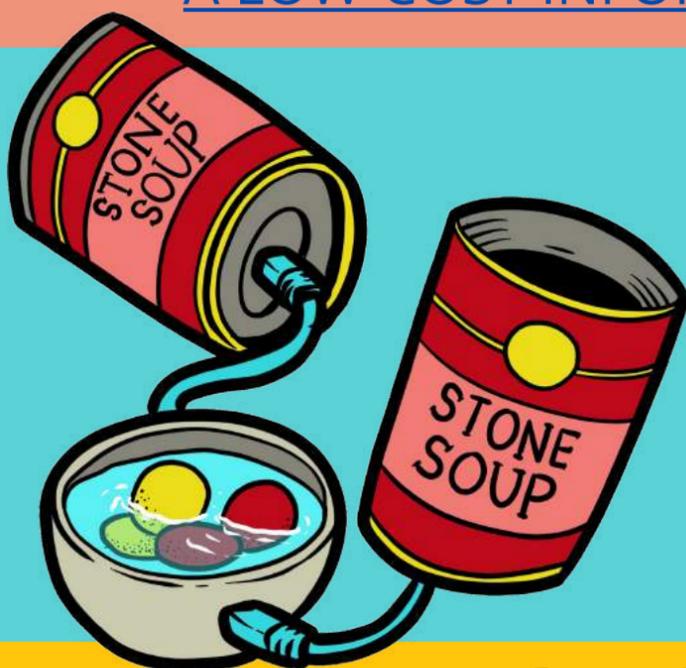




# Project Tin Can

## A LOW-COST INFORMATION INFRASTRUCTURE



**FreeSource** has previously deployed [information portals](#) for multiple social service organizations. These portals are managed using classic Google Sites and are intended to provide organizational visitors with curated, up-to-date information regarding programming, community resources, employment and personal enrichment opportunities, Metro Transit routes, and local news and weather.

## Technological Component

With classic Google Sites [being deprecated as of September 2021](#), we are presented with an opportunity to build a more robust, extensible, accessible, unified, future-proof, and reproducible online resource information management infrastructure using a [WordPress Multisite installation](#). We can use different [themes](#) to create a holistic multipurpose network.



### Information Portals

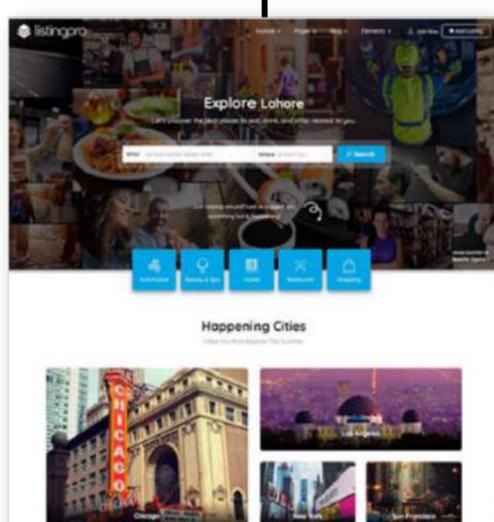
*(Alliance Theme)*

Organization-specific visitor intranet sites with curated, up-to-the-minute information.

### Resource Directory

*(ListingPro Theme)*

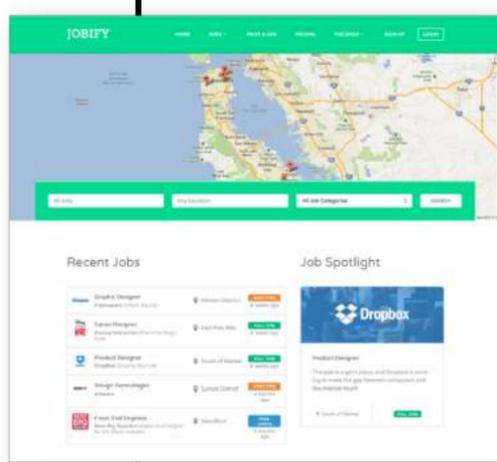
A Yelp-like site that integrates information from existing resource directories and adds maps, images, etc.



