GlobalSale

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1 GlobalSale, a V-Unit Project

The V-Unit is an optional elective unit that students can take for credit at Carnegie Mellon University. The goal of a V-Unit project is to see how computer science and technology can improve society in non-traditional and under-funded areas. GlobalSale is an undertaking implemented as part of the V-Unit framework and it tries to show how technology can lead to a more fair-trade global market. Our work on GlobalSale is at the intersection of two types of V-Units: the survey and the project. We have gathered information about how current organizations and companies are trying to make a contribution to the well-being of people in disadvantaged countries around the world. We have also implemented a prototype website meant to understand how the American public reacts to the idea of "fair-trade". More specifically, we wanted to understand if the GlobalSale website, which wants to be a bridge between the Romanian artisans and the American public, is implementable and what are its chances of success.

GlobalSale is a web-service that showcases the work of Romanian artisans to the American public. The GlobalSale website displays pictures of products made by Romanian artisans. The prototype website allows the artisans to upload images of their work and allows the clients to order the products online. The products will be shipped using international postal services. Our underlying motivation is our desire to reward the artisans from countries with a less stable economy with the right amount of money for their work. We want the artisans to receive almost the entire sum of money for their products. We say "almost" because the shipping costs and the management of the website have to be taken care of. The money needed for running the website will be minimal at first, as we have the technical skills to implement the web-service and keep it running smoothly. In the long run, we plan to allow external advertisments to be placed on the website, to account for some of the extra expenses. Possible sources of funding for the artisans are organizations like Kiva, which provide micro-credits to beginning entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs will be discovered by making occasional visits to Romania and through the personal contacts of the main author of this paper. The contribution of GlobalSale is the ability to pay the artisans what they deserve because there is no need of a warehouse for storing the products and no need to pay employees. Since our prototype solution is a web-service and our intention is for the products to be shipped from Romania to the customer's address, our hypothesis is that an online international is feasible and has good chances of success.

GlobalSale can be seen as a contribution to a bigger movemement: helping people from disadvantaged countries and striving to a fair global market through the use of technology.

2   Analysis of existing successful ideas and projects

At the moment, there are a number of non-profit organizations and commercial companies that target disadvantaged countries. The non-profit organizations try to raise enough money, usually from donations from various sources, to cover the cost of running the organizations while helping the poor. The private companies try to give help to less fortunate countries, while trying to stay in business. While one can see the value of money donations and foreign aid given to disadvantaged countries, there are other people who disagree, for example the economist Peter Bauer. In his work [1, 2] he argues that the attachment of "Third World" status to a particular country is not based on any stable economic or political criteria, and is mostly an arbitrary process. The only characteristic that Bauer found common in all poor economies was that their governments "demand and receive Western aid", the giving of which he strongly opposed. His idea was that central planning, foreign aid, price controls, and protectionism perpetuate poverty rather than eliminate it. It is also our belief that disadvantaged countries need the tools to help themselves and not the actual monetary help. Although this is a complex issue and many books have been written on this topic alone, we embrace Bauer's main view that the most important factor in moving from subsistence to a higher standard of living consists of individual effort by small landowners, traders and artisans. Through this project, our goal is to offer a way of doing commerce that helps the artisans of Romania sell their products. The current version of GlobalSale has been implemented specifically for displaying the work of Romanian artisans, but one can imagine how other versions of the website can be used to improve the economic status of artisans in other countries.

We will enumerate several organizations that have succeeded to create the conditions for helping countries in need. Some of these organizations try to raise donations for relieving the catastrophic effects of earthquakes, while others are trying to encourage local entrepreneurship. The scope of the organizations is varied, but all have the goal of improving the standard of living and the economical status of less fortunate countries and people. By encouraging local businesses of under-developed countries, a sustainable way of making money is created. Even if the local entrepreneurs need some money in the beginning to start their business, they will eventually become independent and start making a profit. There are also the unfortunate cases when local businesses go bankrupt, but this happens in all economies around the world and it is a risk that everyone is aware of.

BRUTE LABS [3] is a non-profit organization, created by a group of Google employees. BRUTE LABS use technology to create sustainable social entrepreneurship. Their team has launched eleven projects around the world and across a broad spectrum of causes: from cyclone relief in Myanmar, to clean water wells in Ghana, to a bio-diesel project with Stanford University. They tackle big problems, such as poverty, hunger, homelessness, global health, education by asking for help from anyone who wants to help and by making their projects

something that anyone can do. They give simple instructions, great design and plug-and-play solutions for social change. For example, they have partnered with Pioneers-Africa, an organization stationed in Ghana, to implement a well drilling project in a remote village in the country. The great part of their idea is that individuals, as well as American businesses can help the project. Individuals can launch their own fundraising campaign and donate the proceeds to the project, they can volunteer their services - especially if they have experience as designers, writers, web-gurus, engineers, field technicians, or they can make a personal contribution of as little as$20 to fund a new water well. The connection between BRUTE LABS and GlobalSale is that both organizations want to harness the economical power of developed countries, such as the USA, in order to help the people in poorer countries, that need initial external help to raise their standard of living.

