CIS 551: Fall 2014

Simple Web Interface To Manage A Toastmasters Club

Database Processing : Project

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1. Summary

1.1. Tostmasters International

Toastmasters International (TMI) is an educational organization operating in a nonprofit basis. The objective of Toastmasters is to help its members improve their communication, public speaking, and leadership skills. It is consisted of over 313,000 members belonging to over 14,650 clubs in 126 countries.[1] The main units of operation of TMI are the clubs. Each club has 7 elected officers; President, Vice-President Education, Vice-President Public Relations, Vice-President Membership, Secretary, Treasurer, and Sergeant-at-Arms [10]. I am a dual member of the University of Oregon club [2] and University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka club [3].

A Toastmasters club conducts club meetings where each meeting is a peer supported workshop with members evaluating the progress of one another's presentation and leadership skills in a cordial and no-pressure atmosphere. This feedback process is an integral part of the Toastmasters program. Meeting participants also develop skills related to timekeeping, grammar and parliamentary procedure. Each meeting has generally 3-5 speech slots, a member may reserve one of them to conduct a prepared speech. Most common time period for a prepared speech is 5-7 minutes. But rarely there are prepared speeches as short as 2 minutes to as long as 20 minutes. Other members will then volunteer to be the evaluator [9] of these prepared speeches.

Apart from the roles of speaker and speech evaluator, there are other roles in a meeting; Toastmaster [4], TableTopics Master [5], Vote Counter, Timer [6], Grammarian [7], and General Evaluator [8]. Members will volunteer for each of these roles. Anyone can attend toastmasters club meetings without registering as a member for an indefinite time period. These nonmembers are referred to as guests.

1.2. Tostmasters Education Program

As mentioned above, the goal of Toastmasters is to improve the members on their communication, public speaking, and leadership skills. To achieve this end, toastmasters have two educational tracks; communication track [11] and the leadership track [12].

1.1.1. Communication Track

The communication track starts with the Competent Communicator (CC) manual. This manual is consisted of 10 speech projects. Each of these will be focusing on a specific area. This starts with an icebreaker and gives guidance to the member to gradually improve his or her public speaking skills by focusing on areas such as organizing the speech and using body language [13]. At the end of successful completion, the member earns a Competent Communicator award. The member can then use CC as a post-nominal title.

A member who has already completed the Competent Communicator level may opt to take on the Advanced Communication Series [14]. Here the member can choose to further his/her communication skills in more specific areas. The available manuals are; The Entertaining Speaker, Speaking to Inform, Public Relations, Facilitating Discussion, Specialty Speeches, Speeches by Management, The Professional Speaker, Technical Presentations, Persuasive Speaking, Communicating on Video, Storytelling, Interpretive Reading, Interpersonal Communication, Special Occasion Speeches, and Humorously Speaking. Each of these manual contain 5 speech projects. The member at CC level may choose two of these manuals and do the ten speech projects from them. This will earn the member Advanced Communicator Bronze (ACB) award. Taking up yet another two advanced manuals and fulfilling some other requirements will earn the member Advanced Communicator Silver (ACS) award. Finishing another two advanced manuals (to a total of six different advanced manuals) and fulfilling

some other requirements will earn the member Advanced Communicator Gold (ACG) award. A member who has achieved ACB, ACS, ACG may use the ones that he or she achieved as a post-nominal title. But the common practice is to only use the highest title.

1.1.2. Leadership Track

The leadership track starts with the Competent Leader (CL) manual. This manual is consisted of 10 leadership projects. These can be fulfilled by volunteering for the aforementioned meeting roles and by taking part in other club activities such as contributing to the creation of the club newsletter, being the webmaster for the club, helping out the club in a membership-building campaign. An evaluator will evaluate how well the objectives of these leadership roles were realized and offer feedback for improvement. [15]. At the end of successful completion, the member earns a Competent Leader award. The member can then use CL as a post-nominal title.