### Opportunity Board

*(Jobify Theme)*

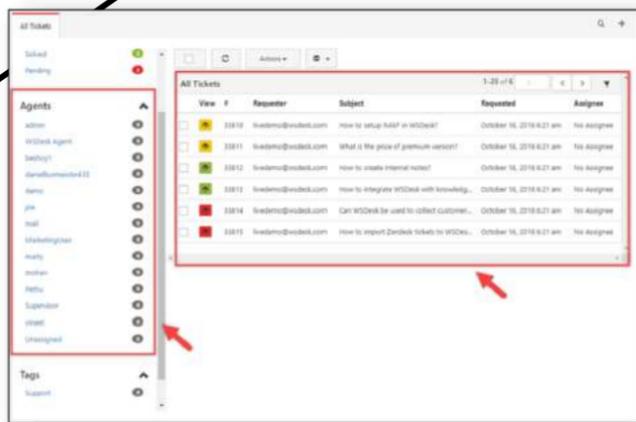
An Indeed-like site that provides crowdsourced ethical vocational and personal enrichment leads.



### Help Desk

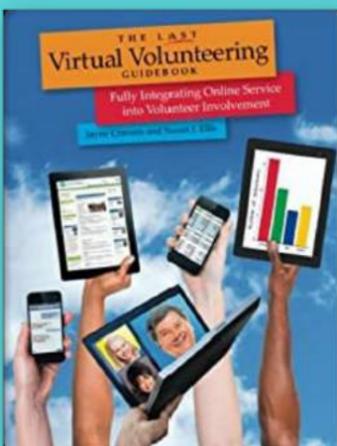
*(WSDesk Plugin)*

An Online system through which people can request resource referral assistance; accessible throughout the network.



## Human Component

a non-traditional volunteer base of individuals who might have difficulty committing to a regular, in-person volunteer schedule and who can remotely assist with small tasks that don't necessarily require specialized training or a great deal of time to complete. People from all walks of life fill out job applications all the time, are good researchers, are able to put people at ease, and possess whatever other requisite skills that one might feel they need to possess for their volunteer efforts to meet with success.





# PROJECT TIN CAN

- Upcycled Dedicated Information Kiosks
- Decentralized Remote Volunteer Information Gathering Network
- Cultivation of Vocational and Community Resource Information
- Interagency Coordination Hub



Both software components and volunteer coordination model intended to be bundled together and supported under an open source framework for ease of duplication in other geographic areas.



# **Project Outline**

- 1) **Introduction:** Connect people with information & community resources that are already out there in a resource sharing ecosystem. Provide easy access for information & spreadsheets without having to do a lot of web surfing. What makes you different from others already out there doing this? What's unique? What's your secret sauce?
  - a) **Thoughts:** Overarching Goals: Stone Soup- Project Tin Can to create an infrastructure for others to build on & grow.
    - i) Build connections between people when you live in such a fractured society
    - ii) Creating harmony
    - iii) Upcycling & repairing
    - iv) Communicating with other people
  - b) **Thesis:** Find & eliminate barriers to give people access to a live & accurate information networks system. Mitigate barriers. Get people around the barriers that are stopping them from finding the information that they need to progress in the way that they want to progress.
  
