An RFID-Integrated Attendance System with Photo Verification for Classroom Efficiency

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Abstract

The UP System started deployment of RFID/NFC-enabled UP ID in 2019. After several years since deployment, we have yet to see a system that fully utilizes the technology embedded in the UP ID. In particular, we see a great potential in using it as an access key for tracking the attendance of students in their classes. Professors currently either use the traditional pen and paper or a spreadsheet in their laptops to check for attendance. The mentioned practices are prone to forgery and takes precious time away from the class period.

Our paper proposes a fully digital attendance tracking system that can be used by professors to record the attendance of their students in real time. The system uses UP ID and facial recognition for a two-layer validation process ensuring accuracy of the records. Facial recognition uses a pretrained YoloV8 model for face recognition. The proposed system allows the students to check in by tapping their ID to the RFID/NFC reader, and aligning their face in the camera. The current prototype takes only about 2-3 seconds per student to complete the whole validation and recording process, with more room for optimizations down the line.

Keywords: UP System, RFID, attendance, machine learning, facial recognition, YoloV8 model.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Overview

Attendance plays an important role in improving the academic performance of students. There is evidence that students with lower attendance often have lower grades (Ancheta, Daniel, & Ahmad, 2021). Therefore, attendance is usually enforced and recorded at most higher education institutions. However, the systems in place for recording attendance are typically manual and time-consuming.

The traditional pen and paper attendance system has existed since the invention of paper itself. It is used for time keeping by manually writing or checking the "present" status in a paper log book. Manually writing names takes an average of 17 seconds per student (Shoewu, Makanjuola, & Olatinwo, 2014), and for class size of 30 students that leads to approximately 8 minutes of class time wasted. While it is recognized that such system is time-consuming and wastes resources, it persisted because of its familiarity. Going to class means bringing pen and paper for most students and teachers alike, so using the same material for recording attendance seemed the most practical.

In recent years, as laptops and portable computers became more accessible, some faculty of UP started transitioning to digital spreadsheets provided by services like Microsoft Excel. While it seemed to have moved the traditional pen and paper towards digitalization, another problem arises as this required manually roll calling students to say "present". It had the same problem of being a manual process. It is easily disrupted by a noisy class. Some time that was supposed to be utilized for immediate teaching was used for roll call.

Both systems mentioned are prone to errors and unnecessarily increases administrative burden for the faculty. Reduction in teaching time means frequently moving the lesson discussions by the faculty, with some topics being rushed or skip entirely by the end of semester. This reduces overall the quality of education students received and may negatively impact their readiness for subsequent courses they may take.

It is also useful to analyze the traditional attendance methods from the lens of CIA triad since we are dealing with information security. It is a guiding model comprised of 3 key principles: Confidentiality - the protection of data from unauthorized access. Integrity - prevent that data from tampering. Availability - data is present whenever you need them (Cawthra et al., 2020). The traditional pen and paper violates confidentiality as there no strict restrictions on who accesses the paper for keeping the attendance data. As a consequence, integrity is also violated as anyone with a pen can easily modify attendance records. Availability also cannot be ensured since paper as a storage medium is easily destructible via wear or tear. Replacing paper with digital counterparts such as Microsoft Excel might address these violations, although indirectly. Teachers put passwords on their laptops, but no authentication is done for the Excel file itself unless it is explicitly encrypted. The file is also prone to accidental deletion.

Therefore, we propose a fully automatic, digital attendance system that addresses these concerns. We utilize the already distributed UP ID and pretrained face recognition models that ensures an easy, accurate, attendance keeping. It aims to ease the burden of faculty and students from manual methods of attendance system, allowing them to focus on class discussions instead.

1.2 Problem Statement

The current methods of taking attendance today such as the manual call roll, biometrics, and online or remote attendance provides challenges in terms of efficiency, security, and authenticity. Manual roll calls are time consuming, according to (Mahato & Suman, 2013, p. 5875), it consumes an average of 5 to 15 minutes in order to complete an attendance using manual roll call attendance. It also provides a burden to some of the teachers through the disruptive behaviors of the students which lower the efficiency of manual roll call ("How Teachers Can Meet the Challenges," 2015). Biometrics attendance systems like fingerprint and facial scanning provide efficiency in taking an attendance but it is more costly and widely not accessible. The online or remote attendance system is only advisable in virtual class and not in face to face class as it is prone to attendance fraud.

Failure to resolve efficiency and a secured attendance system may lead to inaccurate attendance records and high risks of attendance fraud. These gaps may also affect the integrity in terms of attendance of the university. To fill those gaps, the solution should be the integration of RFID and facial recognition technology but there are uncertainties which are the efficient ways to integrate the real-time face capture while managing the privacy concerns and also finding an optimal way to gather sensitive information which are the student's biometric and their RFID serial number.