A member who has already completed both the Competent Communicator level and Competent Leader level may opt to take on the Advanced Leadership Series [16]. By serving as an elected club officer for at least six months, going through officer training programs and conducting presentations from leadership oriented manuals, the member can then earn the Advanced Leader Bronze (ALB) award. Next, the member can go on to take the volunteer position as a district leader (district governor, lieutenant governor, public relations officer, secretary, treasurer, division governor or area governor) for a year; serve a club as a club sponsor, mentor or coach; and complete the High Performance Leadership program. A member that fulfils these requirements will earn the Advanced Leader Silver (ALS) award. A member who has achieved ALB, ALS may use the ones that he or she achieved as a post-nominal title. But the common practice is to only mention the highest title.

A member who has achieved ACG and ALS (the maximum possible awards in both tracks) will be awarded the Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) award [17]. This is a coveted title which only 2% of all the toastmasters in the world have achieved.

1.3. Distinguished Club Program

As described above, completing the communication and leadership projects are important to the growth of a member as an individual. To recognize the support each club will give to its members to complete these projects, a club recognition program named "Distinguished Club Program" (DCP) is conducted [18]. This will award clubs with accolades following the progress of its members in CC, ACB, ACS, ACG, CL, ALB, ALS, DTM achievements.

1.4. TableTopics

In life, not all the speeches one would have to give would be given with prior preparation. Some of the speeches will be made impromptu. This includes simple casual conversation as well. Toastmasters recognize this part of speaking with the TableTopics section. A TableTopics master will come up with a set of thought provoking titles or questions. At the TableTopics session the participants in the meeting puts themselves forward and the TableTopics master will give them a title or ask them a question that s/he has prepared. The participant will then do an impromptu speech on that topic or give a detailed answer for the given question. For this, the participant is given two minutes. [5]

1.5. Project Scope and components

As described in the above sections, a club has to conduct meetings, monitor the educational progress of its members and conduct interesting TableTopics sessions. Currently most clubs use a paper file based format to keep track of member progress. University of Oregon Toastmasters club uses a free service (Doodle) to organize meetings [19]. TableTopics masters use various methods to find

interesting topics. I propose to create a software to handle all of these scenarios. Given below is a brief description of each component.

1.1.3. TableTopics repository component

This component will store TableTopic titles along with keywords that are related for each title. The component will give the ability to search the database using these keywords. This way, a TableTopics master will have quick access to a collection of interesting topics on any subject that s/he may desire. The system will be bootstrapped by adding a few hundred topics to the database. The members of the club will get the ability to add new topics to the database to enrich the repository. When they do this, the TableTopics will be added with a reference to the person who submitted the topic for record keeping purposes. This component will thus have the following applications;

1. Display Random topic
2. Search topics
3. Edit Topics

1.1.4. Meeting Management component

This component will help the club executive officers to organize a meeting. They would be given the option to set up a date and will be given a comment section to provide the other information such as the meeting place and theme (if exists). They will also be given the chance to propose meeting roles for club members. But this would not be compulsory. In setting up the meeting, the club executive officer will define the number of speech slots available in the meeting. This component will thus have the following applications;

1. Set up a meeting
2. Propose meeting roles
3. Define the number of speech slots

1.1.5. Member progress tracking component

This component will track the progress of a member through his/her activates in the toastmasters education program. Club executive officers will be given the ability to add new members. Each member will be given the ability to reserve speech slots and register as an evaluator or volunteer for meeting roles. The progress of non-speech projects will be updated by a club executive officer. This component will thus have the following applications;

1. Add User
2. Reserve a speech slot
3. Register for a meeting role
4. Volunteer to be an evaluator
5. Update non-speech project progress

2. Logical design

1.6. Interrelationships of the data items

At the center of the database would be the member entity. It will have an index number, name, email address, password, and a user level. Club executive offices will be in level 1 and other members will be in level 0. The member entity will be linked to the title entity via the "added by" relationship. The title entity will hold a table topic. Each table topic (title) will have one or zero members listed as the person who added the title. The title entity will be connected to the key entity via the "title to key" relationship. The key entity will hold keywords that are related to table topics. A table topic can have zero to many keywords and a keyword will be paired with one to many titles.

The member entity will be connected to the weak entity "progress" via the identifying relationship "of". There are two types of progress; Communication and Leadership. "Progress" entitty will keep track of the current goal and the levels of progress already completed. Because it is possible to redo each progress level multiple times, the status of each level will be tracked separately.

The member entity will be connected to the meeting entity by relationships; Toastmaster [4], TableTopics Master [5], Vote Counter, timer [6], Grammarian [7], and General Evaluator [8]. There is no need to keep track of which member created a record in the meeting entity.