- 2) **Main Point 1:** What's the problem, why current solutions don't work, & how you'll fix it. A new way to replace & improve Google Sites that's free & can be easily duplicated.
  - a) **Examples:** Easy to duplicate it to another location & have the ability to do minor tweaks like logos, the way it looks, & add their own resources that are local & relevant to them such as public transit information, shelter sites, tickers with weather & the visitors pick what interests them to navigate to
    - i) Google Sites
      - (1) Pros- free to host, easy to duplicate, good to store files, spreadsheets, & embed videos
      - (2) Cons- newly changed platform isn't as good as their old version
    - ii) WordPress
      - (1) Pros- open source, content builder, free, templates, plugins, customizable, modular, themes, upgrades
      - (2) Cons- need hosting, hire coders to modify specific out of the box websites to create custom solutions
  - b) **Analysis**
    - i) Proven case study example: Inside Dharma
      - (1) Website- quickly outdated
      - (2) Printed booklets- hard to carry around
    - ii) 211 - United Way
      - (1) Volunteers running the program & manning the phonelines
      - (2) Not up to date: Dangerous, discouraging, depressing to waste time & get lost
  
- 3) **Main Point 2:** Explaining the concept with strengths and weaknesses. Lack of communication & help with the government organizations led to this new idea to create a distributed brain trust, a crowdsourced information network of different volunteers who collaborate to collect information for the interactive real time portal system with the daily updates scrolling on a ticker each day.
  - a) **Examples**
    - i) Different type of alternative volunteering
      - (1) Opportunities it would provide & to whom
    - ii) It's just as important to know where not to go as where to go

(1) Declared resources, Public transit information, Listings of shelter stuff, Housing, Service updates on the weather (if you're outside a lot), Job postings, Resume help, etc.

iii) Utilize different skills to cover weaknesses

(1) Those who would feel comfortable calling places can, those who aren't can take the data & plug it into the website, generate a map, Social workers, Teacher types to help with resumes, People without degrees can still help somebody apply for a job, Handy people to help maintain the free & upcycled components, fix it repair cafes & events, Connections between people, Physical help, People who are good at getting financing, someone who is good at motivating people

iv) Possible issues:

(1) Current premade, off the shelf website solutions don't work how they need to for fully realizing this concept, Creating a custom volunteer network will take time, be expensive, & take a lot of work to implement, Funding to help with coding even though it's open source & free, still need to hire people to build & modify, Collecting & updating tribal knowledge, Piecing together favors, Learning curve teaching users, Easier to fix issues than annotate a problem, Similar to outreach in that it's easier to do it yourself when you already have the connections, Reliability- game of telephone where things get misinterpreted, Access, Time consuming, Ethical concerns, Prevent companies from taking advantage of desperate laborers, Hostile gatekeepers, Institutions preventing help, Illiterate users, Unfamiliar with technology, Language barriers, Anxieties, People lacking their own phones

v) In person help at the kiosk centers

#### **b) Analysis**

- i) Porteous kiosk- sole purpose to point to a specific website & then it'll reset itself, so everyone can have the experience without it getting messed up
- ii) Similar style to Twitter, which was originally invented for providing public transit updates

4) **Main Point 3:** How you plan to make it work. Outline your vision for how the website will operate & how you plan to expand it in the future. Create a crowdsourced brain trust to collect information to be used in the information portal system to create updates as needed with a ticker of relevant social service information.

#### **a) Examples**

- i) Building the 1st main site will be the tester version. From there, each city will duplicate that main site model & build upon it, so they'll have all the documentation about what works in terms of getting volunteers, keeping them, & maintaining a remote volunteer workforce. It'll be a source that we had built all this knowledge over years & figured out what works & what doesn't. Networks on networks all integrated with other projects
- ii) Theme that mimics an interactive directory site like Yelp with looking up places for reviews, it's a collective collaboration with user feedback of experiences
- iii) Have multiple maps on the page itself, locations of what people are looking for

#### **b) Analysis**

- i) Yelp
- ii) Spiceworks: Web infrastructure
  - (1) Help desk system with email notifications when a ticket request is submitted. It'll get assigned to someone or whoever isn't already occupied that would step up to take on that specific task. They'd log their fixes to have a record then discuss it.
  - (2) By having a central system, it will spread the help out, so no one gets overwhelmed

- 5) **Conclusion:** walk through an example of a person approaching a kiosk to search for a job traditional vs modern way. Reiterate the problem you see that exists and sum up how you're going to fix it. State your goals.
- a) **Thesis:** Create 1 website template & then use that same single installation to create many different websites for each city. It'll be a continuous up-to-date aggregate of information to help those in need including maps, phone numbers, resources, etc. It'll be accessed from DIY built kiosks using upcycled spare parts and manned by a network of volunteers.
  - b) **Thoughts:** Creating a community brain trust of free, crowdsourced help.

