CECS 491A Proposal 2: Dbate

Prepared By: Red Team

Group Members:

Christian Flores-Rogel 013924454 (Team Leader)
Deivis Leung Liang 014110497
Luis Meza 014325959
Keanna Mae Vitug 014699514
John Cayton 014108690

Professor: Vatanak Vong

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I. Introduction

This document consists of a proposal to create Dbate, a classic web application that implements a generalized chat system that allows debating and easy modifications for other game-like functionalities. Dbate allows users to examine and debate on randomly assigned questions. Although users can use other chat systems to debate, Dbate diverges from these applications with its new functionalities that serve the purpose of debating by implementing a live chat feature with a moderator to serve as both the judge and overseer. In this proposal, the value, benefits, and technical aspects of the web application will be analyzed.

II. The Problem

Social media is one of the main flourishing technologies that we have today. Online interactions between individuals often lead to debates due to conflicting views and eventually escalate to arguments if not moderated. One common problem that many people face on the internet is finding a place where they can properly construct an argument and respond to criticism. Although some may enjoy having impromptu debates both face-to-face or through their desired social media feed, these debating styles may become disorderly without anyone closely moderating the individuals.

III. The Solution

The most efficient way for people to debate random questions would be through Dbate. Upon entering the Dbate chat system, each debate starts off without any bias, and the group guides where it goes from there. Over the course of the debate, order will be maintained by a moderator. The core audience for this application would be the young adults on the internet who are starting to form their own opinions and others who are overall interested in the act of debating.

IV. The Value

By assigning groups random questions, users are exposed to a wide variety of topics. When a user is presented with a familiar topic, they are able to share their knowledge and possibly learn something new from other users. In contrast, unfamiliar questions provide users a chance to discover different interests and might encourage them to further research that topic.

Although applications with similar debate features such as Kialo, Artikulate, and Qallout are currently online, Dbate clearly differentiates itself from its competitors. The apps listed above all share the premise of setting their debates on a polling system that labels the opposing sides as pros and cons whereas Dbate implements a neutral third party, the moderator, who chooses the side that won the debate. This is different from the other apps because the method of choosing the winners through popular vote can lead to favoritism. Dbate is also different from apps such as Qallout because the chat would be between a small group instead of two individuals.

Overall, this web application would be extremely beneficial to the young audience because debate skills are valuable for them to begin forming and expressing their own opinions. Dbate will allow users to learn how to articulate their thoughts, improve critical thinking skills, and expand their worldview in a safe environment.

V. Project Scope

This web app will primarily be available in the United States and distributed in the English language only. Dbate is aimed to be accessible to the latest and most popular desktop web browsers to reach the maximum amount of users. The central focus of this project is to adapt to over half of the internet browser share for computers in the US.

The chat room feature will require a total of three to seven members per discussion with one moderator and one to three players for each team. By implementing a limit of members per discussion, Dbate is keeping the users engaged and reinforcing the fast-paced discussion style.

Our main constraints would be new browser updates that may affect the sustainability of the web app as well as accomplishing our goal to reach a specific percentage of computers in the US. These are our main concerns because it may affect the accommodations we might have to implement in order for our web app to meet the necessary requirements.

Due to time constraints, this project will not focus on the availability of the web app in multiple languages and distribution to all browsers. We can assure that we will have the required documentation and a workable web app by the provided deadline with our team of five people. In addition, this web app will not be supported on mobile devices.

VI. How The App Works

In order to keep the chat well-mannered, Dbate will implement phases to determine when users are able to chat. The moderator by default goes to whoever creates the game but they also have the ability to make the moderator be chosen randomly should they choose not to be one. These phases may be altered depending on the user's preference. The first phase will be the opening statement where teams will have a limited amount of time to collaborate and share ideas to support their viewpoint. Then an opening statement will be made by player one of each team.

The second phase is the main debating phase which consists of a back and forth discussion between individual members of both teams. To ensure that all members of both teams are able to get their point across without being interrupted, Dbate will implement rules to keep the discussion civilized. The format of how the discussion will go is where a member of one group goes, then a member from the other group responds, which continues until both players two and three of each team have been given the chance to speak. Users will wait their turn in a queue while the other users make their rebuttals. Depending on the size of the group, the debate structure may be slightly different. If the team members would like to discuss amongst themselves, there will be a private team chat provided to do so. With these implementations, the moderator will still be able to oversee both the private team chat and the group discussion to moderate their behaviors.

The final phase of the discussion will be the closing statement which will follow the same rules as the opening statement. After both sides have given their closing statement with their respective arguments, the moderator will decide the winner and the debate concludes. Overall, the debate will last around 16-30 minutes depending on the settings chosen.

VII. Features

Core Features

The core features are vital in building the content of a web app because without them, the web app will not function properly.

1. Registration
    - This feature allows someone to sign up for the web app by asking them to enter their name, email, username, and password so they can create an account and log in to the app. This is a core feature because it allows the users to have an account so they can access the web app.
2. User Management
    - This feature grants rights to the application and also to a specific user depending on their role for their web app. This is important because it changes the rights of a user when their role is changed within the app such as when a user gets moderator rights. It's also important because it provides additional security to the app by preventing users from getting rights that they don't need.
3. Login/Logout
    - Login allows for the authentication of users based on their username and password. Login allows the user to end their login session with the usage of the web app with their account. This is important because it provides security support by preventing unwanted users from accessing another account by authenticating the user and also by preventing spam since it verifies the user.

