

**Designing a Workspace Reservation System Using ServiceNow**

(Technical Paper)

**'Fake it Till You Make it' Culture in Silicon Valley Startups**

(STS Paper)

A Thesis Prospectus Submitted to the  
Faculty of the School of Engineering and Applied Science  
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Technical Project Team Members

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On my honor as a University Student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this assignment as defined by the Honor Guidelines for Thesis-Related Assignments

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## Prospectus

### **Introduction**

For my technical project, I worked in a team of six interns at a software development internship to design and develop a web application. The end product was a fully functional website where employees can reserve workspaces in an office building. Many companies are looking to return to the workplace in a post-pandemic world, so we were tasked with developing a solution to help manage this transition. We aimed to meet given client requirements for the functionality of the platform including:

1. seating maps and space availability with designated use types for different spaces
2. the ability to reserve a space for use for a set period of time,
3. approvals for various contracting companies and government officials,
4. notifications to approving officials, managers, and requestors,
5. automated or manual approval settings, and
6. workplace and workflow status and reporting.

My technical project and internship gave me experience in the software development field and in the process of product development. In the research portion I will explore how workplace culture in Silicon Valley might impact this development process.

For the STS section of the thesis, I will analyze the sociological factors and impact of Silicon Valley's start-up culture. Silicon Valley is renowned for its technological innovation. It is home to the headquarters of some of the largest tech companies in the world including Google, Apple, Tesla and Twitter and is also known as a breeding ground for tech start-ups. These start-ups often have lofty expectations for their futures with mixed results for successfully living

up to these goals. I plan to investigate the effects and potential dangers of this culture of over-ambition.

### **Technical Topic and Project**

Because of changes in the post-pandemic workforce, many workplaces face shifts in office space requirements and a need to transform to digital workforce management. This motivated a project to support employees and contractors returning to the office and effectively manage office space for hoteling and remote workforce management. In the project, our development team designed and implemented a solution enabling employees to reserve an office space to use for a set period of time. The system we developed primarily consists of a web portal where employees can find available spaces meeting a search criterion and request either individual workspaces or collaboration spaces. Users can filter by relevant parameters such as building, floor, type of room and room capacity. Users can then look through available results using a 'card view' where each reservable room is represented as a card with an image, name and description of the room. Alternatively, users may view available rooms from a map view displaying a floor plan where the available rooms are highlighted and can be clicked to reserve. Security was also a consideration in the project, so users can set up a two-factor authentication to log into the system, and any potential security issues or breaches on the site are tracked. Additionally, notifications for reservations are sent to approving officials, managers and requesters so reservation requests can be approved or declined. Furthermore, dashboards display relevant data and statistics for the quantity and type of reservations in a given building.

The system was primarily developed using ServiceNow, a low-code development platform aimed to help companies manage digital workflows. Additionally, the user interface of the application was designed using the Angular web application framework as well as markup languages HTML, CSS and programming language, Javascript. The team used an Agile methodology and development approach. Responsibilities for the project were divided among team members based on technical and functional skills.

For employees, the portal provides a simplified method of reserving office space, and for managers it streamlines the workflow approval process. The solution improves upon an existing reservation management system by saving time as well as providing an improved user experience. This project has many social implications because it involves the way that we work and the future of the workplace.

### **STS Research and Methodology**

The STS research portion of the thesis will explore the social and ethical implications of Silicon Valley's start-up culture. In Silicon Valley big ideas and big expectations are plentiful with start-ups often forgoing modest expectations and instead promising to "revolutionize the industry" or "change the way we live." Consequently, companies often tend to overpromise and later underdeliver on these lofty claims. I intend to examine the dangers and impact of a culture of "fake it till you make it." Important questions will be explored such as: Where is the line between optimism and ambition or fraud and deception? How is start-up culture embedded in the final products? What dangers could this culture of overambition mean for product quality and safety?

I will tackle these research questions by exploring case studies and examining how they might reflect larger trends. The primary intended case study is Theranos, a health technology company and Silicon Valley ‘unicorn’ which was once worth almost \$10 billion and was seemingly poised to revolutionize the blood-testing industry. However, it quickly collapsed after the validity of its technology came into question and it became clear that its blood testing machines were often inaccurate and unreliable and many of Theranos’s purported claims unsupported or untrue. Now the company has been dissolved and its CEO and president are both on or awaiting trial for fraud. This study will mainly explore the consequences that occur when technology development fails to keep up with promises, including the effects on the companies employees and patients who used the devices. Essentially, this case will highlight the worst effects and dangers and what can happen when “fake it till you make it” culture goes too far.

I also intend to briefly explore or reference a few other cases in order to evaluate the culture of Silicon Valley as a whole. One potential case study is the rise and fall of shared workspace company WeWork. Additionally, I may also explore electric car company Nikola and the recently shuttered Ozy Media company or briefly examine Silicon Valley ‘success stories’ like Tesla or Uber.

### **Key Texts**

One text which may be used in the case study for the STS research portion is the book *Bad Blood: Secrets and Lies in a Silicon Valley Startup* by journalist and author John Carreyrou. The book gives a detailed history of the rise and fall of Theranos and the collateral damage that followed. Additionally, I may reference a series of Wall Street Journal articles by the same author, which first broke the story and exposed Theranos allegedly fraudulent practices.

Other sources may be used for a case study into WeWork including books *Billion Dollar Loser: The Epic Rise and Spectacular Fall of Adam Neumann and WeWork* by Reeves Wiedeman or *The Cult of We* by Eliot Brown which both follow the rise and subsequent fall of WeWork. Additionally, Dan Lyon's *Lab Rats* may be used to provide background and insight as to the pitfalls of Silicon Valley culture. STS foundational texts may also be referenced in analysis.

## **Conclusion**

In my thesis's technical portion I intend to provide a summary of my project developing a workplace reservation application. Then in the STS research portion I will explore how workplace culture in Silicon Valley might impact the technology development process and end products.

## Bibliography

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