My Discussion Forum

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**Implemented Features:**

* Two column layout on main content pages with main posts on the left and recommended posts on the right.
* JavaScript form validation. Forms for signing up for the site and logging into the site check for validity. Checks include length of password, length of username and if a users account has been disabled.
* Server-side scripting using PHP to access the database.
* Data stored in MySQL.
* Data security (passwords hashed in database)
* Maintained state once user is logged in and allows a user to log out of a session.
* Asynchronous updates on pages with comments, searching and administrative actions.
* “semi” responsive design.
* Image uploads for user profiles and user posts.
* Creation of new posts allows the user to create a new post with a picture and choose a category for easier filtering.
* Commenting on posts for registered users only. Users who are not registered can read other comments but will be prompted to sign in if they wish to contribute.
* Grouped discussion topics by category allows for easier access to topics of interest.
* Key word searching for topics that will filter the posts by keyword matches.
* Error handling.
* Password recovery (set up for email).
* Admin options to enable/disable users, edit/remove posts, and search for users by name and email.

**Additional Features:**

* **Hot threads:** (Called recommended posts on site) allows user to view most recently added posts for all categories on the right side of the page.
* **Search and analysis for topics**: User may filter by category to search for a topic of interest broken down into the four main category types of the site Travel, news, sports, politics.
* **Tracking comment history:** Users may see their most past comments in their profile page.
* **Asynchronous updates:** User comments, keyword search and admin search/edit features all use asynchronous updates.

**Walk through:**

* **Main page: (URL:** <http://cosc360.ok.ubc.ca/42686155/php/main.php>**)**
* **Login: admin**
* **Password: admin11**
* **Once logged in a profile/sign out button will appear top right corner (not on profile page)**

1. The main page is the main content area of the site it loads with the “travel” filter as the default setting.
2. Click on the links in the top left corner to sort the user posts by the 4 main categories Travel, News, Sports and politics.
3. On the top right corner of the you may further filter through the posts by using the search bar to preform a keyword search. This search will filter through all the topics in the entire site not just by category.
4. As a visiting user, you can click on the titles of each post to be taken to the main page for an article you are interested in.
5. You can login if you have an account or create a new account using the form at the top right corner and clicking on the “create one” link in blue.

**Article page: (**After clicking the title of a post)

1. On this page, most of the content is the same as the previous but as a visiting or logged in user you can now read the full article.
2. At the bottom of the page there is a comments section where you can read through all the comments.
3. As an un-registered user, you may read the full article and read through all the comments, but leaving comments is only permitted to registered users.

**Sign up page: (**After clicking the Create account button):

1. The sign-up page allows you to sign up for a new account.
2. The information you enter must be valid or you will receive errors about your information.
3. Of course, all fields must be filled out and cannot be left empty.
4. By clicking on the choose file button a profile picture must be uploaded. It is also limited in size.

**Profile page:**

1. You may review all the information about yourself on this page. Under your personally information there is an edit button which takes the you to a page where you may edit all the details about yourself.
2. If you are logged in as an admin there is an additional button that will take the you to the admin page.
3. The form on the right is where a user can enter a new post. Select the category, write a title, add the content and finally a picture to add a post.
4. Under this new post form is where a you can see all the comments you have made in the past.

**Admin page: (**must be logged in using username: admin password: admin11**)**

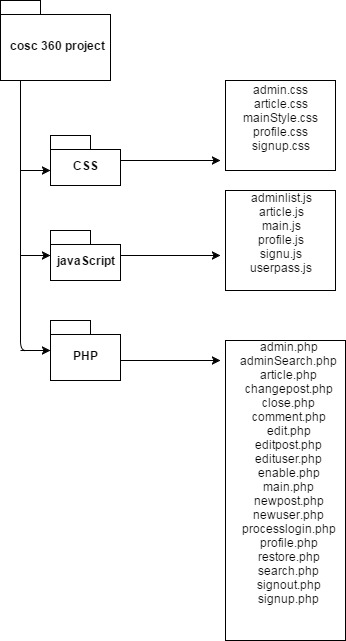
1. To search you can enter either method for searching. To search for users, you use the upper selection bar and type the matching credentials into the text field. Otherwise to search for posts by category the upper two fields must be empty and the bottom search category must be selected.
2. After submitting the matching date will appear as a table.
3. Try searching by username and entering the username “fred123” you can then go ahead and disable the user. If the user tries to login into the site they will be notified that their account has been deactivated. You can test this by trying to login with fred123 password: admin11.
4. After Clearing the form try searching by post by selecting a category.
5. From here posts can either be edited or closed. Unfortunately, pictures are not editable only the content of the post.

