



DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERISTY OF TECHNOLOGY

PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR FINAL YEAR STUDY IN BSC INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY

SUBMITTED BY,

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PROJECT TITLE

WAKILI LAW FIRM MANAGEMENT SYSTEM WEB APPLICATION

A project submitted to the Department of Computer Science in the School of
Computer Science and Information Technology in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the award of the degree of Information Technology, Dedan Kimathi
University of Technology.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the project entitled Law Firm management system submitted for the B.Sc. Information Technology degree is my original work and project and has not formed the basis for an award for degree, diploma or any other similar titles.

Name KEVIN MUHIA KAHIGA

Signature

Date:

This project has been submitted for examination with approval as a University Supervisor.

Name MR. ANTHONY MAINA

Signature:

Date:

DEDICATION

I dedicated this to my beloved family, my close friends and my colleagues and who have been with me at every step during my studying period in the school. I would also like to thank God Almighty for providing me with the gift of life and the strength, both physically and mentally to be able to come this far.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my profound gratitude to God Almighty for providing me with the strength, both physically and mentally, as well as courage throughout the course of the four years of undertaking my course in B.Sc. Information Technology.

The learning opportunity I had in Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (Dekut) was a great chance for learning, professional development and personal development. I would also like to use this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to the University Lectures and Teaching Assistants whose time with has been of great value in adding more knowledge to various fields apart from the academics, university staff whose unwavering commitment to their work and hard work made sure the university ran its activities without any hitches. And finally I would like to thank the school administration from Vice Chancellor Prof. Eng. Kioni and the officials for great management of the University.

ABSTRACT

In this age and time, the use of computers and mobile devices has become a daily routine. In almost every sector of the country there exists a computer system that is essential in their day to day activities. This has also been adopted in the judicial arm of the government by having a digital record of legitimate lawyers in the L.S.K website. With many legal problems arising such as allocation of property cases, criminal cases and instances where private clients and businesses are seeking some legal advice on a certain matter, many clients and legal technology experts say they want cheaper and more streamlined ways to get their legal advice and ensure their compliance with the law. Whenever possible, they want technology-based solutions..

This project is aimed at digitizing and integrating the institution's entire data and its processes into one centralized system which will be easier to access and manage. This system helps in administration and information management between lawyer and client, lawyer appointment scheduling, viewing of court dates, easy management of document files, manage payment between lawyer and client. The system will be a web application utilizing technologies such as HTML, CSS for the user interface, PHP for the backend and MYSQL database for storage of information

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ABBREVIATIONS

Dekut - Dedan Kimathi University of Technology

NGO – None Governmental Organization

L.S.K – Law Society of Kenya

JSC - Judicial Service Commission

CHAPTER ONE : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Through the years the Kenya's Judicial Service Commission (JSC) has been undergoing a slow but promising improvement which cannot be said about previous years. The Kenyan government has implemented some reforms mainly aimed at helping the providing legal aid services to the people. One of the reforms is an initiative by the government to launch the Legal Aid Action plan whose main aim is to try and ensure all persons get access to legal aid in this country and it is especially targeting women, children and persons with disability, which in some ways falls in line with the main objective of this project ("Kenya's first legal aid action plan formally launched | IDLO", 2019)).

Another initiative came from retired Chief Justice Willy Mutunga together with other members of the Justice Service Commission, Joel Ngugi a High Court Judge and Duncan Okello, the Chief Justice's Chief of Staff, as part of their Judiciary Transformation Framework plan, who came up with a plan that will ensure that there is access to justice to every person in need of it(Gainer, Walt, Traub & Walt, 2019).This plan included such actions as establishment of customer care desks to answer questions, simplifying court procedures, creating a case management system and strengthening complaint mechanisms.

However, these plans and strategies above has not accounted for the lack of access to actual lawyers to individuals whom might be in need of their help. Moreover, from a survey done by the Kenyan Judiciary and Hill Innovating Justice called *Justice and Needs Satisfaction in Kenya 2017 Survey* (Otieno, 2018), about one in five Kenyans who encounter a legal problem do not take any legal action to resolve it, but instead attempt to settle their legal disputes through informal ways including friends, family, church leaders and elders rather than take the formal route. (Otieno, 2018).

It simply shows that many Kenyans believe seeking legal help is a hectic task that is best to avoid. Another reason from the survey showed that about 19% of the people that took the survey stated that they did not know what steps to take to resolve a legal grievance (Wakaya, 2018).

While some will ignore the idea of getting legal help from qualified law practitioners or lawyers, others will seek their help but will choose ways that may seem inefficient. One way being personal referrals, which simply involves getting information about a lawyer from a friend or family member. Through a personal connection between a friend or relative and a lawyer, one is able to be referred to the lawyer for help. However, in Kenya many cases have been lost, because of the absence of competent and consistent legal representation ("NYANG'AYA: Free legal services will help protect rights", 2019) . Even if this seems to be the most preferred solution since it is safer and comfortable than trying to seek help from someone you might have any idea of , it still not the right way to do it (Elefant, Law, WILKINS & Recruiting, 2019).

1.2 Problem Statement

Law firms and legal departments face mounting pressure to be more responsive and efficient, while still delivering high-quality work. Clients, legal technology experts say, want cheaper, more streamlined ways to get their legal advice and ensure their compliance with the law. Wakili Law Firm management system aims to accomplish this by providing a platform where within a law firm, clients and lawyers can exchange documents with ease, clients and lawyers can view Court schedule and decided when to set up an appointment and allow a client to pay to his/her lawyer.

1.3 Research Objective

1.3.1 General Objective

The main objective of this project is to automate some of the key processes that occurs during client and lawyer interaction in a law firm.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The objectives of this project is to develop Web application that will:

- i. Allow the lawyer and clients to view court dates.
- ii. Allow user to make payment to lawyer.
- iii. Allow client and lawyer to exchange documents.
- iv. Allow lawyer to create and view appointments.

1.3.3 Justification of the Study

It has been noticed that Law firms and legal departments face mounting pressure to be more responsive and efficient, while still delivering high-quality work. Legal work-flow automation is transforming the way law firms do business by accelerating processes, reducing risk, and allowing lawyers to reclaim their valuable time.

Law Firm management system aims to create a platform at which individuals can gain access to legitimate lawyers and seek legal counsel.