Given the gaps of the current attendance system method, there is a need to design an attendance system with the integration of RFID and facial recognition technology which are:

1. Efficiently captures the real-time data using the RFID and facial recognition technology.
2. Ensure and maintain security and privacy of the student's sensitive data such as their facial biometrics and unique serial number of their RFID.
3. Ensure compatibility with the university infrastructure which is the availability of RFID and the hardware for facial scanning.
4. Determine the effectiveness of the combination of the RFID and facial technology in the attendance system.

1.3 Research Objectives

1.3.1 General Objective

This project aims to develop a web application that effectively uses the current UP RFID and face recognition for attendance checking and recording in the University of the Philippines Visayas. Additionally, it also aims to assess the performance of the application in terms of accuracy and efficiency.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. To develop a full stack web application that uses an RFID scanner and facial recognition models such as YoloV8 for an accurate and efficient tracking of student attendance.

2. To enhance application security by implementing the principles of Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability.

3. To analyze the application's performance based on metrics such as accuracy, efficiency and security.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Research

The focus of this project is to create an attendance system that uses RFID together with facial technology. This project will take real time attendance by scanning the student's RFID and verify the student's identity using facial technology. The project will also focus on the User Experience part where students can take their attendance as quickly as possible by aligning their faces while they scan their RFIDs. In that way it will enhance the overall efficiency and accuracy of taking attendance in the university.

This project will not involve the training of face recognition models, as there are high-performance, pretrained models readily available. The focus will be on utilizing these existing face recognition models for the development of an effective attendance tracking system. This project will only limit face to face classes, it will not cover the virtual or online classes, it will also not cover the other forms of biometric authentication such as fingerprint and eyes (iris scanning) because of its expensive hardware and the privacy concerns of the students.

1.5 Significance of the Research

Facial recognition has been in use mobile applications for validation of identity and the performance has significantly improved over the years. This allowed us to explore the possibility of using it in attendance tracking of students in UP Visayas as there are currently no system like it in place. We also intend for this project to be open-source. Some of the people that will benefit from our developed app are:

- Students - will benefit from the increased class time. This allow better retention of topics and lesson discussions. This complements the goal of recording attendance itself, which is to increase the quality of education the students receive.

- Faculty - will also benefit from the increased class time. An automated system will allow them to focus entirely on delivering the topics that need to be covered. It will lessen the possibility of skipping modules or topics needed by students to learn before taking their subsequent courses.

- UP System - Since the UP RFID are used across all constituent units of the UP System, our project can be used by any faculty under the UP System. They may also choose to create their own version as long as they also make it open source, as stipulated in GNU GPLv3 license.

- Society benefits - this project is significant in our society. The project is scalable and when it is improve more in the future, there is a high possibility that it can be applicable not only to tertiary, higher or in any education but also it will be applicable to large organizations or corporations as it can improve taking attendance plus it can reduce the fraud in taking attendance because one of the gaps to be filled by this project is the integrity, the combination of RFID and the real-time face capture can help the organizations to have integrity in terms attendance.

We also hope that this project will bring focus on the growing accessibility of facial recognition technologies and inspire the community to explore on how it can be incorporated their own projects.

Chapter 2

Review of Related Literature

2.1 Importance of Attendance Tracking

Attendance has become increasingly important in every organization, institution, and workplace to ensure accountability, productivity, and engagement. For example, in schools, it ensures that students are present, participating, and fulfilling their responsibilities. Taking students' attendance is important for monitoring their performance in class. Good attendance is usually linked to good class performance, and vice versa (Zhi, Ibrahim, & Aris, 2014).

2.2 Attendance Tracking Methods

There are various methods to track classroom attendance, from traditional manual approaches, such as roll call or pen-and-paper methods, to modern technology-based systems, including biometric like fingerprint or facial recognition. The advantages and disadvantages of these systems will be discussed in the following subsections using the Confidentiality, Integrity, and Availability (CIA) Triad.

The CIA Triad is a commonly used information security model that helps organizations develop secure systems (Fruhlinger, 2024). Confidentiality refers to the protection of information from unauthorized access to ensure that only authorized users can access or modify data. Integrity ensures that data remains complete, trustworthy, and unaltered by unauthorized users, whether accidentally or maliciously. Availability ensures that authorized users can access the data when needed. These three principles are often used to identify vulnerabilities in

a system.

2.2.1 Traditional Attendance Tracking Methods

The traditional method of taking attendance is through a manual roll call. According to Uniyal (2022), using manual attendance is cost-effective, simple to use, and remains functional during power interruptions. However, despite these advantages, manual attendance has several flaws. For instance, the roll call method is time-consuming as it can waste 5 to 15 minutes of class time which could otherwise be spent on actual learning (Mahato & Suman, 2013, p. 5875). Additionally, there is a problem in integrity when ledger sheets are used as it is easy for students to fake another student's attendance by forging their name and signature or erasing an already marked attendance.

