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Library Management System
June 23, 2020

Problem statement

Just recently, a new local library has opened in Ewing Township, NJ. However, this library does not currently have a database in place to manage daily library activities, and only rely on a written system to keep track of book inventory, rentals, etc.

Objective of the module

Our team has been tasked with creating this database in order to create a quick, convenient library experience. Our objective is to create a sustainable library database.

Description of the desired end product, and the part you will develop for this class

This database would be able to automate typical library tasks and activities such as borrowing books, keeping track of rentals (borrowers), and book information. This database would provide/help librarians/borrowers with rentals, book inventory, book information, and the like. There would be two interfaces to this database system: the librarian interface and the user interface. The librarian(s) would be responsible for adding and modifying new book inventories, book information, and borrowers (e.g. adding new members). Regarding books, the librarian would be able to check-in, reserve, and return books for the members. The borrowers would be able to search the database for books, check-in/out books, reserve, and renew books as well. Our database will give the option of renting either a physical or a digital copy of the book. When renting the digital copy of a particular book, the borrower would have a limited access time, and when the time is up, the borrower would no longer have access to the book, unless renewed. Regarding the database system itself, librarians and borrowers will be able to search for books by using their title, author, or genre. Librarians will also be able to see when every rental was checked out and when they are due back at the library, and borrowers will be able to see when their rentals are to be returned. Additionally, each book will have its own unique identification number, so it will be able to be located when needed. Overall, as stated above, this database system will be able to perform the normal daily activities/tasks of a library.

Description of the importance and need for the module, and how it addresses the problem

The importance of this database is that it will create a more convenient, user-friendly experience for the borrower and the librarian. It addresses the problem statement because it will help alleviate the pressure of having to keep up with the daily book inventory with only a pen and paper system. By moving library activities online, there will be less hassle to maintain and keep track of the library inventory.

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Plan for how you will research the problem domain and obtain the data needed

We will research library reading lists online and pass them into the database for testing purposes. If the database system would be implemented in an actual library, we would be putting in the actual book inventory in the database.

Other similar systems/approaches that exist, and how your module is different or will add to the existing system

All public libraries have online databases used to keep track of borrowed books. Additionally, there are other businesses that have a similar system as ours, such as movie rental companies or video game rental companies. We will add the feature of having either online or physical copies of books, a feature that not every library has.

Possible other applications of the system (how it could be modified and reused.)

This system can also be modified to keep track of renting video games and movies. Once the borrower checks out the item(s), he or she would be sent a notification saying when that certain movie or video game is due back. Another scenario would be renting skis and snowboards: as soon as they are rented, the borrower would have a certain time limit to use the desired vehicle (borrower's request), before getting a notification about returning the skis or snowboards.

Performance – specify how and to what extent you will address this

We will maximize the performance of our database by optimizing the query performance. This will allow our database to run quicker and smoother, and there will be less delay in retrieving information and checking out books.

Security – specify how and to what extent you will provide security features

Regarding security, the librarian/database administrator will have more freedom to access the full database. In order to keep from reporting and tracking an incorrect book inventory, borrowers will not be able to have full access to the database system. They will only be able to search for books, view availability/unavailability, etc.

Backup and recovery – specify how and to what extent you will implement this

We will back up a copy of the rental information of the books in the library every day. The information about the books available will be backed up weekly. This data could be backed up to a separate hard drive in a different location.

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Technologies and database concepts the team will need to learn, and a plan for learning these

In order to complete this database system, we would need to learn web programming (Python) in order to create a sufficient user interface. Also, we would need to learn how to create the tables and the relationships between entities, including attributes as well. Additionally, learning database languages, such as SQL, would be a necessity, in order to be able to successfully communicate with the database.

A diagrammatic representation of the system boundary that specifies what data you will model and which queries you will implement

The data we would be representing is keeping track of book inventory and the borrowers who borrow them. Each book will have the following properties: title, author, genre, ISBN number, number of total copies in the library, and the number of available copies. If the rental books are overdue, reminders/notifications are sent to the borrower. Another aspect of data we can represent is enabling the borrower to see if a book is available or not.