Mchopa [4] is a successful project of BRUTE Labs. Gregory Mchopa, originally from Dar es Salaam, is a young African painter entrepreneur selling his paintings online. All orders are processed with Google Checkout and shipped via USPS from California. There are good chances that BRUTE Labs are buying his paintings and they are selling them to customers from the United States.

Kiva [5] is a non-profit organization that has figured out how to connect the artisans from the developing world with the customers from countries with a good economy, in a trustworthy manner. Their mission is to connect people through lending. By leveraging the internet and a worldwide network of microfinance institutions, Kiva lets individuals lend as little as $25 to help entrepreneurs around the world. The businessmen of *Kiva* have identified a reason why doing business with poor countries has the potential to work: the poor are **highly motivated** and can be very successful when given an opportunity. The connection with GlobalSale is that the artisans using GlobalSale could register on Kiva to ask for a loan, at least in the beginning stages of their entrepreneurial efforts.

aAQUA [6] is a web-service offering a solution to the connectivity issue. aAQUA provide answers to agricultural-related queries, which are replied to in 24 to 72 hours depending on the difficulty. Experts are employees of their respective organizations and serve without charge. This is a form of harnessing the collective power of the masses. If aAQUA wants to use this collective power to offer knowledge and answers to agricultural problems, GlobalSale wants to use the masses for the financial benefit of people from disadvantaged countris.

Ten Thousand Villages (TTV) [7] is one of the world's largest fair trade organizations. This means that TTV is committed to the ideal that every worker should receive a fair wage for their work. The company strives to improve the livelihood of tens of thousands of disadvantaged artisans in 38 countries. Ten Thousand Villages accomplishes this by establishing a sustainable market for handmade products in North America, and building long term buying relationships in places where skilled artisan partners lack opportunities for stable income. There is a shipping problem though, a problem that is present in all organizations that are trying to do business internationally: how do the products get shipped across borders? There are shipping fees that have to be paid, an appropriate method of shipping has to be found, there is a choice between sending the products in bulk or one at a time. These are difficult questions and the solution to each of them depends on the specific organization. Their solution for the shipping problem is the following: they collect the works from artisans from

disadvantaged countries and store them into large warehouses. The next step is to distribute the products in their shops in US and Canada. GlobalSale wants to offer the same financial benefits to artisans, but without incurring the costs of storage and paying the employees. The main difference between GlobalSale and TTV is that our V-Unit implementation is online, thus bypassing many of the storage costs. As mentioned before, GlobalSale does have costs related to website management, but we have the skills to keep the website running in the beggining stages with no extra employeed. If the website develops more and becomes more popular, we will be able to allow for advertisments to be posted on it, thus generating extra revenue.

Another organization that creates opportunities for the rural poor is *iDE* [8]. They provide low cost access to water for agricultural use and profitable links to markets. iDE is devoted to the manufacture, marketing, and distribution of affordable, scalable micro-irrigation and other low-cost water recovery systems throughout the developing world. What connects GlobalSale to iDE is the ideology: iDE offers the help of more experienced professionals for achieving greater good, while GlobalSale offers the financial support of a more developed economy for a fair trade market of artisanal works. The ideology of iDE is that simple, affordable technologies enable the rural poor to become micro-entrepreneurs, creating a path out of poverty that is both sustainable and replicable. iDE uses a market-oriented development model to increase the income of the rural poor by improving market access, increasing agricultural production, and creating sustainable local businesses. Our project GlobalSale is also aimed at improving market access, but by leveraging the advantages of the Internet.

WorldofGood by eBay [9] is a company linked to eBay, where artisans from Western India and other parts of the world can sell their wares to millions of shoppers browsing the WorldofGood.com website. The shipping of some products is free, while some products are shipped from different states of the United States, in exchange of less than $10. This means that as soon as the artisans have finished their work, they send their completed crafts to the US. In a way, the process is similar to the outsourcing of software to poorer countries. One of the advantages of WorldofGood is that the payment is made through PayPal and returns are accepted. GlobalSale will also use PayPal for the international financial transactions. The main difference between WorldofGood and GlobalSale is that the latter is a not-for-profit one, while the former is also interested in the profit of the eBay employees. Since all the GlobalSale maintenance work is done online, the intermediary connection (such as WorldofGood by eBay) is removed and the artisans will be able to harness all the financial benfits of their work.

