

VIETNAM NATIONAL UNIVERSITY - HO CHI MINH CITY
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
FACULTY OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING



SPECIALIZED PROJECT

**BUILD A MOBILE APP FOR
DATA COLLECTION AND
URBAN TRAFFIC ESTIMATION**

Major: Computer Science

Council: Information System

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Ho Chi Minh City, 13th December, 2023



DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

We would like to state that to project "Build a mobile app for data collection and urban traffic estimation" is our own work under the guidance of Assoc. Prof. Tran Minh Quang and MSc. Bui Tien Duc. Related knowledge, information and research works that we refer to will be clearly noted in the references section. We are responsible for the truthfulness of our topic.

Ho Chi Minh, December 2023

Students

Nguyen Nho Gia Phuc

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Motivation

Ho Chi Minh City is a thriving metropolis known for its vibrancy and economic importance, but it also has a persistent problem with traffic congestion. An astounding estimated cost of 6 billion USD per year [1] highlights the crippling effects of traffic congestion on Ho Chi Minh City, indicating not only the financial toll on businesses but also the pressing need to put into practice practical solutions for sustainable urban development. Within this context, the project's driving force is the necessity to improve the current mobile application aimed at facilitating better traffic conditions in Ho Chi Minh City. [2]



Figure 1: Traffic congestion at the Hang Xanh intersection at the end of 2022

The current measures taken by the government to alleviate traffic congestion in Ho Chi Minh City have mostly failed, despite their concerted efforts. The rapid urbanization and increasing vehicular density have posed challenges for infrastructure projects and traffic management initiatives to keep up with. Moreover, the current deficiencies in the public transportation system have hindered its capacity to function as a viable alternative for a significant portion of the population. The insufficient effectiveness of these measures underscores the intricacy of the challenge, requiring a thorough reassessment and inventive strategy to attain significant and enduring outcomes.

1.2 Available solutions

In response to the pressing issue of traffic congestion in Ho Chi Minh City, various measures have been implemented to alleviate the strain on the urban transportation system. One notable initiative



involves ongoing investments in infrastructure development, with the construction of new roads and the expansion of existing thoroughfares aimed at accommodating the city's growing population and vehicular density. Additionally, the government has introduced and expanded public transportation services, such as buses and the metro system, as a means to encourage citizens to opt for more sustainable modes of commuting.

A different strategy for addressing traffic congestion involves the creation of specialized programs for the purpose of continuously monitoring the situation in real-time. These applications utilize technology to deliver real-time updates on traffic conditions, acknowledging the demand for immediate information. Through the collection and analysis of data from diverse sources, including GPS-enabled devices and surveillance cameras, these applications enable users to make well-informed decisions regarding their travels. An example is the TTGT HCMC application created by the Department of Transportation in Ho Chi Minh City. This application functions as a vital instrument, providing users with instant access to real-time updates on the status of routes and visual information through a network of 685 strategically positioned cameras throughout the city. These innovative technologies enhance the ability to effectively manage traffic congestion in urban environments by employing a dynamic and adaptable approach.

1.3 Problem statement

UTraffic [3] is a city traffic prediction system that relies on data gathered from the local population developed by Professor Tran Minh Quang, alongside his associates and students at Ho Chi Minh University of Technology. UTraffic's products aim to mitigate traffic congestion and enhance safety and convenience for users. Using big data analytics and machine learning, the solutions estimate and forecast traffic conditions accurately and quickly, warn users of traffic jams, support efficient routing that takes traffic conditions into account, and provide statistical information and forecasts to help managers make decisions. However, despite UTraffic's commendable objectives and the overarching focus on the mobile application and backend technologies, several challenges have surfaced in the system's current implementation that require careful consideration and resolution:

- Observations from the previous authors highlight the necessity for refactoring the code base of both the server and mobile app to enhance reusability and readability. Furthermore, the documentation requires centralization to simplify the installation and configuration process for new developers. **refactor needed**
- In addition to impeding thorough data collecting and insights into traffic patterns in Ho Chi Minh City, the lack of an iOS version restricts our ability to interact with the sizable iPhone user base.
- In addition to relying on crowd-sourced data for efficient routing, our existing approaches to traffic congestion are not sufficiently diverse.