## Summary

*Beginning project: inspired from previous work in a drop-in shelter*

- Connect people with information & community resources that are already out there in a resource sharing ecosystem. Provide easy access information & spreadsheets without having to do a lot of web surfing
- Free simple & easy platform on Google Sites for a one webpage to store files, spreadsheets, & embed videos
  - Create an internal information template & show other organizations how to copy it for their use like an intranet like Blackboard for people in need
  - Easy to duplicate it to another location & have the ability to do minor tweaks like logos, the way it looks, & add their own resources that are local & relevant to them such as public transit information, shelter sites, tickers with weather & the visitors pick what interests them to navigate to
- The main goal is for people to have access to this information by upcycling old wood & broken computer components to cobble together an information kiosks computer lab workstation into a standing desk format with a sole purpose of showing only a specific website that aggregates a lot of like local community resource organization.
  - Like a Porteous kiosk whose sole purpose to point to a specific website & then it'll reset itself, so everyone can have the experience without it getting messed up.
  - Lumber isn't cheap, so an alternative might be needed
  - Broken computer components are though, so it'll be easy to salvage guts & piece together old parts

*Now: Find & eliminate barriers to give people access to a live & accurate information networks system. Mitigate barriers, get people around barriers that are stopping them from finding the information that they need to progress in the way that they want to progress.*

- Proven case study example: Inside Dharma owned by physicians Carol Corrie & her husband has a similar resource directory. They're like a Buddhist prison mission for people who are reentry, reentering society after being in prison. It's more grassroots.
  - They have a website, as well as a print component where they try to categorize the different resources that are available to those in tough situations.
    - For example, they have sections for where to go for clothing, where to go for men's shelter, women's shelter, if you have kids, etc. It's called Start Here STL.
  - They also print out books twice a year. These little booklets are more actively updated.
    - Difficult to keep up. They need live networking updates of tribal knowledge
    - There was one printed, but then COVID hit & they had to print little supplements. However, it's hard & people try to carry them around & people still have the same issues with it getting out of date really quickly.
- Google Sites has a new version, but this one got rid of a lot of the features
- Issue: new way to replace & improve Google Sites that's free & can be easily duplicated
- Lack of communication & help with the government organizations led to this new idea
- 2 on 1 is a United Way service that supports nonprofits
- They help with referrals to shelters for example, but it's not current. They only update once a year because its mostly volunteers maintaining the program & manning phones. That led to things being out of date quickly which was dangerous & discouraging to people with limited resources as it is, especially during COVID. Depressing to waste time & get lost.

