Teams Management System – Domain Overview

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A. Introduction

This document describes background information about teams making process and interactions within teams in the context of courses assignments and projects. The information provided here is accurate for courses given at the faculty of engineering of the University of Ottawa. This information will be used to guide the development of software to automate teams creation and interactions within teams.

B. Glossary

- Course: A sequence of instructional units, often a semester long, designed by a teacher (or a faculty or other group of teachers) to advance significantly student skills, knowledge, and habits of mind significantly in a particular discipline and to help students meet specified requirements (as set forth in curricula or policy).
  - Course section: subgroup of a course with registered students and specific time and location.
  - Instructional unit: element of a course. A instructional unit include:
    - Lecture: talk on a particular topic provided by a teacher in a classroom setting.
    - Laboratory work (lab): tutorial of experimental work performed under a teacher assistant supervision in a laboratory.
    - Discussion group (DGD): period during which guided discussion groups under a teacher assistant supervision further explore aspects of the topic covered during lectures.
    - Assignment: a set of exercises on topics covered in a course. students work on assignments outside of class periods and get an evaluation for their work. Assignments may be undertaken individually or by teams.
    - Project: A complex assignment involving more than one type of activity and resulting in several work products delivery. Assignments are usually undertaken by teams.
    - Exam: Official exercise designed to evaluate knowledge and skills, and covering the contents of a course or a program of studies.
- Instructor: person responsible for teaching a course or course section. Instructors include teachers and teaching assistants.
- Teacher (syn Professor): faculty member responsible for designing courses content, giving lectures and evaluating students.
- Student: a person enrolled in a University who is learning skills by taking part in courses.
- Team: a group of students working together on a course assignment or project. All members of a team usually get a common evaluation from the work.
  - Team liaison: a member of a team selected as the main point of contact with a course instructor.
  - Deadline for teams creation: set date after which all teams should be formed.

C. General knowledge about the domain

- It is not an obligation that all sections of a same course have the same assignments and projects. However, because all sections of a same course need to have common exams, it is a common practice to have same assignments and projects as well.

D. Customers and Users

The actual customers for this are project are SEG3102/SEG3502 courses instructors. Potential customers include Universities and other institutions who offer courses involving setting up of teams in a voluntary basis.

Potential users are course instructors, students and administrators of computing systems in universities.

- Course instructors are interested in teams being setup in a timely and effective manner. They do not want to spend too much time resolving issues with students unable to find matches.
- Students are interested in being able to identify who is available so they can work with.
- Computing systems administrators in universities manage university wide computing systems. They are responsible for maintaining course lists and information about instructors.

E. The environment

Students and instructors have access to personal computer (PC) systems. Although a majority of these PCs are MS-Windows based, a significant minority of potential users use other platforms such as Linux and Mac-OS. Devices such as tablets and phones are also used to access content.

F. Tasks and Procedures

- Instructors announce team-based assignments and projects at the beginning of their courses. They specify a minimum and a maximum number of students that each team can include. Other rules such as the possibility of cross-sections teams are also established. Based on that information, students make contacts among themselves for setting up their teams, and communicate team lists back to instructors.

  Some students experiencing difficulties in finding a team may ask instructors for help. Using a list of unmatched students, instructors can facilitate contacts between students and incomplete teams.

  Exceptional circumstances can make it necessary to change the minimum and/or maximum numbers of students allowed in a team.

G. Competing Software

Several software tools exist for team work management. These tools are usually used in a corporate context where teams are set up at the management level. They focus more on managing the information flow between team members and across teams.

H. Similarities across domains and organizations

Building an managing a team for a course project is similar to other situations where teams may be built on a voluntary basis (e.g. for playing a team sport such as soccer). In

agile organizations, small teams may also be built on a voluntary basis for parts of software projects.