Novica [10] is another company that wants to create a bridge between the customer and the many talented artisans across the globe. They post a story about the artisans on the website, thus trying to make the customer involved in the artisans's life. The artisans can publicly ask for a loan, at 0% interest rate and the users can donate as much as they want. For example, the artisan Edmundo Contreras received a loan of $1500, from donors all over the US and used the money for his small business. This idea is similar to the core idea of Kiva: entrepreneurs from disadvantaged countries can ask for loans from people who are richer. In the future, we also plan to implement a way for the artisans using GlobalSale to publicly ask for loans. The difference is that we will restrict who can receive a loan: only people who have never received a loan, the loan

can not be a very big amount and the loan has to be used to create merchandize that will be displayed on our website.

HauteLook [11] is an online company that sells brand clothing and designer products at very low prices. The first item you buy has a higher shipping fee, and the following items you buy have a much lower shipping fee. This is a smart accumulative scheme that entices customers to buy products in bulk rather than individual items of clothing. This idea of encouraging the customer to buy in bulk, for a smaller shipping cost, is a good one and we are also going to use it in GlobalSale.

Ushahidi [12] and *Datadyne* [13] can gather information successfully as texts (SMS) from normal phones and MMS from smart phones. Ushahidi is a non-profit tech company that develops free and open source software for information collection, visualization and interactive mapping. The Ushahidi platform is a tool to easily crowdsource information using multiple channels, including SMS, email, Twitter and the web. Our project GlobalSale is designed for Romanian artisans, but there is the possibility that future versions will be implemented for other countries in the developing world where not everyone has a computer and Internet access, the Ushahidi platform is a good one to use. One crucial thing to remember is that most people in the developing world do not have computers, but many of them have phones that can be used to send images of their work to the GlobalSale web server. This is where the Ushahidi platform can be used successfully.

3   Possible improvements brought by GlobalSale

The people running Novica argue that they revolutionized the way we purchase fine handmade products. The traditional process, used in traditional retailing, is: the artisan sells an item to the distributor, the local distributor sells the item to the international distributor, the international distributor sells the item to the retail store, the retail store sells the item to the consumer, the consumer purchases the product.

The Novica way is different: the artisans sell their work to Novica, which sells it to retail stores, website clients and interior design companies.

Still, Novica has to buy the item in the first place and only after they sell it to online clients. Our proposal for GlobalSale is to go directly from the artisans to the website clients. Thus, we do not incur the risk of buying the product from the artisan and not being able to sell it to a customer.

Kiva's mission is to connect people, through lending, with the goal of encouraging entrepreneurship. As of November 2009, Kiva has facilitated over $100 million in loans. Loans seem to be a good way of helping the poor, but one has to wonder what happens if the artisans cannot pay back the loan. Kiva does not have a policy for this situation. This is what they state on their website, as a message to the possible lenders: "When you lend money on Kiva, you may lose all or some of your principal. You should be aware of the different types of risk and find the right loan option for you, with respect to repayment risk and social return. In order to help reduce your risk exposure, you may wish to diversify your Kiva portfolio, thus reducing your exposure to any one borrower."

One disadvantage of HauteLook is that the items are non-returnable. One reason HauteLook can offer the best prices and widest selection is that in most

cases, the brand partners only ship what has been ordered once an event has closed. This means you get more to choose from, but these custom orders take a few days to receive. Although the HauteLook team is working closely with their partners to get the orders to customers as quickly as possible, there is delay of several days or weeks. The customers do not seem to be annoyed by this delay, since the HauteLook business is thriving. Delaying the shipping for several weeks also makes sense for GlobalSale, since artisanal objects are not time-sensitive commodities in the common sense.

In conclusion, there are many organizations and businesses that try to use the collective power of people from developed countries, through social entrepreneurship, financial loans or being an intermediary for the artisans from poor countries, but all have shortcomings that GlobalSale will try to overcome. There are also many good ideas implemented by these other organizations that GlobalSale takes advantage of.

4   The Design of our Application

Our goal can be summarized in two words as "social entrepreneurship". The best definition is given by Wikipedia: "Social entrepreneurship is the work of social entrepreneurs. A social entrepreneur recognizes a social problem and uses entrepreneurial principles to organize, create and manage a venture to achieve social change (a social venture)." By using a user study, we have researched how we can make more probable the adoption of our web-service application. Our main motivation is to increase income and welfare for the artisans from Romania. We want the artisans to be paid the right amount for their work. Sabine Hiller's thesis [14] addresses the right questions:

1. Which factors play a role in determining which artisans use the internet system compared to adopting other methods of commercialising their products?