CIA Triad Analysis:

- Confidentiality: Traditional attendance tracking methods may offer low confidentiality as attendance can easily be accessed by unauthorized individuals, especially with the pen-and-paper method.
- Integrity: Traditional attendance tracking methods have low integrity as it is easy for students to forge another student's attendance or alter existing records.
- Availability: Traditional attendance tracking methods have high availability as attendance can always be taken during class, regardless of technological failures.

2.2.2 Biometric-Based Attendance Systems

Biometric systems such as fingerprint recognition have addressed some of the shortcomings of manual attendance methods. According to Walia & Jain (2016), replacing traditional attendance methods with biometric fingerprint systems improves confidentiality and integrity. However, while biometric fingerprint attendance systems have high reliability, they still come with some limitations (Truein, 2024). For example, if a person's finger is injured or dirty, the system may fail to recognize the fingerprint which can affect the system's effectiveness. Moreover, the cost of deployment can be high due to the need for specialized hardware and maintenance.

CIA Triad Analysis:

- Confidentiality: Biometric systems provide better confidentiality compared to manual methods as biometric data is unique to each individual and stored securely. However, if the data is compromised, the consequences can be severe because biometric data cannot be changed, unlike passwords.
- Integrity: Biometric systems provide high integrity as it is almost impossible to forge or alter fingerprint data.
- Availability: While biometric systems are generally available, they may face limitations if the finger is injured or dirty or in areas with an unreliable power supply.

Facial recognition technology has emerged as an even more accurate and convenient alternative to fingerprint systems (Truein, 2024). According to Yang & Han (2020), real-time video processing in facial recognition systems has an accuracy rate of about 82%, which is higher than other attendance tracking methods. Facial recognition can also help reduce truancy rates by identifying students in real time in order to prevent them from skipping classes.

CIA Triad Analysis:

- Confidentiality: Facial recognition systems, like fingerprint systems, have high confidentiality as biometric data is unique to each individual and stored securely.
- Integrity: The integrity of facial recognition systems is typically high as it is difficult for students to falsify their identity without being detected.
- Availability: Facial recognition systems are generally highly available, particularly in environments with stable lighting conditions.

2.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed various classroom attendance tracking methods and analyzed their advantages and disadvantages using the CIA Triad. Traditional manual systems, while cost-effective, lack both confidentiality and integrity. Fingerprint systems offer better security but may suffer from availability issues when the finger

is dirty or injured. Facial recognition systems, with higher accuracy and efficiency, provide significant improvements in terms of data confidentiality and integrity.

A table comparing these systems, based on the CIA Triad, is provided below:

Attendance Tracking Method	**Confidentiality**	**Integrity**	**Availability**
Traditional	Low	Low	High
Fingerprint Systems	High	High	Medium
Facial Recognition Systems	High	High	High

Table 2.1: Comparison of Attendance Tracking Methods Using the CIA Triad

Our proposed system aims to leverage the security advantages of Facial Recognition Systems by adding an extra layer of user authentication that requires students to use their UP RFID which is personal and unique to each student.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter lists and discusses the specific steps and activities that will be performed to accomplish the project. The discussion covers the activities from pre-proposal to Final SP Writing.

3.1 Research Activities

This project aimed to create an automated attendance system with the help of RFID together with facial recognition technology. This attendance system will replace and reduce the usage of manual attendance such as the written and oral and enhance its lacking optimized features such as security, reliability, authenticity, and integrity using the student's RFID and facial biometric.

The proposed system is expected to function by tapping the RFID of the students with real time facial capture through face recognition technology. The identity of the students will be verified through the unique serial number of their RFID that will match from the system database while the face recognition will serve as the two-factor authentication. The face recognition is expected to work by capturing the students face then will be matched also through the system database. The attendance will only be valid once both student's unique serial number in their RFID and their face has been verified.

To make the system functional, several data from the students need to be collected. Those are the student's name, student number, student's unique serial number of their RFID, and their facial biometrics. Those data will be gathered either online or face to face. Students are encouraged to download any of the RFID

card readers to know their RFID's serial number but in case they are incapable of doing that. Face to face to face will be an option where we can provide a physical RFID card reader. The facial recognition data will be gathered through capturing their image or video to be more accurate.

The hardware components will be using in this system are: RFID scanner: Which will be used to read the RFID given to the students. This will also be responsible for taking the students unique serial number on their RFID ensuring the integrity of the students. USB connector: This will be used to connect the RFID scanner to the Laptop or Raspberry Pi. Flex cable: This will be used to connect the Raspberry Pi Vision Camera to Raspberry Pi. Laptop / Raspberry Pi: This will serve as the main processing unit. The laptop or raspberry pi will be used for running the required algorithm to make the face recognition and read the RFID correctly. Overall, the laptop / raspberry pi will be in charge of handling the data. Raspberry Pi Vision Camera: In charge of capturing the student's facial image while scanning the RFID to the RFID scanner.