4. Error Handling
    - Error handling allows for errors in the application and in communication to be anticipated, detected, and resolved. This is a core feature because the anticipation, detection, and handling of errors will prevent these errors from causing unintended consequences. It's also important because error handling will allow users to have a better understanding of what occurred and not get completely confused.
5. Data Store Access
    - This feature give users the ability to access or retrieve data stored within the database or other repository. This is important because it will allow users to retrieve, store, or manipulate the data in their device.
6. User Access Control
    - This feature restricts features that the users can access and change within the web app. This is important because it will prevent any unauthorized changes that may affect the web app.
7. Logging/Archiving
    - Logging/archiving will enable the recording of warnings, errors, and key events on data that occur. This is important because it makes it easier for the developers to find issues and bugs in the system, which enables them to be able to resolve the issue quicker.

8. Usage Analysis Dashboard
    - This feature shows statistics of the web app's usage including when it was used, where it was accessed, and user activity. This is important because it makes monitoring user activity easier and can help in investigating possible bugs that may appear in the future.
9. Documentation
    - Documentation on what each part of our code in the program does will be provided as well as a user manual, installation manual and other requirements of the document. This is important because it will provide organization and will make it easier to understand our web app.
10. Network Communication
    - This feature will allow the user to access our web-app through the internet. This is important since a user will need some sort of internet connection to access the web app.

Application Specific Features

These are additional features that are specific to our web app that gives it more functionalities.

1. Chat Room
    - Inside the chat room, users are able to participate in the debate. They are able to post comments based on the structure of the debate. Users will be able to make comments in the game chat to communicate with all members of the debate or

through the team chat to communicate with just team members. This functionality is ranked one because without it, users aren't able to participate in the debate.

2. Gameplay
    - For gameplay, each user's ability to post is based on how many members are in each group, so it can accommodate the debate structure. Each user will either be assigned the ability to write their main arguments, rebuttal, or concluding statements for their respective group. Users who aren't assigned to a specific turn are not able to speak during those turns. The chat room will also have a smaller chat room included in the game. Here the users can speak freely with their own teammates so they can plan their statements during the debate. The gameplay function will also allow moderators to select the winner of the debate. This feature is ranked second because it provides the basis for how users will debate in the chat room.
3. Role Functionality
    - The users of the web app have different roles. By assigning different roles for the users, they are limited to the controls given to depending on if they are admin or basic privileges.
4. Waiting Room ("The Queue")
    - A user creates a room where other users will be able to join. This room is used to wait until the game starts and allows for the rules of the game to be modified by the creator. This is important because the creator of a lobby can change the amount of users in the debate, the length of the debate, and choose if they will be

the moderator or allow the moderator to be randomly selected. It is also important because users who join the room can see the rules of the game and the game can be started early before it is full as long as the minimum number of players (3) is met.

5. Matchmaking
    - Allows users to be matched into a random waiting room if they choose the option to join a chat they didn't create. This feature is ranked five because it allows users to be able to join in open debates.
6. Question Randomization
    - In each chat room a question is chosen randomly so the users can participate and debate. This feature is ranked six because it gives the user the topic to debate about.
7. Choose a Side
    - Users choose which side they want to be on after the question has been given. This feature is ranked seven because it will satisfy users during their gameplay.

VIII. User/Player Roles

The web app can be accessed in multiple ways. As a result, roles are created to ensure that the web app will run as optimally as possible and prevent spam. The table below shows the rights and powers that each role has.

Table 1 : User roles and their rights/powers
Note: Ranking #1 = more rights/powers, #2= less rights/powers

Ranking	Role	Rights/Powers
1	Admin	● Ability to add content ● See statistics of website ● Can announce updates ● Ability to delete and/or report users who violate any rules
2	General Users	● Ability to create chat rooms ● Ability to join chat rooms ● Ability to report users who violate any rules

Inside a game, users are assigned to one of the two roles with their own respective privileges. The table below shows the rights and powers that each role has.

Table 2 : Player roles and their rights/powers

Ranking	Role	Rights/Powers
1	Moderator	● Can decide the winner of the debate ● Mute members and remove members from a chat room ● Can post comments (higher priority than members) in the chat rooms
2	Debater	● Can post comments in the chat room debate

IX. The Approach

The project will be using Scrum principles to complete our tasks. Scrum is a framework that utilizes the agile methodology and involves frequent communication and feedback from the client. Communicating with the client is the priority for building this web app. The goal of this approach is to be able to deliver working software in every sprint.

X. Time and Cost

a. Time

The timeline for the web app development will be based heavily on the sprint cycles. Each sprint cycle will last between two to five weeks and focus on having a functional deliverable by the end of the cycle. Overall, the first half of development will focus on the web app design. The team will begin implementing the web app during the second half. The goal is to have the web app finished by the deadline in May 2019.

b. Cost

Resource	Cost	Purpose
Domain	$25.00 - $50.00	Name that is going to be identified by on the internet
Host	$60.00 - $120.00	Allows the web app to be viewed on the internet
Developers	$0.00	Develop web app based on the requirements and client's demands
Miscellaneous	$0-$100	Unforeseen expenses
Total Cost: $85.00 - $270.00		