2. Which part of the welfare of a household that adopts our system, can be allotted to the system?

We have implemented a prototype of the website, that we have used for our user study. The website has a main page that describes the ideology of GlobalSale, a page where clients can login and start browsing the products, a shopping cart where each client can add the products that he plans to buy, a page where the artisans can login and upload pictures of their completed work, and a final webpage that displays all the artworks which can be browsed without logging in. Our website is using the Apache web server and PHP as the server-side language. We present screenshots in the following figures.

Currently, the artisans from Romania can send images while creating the crafts, but the most important images are the ones of the final products. Our role is to advertise the crafts online and to get a feeling of what people want. The customers will have two possibilities: they can either pay for the shipping and get the desired product in a couple of weeks, or they can wait until there is enough demand of products from a certain region and the products can be sent in bulk to the US. That would bring down the cost of shipping, but the downside is that the customers will have to wait until a sizable number of orders
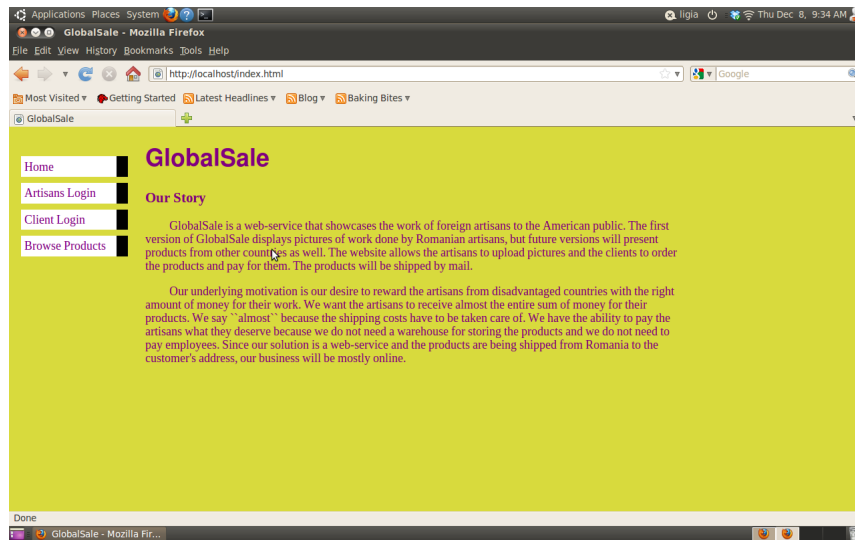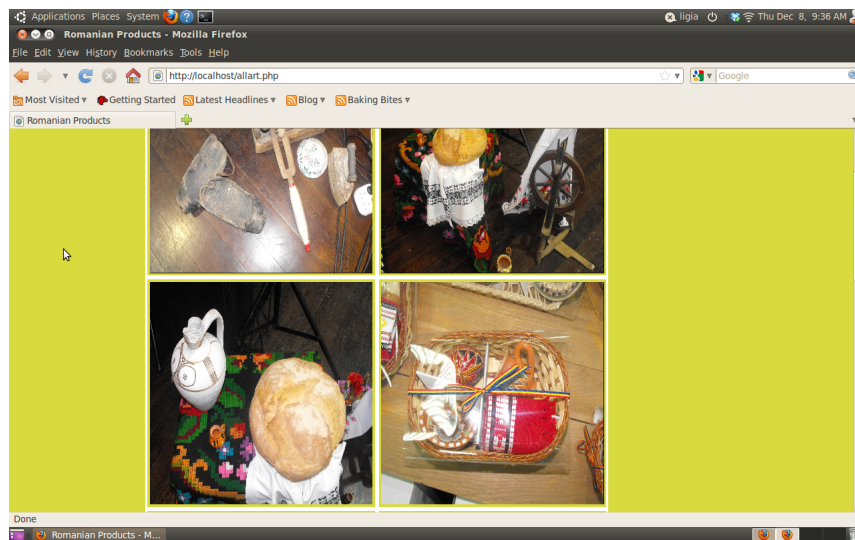
Figure 1: *Index page*

