Perfect Parking

An AI Application to Assist Drivers Finding Parking in Busy Cities

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Abstract

*This project is a Parking application for academic purpose. The aim of Perfect Parking is to create a parking system that will replace outdated systems and to help stop the widespread problem that is parking in our cities. The applications that are used in Limerick City are simply not good enough. So, the goal in this project is to improve the effectiveness of finding parking spaces and to also relieve the stress of the users looking for parking by implementing new and innovative features. I will do this by using the Django framework structure and by implementing methods such APIs that will show the user exactly where the parking is and by providing locations for them to follow straight to the location. I will also use a parking monitor powered by OpenCV to detect if a parking spot has been filled or made empty. By doing this I feel like it will also help with traffic congestion in the city as people won’t need to keep driving around the block to find a convenient parking space.*

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# Introduction

Due to an increase in in the number of cars being used in limerick city and other cities in Ireland, finding a solution to car parks has now become vital. The old-fashioned way of parking was that everyone would just leave their cars parked in the streets until they were needed again, this however caused major traffic congestions in towns and cities. Shop owners also got hugely impacted as there wouldn’t be enough room for staff to park no mind the customers looking to go into their shops which was damaging for their business, it is undeniable that car parks are a very important factor in society, by having parking spaces it reduces illegal parking which would have increased congestions on the road and increasing travel time.

Parking back in the 1980s – 1990s wasn’t such a big issue as there wasn’t very many cars on the road as people couldn’t afford to have a car unless they were wealthy, nowadays however it is very hard to find available parking spaces in places such as cities, and of course universities especially during rush hour. Since limerick City is a big city for students to come and study in with there being over 16,000 students attending university of limerick and just under 2000 students in TUS and Mary I, this brings so much more motor vehicles into limerick city which is a city already struggling with car parking. (University of Limerick, 2022)

The goal is to try and reduce this issue by building a new innovative parking app and to try to help motorists stop stressing about this parking crisis.

## The academic objectives

The academic objectives of this project are to study and gain experience working with AI and object detection in images.

The chosen problem used for this study is to help to reduce the traffic congestion in cities such as Limerick.

## Problem Statement

Ineffective ways of finding an available parking space which is a waste of time, very fuel consuming and causes traffic jams. hen road users are looking to find an available parking space they end up wasting time and using a lot of fuel from them driving around the car park or the block multiple times hopping to find a space, on average people spend 17 hours per year driving around looking for parking spaces (Quellmalz, 2021). By developing Perfect Parking, it is hoped to make the parking process in college campus and in the city seamless and stress free, by doing this I’m hoping to eliminate the time and fuel waste road users encounter while looking for parking.

**Lack of visual parking space availability.**

When road users are driving the visuals of the eye are limited, the vision is blocked by many obstacles such as the cars frame causing blind spots, other cars, trees and much more. It can be understood that the road users can find it difficult to spot an available parking space if it’s in the distance or behind other cars. This has turned into an important problem with road users and as a result they waist time and fuel trying to spot an available space.

**Lack of knowledge of towns or cities.**

Limerick is a city where people migrate to for education or tourism, and with this brings more road users. When drivers first come to Limerick City, they must learn the road routes and with this where the parking is. A lot of road users that drive in a new place start to panic and get anxious when they try and find parking. This can cause them to be in the wrong lanes and cause traffic congestion. But with the Perfect Parking app it will allow users to plan their route to the parking of their choice and follow directions on the phone to the car park. By doing this that it will keep new road users in the city calm so they can enjoy their holiday or for students teach them the road routes and the best places to park.

## Perfect Parking: a solution

## Objectives

## The Scope of the solution

The scope of the Perfect Parking solution is limited to the use of prerecorded video demonstrations to showcase the car detection capabilities of the application. Due to time and budget constraints, live feeds from cities or colleges were not included in the scope of the project. Instead, prerecorded videos were used to demonstrate the application's ability to detect available parking spaces. The solution also includes a server demonstration to showcase the end-user usage of the application and its overall viability as a product. By focusing on these key aspects of the application, the scope of the solution is narrowed, allowing for a more focused and efficient development process.

