



UNIVERSITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON



Professionalism Section (6CS007)

Name: Krishma Khadgi

Student Number: 2329461

Course: Bachelors (Hons) in Computer Science

University email: k.khadgi@wlv.ac.uk

Supervisor: Mohit Acharya

Date: 3rd March, 2025

Table of Contents

Professional Aspect of HourFlow	1
Social Aspect	1
Ethical Aspect.....	3
Legal Aspect.....	3
Security Aspect.....	6
Conclusion	6
References.....	8

Professional Aspect of HourFlow

HourFlow is a skills exchange website that implements time banking system to foster community collaboration and engagement. The platform promotes inclusivity and accessibility by enabling users to trade skills or services based on mutual needs. It features many functionalities like live location tracking, ratings and reviews, discounts and promotions and so on to facilitate user experience. This report delves into the professional aspects of HourFlow i.e. social, ethical, legal and security aspects.

Social Aspect

HourFlow is a platform developed to promote community collaboration and engagement, the impact HourFlow may make on the society is significant. As a skills exchange website, the platform connects individuals with complementary skills, which in turn encourages meaningful social interaction among the people in the community. Similarly, as a platform that utilizes time banking system, HourFlow ensures that even marginalized individuals with financial difficulties have access to essential services, thereby promoting social equity.

The platform contributes to social-wellbeing by optimizing community resources and fostering mutual support networks, encouraging a meaningful reciprocal value rather than just monetary transactions. On that context, as evidenced by the users of Time Banking UK who have exchanged nearly 6 million hours as of March 2021, it can be inferred that people are willing to engage in this service exchange to build community collaboration and service (Otilia Manta, 2024).

Beyond just this service exchange, HourFlow is also a wonderful opportunity for individuals seeking to improve their abilities, gain new experiences, and expand their expertise. Providing an environment or platform for individuals to provide their skills and services for skill expansion leads to a culture of continuous learning and self-improvement. The fundamental mechanism behind service exchanges among individuals in time banking system is based on mutual trust and cooperation. So, users are incentivized to maintain a trustworthy reputation, foster ethical behavior and accountability, and stronger interpersonal relationships. Additionally, encouraging local exchanges in the community reduces reliance on large communities and allows the community to thrive by leveraging their own talents and resources.

However, as there are two sides of a coin, there are many challenges such as trust issues, sustainability and professional service limitations that HourFlow must address. As a peer-to-peer platform, the users may not always abide to fulfill their commitments as agreed. This may lead to dissatisfactions and disputes occurring over lowered service quality. Similarly, if there is an imbalance between the service providers and clients, sustainability might become another major concern. If there are abundant clients rather than service providers, clients might struggle find appropriate service providers to their requests. Conversely, if there are more service providers than clients, service providers may struggle to find opportunity to offer their skills and services. HourFlow must always ensure that there is balance in supply and demand. Furthermore, while HourFlow would be beneficial for everyday needs, it may not always be able to provide specialized or professional services that require formal qualifications. This may happen due to the platform undervaluing professional expertise, which may discourage professionals from using the platform.

HourFlow presents a socially innovative approach to foster collaboration, accessibility and ethical behavior. While challenges exist, the platform has the potential to strengthen community ties, empower individuals, and create a more cooperative and self-sustaining society.

Ethical Aspect

Through time banking HourFlow functions as a peer-to-peer network that enables members to exchange their skills throughout the community. The platform functions to develop community connections so members feel stronger relationships with trust. Many ethical problems must be solved for HourFlow as a peer-to-peer system to fulfill its purpose.

A core artefact in HourFlow, time banking entails that every skill holds equal value as people spend equal amount of time completing a task regardless of the level of expertise. However, not all skills require the same amount of training or effort. Since the platform operates on the principle that one hour of a skill is equivalent to an hour of another, this concept may end up undervaluing specialized skills and overvalue simpler skills and discourage professionals from participating. Similarly, there may be issues ensuring equitable access and opportunities for everyone. Marginalized individuals may have difficulty finding matches or may be undervalued in skills exchanges, leading to social inequality. The platform should strictly monitor for any potential discrimination and biasness.

Likewise, while HourFlow promotes ethical behavior and accountability, some users might not fulfill their commitments as agreed. There is no absolute guarantee that users will deliver the services as agreed, this dilemma may lead to the client's dissatisfaction, inconvenience and breach of trust over the lowered service quality. To counter this concern, HourFlow has a reviews and ratings system which helps build trust and encourages individuals to display ethical behavior, but enforcing accountability remains a huge hurdle.

Additionally, HourFlow collects user data as well as live location tracking for service exchanges which may raise concerns about data privacy and security. To address these concerns, HourFlow implements data encryption to protect sensitive data information. In a similar fashion, the platform also utilizes powerful protocols for authentication, ensuring access to only authorized users. For live location tracking, the platform only tracks the user's location once while logging in and after the user's consent, and does not continuously monitor movement. This approach ensures data privacy and security by limiting unnecessary data collection and reducing the risk of unauthorized access or surveillance.