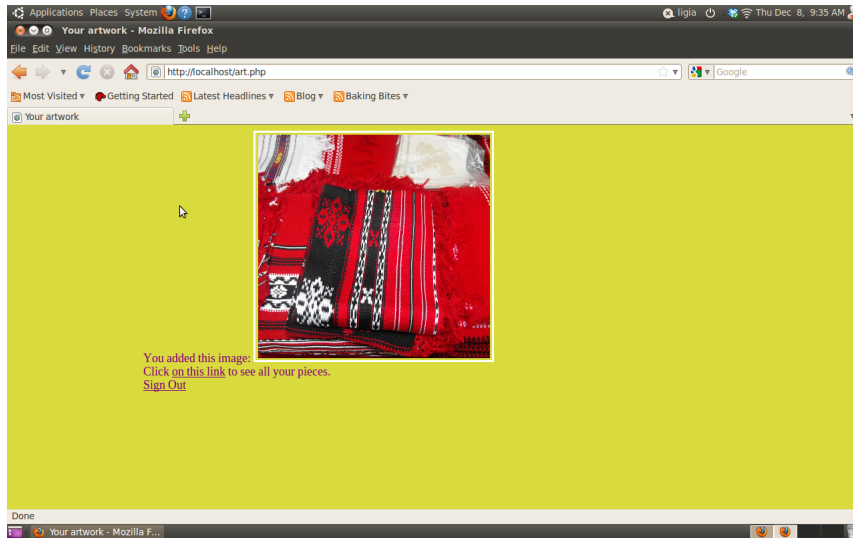Figure 2: *Page with all the artisans' products*

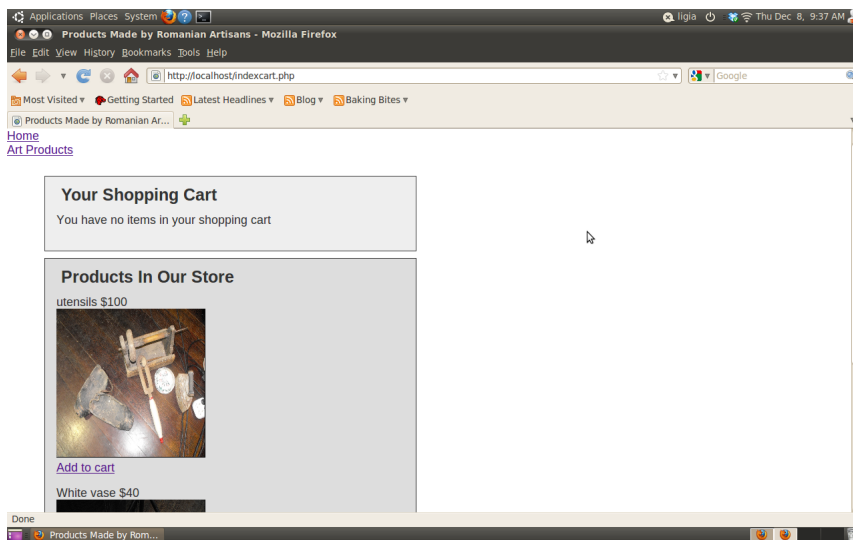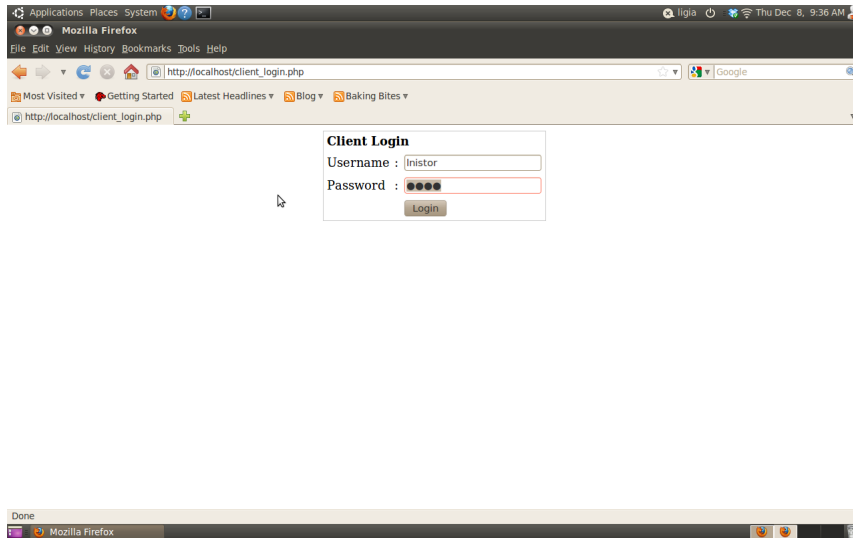Figure 3: *One image uploaded by an artisan*