1.4 Scope and objectives

The UTraffic app and backend, developed by previous teams, serve as the basis for our efforts to enhance and innovate Ho Chi Minh City's traffic circumstances. The objective of the project is to expand the number of users by creating an iOS version of the current Android application. The objective of this iOS expansion is to enhance the accessibility of the UTraffic application, thereby encouraging a broader range of users. Objectively, the introduction of supplementary bus-related services is intended



to encourage the greater use of public transportation. These services will provide users with up-to-date information about bus routes, schedules, and other information, improving the attractiveness of sustainable commuting choices. Moreover, a crucial component of the project entails the reorganization of the code base, with a focus on enhancing the internal code structure to achieve better clarity, readability, and reusability. This aims to streamline development and enhance long-term maintenance efficiency. The project aims to make a substantial contribution to the improvement of urban mobility in Ho Chi Minh City through these collaborative efforts.

2 RELATED RESEARCH

2.1 Bus-Related Services

Previous groups' research has investigated traffic-related value-added services, such as nearby hospitals and automatic teller machines. When it comes to our project, one major candidate for us to continue this research direction is the addition of buses and public transport as a whole. Our research investigates a range of existing applications that provide services related to buses. Through a thorough analysis of established solutions within this field, our objective is to acquire insights that will guide the improvement of our application by finding a compromise between the current system's strengths and weaknesses.

The existing solutions in question are the package offered by FPT in the names of Go!Bus TPHCM and the Buyt TPHCM website, as well as BusMap by Phenikaa MaaS JSC.

2.1.1 The FPT Ecosystem

Besides Go!Bus TPHCM, FPT offers a wide set of choices for citizens to track traffic data, and these services are linked together. Most notably, the TTGT Tp Ho Chi Minh app allows users to see public cameras for traffic. We place particular emphasis on Go!Bus as it aligns with our project's focus, and Buyt TPHCM holds significance for data collection, as detailed in subsequent sections. These applications play pivotal roles in informing our research and development efforts.

2.1.1.a Go!Bus

Fundamentally, Go!Bus offers solely bus-related services like bus stop searching, bus route searching, and routing. The app also has some support for Grab when routing. The home screen for the app is as follows:

