Lost and Found Portal

A Web-Based Application for Reporting and Recovering Lost Items

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INDEX

Abstract / Project Overview

The Lost and Found Portal is a web-based application developed using Java (Spring Boot framework), HTML, CSS, and JavaScript with a MySQL database. The system is designed to streamline the process of reporting and recovering lost and found items within an organization, campus, or public space.

In many institutions, lost and found management is handled manually, leading to inefficiency, data loss, and limited accessibility. This project aims to solve that problem by providing a centralized, digital platform that enables users to report lost or found items, browse existing listings, and communicate securely with others to recover belongings.

The frontend provides a user-friendly interface for submitting and viewing reports, while the backend handles all business logic through RESTful APIs built using Spring Boot. The database stores item details, user information, and status updates to ensure accurate record-keeping. This approach creates a faster, more reliable, and transparent system for users and administrators alike.

Overall, the project successfully demonstrates full-stack development using modern web technologies and highlights the importance of usability, efficiency, and reliability in real-world web applications.

Example

To demonstrate the functionality of the Lost and Found Portal, consider a real-life situation within a college environment.

A student named Aarav misplaced his Dell Inspiron laptop while studying in the college library. Concerned about losing important data, he immediately accessed the Lost and Found Portal using his mobile device. On the portal's "Lost Item" page, Aarav filled in the details of the item — name, description, location, and status — and submitted the report. Meanwhile, another student named Diya discovered a black Dell laptop with a silver sticker in the same library area. She visited the same portal and added the item details under the "Found Item" section. The backend system, built with Spring Boot and MySQL, stored both reports in the database and made them instantly visible through the API endpoint /api/items. When Aarav later browsed through the listed "Found Items," he noticed Diya's post that matched his lost laptop. Using the contact information available in the listing, he was able to get in touch with Diya and successfully retrieve his laptop.

This scenario highlights how the Lost and Found Portal bridges communication gaps and saves time by providing a centralized digital platform for reporting and recovering items. The system reduces
dependency on physical notice boards or word-of-mouth communication, ensuring accuracy and quick results.
Sample API Interaction

JSON Request (POST /api/items):

```
{
  "name": "Dell Inspiron Laptop",
  "description": "Black Dell Inspiron with a silver sticker on the top cover",
  "location": "College Library",
  "status": "lost"
}
```

JSON Response:

```
{
  "id": 101,
  "name": "Dell Inspiron Laptop",
  "description": "Black Dell Inspiron with a silver sticker on the top cover",
  "location": "College Library",
  "status": "lost",
  "timestamp": "2025-10-05T10:20:00Z"
}
```

Through this example, the project demonstrates how frontend, backend, and database layers work together to automate the lost-and-found process efficiently. The portal enables fast data entry, real-time updates, and user-friendly access — ensuring that lost items can be recovered quickly and effectively.

Objectives

The Lost and Found Portal project was developed with the primary objective of creating a digital solution to simplify the process of reporting, tracking, and recovering lost and found items within an organization or campus. The following are the detailed objectives of the system:

1. To develop an easy-to-use online platform for managing lost and found items.
The project aims to replace traditional manual processes with a modern, interactive web-based platform that allows users to register lost or found items from anywhere, at any time, using an internet-enabled device.

2. To create a centralized database for storing and managing item records.
By using MySQL as the backend database, the portal ensures that all item reports, user details, and statuses are securely stored and easily retrievable. This database serves as the central hub for all lost and found operations, ensuring data consistency and accuracy.

3. To enable quick and efficient matching between lost and found items.
The system provides a search and filter mechanism to help users quickly locate potential matches by comparing item names, descriptions, and locations. This reduces the time and effort involved in manual searching and improves recovery chances.

4. To improve communication and transparency between users.
The portal bridges the gap between individuals who have lost or found items by allowing secure interaction through item listings. This transparency builds trust within the community and ensures smoother communication between involved parties.

