



University of California, Merced

Choose Well – Building a Healthy Lifestyle, One Choice at a Time

[Http://choosewell.ucmerced.edu](http://choosewell.ucmerced.edu)

Submitters

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Project Team

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Project Summary

Choose Well is UC Merced's wellness program staff and faculty. Choose Well strives to build a campus culture that encourages healthy lifestyle choices that improve the overall health and well-being of its staff and faculty.

Choose Well consists of two main tiers to engage the user in the wellness program. First we provide an informational site where we offer information to the users to stay healthy at work. Next we have our applications section where users can participate in our Bobcat Walkers program or Fit Cat competitive weight loss challenge. Users are also encouraged to track their own health factors as well.

Description

The UC Merced Health and Wellness program has undergone significant application improvements over the previous year with the launch of the Choose Well application. Prior to our online application participants in the health and wellness program were only able to participate using a paper based system. Participants now have the ability to participate 100% electronically. Program administrators are now able to manage participants, generate reports, and assist users all through the online Choose Well application.

The three tiers of the Choose Well application are outlined below.

Informational Site

Built using our campus content management system (CMS), we allow our program administrators to provide helpful information to users interested in participating in UC Merced's Health and Wellness program. Administrators provide things like information on upcoming health and wellness events, healthy recipes, and links to important information on health benefits and tips for staying health. Because the administration site is based on our campus CMS, the process is familiar and our administrators are able to easily and quickly update content on the informational side of our application.

User Profile and My Choose Well

When visiting My Choose Well for the first time, users will be able to fill out a brief profile form. All information given here is optional and is in place to help users manage their weight loss goals.

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Users can at any time return to their profile page to update their information in the system as needed. Users can also manage Bobcat Walkers incentives, outlined below.

Bobcat Walkers

Bobcat Walkers is a walking program designed to improve the health of the faculty and staff of the University of California, Merced through daily cumulative movement. Each registered Bobcat Walker receives a free pedometer to track daily steps as well as a Bobcat Walker t-shirt. The program promotes the nationally recognized goal of 10,000 steps per day; the equivalent of 5 miles.

First an administrator creates a session and selects who can participate. Current sessions are designed for individual staff and faculty but future sessions may also include students as well as team participation. Incentives for completing a certain number of steps are also included when creating the session. Multiple sessions can be active simultaneously. An example would be users can join a session called “Turkey Trot” that runs from November 20th – November 25th, as well as join the current semester session called “Walking in the Spring”.

Once a session becomes active, a user is able to join a session. By using the “My Sessions” feature of My Choose Well, A user can select any active session to join. From this feature they are also able to view other active sessions as well as view past sessions they were part of and review the amount of steps completed for those past sessions. [Figure 1]

Once a user is participating in a session, they are able to log their daily steps in an easy to use calendar view. In the Totals section, a log is kept and users can view their steps in per week, month or entire history of a walking session in a line graph to easily view progress in their steps. Users can also view departmental totals for each session. [Figure 2]

Incentives are awarded when enough steps have been accumulated and verified by the administrator. When the correct number of steps is logged the user is notified via email with instructions on how to pick up their incentive. Current incentives include a water bottle for 250,000 steps and a GoSmart Pedometer w/Brain for 1,500,000 steps.

From an administration panel, administrators have the ability to fully manage all aspects of the Bobcat Walkers program. Administrators can add/edit walking sessions, assign incentives, manage users, and generate reports. Great detail was put into the administration session to ensure that administrators had full control over every aspect of the application without the need for a developer to assist in regular application functionality. For example, administrators are able to remove users from a session if they feel the user is not correctly participating, or completely ban the user from My Choose Well all together.

Bobcat Walker Participation

Bobcat Walkers fall session had a total of 91 signups and Bobcat Walkers spring session currently has a total of 89 signups. A total of 12,310,824 steps have been logged for both sessions and 77 incentives have been rewarded.

Current Sessions Join a Session Previous Session

Your Current Bobcat Walkers Sessions

Select a session below to view details.

Session Name	Date Range	Team Name
Walking in the spring	01/31/2012 - 06/30/2012	Individual

Details: Walking in the spring

Description:
Bobcat Walkers is a walking program designed to improve the health of the faculty and staff of the University of California, Merced through daily cumulative movement. Walking is a convenient, free and simple way to fit 15-40 minutes of exercise into your work day. Employees are encouraged to walk before or after work, during breaks or at lunch time in order to become more active.

Notes:
Each registered Bobcat Walker receives a free pedometer to track daily steps as well as a Bobcat Walker t-shirt. The program promotes the nationally recognized goal of 10,000 steps per day; the equivalent of 5 miles.