1.3.4 Scope of the Study

The platform's targeted users are legitimate lawyers in a law firm provide legal services and any individual private client and businesses.

1.3.5 Study Limitation

There may be some possible limitation on this study and they may include:

- i. Time - given adequate time the study will be thoroughly researched on and all aspects of the study is done
- ii. Finance - Financial backing will help in acquiring resources that will allow for effective study on the issue.
- iii. Access to relevant information and data - Having relevant information may shed more light on the issue and help in finding many solutions to the issue.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In recent years Kenya has tried to leverage the power of technology especially mobile technology in the Justice Department. This is in a bid to help people get legal advice and give them the justice they deserve. This chapter investigates some of the ways technology has been used to achieve this goal

2.2 Case studies

2.2.1 Case 1: AbacusLaw

AbacusLaw is law firm management system for small law firms and freelance legal practitioners. It's features include legal calendaring, legal work-flow process management, payroll processing. It also provides accounting features for a company such as law firm accounting and law firm trust accounting. The main advantage of Abacus law over other law firms management system is that it is can be customize to suit a law firms needs.

2.2.2 Case 2: Clio

Clio is cloud based legal practice management system that offer services to small law firms and practicing attorneys with features such as , time and billing, and client management software. More features legal calendaring, task management, time tracking, trust accounting and document management. Clio being a cloud-based software ensures that the its clients data is stored safely on the company's servers.

2.2.3 Case 3: HoudiniESQ

HoudiniESQ is another legal practice management software with targeted users such as law firms that seek a single integrated software solution that is cross platform on all operating systems i.e it can run on both MAC and Windows operating systems.

HoudiniESQ the main features that it offers include client management, email management, invoicing, trust accounting, and the ability to easily customize and automate a law firms work-flow . HoudiniESQ offers the option of choosing to run the software as a desktop version of HoudiniESQ or as a cloud-based solution.

2.2.3 Case 4: MyCase

MyCase is a web and cloud -based legal practice management software. It offers a secure client portal, communications tools so you can send messages to clients or staff, activity streams and online payment processing. MyCase also has certified consultants who can assist clients with using the legal practice management software.

CHAPTER THREE : METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Methodology mainly involves the process of planning, creating, testing and deploying a software system. In this chapter I will discuss theoretical analysis of the body of methods and principles associated with this system. It also aims to review the methods that were used in findings of the required data for the system as well as the advantages and disadvantages of these methodologies. It covers the development process and the methodology used to come up with the system.

3.2 System Development Methodology

This project will be implemented using the Agile Methodology. Agile Methodology will help in breaking down the system into features that are to be implemented after a period of time. There are key factors that make the Agile Methodology a good candidate for this project apart from the one stated above. One important factor is that it allows for customer feedback. The customer will helping in guiding the project accordingly since the customer will be involved by seeing the features developed after each period and sign off on them before the next feature is developed. It also helps to stick to a planned schedule while allowing for frequent reviews. The Methodology will also allow for changes in requirements particularly from the customers even late in the development.

This project is implemented using the Rapid Application Development methodology. RAD puts more emphasis to adaptive process rather than planning. This emphasis works well where short time periods are allocated for a project hence allowing the bulk of the work to be done within the stipulated time. RAD favors iterative development and the rapid construction of prototypes instead of large amounts of up-front planning. The planning of software developed using RAD is interleaved with writing the software itself. The lack of extensive planning generally allows software to be written much faster and makes it easier to change requirements.

during the development of this system requirements are expected to be frequently changing due to the involvement of the user in the analysis and design stages. This

involvement helps in maintaining the quality of the system. The structure of RAD allows for frequent changes in requirements.

3.2.1 Requirements Planning

In this stage, the developer, users and team members communicate to determine the goals and expectations for the project as well as current and potential issues that would need to be addressed during development.

This stage involves:

- Researching the current problem
- Defining the requirements for the project
- Finalizing the requirements

3.2.2 User Design

During this phase, clients work hand in hand with developers to ensure their needs are being met at every step in the design process. It's almost like customizable software development where the users can test each prototype of the product, at each stage, to ensure it meets their expectations.

3.2.3 Construction

Because the majority of the problems and changes were addressed during the thorough iterative design phase, the developer can construct the final working model more quickly than they could by following a traditional project management approach.

The phase breaks down into several smaller steps:

- Preparation for rapid construction
- Program and application development
- Coding
- Unit, integration, and system testing

3.2.4 Implementation

This is the implementation phase where the finished product goes to launch. It includes data conversion, testing, and changeover to the new system, as well as user training. All final changes are made while the coders and clients continue to look for bugs in the system.

3.3 Requirement Gathering Techniques

3.3.1 Interviews

This technique will consist of interviewing some people concerning the relevance of the proposed system. This helps in finding the actual situation on the ground and be able to handle it accordingly

3.3.2 Questionnaires

These will be used extensively for data collection. They will be sent to the shops, streets etc. and once a response is received then the data will be analyzed. Both closed and open-ended questionnaires will be used for this exercise.

3.4 Requirement Analysis

After analyzing data from the questionnaires and interviews, I was able to develop the requirements of the new system.

3.4.1 Functional requirements

The system is able to fulfill the following functional requirements:

- i. **User Authentication:** Authorized users are able to login to the system after entering their username and password whereby the system validates the details entered to grant or deny access. The system is able to handle exceptions by issuing user friendly error messages in case of invalid entry.
- ii. **Data Entry, Storage and Retrieval:** Records are stored on the database. The system has fully functional CRUD (Create Read Update Delete) operations enabling the user to enter store and retrieve data seamlessly form the database.

- iii. **Appointment Scheduling:** Lawyers can set appointments for each individuals whom he\she has communicated with and the information on the appointments is saved in the database.
- iv. **Private Messaging:** Messaging between the two users is guaranteed as the platform is equipped to ensure that all messages are sent in real-time and the messages are stored in the database.

3.4.2 Non - Functional requirements

The system is able to fulfill the following non-functional requirements:

- i. **User Sessions:** These are used in authentication and capturing user logs. They also ensure that once a user logs out they have to log back in to use the system.
- ii. **Performance:** Response time of the system is less than two seconds i.e. the time taken between request by the user and response by the system is minimal.
- iii. **Usability:** The system provides an easy to use user interface with well labeled user interface components.
- iv. **Integrity:** Only the system administrator has the right to change crucial data in the system.