Figure 4: *Shopping cart*
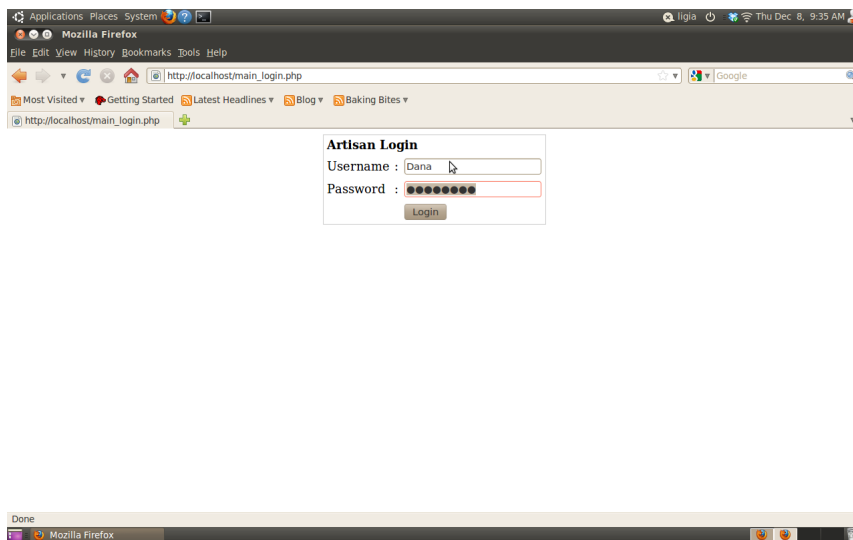
Figure 5: *Page where clients can login*

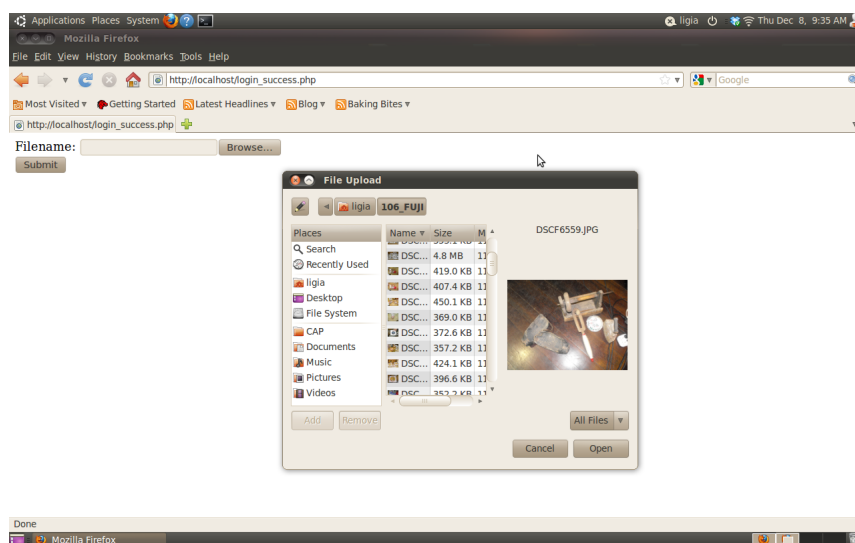Figure 6: *Page where artisans can login*

Figure 7: *An artisan can upload an image here*

is reached. All our money transactions will be done through PayPal, as that is the best platform for international transactions.

5   Shipping Logistics

There are different ways of sending a packet from a specific country to the US: using normal postal services, that will usually employ an airplane, and using sea-based services, like ships. The time it takes to send a packet by ship is significantly higher than by air. For example, if we want to send a packet from Romania to the US, it takes approximately 10 days by air channels and as many as 90 days by boat.

For a packet of 10x10x10 (cm) of 5 kg to be sent from Romania to the US using postal services, a Romanian would have to pay for it 135 RON, which is approximately 43 dollars. It is likely that Romanians will not pay this much for shipping a packet, since they are not sure that they will make a profit by selling all other art articles. But 43 dollars is also a big price for an American customer to pay for shipping and thus the shipping money will have to be split. The only reasonable solution is for the artisan to send the products in bulk for a group of American customers. The products will arrive at my house and I will send them to other parts of the US. This is the crucial point that makes our business solution worth trying: it might be that the shipping costs are big for the artisan's country; nevertheless, since the artisan's country does not have a good economic situation, the same price is small for an American, especially if the shipping costs is split four ways. As an experiment, a package has been successfully sent from Romania to my house in the US. It arrived at the destination in less than two weeks and in very good condition. This is good evidence (although more evidence is needed) that the postal services are good for these kind of international shipping.

We have to answer the following question: who will pay the shipping costs? The answer is that the consumer will pay the shipping costs, when he orders the product online. This leads us to next question: how will we transfer the money to the artisan? This is an important question, as each international transaction will have a fee applied to it. Since the best way of transferring money internationally is to use PayPal, this is the system that we proposed to be used in the GlobalSale project.