3.2 RFID and Face Recognition

We use the UP RFID for our system. This approach enhances security by combining something you have (the RFID token) with something you are (your face).

3.2.1 RFID as a Token

The RFID token (the UP RFID) provides a unique identifier (ID) for the user. The RFID reader scans the token and extracts the unique ID. This ID is used to retrieve the corresponding user profile from a database.

3.2.2 Face Recognition as a Verifier

Face recognition ensures that the person presenting the RFID token is the authorized user associated with that token.

3.3 Face Recognition

Face recognition pipeline can be simplified into 2 steps:

1. Face Detection: The process of finding the faces in a viewfinder and draw bounding boxes around the detected face. We will use a pretrained YOLOv8n model as the base model for face detection.

2. Face verification: This is a downstream task from face detection. We will use the cropped image from as input for the face recognition model to identify the individual. It is based on the same pretrained YOLOv8n model fine tuned for identifying faces. We used the YoloV8n as it is the only supported by YOLO toolkit to be exported to IMX500 chip. Also, 'n' means nano or the smallest model in the YoloV8 family of models as larger models like the YoloV8m are not able to fit to the 8mb memory of IMX500 (Sony, 2023).

3.3.1 Face recognition model training

Fortunately, Ultralytics(the team behind the YOLO model) provides complete documentation for finetuning a pretrained model using few lines of code. The data.yaml file contains the dataset information such as the directory of the images and their corresponding labels. The model can then be exported to the Sony IMX500 vision sensor for inference(?, ?).

```
# download model
model_path = hf_hub_download(repo_id="arnabdhar/YOLOv8-Face-Detection", filename="model.pt")

# load model
model = YOLO(model_path)

# train model
model.train(data="data.yaml", epochs=100, imgsz=640)
```

Figure 3.1: Training the model

3.4 Hardware Development Tools

Our current prototype uses hardware components that are commonly used in the industry to build an integrated system. All of the tools are readily available. These include but are not limited to:

- RFID Scanner - Used as a reader for the RFID. The RFID scanner allows us to have secured and efficient way of identifying the student's unique serial number.

- Raspberry Pi AI Camera - The newly released camera module for Raspberry Pi hardware that allows us to capture the student's facial image while scanning the RFID with the use of RFID scanner. It uses an embedded AI accelerator for efficient processing of face data.

- Raspberry Pi - Serves as the main processing unit which allows us to integrate the other hardware together with the necessary software.

- USB Connector - Serves as connector for the RFID scanner and Raspberry Pi.

- Flex Cable - Serves as connector for the Raspberry Pi Vision Camera and Raspberry Pi.

3.5 Software Development Tools

Our current protoype include these frameworks and tools that are heavily used in the industry for rapid development and deployment of web applications. All of the tools used are open source. These include but are not limited to:

- Django - The web framework for perfectionists with deadlines. Django, which serves as the backend server, allows us to interface with the database server to do queries in the Python using Django's Object Relational Mapping tool(ORM). We can easily integrate popular pretrained facial recognition models as they are typically written in Python.

- Django Ninja - Creates the REST API on top of our Django backend to allow the frontend to consume the backend content.

- NuxtJS - The frontend JavaScript framework used to build our web interface. Includes all the tools for routing, quering, and security. By default, it renders our web interface in Server Side Rendering(SSR) mode. Most of the work happens in the server and no authentication tokens are stored in the client browser. This increases security since authentication tokens are only added in the server side per request.

Chapter 4

Preliminary Results/System Prototype

4.1 System Architecture

Using the tools mentioned in Section 3.5, our system can be visualized as shown in Figure 4.1:

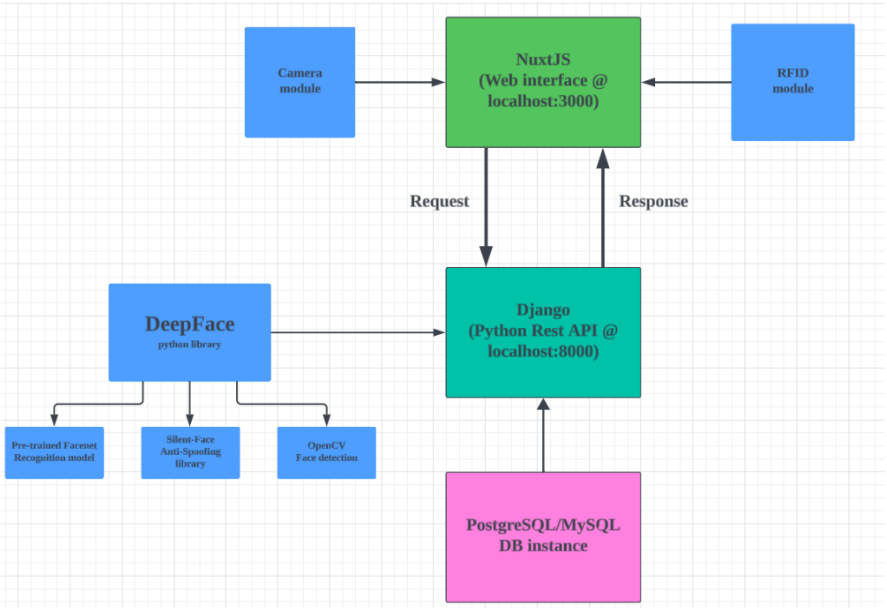

Figure 4.1: System Architecture

4.2 Process Diagrams

4.2.1 Time In Process

Time in process includes a check if the student already has time in records. First step in this is the student tapping the ID to the RFID sensor and trigger the photo capture to check the face.