CHAPTER FOUR: SYSTEM ANALYSIS AND DESIGN

4.1 Results on Data collected

Upon collection, evaluation and analysis of data collected in form of questionnaires and one on one interviews, the following data was clearly put to perspective from the subjects.

- i. One out of five respondents said that they sort legal aid on a legal problem.
- ii. Majority of the respondents said that they were to refereed lawyers by relatives and friends.
- iii. There is no system currently that the respondents know of that actually helps in acquiring help from a lawyer.
- iv. There is also no software available that helps lawyers get clients.

4.2 Feasibility Analysis

4.2.1 Economic Feasibility

Economic analysis is the most frequently used method for evaluating the effectiveness of a Management System. Most commonly known as cost/benefit analysis, the procedure is to determine the benefits and savings that are expected from a system and compare them with costs involved.

Benefits from Law Firm management system Application are:

- i. The application will be user friendly.
- ii. No information gaps.
- iii. Saving of precious time and resources.

The system is financially feasible because of the following reasons:

- i. In terms of the cost of the system development, the cost is not much because most of the resources needed to develop the application are free.

- ii. By using a transaction fee model where an amount of money is charged for every time the client makes a transaction with the lawyer the application is able to gets its money which

4.2.2 Technical Feasibility

Technical feasibility centers on the existing computer system i.e. Hardware and Software and to what extent it can support the proposed system

Some of the materials that the system will need is a database such as MySQL which will store the relevant information, PHP services that will process information on the backend and a text-editor or IDE for developing the application

In terms of labour, at first, i can develop the application with all the materials but in the future a team of about three developers is able to scale the application using the technologies stated above. Marketing can be done using affiliate marketing in which the affiliates gets commission for each user that uses his platform to signup to the application.

The system is technically feasible because of following reasons:

1. The technologies to implement the system such as databases and payment systems are already available and free and are supported by every android device.
2. In terms of resources such as the software and hardware the application is able to run on any device the project is operationally feasible.

4.2.3 Operational Feasibility

Operational feasibility is the measure of how well a proposed system solves the problems, and takes advantage of the opportunities identified during scope definition and how it satisfies the requirements identified in the requirements analysis phase of system development. The system will be feasible because of the following reasons:

- i. The system is Operationally Feasible since it will reduce the time the client take to look for a lawyer who is in the location of the client.

- ii. By involving the users early when implementing the application and getting feedback the application will be built according to the users needs.
- iii. By using the application, the users are able to find professional lawyers that understand their problems and guide them through solving the cases.

4.3 System Design

4.3.1 ERD Diagram

Shows relationships among objects and entities in the system.

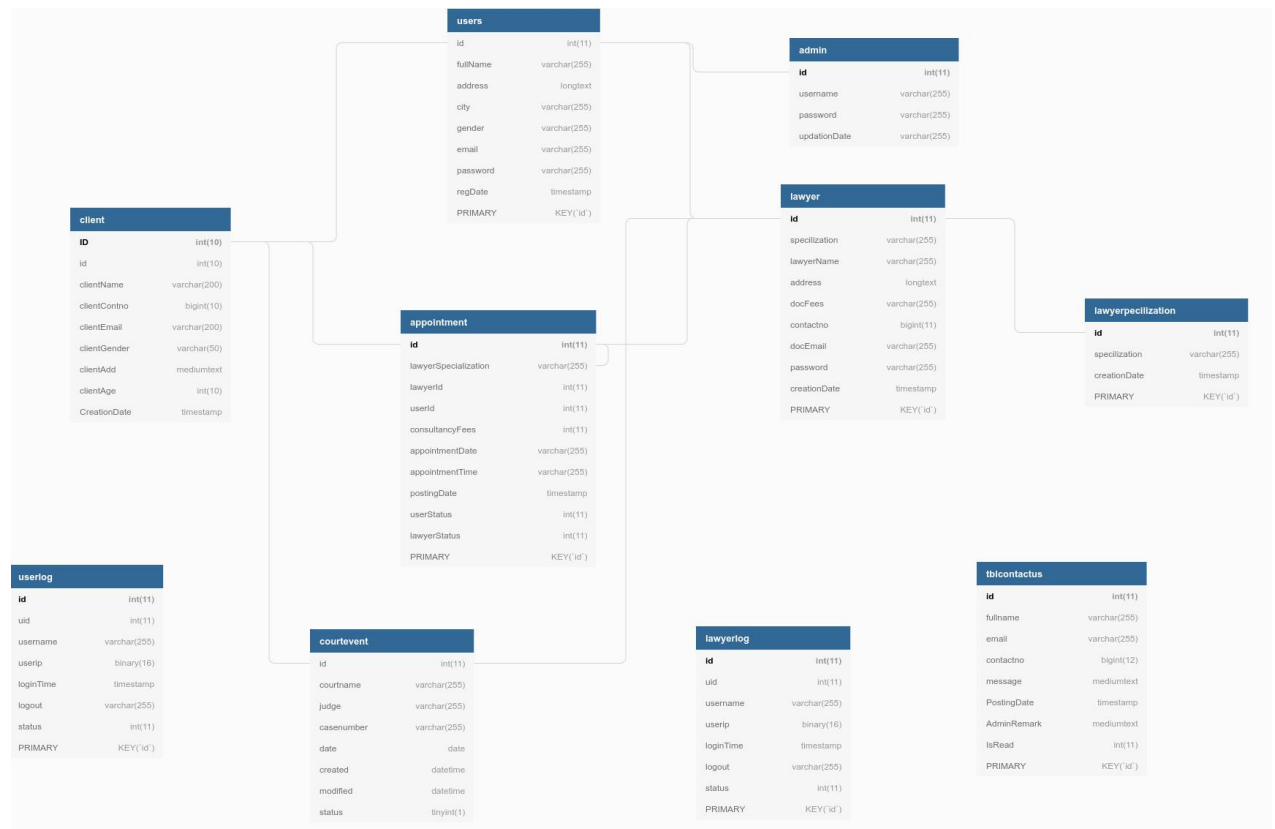


Figure 4.1 ERD diagram

4.3.2 Class Diagram

Illustrates relationships and source code dependencies among classes in the Unified Modeling Language. A class, in this context, defines the methods and variables in an

object, which is a specific entity in a program or the unit of code representing that entity.