6   User Study

We have conducted a user study, with the objective of understanding how people feel about fair trade and about buying online the work of Romanian artisans. The users were presented with the GlobalSale idea, which is: to facilitate the e-commerce between Romanian artisans and American buyers, with the hope of a more fair trade market. The participants were also shown the prototype GlobalSale website and 60 pictures of Romanian artwork. The users were asked if they liked the products, what is the price that they would pay for some products and how long would they wait for a product to be shipped from Romania to their address. The research questions behind the user study are: how do buyers living in the US react to foreign merchandize that they can buy over the internet, how do customers from the US feel about fair trade, what are the financial and practical limitations that might hinder the success of a website like GlobalSale. The data from the study has shed light on how subjects make financial choices and will be used to improve the GlobalSale website, in order to make it more likely to succeed. Another major question that the user study addresses is: what are the subjects' opinion about paying a bit more for a product, if that means that the extra money they pay will make a big contribution in someone's life (someone from a poorer country, such as Romania).

The research has been conducted on the Carnegie Mellon University campus, on a random sample of 10 participants, all students at CMU. The participants were between 21 and 35 years old, they have been contacted through email solicitation and have not been compensated for the study. The necessary precautions have been taken to be sure that there will be no breach of confidentiality: all the answers from participants have been collected on a password protected desktop computer from the author's office and the names of the participants have been translated to code.

All the participants appreciated the work done by Romanian artisans, but only 80% of them considered buying it, either because someone else buys this kind of products for them, or because they do not have a stable house yet, as PhD students. When asked how much would they pay for a specific product, some of them mentioned $10-$30 for most products and $50 for a few products that are antique-like or handmade. The key insight here is that American buyers are willing to pay more for a product that is authentic (handmade, for eg.) than Romanian buyers are. Thus, GlobalSale provides a way for Romanian artisans to obtain more money for their work and gives the hope of a more fair global market.

All the participants agreed with ordering a product if it had a shipping time of three weeks, but no one wanted to order a product with a shipping time of two months. This shows that the idea of accumulating ordered products over

time and shipping in bulk will not be popular and hence the products that are ordered online will have to be shipped in two-three weeks. The solution here is to coordinate the orders of different buyers, so that the products can still be shipped in bulk, but will arrive in a few weeks. Thus, the online customer will be informed that his order can be delivered in a few weeks only if there are enough other products that have been ordered by other customers. In the unlikely case that there is a single customer who has ordered a product in a month, he will be informed that his order cannot be delivered until other people order more products and he will be given the possibility of accepting this condition or give up on buying that product.

The answers to the following question "The artisans that display their products on this website will receive the complete sum of money for their work (minus the money needed for paying the shipping fees and for website management). Other companies give the artisans only a fraction of the money they receive from buyers, because other companies need to cover storage related expenses. Does knowing this fact make you more inclined to buy products from the GlobalSale website? " were mixed. There were answers such as "Yes, I think it does. I like to support the artists, it's part of the experience of not going to Pottery Barn. You know that the money actually goes to the people that spend money making it.", " Yes, because it would mean that the money would be used for a better cause than for inefficiencies, middlemen." but also answers such as "Maybe. It's more about cost, how much is it going to cost me. If the 2 products were the same price, I would go with GlobalSale because I know more of it goes to the artisan.", "No, especially for Christmas gifts. I want to find the cheapest deals, because I buy a lot for Christmas. For someones birthday I might. Take the Toms Shoes (organization). Just because I felt good about helping sometimes, I won't do it all the time. There are many ways of helping people, I am not going to buy everything from one site, even if that site makes me feel good. I also give to other charities, so I don't feel like I always have to buy things from the artisans. I would buy from GlobalSale sometimes.", "Not really because the web site might need a lot of money to cover their expenses." The outcome is that people have mixed feelings about buying from the GlobalSale website, but those who would like to buy products are more inclined to do so if they see a story related to the piece of art. The impact on the design of the website is the following: the story of the artisan has to be presented next to his products, in order to make it a more personal experience for the buyer. A second insight is that we have to be very careful about the prices of the products. For some buyers, the price is the only criteria by which they choose what they buy and we have to keep in mind that there is the additional shipping cost that the customer has to pay when buying from GlobalSale. The prices on the website can be slightly smaller than the prices from physical shops (for similar products) because the exchange rate American dollar-Romanian leu (the Romanian currency) favours the dollar, so $10 mean much more for a Romanian than for an American. If the products on the GlobalSale website are slightly cheaper than the products present at the local shops, the added shipping fees will not make the total cost unreasonable. The key here is our motivation: GlobalSale wants the artisans from Romania to get the money they deserve and thus we can make the price smaller, as long as the artisan covers his manufacturing costs and makes a profit (however small the profit, it will be an advantageous profit for him, since it is in American dollars), but the local businesses are interested

in as big a profit as possible. Thus, whatever the prices are at local businesses, GlobalSale can price the products slightly lower and the Romanian artisans will still make a profit, because of the American-Romanian exchange rate.

