

The University of British Columbia - Okanagan

COSC 360 Project  
Client-Side Experience

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<https://github.com/ColinLefter/COSC-360-Group-Project>

February 11, 2023

## Description

Our project models a modern online discussion platform where users have the freedom to engage in online conversation by creating posts and adding to discussion threads. Registered users can create posts on a diverse range of topics, building their reputation on the platform through engagement with others. All users can browse and search for specific topics, or explore trending topics through a responsive and intuitive interface.

Unregistered users can browse existing posts and threads, but are required to create an account in order to leave comments, like and share posts.

The forum will consist of user-generated threads, categorized by use of tags. Each thread will represent a linear format with every response or comment following in chronological order. For organization, responses can be linked through a post id. This supports the navigation of specific conversation in a large or busy thread.

Administrators of the platform will have access to a comprehensive suite of tools that enable them to view core analytics for the platform. A variety of site-wide aggregated data will be made available, such as the number of daily, monthly and quarterly active users, number of registered accounts and metrics by category. In addition, administrators will also have the ability to query user account data when providing customer service. Having access to user account data is also crucial to ensuring the security of the platform and preventing harmful content from being published. Content moderation through the use of sub-administrator accounts (moderators) allows approved users to moderate content to a safe extent, while providing an appropriate level of privacy.

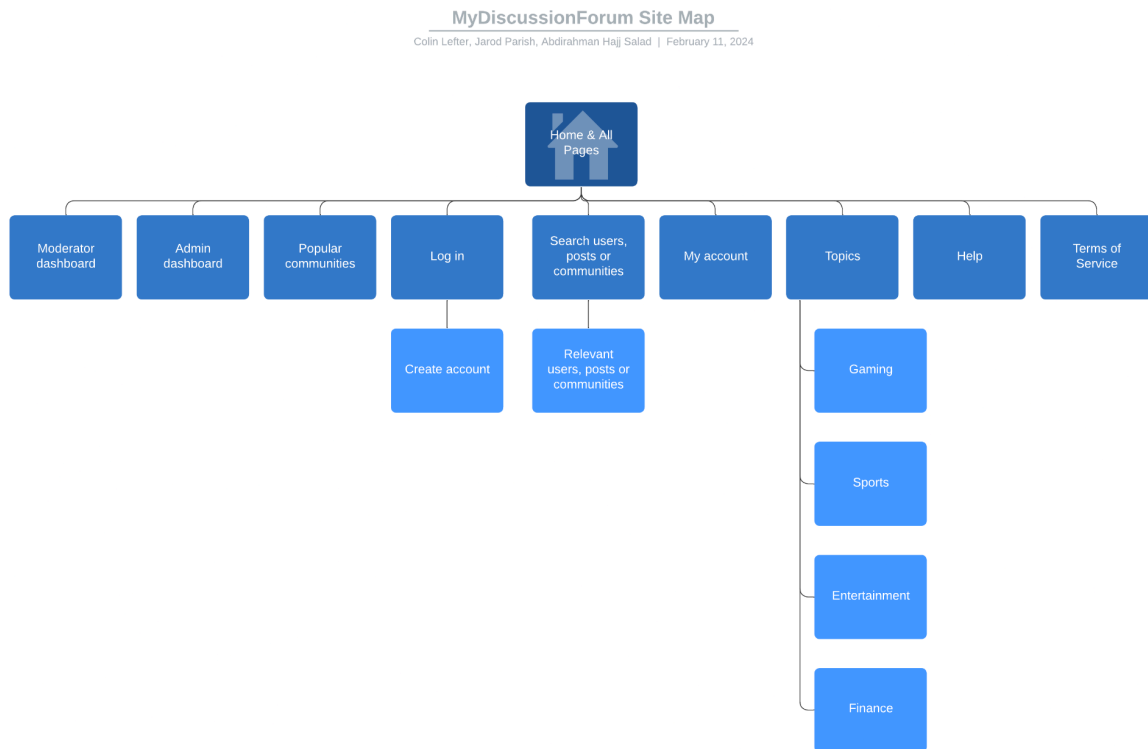
## Layout Document

- [PDF on GitHub](#)

## Pages

- [On GitHub](#)
- **NOTE:** The project must be run on a development server for pages to load correctly

## Organization of Pages: Site Map ([link](#))



# Logical Process

## User Interaction

An end-user will be able to interact with the site in a multitude of ways. For instance, an end user may wish to:

- Search, sort and filter for posts, tags, and communities
- Create or log into an account
- Create, delete, and respond to posts
- Rate posts, influencing the original posters reputation
- Modify personal account or site settings

## Browsing

An end user should have access to all content areas of the website, regardless of account status. This includes any and all communities, tags and posts. Additionally, the user may use the search bar to search for any particular keywords. The website will respond with the most relevant information available, at which point the user can filter or sort the information to acquire the desired results.