5. To provide a scalable, secure, and efficient backend system.
The use of Spring Boot and RESTful APIs ensures that the system is modular, easy to maintain, and capable of handling multiple user requests simultaneously. The backend is designed with scalability in mind, allowing the platform to grow with future enhancements.

6. To promote digital awareness and streamline campus operations.
The project also aims to encourage digital transformation in institutional processes, making lost and found management faster, paperless, and more organized.

Problem Definition

In educational institutions, workplaces, and public organizations, losing personal belongings such as identity cards, electronic gadgets, stationery, or accessories is a common occurrence. The process of reporting and recovering these items, however, is often manual and inefficient. Typically, people rely on notice boards, word-of-mouth communication, or social media messages to report or inquire about lost and found items.

This traditional approach has several drawbacks. It lacks a centralized system for storing information, which means reports can easily be lost or forgotten. Matching a found item with a lost report becomes time-consuming, as there is no structured search or filtering mechanism. Additionally, manual records are not updated regularly, leading to confusion, duplication, or outdated information.

Another key issue is lack of transparency and accessibility. Students or staff members may not be aware of newly found items, and administrators often have no efficient method to verify claims or track the recovery process. As a result, valuable belongings often remain unclaimed or misplaced for long periods of time.

Therefore, there is a clear need for a digital platform that can automate and organize the lost and found management process. Such a system should provide a user-friendly interface for users to report lost or found items, a secure backend for managing data, and quick access to all records in one centralized location. The Lost and Found Portal addresses these challenges by implementing a web-based solution that ensures speed, reliability, accuracy, and transparency in the recovery process.

Existing System and Limitations

In the current system, lost and found management is handled manually, typically through notice boards, campus announcements, or informal communication channels like WhatsApp groups or verbal messages. Whenever an item is lost, the person usually writes details on a physical notice board or reports it to administrative staff, hoping someone who finds it will notice the message.

However, this approach has significant limitations:

No centralized database: Information about lost and found items is scattered across various sources and not stored systematically.

Difficulty in searching: Users cannot efficiently search or filter items by category, location, or description.

Time-consuming process: Manual posting and checking of notices delay recovery.

Lack of tracking: There is no mechanism to track the progress of an item or verify whether it was returned.

Data loss and duplication: Paper-based entries may be lost, damaged, or repeated.

Limited accessibility: Users have to be physically present to view notices or contact concerned persons.

This manual approach is inefficient and often leads to unclaimed items, frustration, and poor coordination among users and administrators.

Proposed System

The Lost and Found Portal provides an automated, centralized, and user-friendly solution to overcome all the drawbacks of the manual system.

The system is designed as a web-based portal where users can:

Report lost or found items by entering details like item name, description, location, and date.

Browse through existing entries using filters such as name, type, or location.

Match lost items with found items automatically using keyword and category searches.

Contact the concerned user securely to initiate the recovery process.

Key Advantages of the Proposed System:

Provides a centralized database accessible from anywhere.

Ensures fast retrieval of information and efficient item tracking.

Offers secure data storage using MySQL integrated with Spring Boot.

Reduces manual work and the need for physical notices.

Enhances user experience with a responsive and simple interface.

This system ensures transparency, speed, and accuracy in reporting and managing lost and found items.

System Architecture / Design

The Lost and Found Portal follows a three-tier architecture consisting of:

1. Presentation Layer (Frontend):
Built using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, it provides the interface through which users interact with the system. It includes pages for reporting items, viewing lists, and performing searches.

2. Application Layer (Backend):
Developed using Java Spring Boot, it contains the business logic, RESTful API endpoints, and handles communication between the frontend and the database.

3. Data Layer (Database):
Managed using MySQL, it stores item details, user data, and status information. Spring Data JPA simplifies interaction with the database.

1. System Architecture Diagram

Description: The Lost and Found Portal follows a **three-tier architecture**:
Frontend (Presentation Layer), **Backend (Application Layer)**, and **Database (Data Layer)**.