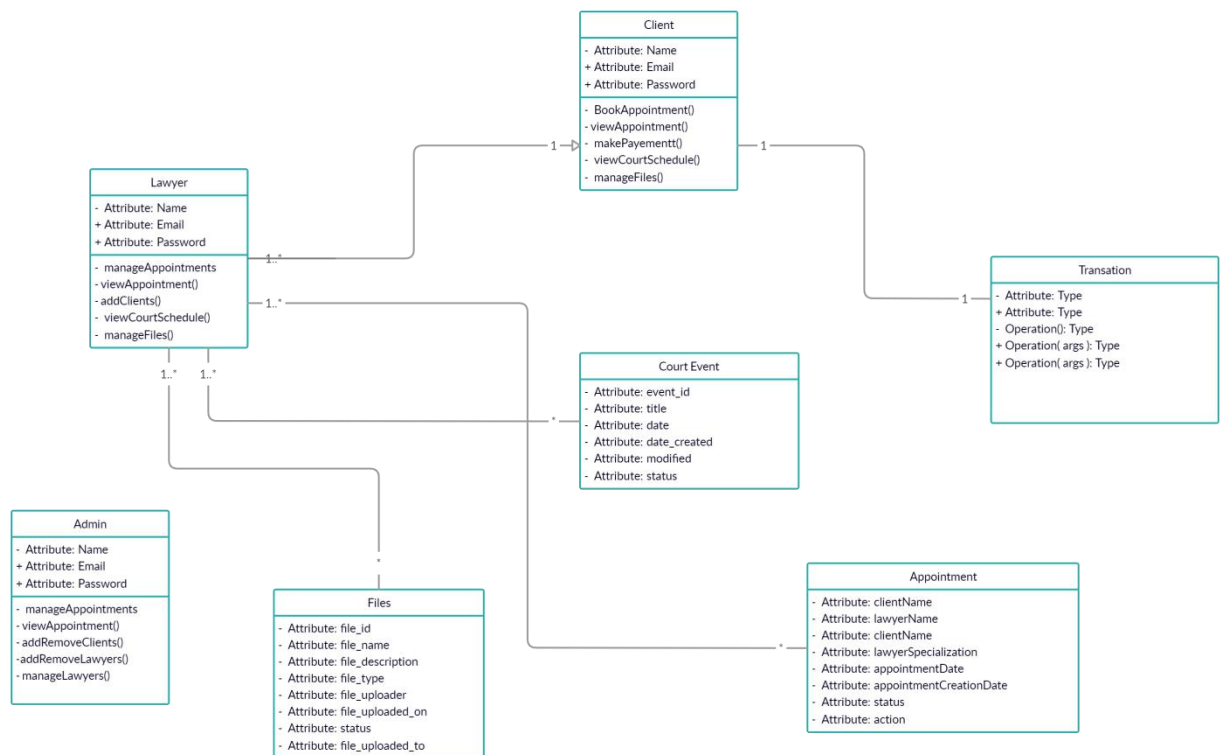


Figure 4.2 Class diagram

4.3.3 Use Case Diagram

This is a graphical depiction of the interactions among the elements of a system. It summarizes some of the relationships between use cases, actors and systems.

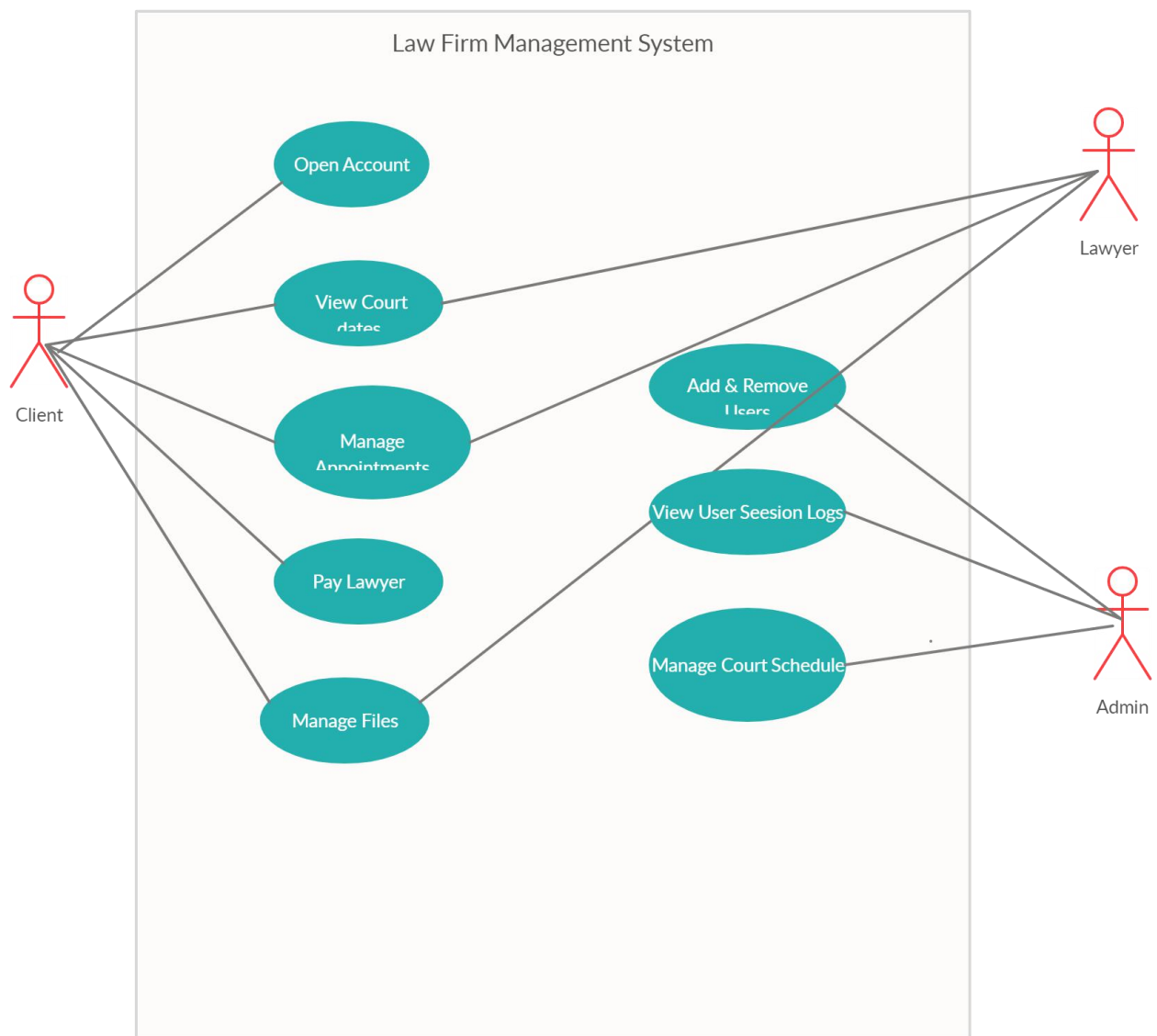


Figure 4.3 Use Case Diagram

4.3.4 Flow Chart Diagram

This is a graphical depiction of the step by step process a user takes while interacting with the system in this case the client.