[Figure 1 My Sessions]

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Individual Totals

Session: Walking in the spring ▾

The graph below shows individual totals for you and other team members if part of a team.



Overall totals for Walking in the spring:

Bobcat Walker	Total Steps
Chris Mitchell (Me)	72198

[Figure 2 Totals and Graph]

Fit Cat Weight Loss Challenge

The Fit Cat Challenge is designed to motivate users to a new level of fitness. Fit Cat is UC Merced's weight loss challenge for faculty and staff. It is a four month friendly competitive weight loss program. Fit Cat will help users learn new ways to eat health, fit exercise into your daily routine and develop overall healthier lifestyle, one choice at time.

Built using the same back end technology as Bobcat Walkers, administrators create and manage sessions to allow faculty and staff to join sessions. Administration screens are similar to Bobcat Walkers, allowing for an easy learning curve to create both Bobcat Walkers as well as Fit Cat sessions.

Fit Cat sessions are generally a team's based competition. Similar to Bobcat Walkers administration, great detail was put into the administration section to allow the administrators to manage all aspects of both the Fit Cat session as well as team management. Administrators have the ability to limit team size, manage team members including add/remove team members, and manage team captains.

Users are also able to manage their teams from the "My Sessions" section of Fit Cat. Users can create teams, invite users, and remove team members from their teams. When a user creates a team, they will be assigned a team captain role and are able to fully manage their team without the need for an administrator to intervene.

Weights of each team member are gathered by the team captain weekly and logged into an online spreadsheet. Individual users are only allowed to see their own weight loss statistics to ensure privacy of user's individual data. This spreadsheet view also calculates cumulative weight loss on a weekly basis. Users are encouraged to visit the spreadsheet view on a weekly basis to view their current weight loss totals as well as review their past progress.

A weight loss goal contract is presented to the user when they sign up for the Fit Cat program. The goal of the contract is to help the user establish specific, realistic goals. Establishing goals enables the user to focus and develop a plan of action. The goal contract is viewable and editable at any time from the "Goal Contract" section of Fit Cat.

Fit Cat Participation

As of March 29th, 2012 we are currently half way through our first Fit Cat session. There are 137 signups, totaling 22 teams. Users have lost a total of 585.3 lbs.

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Spring 2012

Team Name: IT Rocks!

Team Captain: Chris Mitchell

Team Initial Weight: **999.99**

[Jump-to-week](#)

[Jump to current week](#)

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Participants	Apr 09 2012	Apr 16 2012	Difference	C. Weight/ %
Alexander Kang	11.00	11.00	3	3 / 1.71%
Chris Mitchell	29.00	29.00	5	4 / 2.02%
John Kamminga	29.00	29.00	6	29 / 12.89%
Total Team Weight	69.00	69.00	14	
Cumulative Weight Loss			36	
Cumulative % Weight Loss			6.02 %	

[Figure 3 Fit Cat Team Captain Spreadsheet (figures blurred for privacy)]

Technology

The My Choose Well application tier is done in PHP using the Zend Framework. By using Zend's Model – View – Controller architecture, we were able to decouple all business models from the front end web technology, allowing each function of the application to be independently developed and deployed as needed.

The informational tier of the Choose Well application is running on our campus CMS using Drupal. A recipe module was used to allow administrators to keep the recipe content up to date on the site, and a tutorial module was used to help with training and site updates.

jQuery and jQuery UI javascript libraries were used for front end development. jqPlot, a charting plugin for jQuery was used to generate the line graphs for Bobcat Walkers. Other miscellaneous plugins including jEdit, SimpleSlide, and ToastMessage were used to enhance usability, allowing us to deliver a modern performing application to our end users.

Timeframe

Initial project kickoff occurred in August of 2010. The informational site was launched to gain interest in the project in November with Bobcat Walkers launching in January of 2011. During the kickoff session of Bobcat Walkers, initial requirement gathering for Fit Cat was performed. Development started of Fit Cat started in August of 2011. January 2012 the entire My Choose Well application was pushed live.

Customer Feedback

"I *love* the new Bobcat Walkers interface. It makes tracking my steps so easy and I don't have to keep any of my paper records anymore."

- **Janette Herrera - Choose Well Administrator**

"With the new Bobcat Walkers app I'm able to track my steps from the current session *and* past sessions; perfect to see my progress from year to year!"

- **John Kamminga – Choose Well User**

"The new Fit Cat app is a God-send. I really like the real-time updates of our weight-loss percentages."

- **Tina Machado – Choose Well Administrator**