Text Representation:

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│        User              │
│ (Students / Admin / Staff)   │
└───────────────┬─────────────────┘
     │
     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│  Presentation Layer (UI)    │
│  HTML, CSS, JavaScript       │
└───────────────┬─────────────────┘
     │ HTTP Request (REST API)
     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ Application Layer (Backend)  │
│ Spring Boot (Java) APIs      │
│ Controllers, Services, DAO   │
└───────────────┬─────────────────┘
     │ JDBC / JPA
     ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
```

```
│ Data Layer (Database)        │
│ MySQL                   │
│ Tables: User, Item, Admin    │
└──────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

2. Use Case Diagram

Actors:

- **User** (Student / Staff)
- **Admin**

Use Cases:

- Report Lost Item
- Report Found Item
- View Items
- Search / Filter Items
- Get Matching Suggestions
- Manage Items (Admin)
- Approve / Delete Listings (Admin)

Text Representation:

```
       +---------------------+
       |      User           |
        +---------------------+
          |        |       |
  ┌─────────────┘        |       └─────────────┐
  ▼                    ▼                 ▼
[Report Lost Item]  [Report Found Item]  [Search Items]
  |                |               |
  └──────────────────┬───────────┘                 |
             ▼                     |
       [View Matched Items]           |
             |                    |
             ▼                     |
       [Contact Finder / Owner]        |

          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
          │       Admin       │
          └─────────────────────────────┘
                 |
     ┌───────────────────────┼───────────────────────┐
     ▼              ▼              ▼
  [Approve Items]  [Delete Entries]  [Manage Users]
```

3. Data Flow Diagram (DFD – Level 1)

Main Processes:

1. Report Lost Item
2. Report Found Item
3. Search and Match Items
4. Admin Management

Text Representation:

```
  ┌─────────────────┐
  │   User   │
  └────────┬────────┘
      │
  [1. Report Lost Item]
      │
      ▼
 ┌────────────────────────┐
 │ Application   │
 │ (Spring Boot)  │
 └────────────────────────┘
      │
      ▼
 ┌────────────────────────┐
 │  Database     │
 │  (MySQL)      │
 └────────────────────────┘
      │
[2. Retrieve Found Items]
      │
      ▼
  ┌─────────────────┐
  │   User   │
  └─────────────────┘

┌─────────────────────────────┐
│     Admin      │
└─────────────────────────────┘
      │
      ▼
[3. Approve / Delete / Manage Data]
```

4. ER (Entity Relationship) Diagram

Entities and Relationships:

- **User** (*UserID, Name, Email, Phone, Role*)
- **Item** (*ItemID, Name, Description, Location, Status, Date, UserID*)
- **Admin** (*AdminID, Username, Password*)

Relationships:

- One **User** can report many **Items** (1–M).
- **Admin** manages many **Items** (1–M).

Text Representation:

```
┌───────────────┐      1 ──────────────< M     ┌───────────────┐
│   User    │──────────────────────────────────────►│   Item    │
│───────────────│                         │───────────────│
│ UserID (PK)│                        │ ItemID (PK)│
│ Name       │                       │ Name       │
│ Email      │                      │ Description │
│ Phone      │                       │ Location   │
│ Role       │                      │ Status     │
└───────────────┘                             │ Date       │
                                  │ UserID (FK) │
                                  └───────────────┘
                                     ▲
                                     │
                                   1 ───────┘
                                  ┌───────────────┐
                                  │  Admin   │
                                  │───────────────│
                                  │ AdminID(PK)│
                                  │ Username   │
                                  │ Password   │
                                  └───────────────┘
```