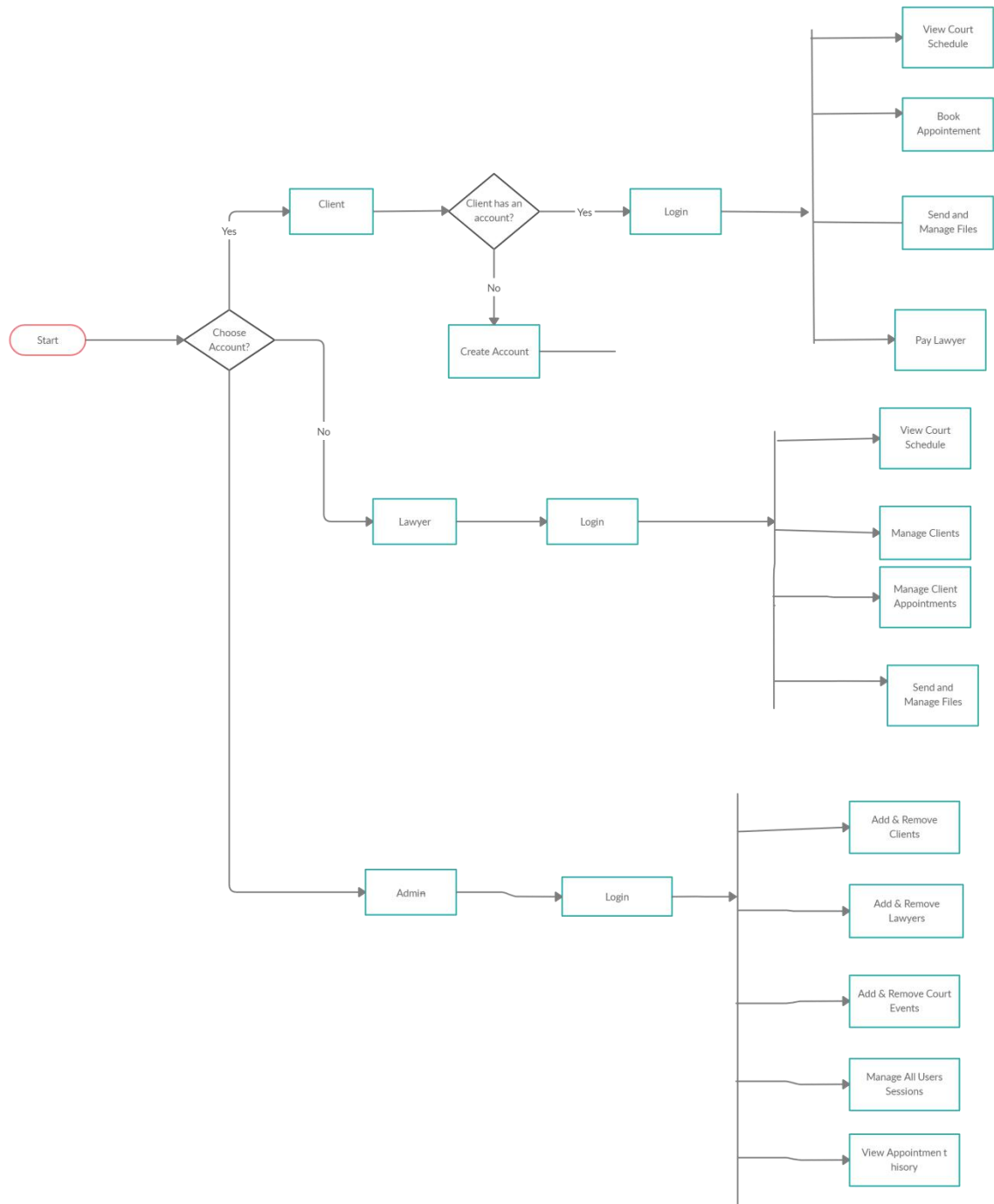


Figure 4.4 Flow Chart diagram

4.3.5 Sequence Diagram

The sequence diagram shows the interaction between objects such as the lawyers, client, database etc. In the order in which these interactions take place.