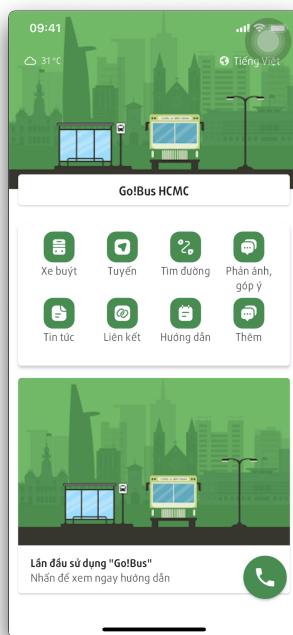
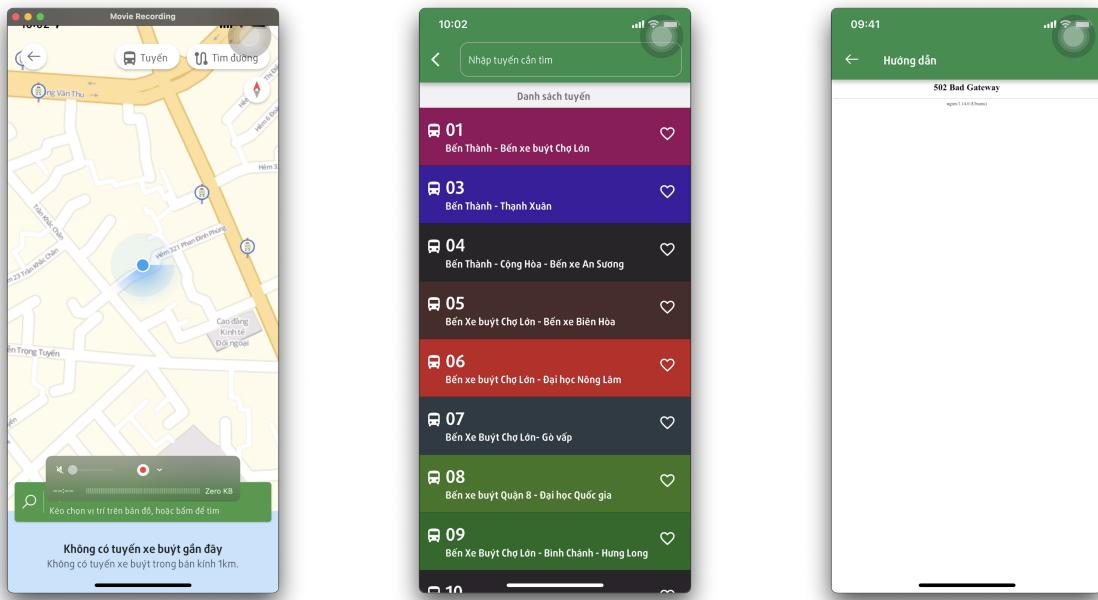


Figure 2: The home screen for Go!Bus.

Nevertheless, during our testing of these features, none of them functioned, or had inconsistent uptimes. Here are a few examples of these occurrences.



(a) No data for nearby routes.

(b) The stops do not show anything when pressed.

(c) Embedded web view with server error.

Figure 3: Go!Bus functionalities problems

It also portrayed some mobile app bad practices, such as embedding an excessive number of web views into the user interface. Apple, in particular, is not fond of this approach and publicly stated that apps using this will not be accepted in the future. This is one of the points that we will take into consideration when developing our iOS app.

2.1.1.b Buyt TPHCM website

Buyt TPHCM website is an online resource designed to provide comprehensive information and tools for navigating the public bus system in Ho Chi Minh City. This website aims to enhance the accessibility and user experience of public transportation within the city by offering the following key functionalities:

- **Detailed route information:** The website provides users with comprehensive information on all bus routes in Ho Chi Minh City, including individual stop locations, schedules, and route maps.
- **Real-time bus arrival predictions:** To promote efficient travel planning, buyttphcm.com.vn offers real-time bus arrival predictions for all routes, allowing users to make informed decisions about their travel time.
- **Convenient tools and resources:** This website provides access to the Go!Bus mobile application, enabling users to easily purchase tickets and plan their bus journeys on the go. Additionally, users can find helpful information about the Public Transport Management Center and other relevant resources.
- **Up-to-date news and information:** buyttphcm.com.vn keeps users informed of the latest de-

velopments in the Ho Chi Minh City bus system, including temporary route changes, service disruptions, and new initiatives.

With its regularly updated resources, Buýt TP HCM will play a crucial role in our data collection process for bus stops and routes in the later stages of our project.

2.1.2 BusMap

BusMap rose as a prime solution for city navigation using buses. It also expanded into other regions and countries like Thailand and is overall doing well.

The fundamental bus services like searching and routing are executed well on BusMap, bar some UI lag that could be due to the excessive inclusion of map views. Users can see the bus locations that are coming their way with an estimated time of arrival. There are also other services offered by BusMap, such as JobMap, MotelMap, and driver license support. However, sections like "Blogs" and "News" might be unnecessary for most users.