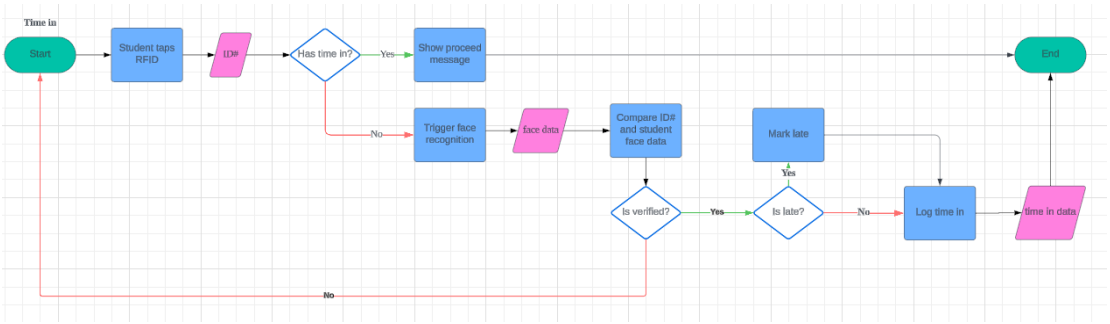

Figure 4.2: Time in

4.2.2 Time Out Process

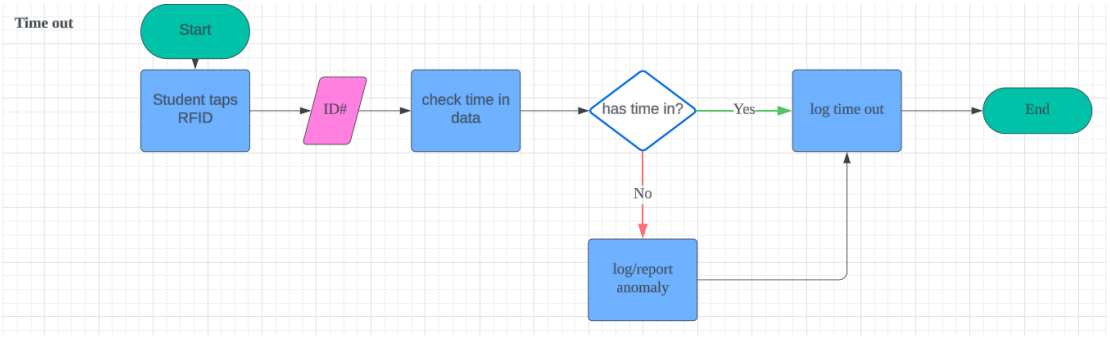

Figure 4.3: Time Out

4.3 Django Backend

4.3.1 Models

Django Model class maps to SQL tables. For example, a Student table will have the following columns which maps to Student Model class' attributes like in Figure 4.4:

```python
class Student(models.Model):
    student_id = models.IntegerField(primary_key=True)
    first_name = models.CharField(max_length=100, default='')
    last_name = models.CharField(max_length=100, default='')
    email = models.EmailField(null=True)
    face_data = models.TextField(null=True)

    Codeium: Refactor | Explain | Generate Docstring | ×
    def full_name(self):
        return f'{self.first_name} {self.last_name}'
    Codeium: Refactor | Explain | Generate Docstring | ×
    def __str__(self):
        return self.full_name()
```

Figure 4.4: Student model

SQL equivalent would be:

```
CREATE TABLE Student (
student_id INTEGER PRIMARY KEY,
first_name VARCHAR(100) NOT NULL DEFAULT '',
last_name VARCHAR(100) NOT NULL DEFAULT '',
email VARCHAR(254),
face_data TEXT,
CONSTRAINT unique_email UNIQUE (email)
);
```

4.3.2 Database Tables

Our database tables that can be accessed by Django's ORM. This includes the tables for Teachers, Subjects and tables for relationships. See Figure 4.5

