

blogABLE (web-app)

ADVANCED WEB TECHNOLOGIES

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Introduction

The web-app developed is basically a blog of blogs. Any registered user can have their own blog and posts messages. If you are not registered, you cannot publish any message.

On the home page latest publications of all users appear together. We can move forward and backward page to see all publications. In addition, we know who has written each publication, so we can access to their profile.

Profiles are public, so anyone can access them without having to register. To do this you must know the username of the person you wish to view, or access the profile directly from a message that appear on the main page.

So, if you are already a registered user, you can post as many messages as you wish and will appear on your profile page. In addition, also they will appear on the main page with other users' posts.

To build the application has been used tools like Python, Flask, Jinja2, HTML, CSS, SQLite, Bootstrap or JavaScript.

Design

I have divided the architecture of the web application into five sections: 'register', 'login', 'post', 'user blog' and 'home'.

If we access register section we will be able to register. We have to enter the username that we want to have, our email and a password. If the username is already being used, the web will not let us register and a flash message warning it will appear. Once we have registered correctly, the web redirects to our homepage (user blog).

As we just register, we do not have any publication yet, so that the website itself invites us to publish a new message. By accessing the post section, we will have to fill two fields: title and message. Once it has been done, we can publish our message. The web redirects to our homepage and see a flash message saying that the post was successful. Just below, we will see our message. Apart from the title and the message,

the publication features the author and date of publication, which are added by the web directly.

If we were already registered but have not log in yet, we click login. Simply we have to put our username and password to access.

When we are guests, we can see the login and register buttons, but when we are logged in, we will see three buttons: our user profile, 'post', and 'logout'.

If we're done with the web, we can exit by clicking logout. So, we will close the session and we will be redirected to the main page.

On the home page latest publications of all users appear. Here we can read all publications and, if any interests us, we can click on the author's name to access their profile.

If you know the username of a member, you can access their profile using '/<username>/' and thus see their publications. We can also directly access older publications of both the main page and user page by typing '/2/' or '/<username>/2/'. We can also use the buttons 'Older' and 'Newer'.

To make the web-app, we have used a base template ('base.html') that is repeated on every page of the website. All other templates extend from this base template.

Finally, it has also been created the template for the 404 error, and can be tested with the path '/force404'.

Enhancement

The first thing of the web application that I would improve would be the way for a user to publish. I would give more freedom to users to format their messages as, for example, to put words in bold or underlined.

The 'post' section would also have the option to see visually how your post is going to be published.

One could also mention other users as follows to post a message: '@<username>'. When reading the message, you could click on the mentioned user and access to their profile directly.

Moreover, I would create a private section for each user where they could edit their data, such as username, email or password. It would also have more options such as modify the header image of their profile, or upload a profile picture.

Finally, it should be note that the software can always be improved, so that we could make many other improvements to this web-app. For example, you could build a system of friends whereby you could have a relationship with someone else. Furthermore, it could also be designed a private messaging system whereby users could communicate privately.

Critical evaluation

A critical evaluation of the web application can be very subjective, but I would take into account the following aspects in particular.

The web application is not simply a login and logout system. Each user has their own personal page where they can publish, and every personal page can be accessed by anyone. In addition, the number of messages are handled so the web do not overload. Only a few messages are displayed per page and, if the user wants to see more, they can press the button 'Older'. Also, if you want to see rather more old messages, you can type `'/<username>/<pageNumber>/'`, so accessing the page you want.

The messages are published by the users appear together on the main page, so anyone can enjoy reading the latest news published. And if you liked on especially, you can access the user profile of who has written the message, and keep reading only their messages.

It is important to say that we start practicing with very simple aspects of Python and HTML, so that the web is significantly more advanced than studied. Obviously, you can improve it in many aspects like all software, and this has been detailed in the 'improvements' section. All these improvements would enrich the functionality of the web making it a fairly complete and enough to launch a first version at web market. Thus, we could test how the user gets on with the web-app before developing all the functions fully and getting direct feedback.

Personal evaluation

This work has helped me to learn and discover new aspects of Python and how to create a website from zero.

A useful aspect has been everything related to the database. I found it very interesting to learn to manage a user base and how passwords are encrypted so that the administrator of a site cannot obtain them.

Furthermore, the use of sessions is fantastic. Thanks to them, we can show aspects of the web that we would not show if the user was not logged in.

The template for the graphic design of the site was very different from how it finally left, and I had to learn a lot of HTML tags which I did not know before. So, I managed to remove those parts of the web that seemed unnecessary. I had several problems with Bootstrap, because some pieces of code that the web had implemented made that submit buttons did not work. Luckily, I was able to remove that code and now everything is working properly.

Summary

Notes & Workbook 2015-2016

Website template - <http://startbootstrap.com/template-overviews/clean-blog/>

Python Documentation <https://www.python.org/doc/>

Flask <http://flask.pocoo.org/>