The weak entity "speech", will be connected to "member" and "meeting" through the identifying relationships, "Done by" and "Done at" respectively. It will also have another relationship with member named, "Evaluated by". This is a one to many relationship going from member to speech.

1.7. ER-Diagram
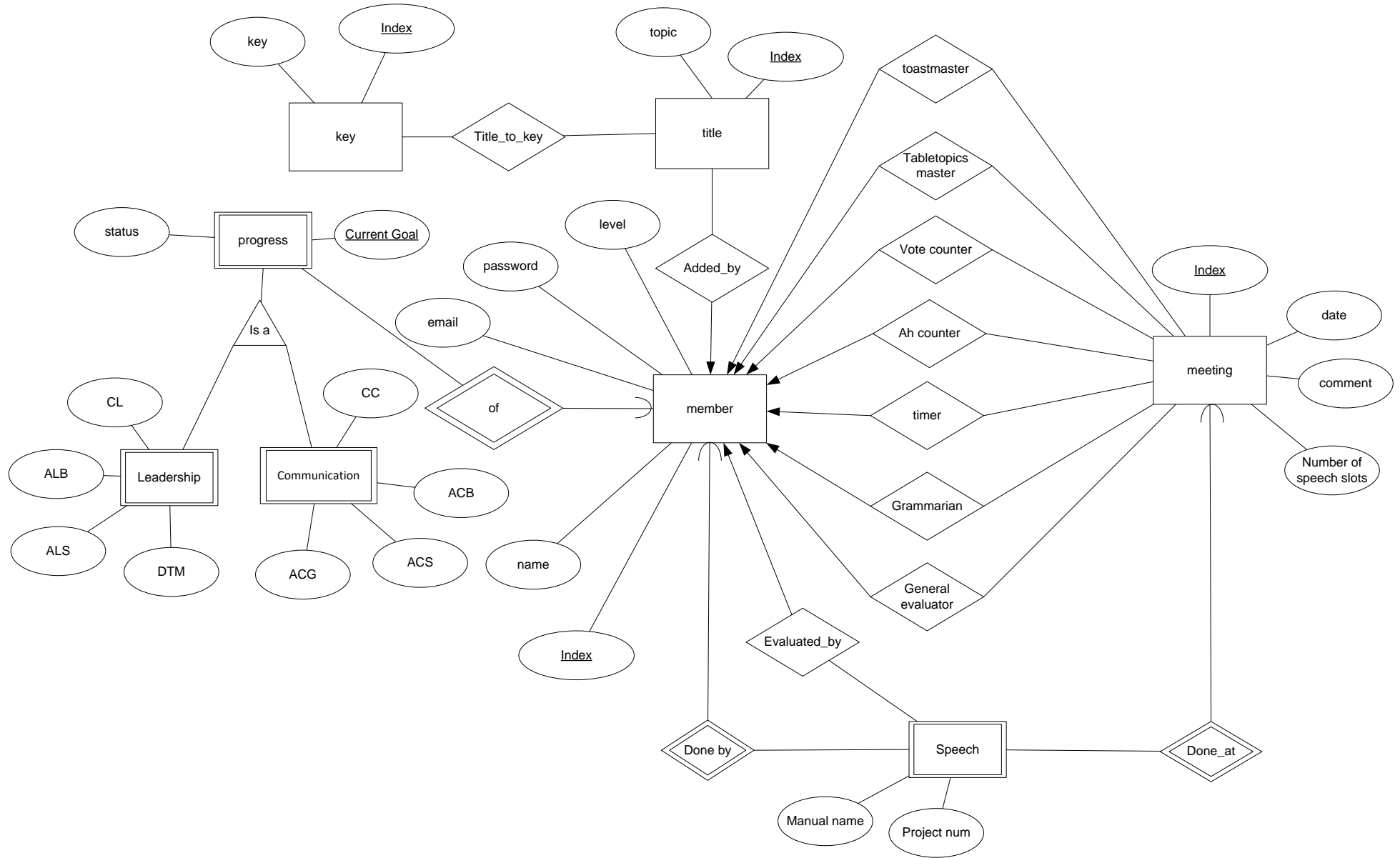
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