Legal Aspect

HourFlow is a skills exchange website that uses time as currency. While it provides accessibility and economic inclusivity, it also has many legal implications that must be addressed. The following report details how HourFlow must comply with regulations like General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance, Equity Act compliance and Copyright Issues.

GDPR compliance is a set of rules set by General Data Protection Regulation, a European Union on May 25, 2018. The regulation mandates on how organizations must collect, store and process personal data to ensure privacy and autonomy of the user's information (Union, 2016). According to the regulation, the data collected and processed must be lawful, fair and transparent to the individual. HourFlow, like any other websites, collects basic user data like name, email, profession and so on. Besides name, email and password upon registering, the user can provide data to the platform voluntarily in settings. The usage of these data is made transparent to the users. Similarly, sensitive data like passwords are encrypted for data privacy and security. HourFlow also collects live location of the user for service exchange. However, this data is only collected after the user has consented to the access of their location. Additionally, the platform only monitors the user's location once when logging in instead of continuous monitoring, minimizing the need for storing unnecessary data and adhering to the principle of data minimization.

The Equality Act is an Act that was introduced on October 1, 2010 in the United Kingdoms that protects individuals from discrimination and harassment based on their characteristics such as gender, age, race and so on (Library, 2024). As a platform for community building and collaboration, the service exchange is accessible to everyone, regardless of their socioeconomic or diverse background. The unique feature of time banking gives equal importance to every individual's spent hours, ensuring that no discrimination is made during service exchanges.

In a similar fashion, copyright is a huge issue within any industry. As within the terms of copyright Act of Nepal, any original works that lie within the terms of this Act, such artistic works, databases, literary works and so on shall be protected under the law, ensuring both the ownership and authorship rights of the creator (Office, 2011). HourFlow should provide clear terms of service that defines content ownership to protect intellectual property conflicts.

HourFlow operates as a fair skill exchange platform which follows data protection law together with anti-discrimination management and copyright compliance standards for user safety. The

platform enforces GDPR compliance to allow secure data storage while requiring user consent for all data collection and uses in order to protect user privacy and decrease potential security breaches. User participation in skill exchanges becomes discrimination-free because HourFlow upholds the Equality Act standards. HourFlow protects intellectual property ownership through its copyright recognition which prevents disputes between content creators and their intellectual works.

Security Aspect

As with any other platforms, security is a major area of concern for HourFlow as well. This section of the report explores the security measures implemented by HourFlow to protect user data, prevent unauthorized access and ensure transaction integrity within the platform.

A major security concern will always be data privacy and protection, a concern so huge that it also falls under ethical and legal considerations. HourFlow has taken many approaches and measures to ensure that the platform's user data is protected and secured. First and foremost, users have autonomy over their data, meaning, they have the ability to input, modify and delete their information as per privacy policies. Similarly, to ensure confidentiality and prevent unauthorized access, HourFlow utilizes powerful hashing techniques like Bcrypt to hash sensitive data like password before storing it. This approach ensures that sensitive data remain protected and secured even in the event of a malicious breach. The platform also collects live location data of the user to facilitate service exchange. However, the data is only collected once after logging in and only after the user's consent to the access of their location. This approach enhances privacy and security, and reduces the risk of surveillance abuse.

Likewise, the platform also utilizes a powerful authentication mechanism called JSON Web Token (JWT) which secures user sessions, ensuring that only authenticated users have access to their accounts. Similarly, the utilization of email and password verification alongside JWT serves as a crucial enhancement to authentication. Moving on, several secure communication technologies like HTTPS (Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure) and TLS (Transport Layer Security) were used to encrypt data during data transmission between user and the server. This encryption prevented data interception against malicious hackers/actors during the transmission.

In addition, biasness is a serious issue for ratings and reviews system. A participant might be falsely assessed or rated due to another participant's prejudice or bias. To address this concern, the user ratings and reviews must be strictly monitored to ensure fair and trustworthy interactions on the platform. Lastly, as detailed above, it can be deduced that by implementing strong authentication, encrypted data handling and so on, HourFlow protects user data, secures transactions and creates a safe and reliable environment for its users.

Conclusion

HourFlow is a platform committed to facilitating secure and ethical skill exchanges while ensuring social, ethical, legal and security compliance. As mentioned in the contents above, as a community collaboration website, its benefits and impacts on society are huge, however, there are similarly many ethical, legal and security concerns that must be taken into consideration. The maintenance of trust and platform engagement relies on resolving three main issues that include fair skill exchange rules as well as non-discriminatory practices and data privacy safeguards. The platform uses strict security protocols combined with ethical guidelines along with transparent legal frameworks to develop an environment that protects all users. The platform maintains its compliance with international standards through strict observance of GDPR as well as the Equality Act and copyright laws to guarantee protection for user rights and platform integrity.

References

- Library, H. o. (2024). *A Short Introduction to Equality Law and Policy*. London: House of Commons Library.
- Office, U. K. (2011). *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988*. London: UK Government.
- Otilia Manta, M. P. (2024). Transforming Financial Systems: The Role of Time Banking in Promoting Community Collaboration and Equitable Wealth Distribution. *FinTech*, 17.
- Union, E. P. (2016). *Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the council*. Brussels: General Data Protection Regulation .