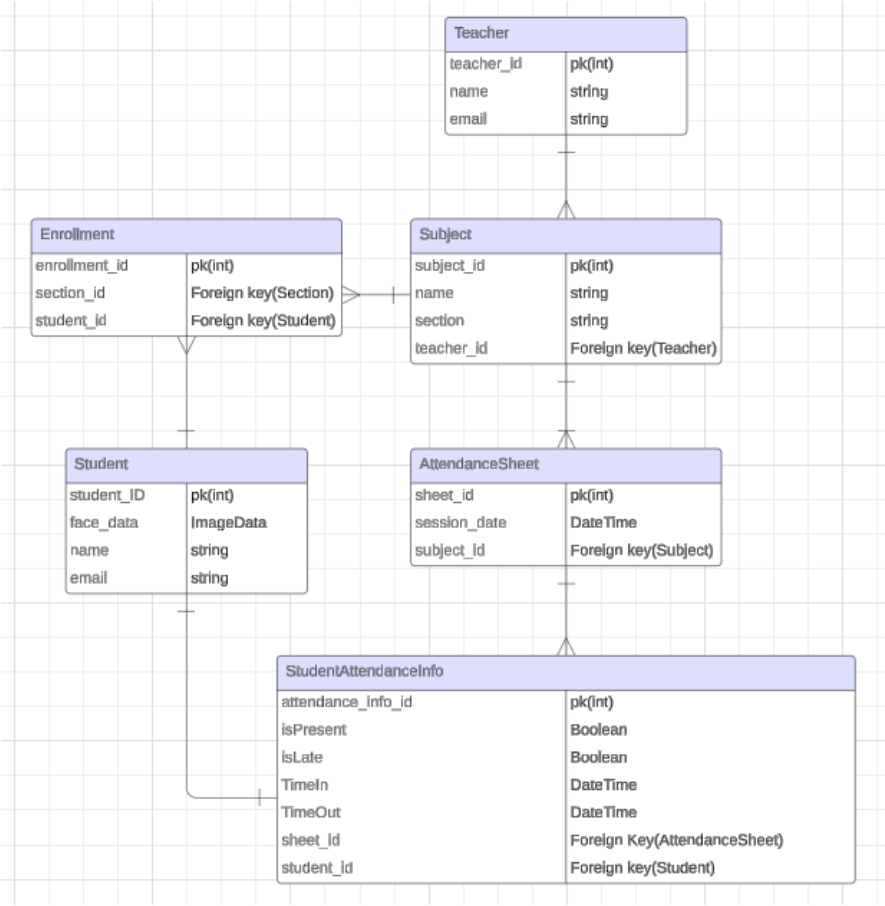

Figure 4.5: Database Tables

4.3.3 REST API by Django Ninja

Figure 4.6 is the automatic OpenAPI compliant documentation provided by Django Ninja. It contains all endpoints we can use to query data from the database. All endpoints are protected using HTTP Bearer token authentication.

4.3.4 Admin panel by Django

Figure 4.7 is the Django administration page only accessible to a superuser account. This is where most of the backend maintanance work happens. It contains all the data inside the database allow full control over them. It also contains every authentication tokens used by each teacher account.

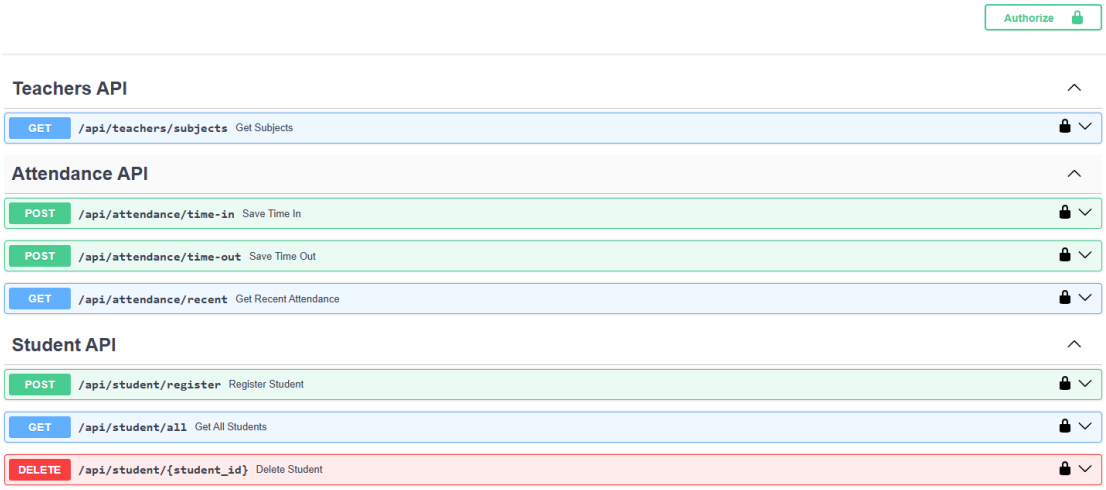

Figure 4.6: API Documentation

4.4 Nuxt Frontend

With the backend handling most of the heavy work, the frontend only needs to capture images from the camera and sending them to the backend to verify student identity. The localhost:3000/dashboard/time-in-out page handles the time in and time out process. The RFID input is automatically highlighted upon opening the page so it will be immediately ready to take in input from the RFID scanner. When the proper number length is inputted, it will immediately start to verify the identity. It will then notify the student for the time in/time out time and status. It will also notify for any errors like spoof image or no face detected. From our testing, the response time is currently at most 2.3 seconds, most of the delay comes from the fake delay we used to allow the student to read the notification after verification.