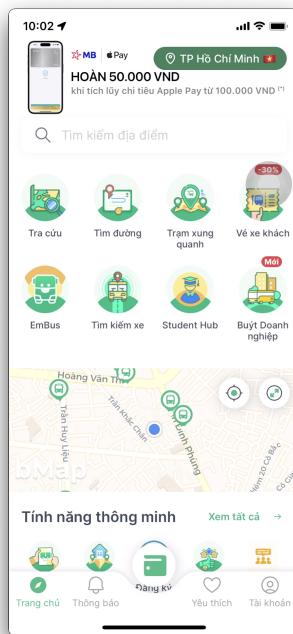


Figure 4: The home screen for BusMap

2.1.3 Conclusion

Both of these apps share a common feature of being equipped with an abundance of supplementary services. While Go!Bus TPHCM is compatible with Grab, BusMap has diversified its partnerships to include other businesses. One apparent limitation of UTraffic is the lack of access to real-time data, such as the current locations of buses and the duration until the next journey. Nevertheless, with sufficient effort and development, our application can excel as a dependable routing and search engine. Ultimately, the primary function of UTraffic is to process congestion data; therefore, we must be careful not to delve too thoroughly into other domains.



2.2 UTraffic's system analysis and design

2.2.1 Current code base structure

2.2.2 Implemented APIs

During our research to improve the performance and coherence of the application, we have come across some crucial APIs that are listed below:

- **Find Route by ID:** `/routes/route_id` - Retrieve detailed information about a specific bus route.
- **Nearby Routes:** `/routes/nearby` - Discover nearby bus routes based on location.
- **Find Stops by Route:** `/routes/route_id/stops` - Get a list of bus stops along a specific route.
- **Find Stops by Location:** `/stops/nearby` - Find bus stops near a given location.
- **Route Search:** `/routes/search` - Search for bus routes based on keywords or criteria.

We also expanded the existing API that handles the traffic status by supporting an endpoint that outputs GeoJSON data. This is done by following the GeoJSON's standard format of being a FeatureCollection of Features, where each Feature is a Point with the coordinates of the traffic status.

3 THEORETICAL BASIS

3.1 Model

3.1.1 Model-View-Controller (MVC)

MVC is an architectural design pattern for building applications that separates the application into three main logical components: the model, the view, and the controller. In the MVC model:

- **Model:** Represents the data and business logic of the application. It is the "unchanging essence" of the application and should be stable and long-lived.
- **View:** Represents the user interface of the application. There can be multiple views for different devices, such as a web interface, mobile app, or command line interface.
- **Controller:** Handles user input and updates the model and view accordingly. It acts as an intermediary between the model and the view, processing business logic and managing data flow.