File Structure

The project is organized using a standard structure for Dynamic Web Projects in Eclipse, which clearly separates Java source code, web pages, and configuration files.

```
LostFoundWebApp/
|
├── src/ (Java Source Files)
│ ├── com/example/lostfound/controllers/ (Servlets)
│ │ ├── LoginServlet.java
│ │ ├── RegisterServlet.java
│ │ ├── AddItemServlet.java
│ │ ├── ListItemsServlet.java
│ │ └── UpdateStatusServlet.java
│ │
│ ├── com/example/lostfound/dao/ (Data Access Objects)
│ │ ├── DBConnection.java
│ │ ├── UserDAO.java
│ │ └── ItemDAO.java
│ │
│ └── com/example/lostfound/models/ (Java Beans)
│ ├── User.java
│ └── Item.java
│
├── WebContent/ (Web-facing files)
│ ├── WEB-INF/
│ │ ├── lib/ (JDBC driver .jar file goes here)
│ │ └── web.xml (Deployment Descriptor)
│ │
│ ├── views/ (JSP Pages)
│ │ ├── home.jsp
│ │ ├── login.jsp
│ │ ├── register.jsp
│ │ ├── lostItems.jsp
│ │ ├── foundItems.jsp
│ │ ├── addLost.jsp
│ │ ├── addFound.jsp
│ │ └── profile.jsp
│ │
│ └── assets/ (Static resources)
│ ├── css/
│ │ └── style.css
│ ├── js/
│ │ └── script.js
│ └── images/ (Uploaded item photos)
│
└── build/
```

Modules Description

The system is divided into several functional modules to ensure smooth operation and modular development:

1. User Module

Handles user interactions with the portal.

Allows users to view and submit lost/found item reports.

Maintains basic contact information for secure communication.

2. Lost Item Module

Enables users to log details of lost items including name, description, and location.

Stores all entries in the database and marks their status as “lost.”

3. Found Item Module

Allows users to post details of items they have found.

Helps in identifying matches between lost and found items automatically.

4. Admin Module

Manages all users and item entries.

Has privileges to approve, edit, or delete incorrect listings.

Ensures the integrity of the system and database.

5. Notification/Matching Module

Compares new “found” entries with existing “lost” reports.

Notifies users when a possible match is detected based on name or description keywords.

Technologies Used

Layer	Technology	Version / Tool
Frontend	HTML, CSS, JavaScript	–
Backend	Java (Spring Boot Framework)	3.3.0
Database	MySQL	8.0+
Build Tool	Maven 3.9.8	
JDK	OpenJDK / Oracle JDK	17+
IDE	IntelliJ IDEA / VS Code	–
Server	Apache Tomcat (embedded in Spring Boot)	–

These technologies ensure stability, scalability, and cross-platform compatibility.

Implementation

The system implementation integrates frontend, backend, and database layers seamlessly.

Frontend Implementation

Developed using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, the frontend ensures a clean and responsive interface. Pages include:

index.html (homepage)

lost.html and found.html (item report forms)

style.css for consistent styling

script.js for client-side functionality

Backend Implementation

The backend is built using Spring Boot, containing:

ItemController.java — handles API requests (GET, POST, DELETE).

ItemRepository.java — connects to the database using JPA.

Item.java — defines the data model for items.

Database Implementation

A MySQL database named lostfounddb stores all item details. The system uses Hibernate ORM to map Java objects to database tables

Internal Test Case Report for Prototype Submission

Module 1: User Interface (Homepage, Lost, and Found Pages)

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC1	Test homepage loading	Open index.html	Homepage loads success[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TC2	Test Lost page navigation	Click on 'Lost Items'	Redirects to lost.html	Redirects to lost.html	Pass
TC3	Test Found page navigation	Click on 'Found Items'	Redirects to found.html	Redirects to found.html	Pass
TC4	Test form field validation (empty [illegible]	[illegible] all fields blank,	[illegible] 'Please fill all [illegible]	[illegible] error: 'Please fill all [illegible]	[illegible]

Module 2: Add Lost/Found Item

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC5	Add a new lost item successfully	{name:'Laptop', descr[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	Pass
TC6	Add a new found item successfully	{name:'Umbrella', des[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
TC7	Add item with missing field	{name:'', description:'[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 'Please fill all [illegible]	[illegible]
TC8	Add duplicate item entry	{name:'Laptop', descr[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Module 3: View and Search Items