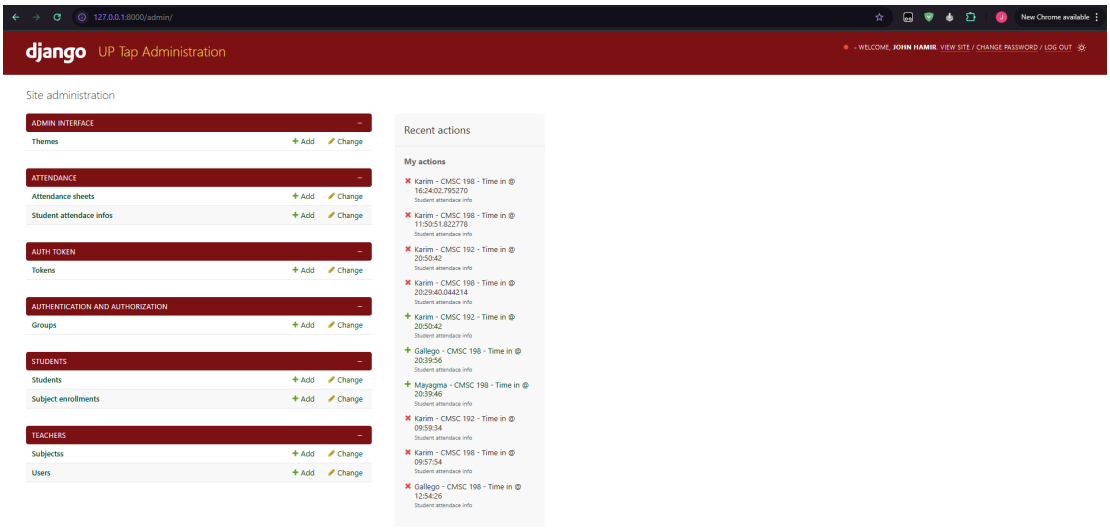

Figure 4.7: Django Administration

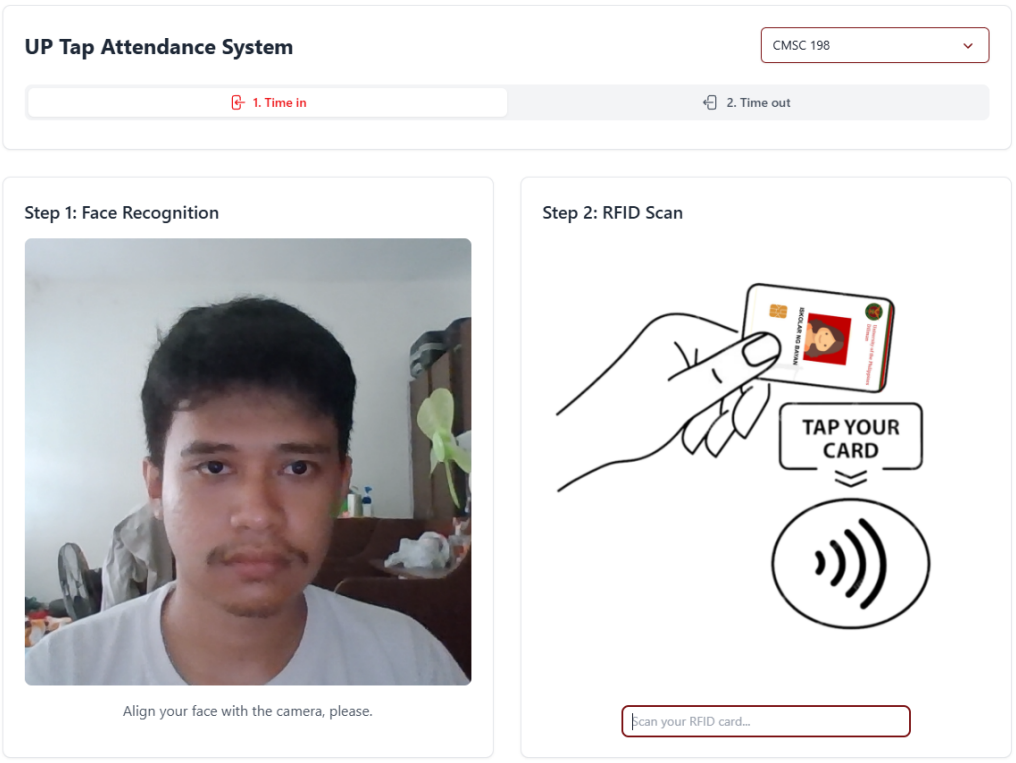

Figure 4.8: Time in and Time out Page

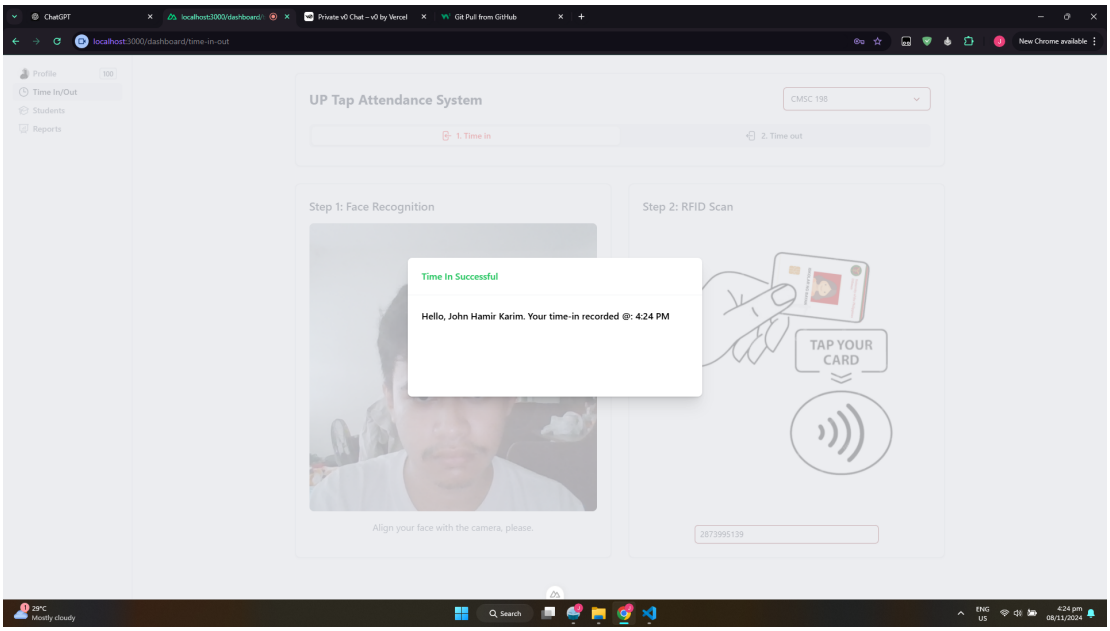

Figure 4.9: Successful Time In

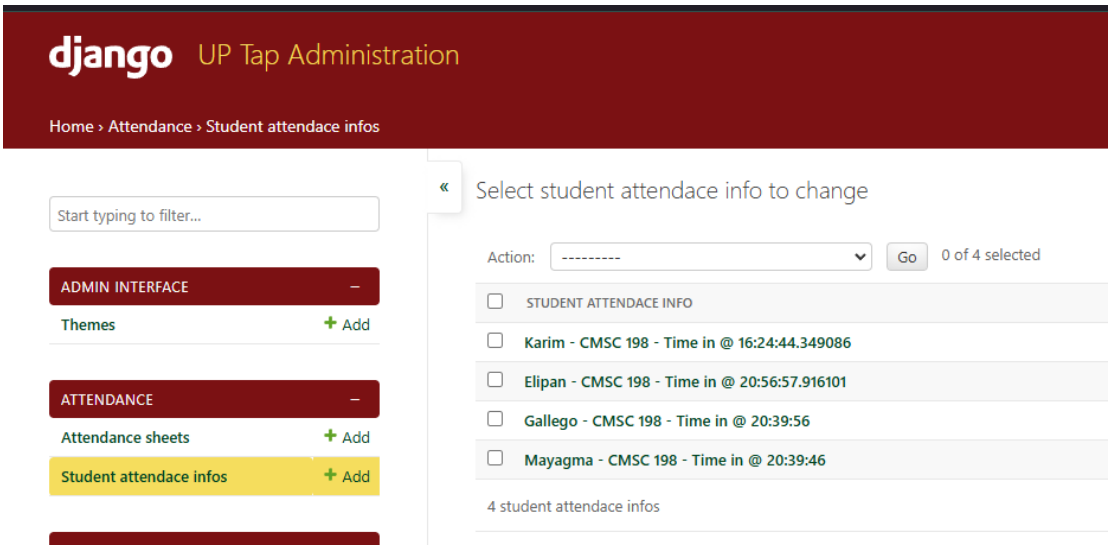

Figure 4.10: Django saving the attendance time instance in 24-hr format

```
if(time_in){
    openModal(time_in)
    // 2 second countdown
    setTimeout(() => {
        closeModal()
    }, 2000);
    setTimeout(() => {
        rfidRef.value.$refs.input.focus()
    }, 2300)
}
```

Figure 4.11: Fake Delay

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Appendix A

Appendix Title

Appendix B

Resource Persons