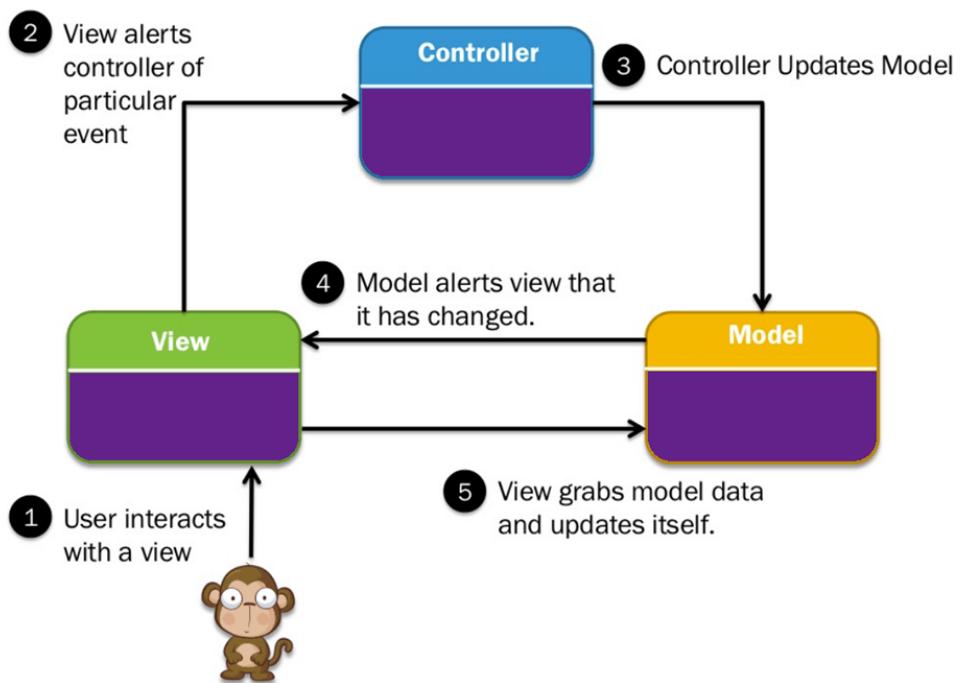


Figure 5: MVC architecture

Benefits of using MVC:

- **Separation of concerns:** Each component has a well-defined role, making the code easier to understand and maintain.
- **Improved testability:** Each component can be tested independently.
- **Increased flexibility:** Changes to one component can be made without affecting the others.
- **Easier collaboration:** Different developers can work on different components independently.



3.1.2 Model-View-ViewModel (MVVM)

3.2 Frontend

3.2.1 Java

3.2.2 Swift

3.2.3 SwiftUI

3.3 Backend

3.3.1 Java

3.3.2 Python

3.4 Database

3.4.1 MySQL

3.4.2 MongoDB

3.4.3 Oracle

3.4.4 PostgreSQL

4 IMPLEMENTATION

4.1 Bus Services Integration

4.1.1 Getting a single route's information

The integrity of the data on the Buýt TPHCM website is guaranteed due to its commissioning and maintenance by the Ho Chi Minh City Department of Transport.

Several JavaScript source files power this site:

- **L.Config.js:** This is a configuration file to set up the map rendering for Buýt TPHCM. The tiles are loaded from <http://map.stis.vn/bright/z/x/y.png>.
- **L.RouteMap.js:** This source file is responsible for showing the stops and bus routes. We were able to get the coordinate sets that we wanted by placing breakpoints on this file.