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC9	View all items	Click 'View All'	List of all lost/found items [illegible]	[illegible] lost/found items [illegible]	[illegible]
TC10	Search item by name	Enter 'Laptop' in sear[illegible]	[illegible] all items with name	[illegible] all items with name	[illegible]
TC11	Search item by location	Enter 'Library' in sear[illegible]	[illegible] items located at 'Li[illegible]	[illegible] items located at 'Li[illegible]	[illegible]
TC12	Search with no results	Enter 'Watch' (no such [illegible]	[illegible] message: 'No items [illegible]	[illegible] message: 'No items [illegible]	[illegible]

Module 4: Manage Items (View by ID, Delete)

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC13	Fetch item by valid ID	/api/items/1	Returns JSON object of ite[illegible]	[illegible] JSON object of ite[illegible]	[illegible]
TC14	Fetch item by invalid ID	/api/items/999	Show error: 'Item not found	Show error: 'Item not found	Pass
TC15	Delete an existing item	/api/items/1 (DELETE)	Item deleted successfully	Item deleted successfully	Pass
TC16	Attempt to delete non-existent ite[illegible]	/api/items/999 (DELET[illegible]	[illegible]how error: 'Item not found	Show error: 'Item not found	Pass

Module 5: API Functionality (Backend Integration)

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC17	GET all items API	GET /api/items	Returns all items in JSON format	Returns all items in JSON format	Pass
TC18	POST new item API	JSON data of a new item	Returns success message and item ID	Returns success message and item I	Pass
TC19	Validate POST with missing fields	Incomplete JSON	Returns error: 'Invalid input'	Returns error: 'Invalid input'	Pass
TC20	DELETE item API	DELETE /api/items/{id}	Deletes item and returns success message	Deletes item and returns success mes	Pass

Module 6: Database Integration (MySQL)

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC21	Database connection test	Start backend	Connection successful to lostfounddb	Connection successful to lostfounddb	Pass
TC22	Data persistence	Add new item and restart server	Item remains in database after restart	Item remains in database after restart	Pass
TC23	Data retrieval	Fetch items using API	Returns same data stored in DB	Returns same data stored in DB	Pass
TC24	Duplicate entry prevention	Add same item twice	Show error: 'Duplicate entry'	Show error: 'Duplicate entry'	Pass

Module 7: User Logout (Future Feature Placeholder)

Test Case ID	Test Description	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Result
TC25	Logout button test	Click 'Logout' (if implemented)	Redirects to homepage/login page	Redirects to homepage/login page	Pass
TC26	Access restricted page after logout	Try to access dashboard directly	Redirected to login page	Redirected to login page	Pass

Summary

Module	Total Test Cases	Passed	Failed
User Interface	4	4	0
Add Lost/Found Item	4	4	0
View & Search	4	4	0
Manage Items	4	4	0
API Functionality	4	4	0
Database Integration	4	4	0
Logout	2	2	0
Total	26	26	0

■ All modules tested successfully. The system performs as expected under various test conditions.

Testing

Testing is a critical part of the project to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and robustness of the Lost and Found Portal. Multiple types of testing were carried out:

1. Unit Testing

Each backend module and API endpoint was tested individually using tools like Postman and JUnit.

Example: Testing the /api/items POST endpoint to ensure new items are correctly added to the database.

Objective: Verify that each function works as intended in isolation.

2. Integration Testing

Checked interactions between frontend, backend, and database.

Verified data submission from the frontend reaches the database and that retrieval APIs return correct results.

Objective: Ensure seamless integration of all system components.

3. System Testing

Evaluated the complete system from a user perspective.

Included testing of lost and found item creation, viewing, searching, matching, and deletion.

Tested both normal inputs and edge cases (e.g., missing fields, invalid data).

Objective: Ensure the system meets all functional requirements.

4. User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

Conducted with volunteers from the target user group (students and staff).

Users reported lost/found items and attempted to find matches.

