DEVELOPMENT OF SMART PAYMENT SYSTEM

FOR USLS – IS CAFETERIA

A Design Project Presented to

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Introduction

Technology is highly essential to the culture today. Even though its changes are fast-paced, the world looks for ways to cope with its evolution and apply it to solve everyday problems. Man has developed hardware devices, software application and ways to communicate in order to suffice the needs and wants of society, making life easier and more comfortable. The society today wants products and services available anytime and anywhere – in short, have things on-the-go.

The market for children’s products and food is enormous. Parents on the one hand have a hard time raising children the way they want to, while on the other hand, kids are being increasingly influenced by commercialism that often goes against what parents are trying to do. (*Anup Shah, 2010*) Purchasing of food items in a school cafeteria is inevitable, especially for young students like the Lasallians from the University of St. La Salle – Integrated School. This is one reason why it is important for parents to monitor their children’s transactions.

Background of the Study

In the University of St. La Salle – Integrated School, the cafeteria is one of the most visited places by the students. Also, majority of purchases are done here. There is a large of number of sellers but the number of employees under one seller is low, thus, making transactions slower and more tedious. This also leads to congestion while buying food items.

Parents, in one hand, also face the problem of being unassured. Since they are not always around their children, they have no means of monitoring what their children are buying or whether the food they eat is safe.

This design project aims to use Radio-frequency Identification (RFID) in making cashless purchases from the cafeteria in the University of St. La Salle – Integrated School. It also makes use of Cloud Computing by keeping track of the vendor’s list of items that are available for buying, along with their prices, the number of purchases made by the students and the total revenue that they have accumulated throughout a certain period. This payment scheme also comes with an application which the parents can download in order to monitor the student’s transactions, see the available balance in the child’s account and control the child’s daily expenditure budget

Statement of the Problem

The main goal of this study design project is to address the traffic that is created during transactions in the cafeteria of the University of St. La Salle. Aside from that, there are other supporting questions for the problem. These questions are as follows:

1. Will the use of RFID make transactions faster?
2. What would help to secure the buying system in USLS-IS cafeteria?
3. What would help monitor the budget of the student and the food he/she eats?
4. What would help regulate the products sold in school?
5. How can the students maximize their break or lunch time in terms of purchasing food?
6. How can the vendors accommodate more customers at a time?
7. What can be a more convenient way to do transactions in terms of payment?
8. What can help with the inventory process which the vendors do at the end of the day?

Scope and Limitations

This project is a payment system using Radio-frequency Identification (RFID) that is linked to the student’s Identification card. It is built with a cloud system where transactions and file storage are present. An app is provided to the parents so that they can track the things the students buy and limit the child's expenses during the day. The RFID can be loaded anytime via a kiosk machine. The loading machine does not dispense cash and is limited only for paper bills, therefore the exact amount must be deposited. If the RFID is lost, a temporary card, along with the student’s credit information, will be provided. The client is then obliged to return the temporary card as soon as the lost card is replaced.

Every store in the cafeteria has a product list of all the products they sell. Product lists are then stored in the cloud, together with the number of purchased items, and monitored by the administrator. The administrator is the only person granted with access to the cloud. The vendors need to surrender to the administrator the product they want to sell and it will be added to the store’s product list in the cloud. The setup in the vendor side is a Barcode scanner, an NFC reader, PN532, and a computer that connects to the cloud.

The transaction method goes this way: first, the student picks a product to buy then the vendor will scan its barcode. The student will proceed to payment by tapping the RFID card on the NFC reader. After that transaction is sent to the cloud, the transaction of the student will reflect on the app given to the parents. The administrator monitors every transaction that is done in every store, including their daily income. Every week, the store can retrieve their liquidation reports from the administrator and claim their revenues from the school’s Business Office. In redeeming the money, rents and other utilities are automatically deducted.

Significance of the Study

It has always been a struggle for some vendors to keep up with the amount of students that buys in their store. Some stores have only around 2 employees to accommodate more than 10 students buying. This may result to student congestion and prolongs each transaction time. It’s inconvenient for the students since they only have a limited time to eat. Added to that, there may also be some products that may be sold in the cafeteria that’s not good for the students. Our study will aid the said problem.

It will make it more convenient for the vendors since their transaction times will decrease and therefore increase the amount of customers each employee can accommodate at a time. This is because the payment will be automated, with the use of RFID and products that are barcode registered. They only have to scan the registered barcode and then let the student tap the RFID. That will deduct the exact amount from the student’s current balance. This way, there’s no need for the vendors to manually process the money both receiving the payment and returning the change. And since the student pays the exact amount, this can prevent vendors from overcharging them. The parents will also be able to monitor what their child has been purchasing through a monitoring app that updates in real time. In addition to that, since the products have been registered with their own barcode, the cafeteria can regulate what products are being sold.

Our study will also aid the cafeteria in regulating the food that is being sold to the students. This can help with making sure the food that the students eat is healthy. Regulated product supply means regulated consumption. This can lessen the amount of products that the students consume which are considered unhealthy.

2018 is a part of the year of innovation. Technology has been spreading around the world mostly for the purpose of automation. There were times that our University have tried implementing automated technologies but not all have been successful. This study can help the University slowly step into Automated Technologies.

Definition of Terms

Throughout the study, there are terms that are technical and might need explanations. For the purpose of this study, the following key terms are defined.

Student. This refers to a person who is currently enrolled in the University of St. La Salle – Integrated School.

Parent. This refers to the legal guardian of a student studying in the University of St. La Salle – Integrated School.

Vendor. This refers to the store, the store owners and the employees affiliated to the cafeteria within the University of St. La Salle – Integrated School.

Radio-frequency Identification (RFID). According to George Roussos, it is an umbrella term that refers to several information and communication technologies that share the capability to automatically identify objects, locations, and individuals to computing systems without any need for manual intervention.

Cloud. It is a network of remote servers hosted on the Internet and used to store, manage, and process data in place of local servers or personal computers.

App. It is a software application downloaded on a device for personal use by a user.