The user may also browse without a destination in mind. The sidebar columns have popular and trending communities and tags, allowing the user to navigate to any of their choosing. Posts allow users to view profiles, or tags related to any which post.

## Account Creation

If a user wishes to functionally interact with the content on the website, the user is required to create an account. If an account already exists, the user may log in to the existing account. To create an account, a user can navigate to the right of the header and find the “LogIn” button. Pressing this button will navigate to a new page, containing a login information form. The user can enter their information and log in, redirecting them to the home page.

If the user does not own an existing account, they may navigate to the link labeled “Create one now.” The link directs the user to an account creation page. Entering in the required information, such as name, email address, and password, the account can be successfully created. If any of the information is recognized as invalid, the website will prompt the user of the specific error, and request that it be corrected. For example, if the password is too long, the website will prompt the user accordingly.

## Post Creation

If a user wishes to interact with a community post, they can add a thread to a community of their choosing, or they may add a post to an already existing thread. Regardless, a post can contain a title, and whatever media the user chooses. The media can be text, images, et cetera. Creating a post links the post to their profile, and allows other users to view it.

If a user wishes to delete a post, they must be the original author of the post. Posts with no replies can be deleted, but posts with replies will stay, with the original posts content removed. A user can also modify a post, manipulating the content as the user sees fit.

## Post Interaction

A user can interact with any post by replying with another post, as described above. A user can also interact through voting. Voting allows the user to give a rating reflective of the post's content or quality. The ratings on a post have a direct effect on the reputation of the original poster. The concept of reputation helps guide a user by identifying the trustworthiness of the original poster.

The user can also choose to report a post for violating rules, or for posting inappropriate content. Any reports are made available to moderators of a given community, or an administrator if the community does not have any moderators.

## Account Modification

On any page, a user can navigate to the "My Account" button in the footer. This navigates to a profile view for the user's profile, displaying the user's public information. This information includes the user's username, password, email address, and more. Certain details can be modified, such as changing a username or password.

## Administrative Interaction

In addition to the privileges of the user's, administrative accounts have more actions.

## Post Modification

An administrator has the ability to modify or delete any posts on any forums. Similarly, a moderation account can delete posts in a thread, given that they have the privileges for the given community. This is to ensure that a moderator must possess some familiarity with the community, so that their permissions cannot be used inappropriately.

## Administrative Dashboard

There are two types of dashboards available, one for moderators, and one for administrators. The dashboard can be accessed in the footer of any main page, given that the logged in account has the correct privileges. For moderators, the dashboard consists of a lookup function allowing the moderator to find and view information about a given user. The moderator can permanently or temporarily ban an account, or delete a user's account.

An administrator account dashboard has all the same functionality as a moderator, with higher functionality. An administrator can create announcements, through which all administrators can view in their dashboard. An also has access to site-wide metrics, such as daily active users. An administrator may also use the dashboard to give a user moderation privileges, or strip them away as necessary.

## Discussion

On the subject of style, the website assumes a minimalist approach. The design is reminiscent of modern website design, such as Google websites, with rounded edges, grayscale colors, and appropriate amounts of whitespace. The website is not intended to be devoid of color, but as a support for color due to the expectedly vivid contrast. Too much color, however, may have a negative effect on the aesthetic look of the page. As such, the color will be carefully added. Between pages, the website stays consistent in design, enhancing the users' learnability. The simplistic layout also mitigates distractions, keeping the user focused on important content.

Regarding the format, the website mimics that of other popular forum-style websites, like Reddit. Most content containing pages follow the same format. Split into three columns, excluding the header and footer, the sides are intended for website navigation while the center is reserved for content. That is, a title for context, and a list of items. These items might refer to posts, tags, communities, or users.

The Log In and Account Creation pages are relatively standard, with a form taking the center with whitespace around. The largest difference is the lack of navigation bar functions, like the search bar. A back arrow could be added, but it wouldn't be a strong navigational tool, as the Log In and Create Account pages can be toggles in the top right of the page. Therefore, a Logo to allow easy front page access is most appropriate.

Another component of the website is the user's freedom. No part of the website is inaccessible, except for those requiring administrative rights. Most pages are accessible through a small number of inputs. For example, regardless of what page the user is on, the account page is always accessible in one click.