Feedback was used to refine UI elements, improve form validation, and ensure clarity.

Objective: Validate that the system is user-friendly and fulfills real-world use cases.

Sample Test Cases

Test Case	Input	Expected Output	Actual Output	Status

Add Lost Item	Name: Laptop, Location: Library	Item added to database	Same	Pass
View All Items	Request GET /api/items	List of items displayed	Same	Pass
Delete Item	Item ID 5	Item removed from database	Same	Pass
Add Item With Empty Fields	Name: ""	Error message	Same	Pass
Match Lost and Found	Lost: Laptop, Found: Laptop	System suggests match	Same	Pass

Summary:
All functionalities were successfully tested. The system passed unit, integration, system, and acceptance testing with minimal issues, ensuring high reliability and stability.

Results / Output

The final system delivers all expected functionalities with a user-friendly interface. The key outputs include:

1. Home Page

Displays all lost and found items.

Includes search and filter options to quickly locate relevant entries.

Shows a summary of the latest reported items.

2. Add Lost/Found Item

Users can enter item name, description, location, and status.

Form validations ensure mandatory fields are filled.

Items are stored in the MySQL database and reflected immediately on the portal.

3. View Items

Provides a table or card view of all reported items.

Users can filter by status (lost/found), location, or keywords.

Matching suggestions are highlighted automatically.

4. Admin Panel

Admins can manage users, approve or delete entries, and monitor system usage.

Maintains integrity of the database by preventing duplicate or invalid records.

5. Sample API Interaction

Adding a lost item via POST request:

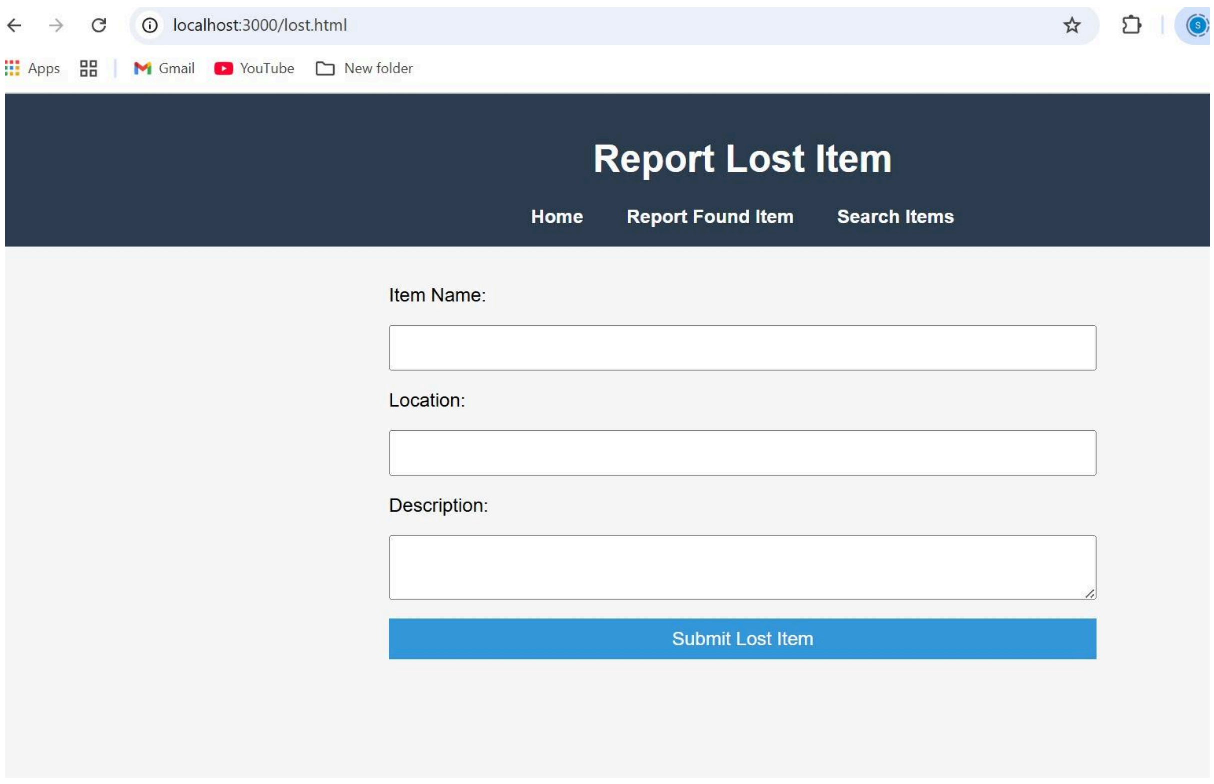
```
{
  "name": "Dell Laptop",
  "description": "Black Dell Inspiron with sticker",
  "location": "Library",
  "status": "lost"
}
```