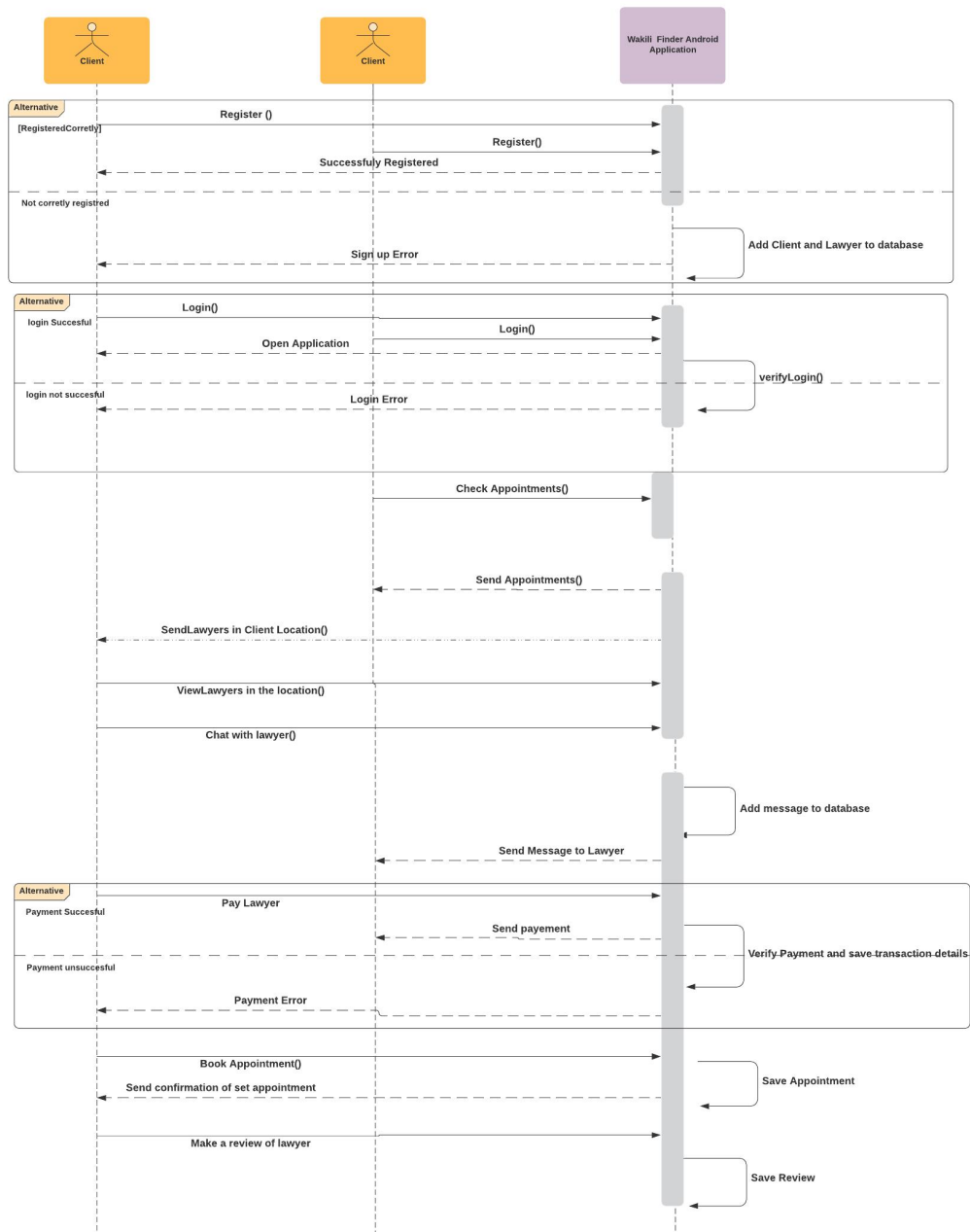


Figure 4.5 Sequence diagram

CHAPTER FIVE

SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION AND TESTING

This software is a Web Application it is developed in using HTML,CSS, Javascript and JQuery on the Frontend and PHP and MySQL Database on the backend. The web application utilizes the PayPal SDK for payment the system.

The application features a good User Interface and simple controls that makes it easy for the user to know his\her way around the application.

5.1 User Interfaces

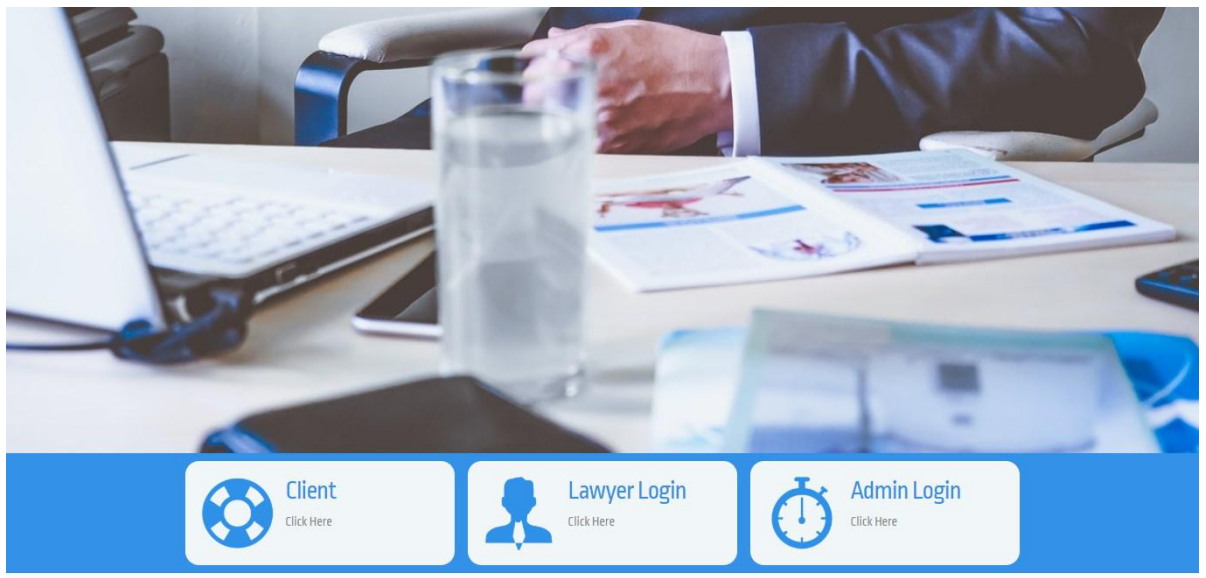
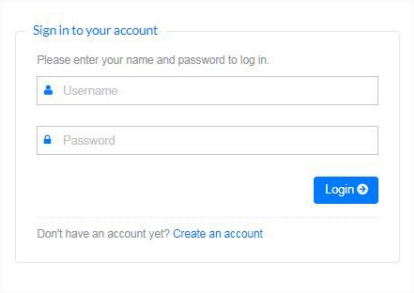


Figure 5.1 Account Selection

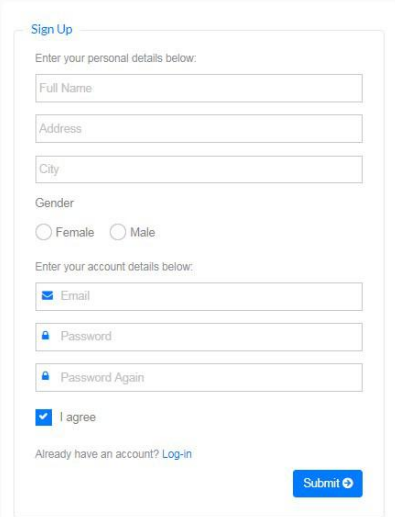
To access the lawyer account or the client account buttons are provided



The image shows a 'Client Login' form. At the top, it says 'Client Login'. Below that is a section titled 'Sign in to your account'. Inside this section, there is a prompt 'Please enter your name and password to log in.' followed by two input fields: 'Username' and 'Password'. The 'Password' field has a lock icon. To the right of the 'Password' field is a blue 'Login' button with a right-pointing arrow. Below the input fields, there is a link that says 'Don't have an account yet? Create an account'.

