Vision and Scope

Business requirements

Background

Coursera is a web-based platform that offers millions of unique students online learning opportunities. The StudySync team consists of students pursuing a degree through Coursera. Throughout our studies, we have noticed the drawbacks of online-based learning through the web browser. In particular, the ease with which distractions find their way into our study sessions. These distractions mainly come from social media or entertainment websites like YouTube, Reddit or Instagram. Combining the many distracting websites with the inherent freedom of online learning is a recipe for lacklustre study sessions and possibly failure of courses. We see the production of the StudySync web extension as a well-fit solution to this problem.

Business Opportunity

Coursera serves over 113 million learners worldwide, offering a large demographic to tap into. While building a web extension that caters to all of these students is unreasonable, we have direct access to around 10,000 unique learners currently enrolled in the same program as the StudySync team. The BSc in Computer Science program is offered in cooperation with the University of London. These users display constant frustration with the ease of online distractions and the need for study habit tools provided by Coursera. Our preliminary questionnaire confirms the desire for a tool of this nature. Users are frequently distracted by unrelated websites, need help to focus on their Coursera studies and try to implement a wide array of technologies to mitigate this problem. They also see value in a time tracker, which helps display their study habits' effectiveness by semester.

As mentioned in the comparative analysis, students use and have access to many different tools, which somewhat solve our initial problem. The website blockers perform well and provide many functions to increase the student's productivity. Unfortunately, they all require significant upfront setup costs, aren’t built directly for Coursera, and can ask for payment to be of actual use. On the other hand, the time trackers also suffer from the same issues the website blocker does. The lack of Coursera integration is also glaringly apparent here, as users cannot accurately understand their study time per course or task. The high barrier to entry for these solutions also limits the number of students who will put in the effort to solve this problem. With this in mind, we see this as an excellent opportunity to produce a fit-for-purpose web extension with a low barrier to entry. Using an agile development process, solving this problem will be a perfect opportunity for StudySync.

The web extension would limit the barrier to entry by providing base settings that integrate well with the average student’s desired settings. It would also be a free web extension, lowering the entry barrier. Focusing on Coursera integration would also provide a relevant, accurate picture of their study habits on the platform. The web blocker would behave as a whitelister as opposed to a blacklister which would limit the decisions needed by the user. These options would combine to provide the best productivity tool for students to pair with their Coursera studies. The direct access to the degree students is an excellent testing ground to get an MVP product tested, produced and published.

(Comparative Evaluation)

Business objectives

* Limit website distractions to Coursera study sessions.
* Provide actionable time-tracking analytics to users.

Success metrics

Vision statement

For computer science students enrolled in the program offered via Coursera and the University of London who need help to limit distractions to their studies, StudySync is a web extension that will provide a single point of access to study productivity tools. The web extension will use a whitelist to block all web traffic except for the URLs specified. The system will combine this with time-tracking analytics to provide actionable feedback on the quality of the user’s study sessions. The time tracker will track students' time spent studying during semesters in each class and each specific task within classes. This extension will increase students’ productivity and provide actionable statistics to help guide their study sessions. This enables students to create better study habits and become better students. Unlike the current productivity web extensions on the market, our product will integrate directly with the Coursera website, contain no paywall, and come with out-of-the-box functionality to combine into a low barrier to entry Coursera productivity extension.

Business risks

Business assumptions and dependencies

Scope and limitations

Major features

Scope of the initial release

External Events

* Student enters a URL into a web browser.
* Student enables whitelist.
* Student adds URL to whitelist.
* Student goes to

Scope of subsequent releases

Limitations and exclusions

Business context

Stakeholder profiles

* University of London (Coursera) BSc Computer Science Students
* StudySync (team 68 Group 6)
* Coursera
* Dr. Sean McGrath and Module Tutors.
* University of London

Project priorities

Deployment considerations