่ได้เป็นกลิ่นน้ำผ ปเปิลเขียวปนมากับสับประรดหวานฉ่ำและผิวมะนาวขูด ตามด้วยกลิ่น โอ๊กจัดเจือหอมอมหวาน ...น่าจะดูดีมีกลิ่นเทียนอบด้วย ...

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GourmetThai
www.gourmetthai.com

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www.thaitheparos.thailand.com

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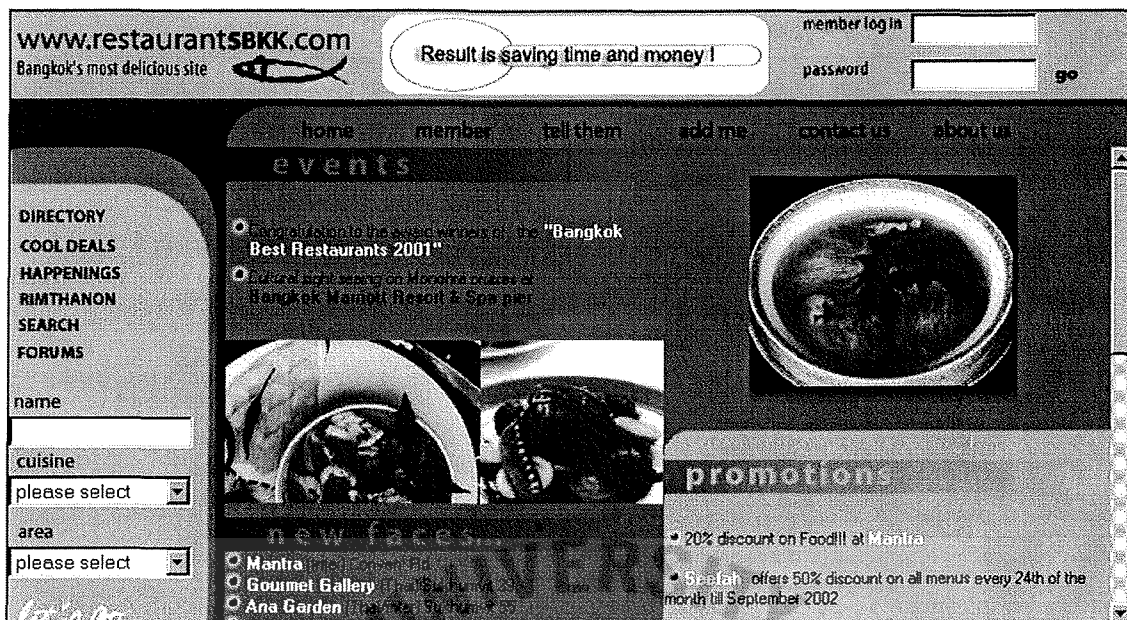
Figure B.2.   Homepage of www.gourmetthai.com.

Figure B.3.   Homepage of http://www.restaurantsbkk.com.

APPENDIX   C

TOP TEN MISTAKES IN WEB DESIGN

TOP TEN MISTAKES IN WEB DESIGN

1. Using Frames

Splitting a page into frames is very confusing for users since frames break the fundamental user model of the web page. If users create a bookmark in their browser they may not get the same view back when they follow the bookmark at a later date since the bookmark doesn't include a representation of the state of the frames on the page.

URLs stop working: the addressing information shown at the top of the browser no longer constitutes a complete specification of the information shown in the window. If an author copies the URL in order to include it as a hypertext anchor in one of his or her own pages then that anchor will not lead readers to the desired view but to the initial state of the frameset. Similarly, if a user decides to send an email message to a friend with the recommendation to check out a page, then copying the URL from the browser will not work if frames are used since the URL points to the frameset and not to the current view (with the information of interest to the friend).

Many browsers cannot print framed pages appropriately. Of course, most browsers don't print *anything* really well, but at least regular pages normally print in full. With frames, it is common to have the print command result in the printing of a single frame. Printing the full page is difficult with scrolling frames.