Figure 5.2 Login / sign up module

User client or user lawyer enters login credentials and once authenticated the system grants access to the the the main screen of each account.



The image shows a 'Client Registration' form. At the top, it says 'Client Registration'. Below that is a section titled 'Sign Up'. Inside this section, there is a prompt 'Enter your personal details below.' followed by three input fields: 'Full Name', 'Address', and 'City'. Below these is a 'Gender' section with two radio buttons: 'Female' and 'Male'. Then, there is a prompt 'Enter your account details below.' followed by three input fields: 'Email', 'Password', and 'Password Again'. The 'Email' field has an envelope icon, and the 'Password' and 'Password Again' fields have lock icons. Below the 'Password Again' field is a checkbox labeled 'I agree'. At the bottom left, there is a link that says 'Already have an account? Log-in'. At the bottom right is a blue 'Submit' button with a right-pointing arrow.

Figure 5.3 Client Sign up

Sign up screens for the client and lawyer users. After signing up and logging in each user will be directed to their individual home screens.

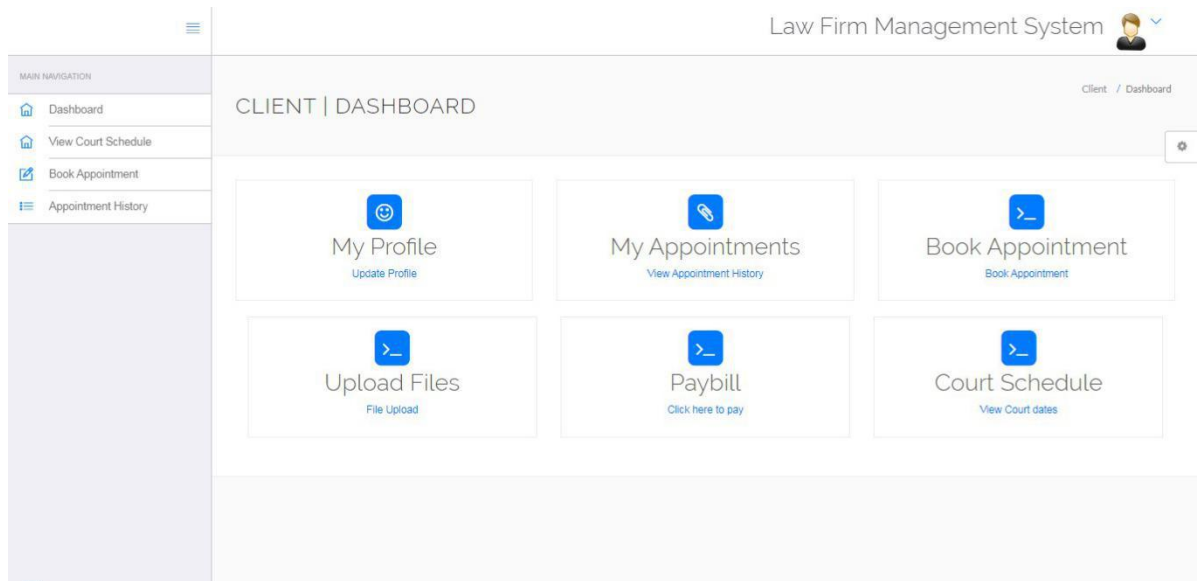


Figure 5.4 Client Dashboard

The home Client screen show the list of all lawyers that are currently in user's location by default. The client may choose to search for lawyers in other location.

Figure 5.5 Client Book Appointment

The Client Books Appointment on this page by selecting from the lawyers that are registered in the Law Firm

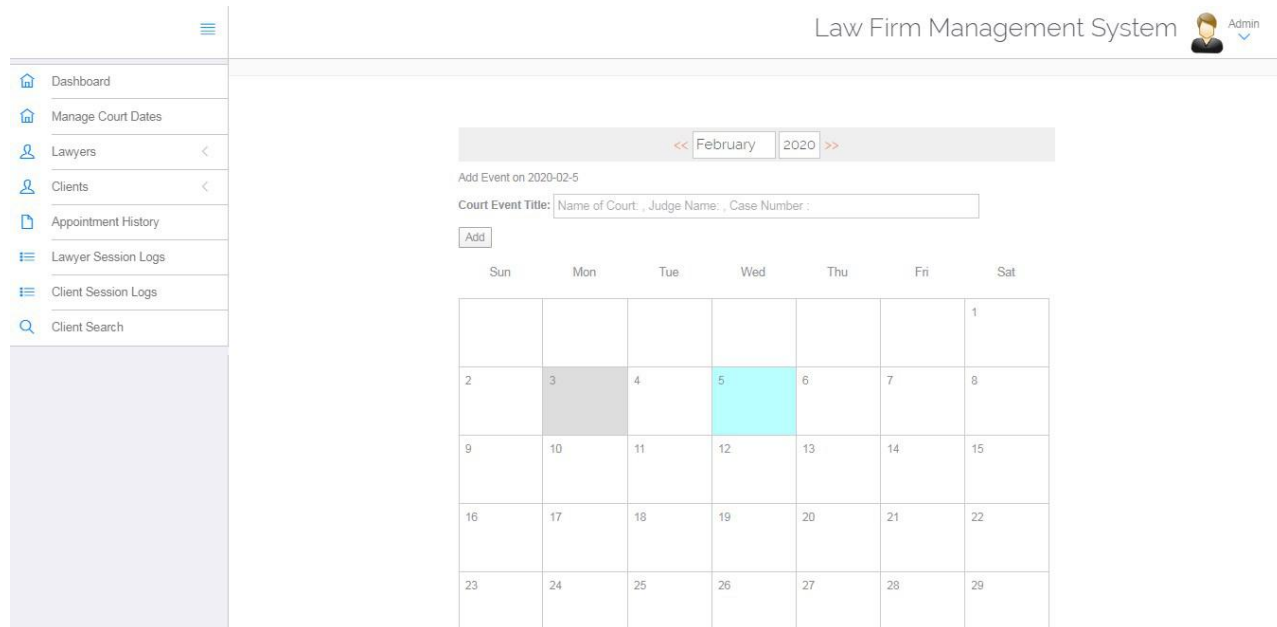


Figure 5.6 Court Schedules

The Court Schedule page shows a calendar of all the court events near the Law Firm

5.2 Installation

Law Firm management system is a Web application that is developed using the HTML, CSS, JavaScript and JQuery on the front-end and PHP and MySQL for the Backend. The application is installed by using the XAMPP software, by copying all the files in the Xampp htdocs folder. A database is then required to be created .