- Create a crowd sourced brain trust to collect information to be used in the information portal system to create updates as needed with a ticker of relevant social service information. Looking back to how Twitter was originally invented, for providing public transit updates
- Building the 1<sup>st</sup> main site will be the tester version. From there, each city will duplicate that main site model & build upon it, so they'll have all the documentation about what works in terms of getting volunteers, keeping them, & maintaining a remote volunteer workforce. It'll be a source that we had built all this knowledge over years & figured out what works & what doesn't. Networks on networks all integrated with other projects
- WordPress free website builder, open source, content builder where you don't have to know HTML code, easy to customize & modular with plugins & different themes with functions that upgrade
  - However, it's not free to host like Google Sites
  - Can use it to create 1 website template & then use that same single installation to create many different websites.
    - Essentially the same number of resources to host multiple websites
    - Easier to manage for multiple websites because it's the same interface, it's the same installation that you manage these different websites
  - Theme that mimics a directory site like Yelp with looking up places for reviews, it's a collective collaboration with user feedback of experiences
    - Solicit businesses to join this camp. They can make money doing it
  - Have multiple maps on the page itself, locations of what people are looking for
- Different type of volunteering. Alternative to the more traditional soup kitchen, tutoring, animal shelter, etc.
  - Gives people an opportunity to give back who wouldn't normally be able to because of social anxiety, physical disability, maybe can't drive nor take a bus, they might have a work schedule that precludes it, etc.
  - It also allows people who were in that situation to pay it forward. If they have adequate shelter, access to the internet & a phone, there is a lot they could do with a regular routine of calling specific places to verify information & check schedules, develop rapport & relationships with these organizations.
  - This creates a distributed brain trust, a crowdsourced information network of different volunteers who collaborate to collect information for the interactive real time portal system with the daily updates scrolling on a ticker each day.
    - It's just as important to know where not to go as where to go
    - Declared resources
    - Public transit information,
    - Listings of shelter stuff,
    - Housing,
    - Service updates on the weather (if you're outside a lot),
    - Job postings
    - Resume help
  - Utilize different skills to cover weaknesses
    - Those who would feel comfortable calling places can
    - Those who aren't, can take the data & plug it into the website
    - Generate a map
    - Social workers
    - Teacher types to help with resumes
    - People without degrees can still help somebody apply for a job
    - Handy people to help maintain the free & upcycled components

- Fix it repair cafes & events
      - Connections between people
    - o Physical help
    - o People who are good at getting financing
    - o Someone who is good at motivating people
- Possible issues:
  - Current premade, off the shelf website solutions don't work how they need to for fully realizing this concept
  - Creating a custom volunteer network will take time, be expensive, & take a lot of work to implement
  - Funding to help with coding even though it's open source & free, still need to hire people to build & modify
    - Collecting & updating tribal knowledge
    - Piecing together favors
    - Learning curve teaching users
    - Easier to fix issues than annotate a problem
      - o Similar to outreach in that it's easier to do it yourself when you already have the connections
    - Reliability- game of telephone where things get misinterpreted
    - Access
    - Time consuming
    - Ethical concerns
      - o Prevent companies from taking advantage of desperate labors
        - Ex. Place a vegan worker at McDonalds to be paid minimum wage for doing something they don't believe in, just to be able to survive
    - Hostile gatekeepers
    - Institutions preventing help
    - Illiterate users
    - Unfamiliar with technology
    - Language barriers
    - Anxiety: ex. Talking on the phone
    - People lacking their own phones
    - In person help at the kiosk centers
- Use Yelp like template on WordPress to help with the job hunt:
  - *Traditional*- job sites, job groups, word of mouth job opportunities, headhunting boards, recruiting boards
    - o Ex. Indeed & monster.com
  - *New*- Facebook pages, public groups, crowdsourced information from public sources that aren't in 1 location.
    - o People might have trouble navigating & finding information.
  - *Goal*: 25 detailed listings a week with mapped locations, what's needed, & pertinent contact information included. Includes vocational links
    - o Eventually increase it as much as possible 70-80 to have case managers double check & distribute information on PDFs & printouts
    - o Should take around 20 hours a week to put together
      - Start parttime then move to fulltime
      - Web infrastructure: Help desk system with email notifications when a ticket request is submitted. It'll get assigned to someone or whoever isn't already

occupied would step up to take on that specific test. They'd log their fixes to have a record

- o Ex. Spiceworks
- o By having a central system, it will spread the help out, so no one gets overwhelmed
- o Apply that tech concept here: ex. building a resume, finding a specific type of resource, etc. Same network of volunteers who are collecting information.
- o Cheap burner phones to call in for help

**Overarching Goals: Stone Soup-** Project Tin Can to create an infrastructure for others to build on & grow

-Build connections between people when you live in such a fractured society

-Creating harmony

-Upcycling & repairing

-Communicating with other people