Volunteer BIS-AITP Students Create Website to Help Connecticut Register for Covid19 Vaccination Appointments

Introduction to the Problem:

Back in October 2020, Sue Starkey, the Director of the Northeast District Department of Health in Connecticut needed multiple database system the district. She remembered attending the BEST-FESTs (Business Experiential Skills and Technology Festivals) at Eastern, where she was impressed with the high-quality information systems projects BIS students did creating websites, database, and systems for nonprofit organizations, so she reached out to Dr. Citurs. During the Fall 2020 Semester, Director Starkey and Dr. Citurs worked on starting to outline the Northeast Districts database system needs. However, as Covid19 vaccination moved beyond healthcare workers and nursing home residents, seniors as well as other non-tech savvy people struggled desperately through multiple systems to register and schedule their vaccination appointments. It soon became apparent to Director Starkey and Dr. Citurs that creating a system to help people register and schedule their Covid19 vaccination appointments was far more urgent than the other database system needs. Thus, in early January 2021, Dr. Citurs reached out to BIS-AITP students to volunteer to construct a website to help Connecticut residents and workers get scheduled for the Covid19 vaccinations. It was apparent that a simple user friendly concise step-by-step website was needed to help people navigate through the vaccination appointment scheduling process and that instructions for the Spanish committee were lacking from the State of Connecticut and Center for Disease Control's Vaccination Administration Management System (VAMS) and needed to be created.
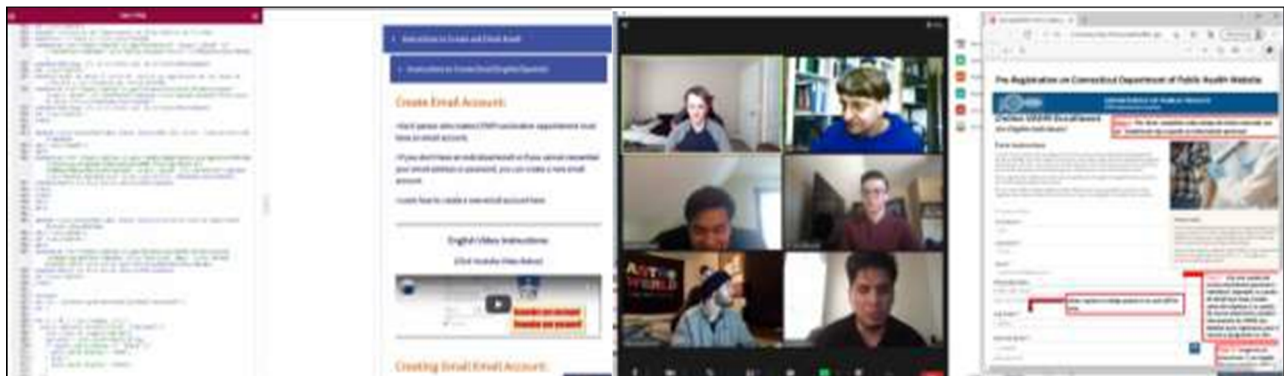
Development Process of the Website:

Developed by ECSU BIS students, the Covid19 Vaccination Appointment Scheduling website was found to be more challenging than initially thought due to the dynamically changing internet portals and documentation of the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Connecticut Health Department, as well as working with the technological proficiency cap between various age groups. Before eligible individuals in Connecticut can use VAMS, they are required to preregister through the Connecticut Health Department's "Pre-registration Portal", which required by the CDC. After registering for VAMS, an invitation email would be sent, thus beginning the scheduling process in VAMS. As with all quality projects, the BIS team adopted a methodology to systematically develop the website. A modified rapid agile scrum approach was chosen, as time was a major constraint. Each team member took on a primary role in the development of the website: Gary Kozlowski the primary site developer, Jon Shooner the code reviewer, and Hunter Vetterkind the information/data organizer. Luis Serrano and Leonard Vargas crafted Spanish translations for the website and asked for feedback from their family members on it. These translations include the PDF documents crafted by Luis, as well as the Spanish email guide videos by Leo. The project took 3 weeks from scratch to make public, but the website is periodically updated.