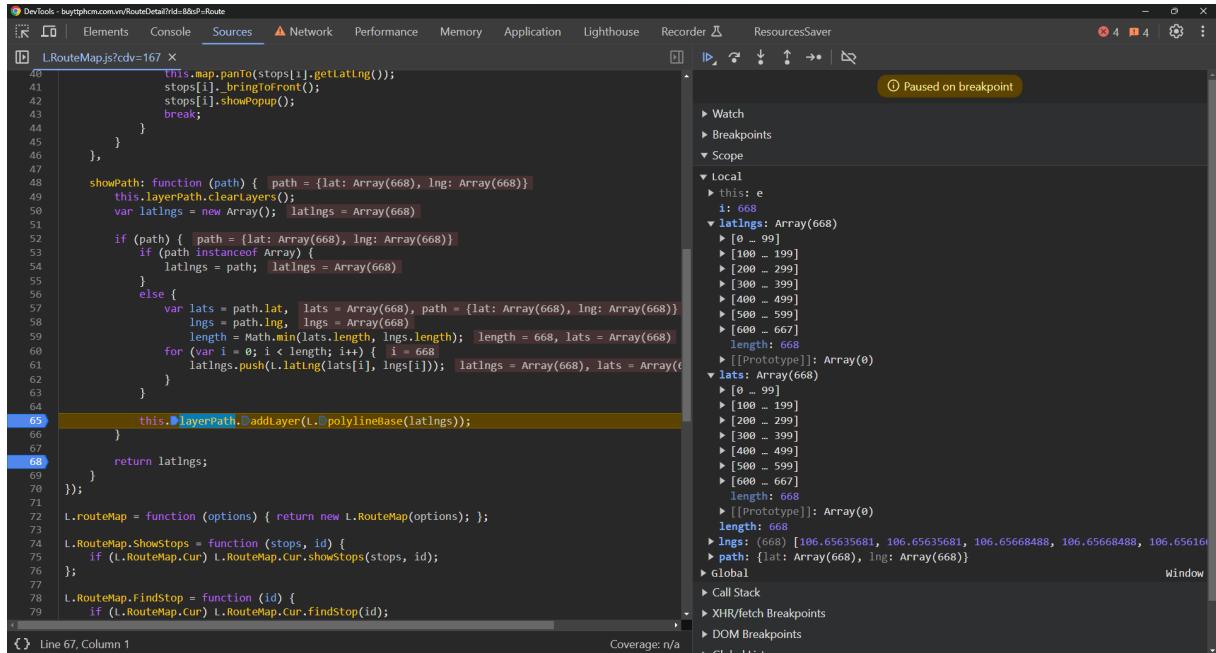


Figure 6: Capturing and observing the route data using the DevTool

By inserting breakpoints in `L.RouteMap.js`, we can easily obtain the coordinates of the route, as demonstrated on the right-hand side. It is worth mentioning that while the coordinates are given in both distinct arrays and a single array with integrated data, it is more advantageous to utilize the latitudes and longitudes in separate arrays. The reason for this is that the present system implementation utilizes MongoDB, which does not allow tuples due to its implementation of BSON.

When it is desirable to work with a single array of coordinates, the stored data can be retrieved and combined together. Below is an example where we zip the arrays and plot them using Matplotlib (please note that since there are over 600 elements in each array, 668 to be exact, a figurative number was put in the code excerpt)

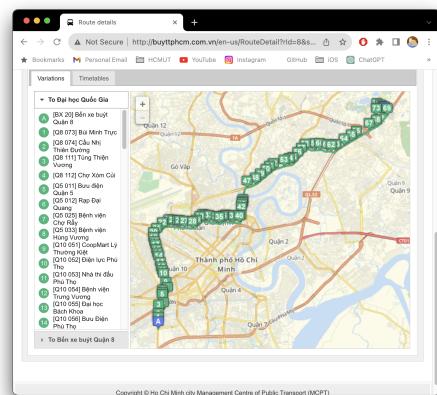
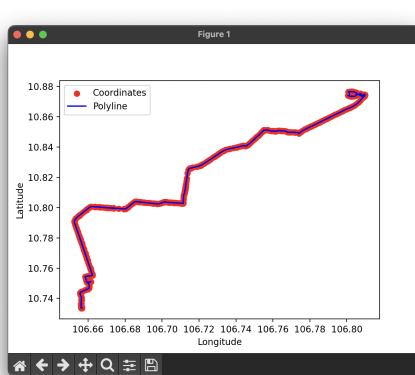
```

1     lat = [10.001, 10.002] # the latitudes
2     lng = [106.001, 106.002] # the longitudes
3     coordinates = [(lat[i], lng[i]) for i in range(min(len(lat), len(lng)))]

```

```
4 # Extract latitudes and longitudes from the coordinates
5 latitudes, longitudes = zip(*coordinates)
6
7 # Create a scatter plot to mark the coordinates
8 plt.scatter(longitudes, latitudes, color='red', marker='o', label='Coordinates')
9
10 # Create a line plot to draw the polyline
11 plt.plot(longitudes, latitudes, color='blue', label='Polyline')
12
13 # Set labels for the x and y axes
14 plt.xlabel('Longitude')
15 plt.ylabel('Latitude')
16
17 # Add a legend
18 plt.legend()
19
20 # Display the plot
21 plt.show()
```

The result is as follow:



(a) The Matplotlib representation of the bus route 8.

(b) The actual route 8 from Buyt TPHCM.