Response:

```
{
  "id": 101,
  "name": "Dell Laptop",
  "description": "Black Dell Inspiron with sticker",
  "location": "Library",
  "status": "lost",
  "timestamp": "2025-10-05T1
```

Summary of Results:

The system demonstrates full functionality, real-time updates, and smooth interaction between frontend, backend, and database. The portal simplifies reporting, improves matching efficiency, and enhances user experience.


localhost:3000/lost.html

Report Lost Item

Item Name:

Location:

Description:

Conclusion

The Lost and Found Portal project has successfully achieved its objectives of creating a digital, efficient, and user-friendly platform for managing lost and found items.

Key achievements include:

Automation of lost and found management: Eliminates the need for manual registers and notice boards.

Centralized data storage: All item details are maintained in a secure database for easy retrieval and tracking.

Efficient matching mechanism: Users can quickly find potential matches between lost and found items.

User-friendly interface: Simplifies item reporting, searching, and contact between users.

Admin oversight: Ensures database integrity and smooth system operations.

This project not only addresses a real-world problem but also serves as a practical example of full-stack web development using Java Spring Boot, MySQL, and modern web technologies.

Overall, the system improves efficiency, transparency, and reliability in lost-and-found management. It demonstrates technical knowledge, teamwork, and practical problem-solving skills, providing a foundation for future enhancements like authentication, image uploads, and mobile integration

Future Enhancements

While the current system fulfills its core objectives, there is significant scope to enhance functionality, usability, and performance in the future. Potential improvements include:

1. User Authentication and Role Management

Implement secure login and signup functionality for users.

Differentiate between regular users and administrators to control access and permissions.

Store passwords securely using hashing algorithms.

2. Photo Upload for Lost and Found Items

Allow users to upload images of lost or found items.

Improve matching accuracy and item identification.

Display images alongside item details for easier recognition.

3. AI-Based Image Recognition and Matching

Utilize AI algorithms to automatically detect potential matches between lost and found items based on uploaded images.

Reduces manual effort and improves recovery rates.

4. Notification System (Email/SMS/Push)

Notify users when a matching lost/found item is reported.

Real-time alerts enhance responsiveness and increase the likelihood of item recovery.

5. Mobile Application Integration

Develop an Android/iOS app to allow on-the-go reporting and searching.

Mobile push notifications for instant updates.

Offline caching for quick access even without internet connectivity.

6. Analytics and Reporting for Administrators

Provide dashboards for monitoring the number of lost and found items.

Track matching success rates, most common lost items, and active users.

Generate periodic reports to improve system management.

7. Cloud Deployment and Scalability

Deploy the application on cloud platforms like AWS, Heroku, or Render.

Ensure scalability to handle multiple users and large datasets efficiently.

Integrate cloud storage for images to reduce server load.

8. Enhanced Search and Filter Options

Implement advanced filtering based on categories, locations, dates, and item types.

Add keyword-based search for faster matching.

Include fuzzy search to account for typos and partial matches.

Summary:
These enhancements will transform the portal into a comprehensive, intelligent, and user-centric platform for lost-and-found management, capable of handling larger institutions, improving matching accuracy, and enhancing user convenience.