5.3 Support and Training

The application is meant to be used by the general public and its design as well as its UI looks similar with other popular applications users have used making it an easy application to use requiring minimal to no training at all for a first time user.

5.4 Maintenance

Users will be able to receive regular updates to the application which will include bug fixes, updates so that the application supports multiple devices, security issues fixes, added functionality etc.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 CONCLUSION

Once the software is fully developed, it will be the first stop for anyone who seeks the counsel of a lawyer no matter where they are. This android application is designed to make the search for legitimate lawyers easy, more reliable, convenient and, efficient. Security measures have also been implemented to ensure integrity of data, access and retrieval of crucial information pertaining to the daily operations undertaken in the home.

6.2 RECOMENDATION

This system solves a real world problem and by implementing some additional functionality the application, grow to be a product that anyone can rely on. These additional functionality includes:

- i. Allow lawyers to have the ability to add custom location for meeting and doing case related tasks
- ii. Allow lawyers to have the ability to add Clients with details regarding their personal details along with the details of Case such as Court, Location, Opposition Details, Judge and other related details
- iii. Provide a Reminder feature which lets the Lawyer and/or Client be reminded by an Email.

6.3 CHALLENGES

Some of the challenges encountered during the implementation of the project include:

- i. Unreliable internet access. The project required extensive research which more than often involved use of the school internet which was not really reliable
- ii. Time constraints. There wasn't enough time for collecting data, analyzing it, system design, and development and testing considering I did this system along with my studies.
- iii. Development of health issues. I developed some health problems during the course of the project thus which contributed in a lot of time taken before project was completed

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The following sample questionnaire was used for data collection.

Law Firm management system

This Survey is designed to gain an understanding of how easily accessible legal services and providing the same is in Kenya specifically in Nyeri county. The target group for this interview is the general public and professional lawyers in a Law Firm who will help me get insight on how they access these services and how they are rendered using through the status quo. All this will be in a bid to determine how the proposed system can be structured to avoid the pitfalls and improve on the process.

CLIENTS

1. How Many times have you been charged with a crime or any other legal misunderstanding in the past 6 months?
.....
.....
2. What measures did you take to find legal representation?
.....
.....
3. How did you determine the lawyer/council you chose was the best fit for you?

.....
.....
.....
...

4. Briefly describe the quality of services you received and how or which improvements would you like to see in future?

.....
.....

(Briefly describe the system: name, functions, features)

5. What challenges did you experience in finding legal representation briefly explain?

.....
.....

LAWYER/LEGAL COUNCIL

6. Have any people do you represent in a month/ how many new clients do you receive each month? (write a numerical figure next to the answer or tick where appropriate)

.....
.....

If Yes, approximately how many?

.....

No

.....

7. What barriers do you think hinder you from getting the number of customers you've projected?

.....
.....

8. Do you use any computing software to help you acquire new clients and make your services known?

.....
.....

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Question samples used in analysis and information collection.

Interview Guide

1. Tell us about your experience with a lawyer.
2. if client has used an application that the one that is being proposed
3. How did you as the client get access to lawyer
4. How would you like to improve your experience with a lawyer
5. How did you as the client find payment to the lawyer.

APPENDIX 3 REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 4 SCHEDULE

	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
Proposal							
Research							
Requirement Analysis							
System Design							
Implementation							
Testing							
Documentation							
Presentation							

APPENDIX 5: RESEARCH BUDGET

Item	Description	Cost
Research activities	Transport to research area	4000
Photocopying & printing	Photocopying and printing of documents	2000
Laptop		30,000
Miscellaneous	Binding	2500
Internet	Internet costs for 3 months @2000	6000
Total	12500	

APPENDIX 6

SAMPLE CODE : Functions.php

```
if (isset($_POST['func']) && !empty($_POST['func'])) {

    switch ($_POST['func']) {

        case 'getCalender':

            getCalender($_POST['year'], $_POST['month']);

            break;

        case 'getEvents':

            getEvents($_POST['date']);

            break;

        case 'addEvent':

            addEvent($_POST['date'], $_POST['title']);

            break;

        default:

            break;

    }

}

function getCalender($year = "", $month = "")

{

    $dateYear = ($year != "") ? $year : date("Y");

    $dateMonth = ($month != "") ? $month : date("m");

    $date = $dateYear . '-' . $dateMonth . '-01';

    $currentMonthFirstDay = date("N", strtotime($date));

    $totalDaysOfMonth = cal_days_in_month(CAL_GREGORIAN, $dateMonth, $dateYear);

    $totalDaysOfMonthDisplay = ($currentMonthFirstDay == 7) ? ($totalDaysOfMonth) : ($totalDaysOfMonth + $currentMonthFirstDay);

    $boxDisplay = ($totalDaysOfMonthDisplay <= 35) ? 35 : 42;

    ?>

    <div id="calender_section">

        <h2>

            <a href="javascript:void(0);" onclick="getCalendar('calendar_div','<?php echo date("Y", strtotime($date . '-' . 1 Month'))); ?>','<?php echo date("m", strtotime($date . '-' . 1 Month'))); ?>');">&lt;&lt;</a>

            <select name="month_dropdown" class="month_dropdown dropdown"><?php echo getAllMonths($dateMonth); ?></select>

            <select name="year_dropdown" class="year_dropdown dropdown"><?php echo getYearList($dateYear); ?></select>

            <a href="javascript:void(0);" onclick="getCalendar('calendar_div','<?php echo date("Y", strtotime($date . '-' . 1 Month'))); ?>','<?php echo date("m", strtotime($date . '-' . 1 Month'))); ?>');">&gt;&gt;</a>

            if (($cb >= $currentMonthFirstDay + 1 || $currentMonthFirstDay == 7) && $cb <= ($totalDaysOfMonthDisplay)) {

                //Current date
```