Students' Reflection:

When reflecting back on the project, Leo Vargas(BIS Major Senior), who created instructional videos in Spanish, said "It is one of the most interesting projects I have done;[it] has been in making this website to help the elderly get registered for the Covid19 vaccine. It is interesting because of the impact it can have on the Windham community and Connecticut. I also enjoyed working with the rest of the members. Each one of us really went above and beyond when it came to communicate important tasks that had to be done. I think it was such a joy to be able to see a project from start to finish. I really learned a lot about teamwork, communication and the importance of making and sticking to a plan. "Luis Serrano piped in, "Difficulties weren't many. However, translations are not easy either. It took a lot of back and forth with a Spanish to English dictionary to get it right. I had my parents review part of the finished product and was glad there were only three Spanish errors that needed to be changed." Gary Kozlowski added when reflecting on the project, "It was interesting to work in an environment where we would plan, design, develop, test the product, release the product then get feedback from the users to make it even better. I really enjoyed that because now I can apply that to any type of project I do or have in the future and make it be the best possible outcome. Through this project I've had the opportunity to gain experience in the realm of product development and the Agile work process with a professional and get better. "All of the team agreed with Gary that, "Planning and evaluating [the website] took a lot of our time. Daily and weekly planning was a must to achieve our objectives and meet the client's needs. Frequently, we had to spend extra time, which we were fine with because it was for a good cause."

Sue Starkey, NDDH Director of Health, said, "I turned to ECSU because of the excellent reputation of the Business Information Systems Program at ECSU and have been so impressed by all they have done to help. The professionalism and capabilities of the students and the program director are surpassed only by their goodwill."

Links to News Articles:

WILI 1400AM: https://www.mixcloud.com/wili1400/22521-ecsu-bis-students-create-covid-vaccine-sign-up-website/,

Greenwich Sentinel:
https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.greenwichsentinel.com%2F2021%2F02%2F27%2Feastern-student-leonard-vargas-of-old-greenwich-creates-website-to-help-senior-citizens-schedule-covid-

vaccines%2F&data=04%7C01%7CCitursA%40easternct.edu%7C9e55fa126cc14e1aeb3008d8dbd95 3c1%7C00bc4ae8576c45e3949d4f129d8b670a%7C1%7C0%7C637501073739343784%7CUnknown%7CT WFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000& amp;sdata=JXBchkcYM5OFExzsSHwO3BK6FwVBrEcj1Xu45k7tSko%3D&reserved=0,

NBC
Connecticut:https://nam04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nbcconnecticut.com%2Fnews%2Fcoronavirus%2Fcovid-vaccine%2Fecsu-students-create-website-to-help-navigate-vams%2F2420960%2F&data=04%7C01%7CCitursA%40easternct.edu%7Cafd5c0f33103444068ae08 d8cf4ca487%7C00bc4ae8576c45e3949d4f129d8b670a%7C1%7C0%7C637487275895934937%7CUnkno wn%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7 C1000&sdata=O7LX%2BVdYi8pYzBGgwYPK6wxFNWez4YGrP0%2FB89Y8RjI%3D&reserved=0,

ABC WTNH: https://www.wtnh.com/news/health/coronavirus/ecsu-students-create-website-to-help-people-sign-up-for-covid-19-vaccine/

ICE Radio at MCC: https://soundcloud.com/iceradiomcc/themiddlec-ak-with-dralexciturs4ecsu-bis-students-simplercovidsite-02-27-21wav

Eastern CT TV: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GMSZQgMcOp0&t=4s

The Chronicle CT: https://chronicle-ct-app.newsmemory.com/?publink=075e51fec

Eastern CT State University Press Release: https://www.easternct.edu/news/_stories-and-releases/2021/02-february/eastern-students-create-website-to-help-senior-citizens-schedule-covid-vaccines.html