2. Gratuitous Use of Bleeding-Edge Technology

Don't try to attract users to your site by using of the latest web technology. You may attract a few nerds, but mainstream users will care more about useful content and your ability to offer good customer service. Using the latest and greatest before it is even out of beta is a sure way to discourage users: if their system crashes while visiting

your site, you can bet that many of them will not be back. Unless you are in the business of selling Internet products or services, it is better to wait until some experience has been gained with respect to the appropriate ways of using new techniques. When desktop publishing was young, people put twenty fonts in their documents: let's avoid similar design bloat on the web.

As an example: Use VRML if you actually have information that maps naturally onto a three-dimensional space (e.g., architectural design, shoot-them-up games, surgery planning). Don't use VRML if your data is N-dimensional since it is usually better to produce 2-dimensional overviews that fit with the actual display and input hardware available to the user.

3. Scrolling Text, Marquees, and Constantly Running Animations

Never include page elements that move incessantly. Moving images have an overpowering effect on the human peripheral vision. A web page should not emulate Times Square in New York City in its constant attack on the human senses: give your user some peace and quiet to actually read the text!

4. Complex URLs

Even though machine-level addressing like the URL should never have been exposed in the user interface, it is there and we have found that users actually try to decode the URLs of pages to infer the structure of websites. Users do this because of the horrifying lack of support for navigation and sense of location in current web browsers. Thus, a URL should contain human-readable directory and file names that reflect the nature of the information space.

Also, users sometimes need to type in a URL, so try to minimize the risk of typos by using short names with all lower-case characters and no special characters (many people don't know how to type).

5. Orphan Pages

Make sure that all pages include a clear indication of what website they belong to since users may access pages directly without coming in through your home page. For the same reason, every page should have a link up to your home page as well as some indication of where they fit within the structure of your information space.

6. Long Scrolling Pages

Only 10% of users scroll beyond the information that is visible on the screen when a page comes up. All critical content and navigation options should be on the top part of the page.

More recent studies show that users are more willing to scroll now than they were in the early years of the web. We still recommend minimizing scrolling on navigation pages, but it is no longer an absolute ban.

7. Lack of Navigation Support

Don't assume that users know as much about your site as you do. They always have difficulty finding information, so they need support in the form of a strong sense of structure and place. Start your design with a good understanding of the structure of the information space and communicate this structure explicitly to the user. Provide a site map and let users know where they are and where they can go. Also, you will need a good search feature since even the best navigation support will never be enough.

8. Non-Standard Link Colors

Links to pages that have not been seen by the user are blue; links to previously seen pages are purple or red. Don't mess with these colors since the ability to understand what links have been followed is one of the few navigational aides that is standard in most web browsers. Consistency is key to teaching users what the link colors mean.

9. Outdated Information

Budget to hire a web gardener as part of your team. You need somebody to root out the weeds and replant the flowers as the website changes but most people would rather spend their time creating new content than on maintenance. In practice, maintenance is a cheap way of enhancing the content on your website since many old pages keep their relevance and should be linked into the new pages. Of course, some pages are better off being removed completely from the server after their expiration date.

10. Overly Long Download Times

Traditional human factors guidelines indicate 10 seconds as the maximum response time before users lose interest. People who are looking for things on the web are often in a state of hurried distraction. They have been trained to endure so much suffering that it may be acceptable to increase this limit to 15 seconds for a few pages.

Even websites with high-end users need to consider download times. Bandwidth is getting worse, not better, as the Internet adds users faster than the infrastructure can keep up.

Some guidelines for fast initial loading are:

(1) The top of the page should be meaningful even when no images have been downloaded (i.e., more text, less images).

(2) Use ALT attributes for images so that the user can understand what they are about before they are rendered.

(3) The browser must draw the top of the page fast: it can only do so if it has all the information it will need for layout, so include width and height attributes on all images and table columns.

(4) Complex tables often take a long time to render, so cut down on the complexity of your tables by splitting the information into several tables. In particular, the top table should be simple and fast to render.

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