The answers to the question "Would you pay $10 for a product to be shipped from Romania to your address in the US? " were mostly favorable, with additional specifications in the answer, such as "Depends on the product (size, volume, price)." This means that we have to be very careful about the shipping fee, as people expect the shipping fee to be proportional to the product they are purchasing.

The question "Would you pay extra for a product if you knew that the extra money will make a big contribution to a person living in a disadvantaged country?" had mixed answers, ranging from "No","Maybe, it depends how much. If the money goes directly to the artisan, you don't know if the money is going to be used by the artisan to support their family, or to buy drugs." to "Occasionally it would happen, but if I see the story of the artisan there. Like Kiva, put a human element into it and people will be more likely to do it. If I can see the face, if I can see the impact of what I am doing, it's more likely I will help.", "Yes, it is natural that you want to give money to people for which it makes a difference, than giving the money to a rich CEO to buy a bigger yacht." These answers reflect the following: people want to see transparency in financial transactions related to charity, they want to be sure that their money will go to the right person and it is not lost in a corrupted system. The artisans on GlobalSale will have to give periodical updates of how their business is going and how their lives have been improved by GlobalSale. These updates will have to be posted on the website, along with the life story of the artisan, as described above. If the buyers see that the extra money they pay for a product is used for a truly good cause, they are more likely to keep helping the less fortunate.

Although the answers to the questionnaire are mixed, more than 50% of people are influenced by the idea of "fair trade" in their buying decisions. This is encouraging, as it shows that there is a market that GlobalSale can target: well-educated people, that have reasonable incomes. One thing that is needed in order to run GlobalSale and create the shipping logistics is to register the organization as a non-profit. This gives rise to the need of abiding by contract law - i.e. if GlobalSale takes money, it needs to ensure the customer gets what they paid for.

7 Future Work

The first version of GlobalSale displays pictures of products made by Romanian artisans, but we want future versions to present products from other countries as well. The open problems that have to be addressed in future work are presented in this paragraph. First, the shipping process has to be clearly defined. We already know that the Postal Services are a viable option, but if the customers want their products to arrive in two weeks, we will have to coordinate the orders of different customers, so that we can ship the products in bulk (since this is the only reasonable way of sending products from Romania to the US).

The problem of scaling to other countries is the most challenging one because each country is different, with its different customs and regulations that have to be taken into account. It is much different dealing with the financial system

in Romania than dealing with the banks in an African country. We will need to consult many sources in order to understand how the banks work in a specific country, how the postal services work, what is the exchange rate, etc. There will be substantial research to be done in this direction, but it is not impossible. And once we understand how to overcome the logistical problems of a disadvantaged country, we will have the great satisfaction of contributing to a fair market. Another issue that has to be overcome is how to find and contact artisans from a new country. The author of this paper is Romanian and has many connections with different artisans in Romania, but that will not be the case when expanding GlobalSale to a country in the African continent, for example. In the latter case, we will have to think of new ways of advertising GlobalSale and letting the artisans know that they can sell their products using GlobalSale, researching how we can pay the artisans and possibly contacting the local banks in that country to better understand how to make the financial transactions related to GlobalSale. Another impediment that has to be accounted for is the different languages that are spoken in different countries. The implementation of GlobalSale for a new country definitely has to take that into account and provide translations.

8 Lessons Learned

I have learned many lessons while doing this V-Unit project and I am glad that I completed this project. The first lesson is that for any business to work, there are a lot of logistics involved and one needs to think very carefully about solving the different problems before opening the business to the public. There are financial problems, transportation issues, legal problems that have to be put in order before clients can enjoy the services provided. A second lesson is that the final idea of a business, or a project in our case, might not be the original idea that started the project, but it can still be useful. The third insight is that I enjoy very much working on these kind of projects and it would give me great satisfaction to have a business of my own, that I have designed from scratch and that helps people. I have understood that even if my future potential company is not for profit, as long as it provides enough money for me to live, I would be very invested in that company. So in this sense, the V-Unit has confirmed my feeling that I would be very very happy as an entrepreneur.

9 Conclusion

This V-Unit project has made two contributions: a survey about how current organizations and companies are trying to help people in disadvantaged countries around the world and the GlobalSale web sevice, that acts as a bridge between Romanian artisans and the American public. Although there are still some open problems with the GlobalSale implementation, our user study and the experimental shipping of one package from Romania to the US have shown that this is an implementable idea and the Romanian artisans will benefit from it, thus contributing to a more fair global market.

References

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[2] Peter Thomas Bauer. *United States Aid and Indian Economic Development.* American Enterprise Association, 1959.

[3] http://www.brutelabs.org/.

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