**Implementation:**

**Technologies:**

1. **Html** (Sematic content layout)
2. **CSS** (Styling)
3. **JavaScript** (Client side scripting)
4. **PHP** (Server side scripting)
5. **MySQL** (Database)
6. **Xampp** (Local Apache, MySQL, and PHP web stack)

**System Overview (**All original Html files were converted to PHP so no html folder applicable**):**

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**CSS:**

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| admin.css | Creates the style for the admin page. Styles the resulting table as well as the input form. |
| article.css | Creates the style for the article page. Uses a floating element to establish a two-column layout. Determines the size of the post image and places a border around it to emphasize the image. |
| mainStyle.css | Creates the style for the main page. Uses a floating element to establish a two-column layout. Also uses a fixed positioned header so that the top nav bar is always in view. |
| Profile.css | Creates the style for the profile page. Uses a floating element to establish a two-column layout. Uses styling the determine the size of the profile image and puts a blue border around it for emphasis. |
| Signup.css | Creates the style for the sign-up page by styling the form, field set and inner table used to layout the form. |

**JavaScript:**

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| --- | --- |
| adminlist.js | Used for the admin.php page to asynchronously enable or disable users. Also, used to asynchronously close user posts. Sends the data to adminSearch.php, enable.php and close.php for processing. |
| article.js | Used on the article.php page to asynchronously update the comments on the page after a new comment is added as well as update the number of comments on the page. |
| main.js | User on main.php to asynchronously update the page after a key word search has been initiated. |
| Profile.js | Used to validate the that user has entered a title of at least 1 character and no less than 40. Validates that a picture isn’t empty also that the post is at least 1 character up to 1000. |
| Signup.js | Validates all the fields in the form, including password length and password matching. |
| Userpass.js | Validates the user`s credentials are of valid form before sending the request to the server. |

**PHP:**

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| --- | --- |
| Admin.php | This is the page that the admin views after navigating to the admin screen. This screen contains the form that is used to search for user and post data. It uses adminlist.js to display asynchronous updates. |
| adminSearch.php | Contains the database logic that is used to dynamically update admin.php. The page is accessed using adminlist.js to be able to update admin.php asynchronous. |
| Article.php | The main display page for displaying information about individual posts, pictures and to leave comments. The comments on this page use article.js to update asynchronously. |
| Changepost.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for editing a userpost. |
| Close.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for closing a userpost. |
| Comment.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for adding a new comment on the article.php page. This uses article.js to update asynchronously. |
| Edit.php | Used to allow a user to enter credentials to edit their profile information. |
| Editpost.php | User to allow an admin to enter their information to edit post information. |
| Edituser.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for editing a user`s information. |
| Enable.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for enabling or disabling a user profile. |
| Main.php | The main page of the site with database logic to filter content, enter login details, view articles, and create a new profile. |
| Newpost.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for adding a userpost. |
| Newuser.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for adding a new user. |
| Processlogin.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for procesing a user login. |
| Profile.php | Displays all the user profile information, see recent posts, see past comments and allows users to create new posts. |
| Restore.php | Allows users to enter their passwords for password retrieval. |
| Search.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for keyword searching a user post. |
| Signout.php | Contains the database server side scripting logic used for unsetting a logged in user from the session. |
| Signup.php | Allows the users to enter their credentials into a form in order to register a new user. |

**Implemented Features:**

* Two column layout with user posts sorted by category on the left and recommended posts on the right that display the five newest posts.
* Fixed header to maintain access to the navigation features of the site.
* Key word searching to filter through user posts.
* Server side security using JavaScript for all forms.
* Uses relative CSS units for size scaling.
* Sign in and sign out to permanently store current user in a PHP Session and clear the session upon logout.
* Users can upload profile images via PHP and store them in the database.
* Users can edit their profiles to change personal information.
* Users view all their past posts (with links) as well as their past comments.
* Administrators can disable or enable user accounts
* Administrators can edit posts.
* Administrators can close posts to delete them from the site.
* Signed in users can leave comments on posts
* Visiting users can read posts but not leave comments.
* Asynchronous updates for comments, keyword searching, user enabling and disabling, post closing.
* Emailing password for forgotten passwords (does not actually email)

**How it Works:**

My Discussion Forum is a news, travel, sports and political discussion forum that allows users to read articles, post articles, upload profile pictures and comment on articles of interest. This website uses a database to store all the data entered by its user and retrieves all this data from the website to display on each of its respective pages. The user first enters the site on the main page and from there has several options. The page starts on the Travel category by default but if the users wishes they may filter the categories by selecting one of the four category buttons on the top left hand corner of the screen. Once a user finds an article of interest, he can view the article in more depth by selecting the title link and navigating to the respective article page. Each of these articles is dynamically displayed from data that was previously stored data in the database. Users may comment on these articles as well but they must have a valid account on the site to do so. Upon signing up, the user is given a form which he may enter his credentials as well as input a picture that will be displayed on his profile page. The user may also later edit this information if he so pleases. Administrators of the site have similar options to that of a normal user, however, they also have the ability to: disable users, close posts, and edit posts. The administrator is known to the website because they have a special status field in the database. This permission can only be given manually and so it is not possible to promote a user to admin without external access to the database.

**Limitations:**

* Images can only be uploaded up to the maximum size a blob data type can hold.
* Users may edit their profile but not their profile picture.
* Filtering by category on the main page is not done asynchronously.
* In order to edit profiles, the user must be taken to a new page instead of having the option to make changes from the profile page.
* Email password recovery is not functional.
* Administrators can edit posts and close them but the cannot change the picture.
* More work is required to fix some robustness issues with PHP upon unexpected SQL errors. (Simply displays html message)
* Profile page Scrolls once the comment history is too large instead of expanding the page.
* Site is responsive to an extent but still needs work to be considered a fully responsive site.
* The menu options in the footer aren’t fully functional and new pages would be required to fulfill their links.
* The user profile page works and has functionality, but at this point in time other users have no way of viewing other users profile pages.
* Images displayed in the main page along side articles were not correctly limited in size to be universal so too large or too small of images will destroy the look of the site.