Similarly, information about the bus stops can be obtained by placing breakpoints in L.RouteMap.js. Each route comes with a list of stops and their corresponding data. This will be useful in designing our data schema later on when we integrate the gathered information into our database.



The screenshot shows the DevTools browser extension interface. The left sidebar lists tabs: content.js, leaflet.js?cdv=167, LRouteMap.js?cdv=167, and Grammarly-check.js. The main area displays the code for LRouteMap.js. A specific line of code is highlighted in blue: `L.RouteMap.ShowStops = function (stops, id) { ... }`. To the right, the DevTools sidebar shows a tree view of the data structure under the 'Local' tab. The root node is 'stops' (Array[73]). The first item in the array is expanded, showing its properties: AddressNo, code, Lat, Lng, Name, Routes, Search, Status, StopId, StopType, Street, SupportDisability, Ward, and Zone. Below this, there is a note: '[[Prototype]]: object'. The tree continues to show 72 more stops with similar properties.

Figure 8: Capturing and observing the bus stops data using the DevTool

4.1.2 Automation of the mining process

Since there are about 130 routes currently displayed on the website, it is impossible to place breakpoints and collect data by hand. This necessitates the use of automatic scripts to gather information.

After careful examination, we found several places where we could mine the data. This introduces us to the routevar.js file, which contains the three functions: loadVarsByRou(rouId), loadStopsByVar(prtId, rouId, varId), and loadPathByVar(prtId, rouId, varId)

4.1.3 Data storage of bus services

4.2 iOS App Development

We are determined to develop an equivalent iOS app for the project in order to provide a more complete experience for the users. The app is developed using Swift 5.9 and Xcode 15. The app is compatible with iOS 16.0 and above.

First and foremost, this app must at least offer the basic functionalities like that of the Android counterpart. This includes authentication, viewing the traffic status report, and being able to communicate with the server. Other requirements are that the app must also be lightweight, performant, and consistent with the ongoing design of the Android app to an extent. During the development of this prototype, we have also taken into consideration the possibility of future expansion, such as adding more features and improving the user experience, as well as following Apple's best practices when it comes to iOS app development.

4.2.1 The landing page and permission requests

Because the UTraffic app must know the user's real-time location in order to gather GPS data and also display nearby traffic status, it is crucial that we ask the users for location permissions upon the first



app launch. This is done by presenting a dialog box that asks for the user's permission to access their location. The choice is saved into `UserDefault`s, so that this process will not be repeated on subsequent app launches.

4.2.2 Account registration and login

We adapt most of the user interface from the Android app to the iOS app in order to provide a consistent experience of the app across platforms.

4.2.3 Viewing the traffic status report



5 WORK EVALUATION AND FUTURE PLANS

5.1 Work Evaluation

No.	Content	Duration
1	Study existing systems	1 week
1.1	Study UTraffic's services	0.5 week
1.2	Study other existing services	0.5 week
2	Prepare necessary knowledge	4 weeks
2.1	Prepare necessary Front-end knowledge	1 week
2.2	Prepare necessary Back-end knowledge	1 week
2.3	Prepare necessary Database knowledge	1 week
2.4	Prepare necessary Model knowledge	1 week
3	Implementation	6 weeks
3.1	Gather bus-related data	2 weeks
3.2	Bus services APIs	2 weeks
3.3	Implement application's iOS Front-end	2 weeks

5.2 Future Plans

No.	Content	Duration
1	Implement bus services	4 weeks
1.1	Add appropriate APIs to the system	2 weeks
1.2	Implement features for searching and filtering bus stops and routes	1 weeks
2.2	Implement features for suggesting bus routes between locations	1 weeks
2	Implement parking services	4 weeks
2.1	Add appropriate APIs to the system	2 weeks
2.2	Implement features for registering, managing, and searching for parking lots	2 weeks
3	Implement iOS application	4 weeks
3.1	Import existing features from Android	2 weeks
3.2	Implement bus services	2 weeks



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