## Report Structure

This thesis is structured with five chapters:

Literature Review:

This chapter discusses the different types of data and the problems with gathering data, it also discusses about object recognition and AI. The literature review also touches on the parking business sector and the global and Irish trends, while also discussing the software solution.

Analysis and Design:

This chapter discusses the design of the application such as the use cases and the database design. The chapter also goes on to discuss about computer vision and how OpenCV makes it possible.

Implementation:

This chapter discusses how the project was implemented. It also discusses the tools that were used to develop this application such as the Django framework and how other tools such as GitHub were used to make the development possible.

Testing and Results:

The testing and results chapter goes on to show how different software testing techniques were used to test the program such as Unit Testing.

Conclusions:

The Analysis and Design also discusses a look to the future which is about how this project could be scaled up in the future.

# Literature Review

## Big Data and Realtime Data

A large amount of live data will be required to provide a comprehensive parking software application solution.

### What is big data?

Big data is a combination of structured, semi structured, and unstructured data that is collected by organizations, this data can be mined for information to be used in many projects such as machine learning, predictive modelling, and other analytics applications. Big data is often characterized by the three Vs.

* The large **Volume** of data in many environments.
* The wide **Variety** of data types frequently stored in big data systems.
* The **velocity** at which much of the data is generated, collected, and processed.

These characteristics were first identified in 2001 by Doug Laney, they were then further popularized in 2005 by an analyst at a consulting firm called Meta Group.

Big data doesn’t equate to any specific amount of data, big data deployments often involve terabytes, petabytes or even in some cases exabytes of data that is created and collected over time. (Botelho, 2020).

### Why is big data important?

Big data importance lies in the fact of how a company utilizes the gathered data. Every company uses its gathered data in its own way, the more a company can gather its data the more the company can grow.

Big data provides valuable insights into customers that companies can use to refine their marketing, advertising, and promotions by doing this they can increase customer engagement and conversion rates. (TechVidan, 2022)

Big data is huge in the medical industry, medical researchers can identify disease signs and risk factors, this can help the doctors diagnose illnesses and medical conditions in patients. A combination of data from electronic health records and the web can give healthcare organizations and government agencies up to date information on infectious diseases threats or outbreaks, we have seen this in the past with the pandemic and how the HSE in Ireland were able to monitor the amount of covid – 19 infections per county, and how they were able to create the Covid App with this data. (Botelho, 2020)

### What is Real Time data

Real time data is data that is available as soon as its created and acquired. Rather than being stored, data is pushed to users as soon as its collected and is immediately available without and delay, this is crucial for supporting live, in the moment decision making. This real time data is a big part of our everyday lives, it powers everything from bank transactions and GPS this was also seen in the many Covid-19 maps that emerged during the pandemic. (Splunk, 2021)

We see a lot more of real time data then we think, Google collects endless amounts of real time data and the way they do it is very smart, they use a device that 6.6 billion people in the world have and that being smart phones. (Turner, 2023) if people have smart phones, then nearly everyone has the google map application and GPS in their phones. When people sign into google on their phone Google starts creating real time data through the GPS and other apps, for example, when your using Google Maps on your phone it shows loads of data such as the estimated time of arrival to your destination and also if there is any traffic on your route, Google knows this by using real time data from other people that are taking that route and that might be stuck in traffic and this is all taken from the GPS location on smart phones. (Ashish, 2022)

### What is the importance of Real Time data?

Real-Time data is a necessity to stay relevant for today’s business and it needs to be delivered by sophisticated electronic communications tools such as digital signage and data dashboards, to remain appealing to today’s tech savvy workforce from call centres to retailers. (Barnett, 2017)

Real time data is important in many parking applications, these applications use real-time data to show users if there is parking spaces in the carpark which they have selected, this data can be gathered by the carpark having a barrier that counts the amount of cars that go in or the amount of cars that exit, some carparks also have sensors on each of the parking spaces this allows users to see what actual spaces are available, this is the most ideal as it allows people that need disabled parking to see if that type of parking space is available.

## Problems with gathering data.

Generic paragraph of the problems of collecting big bag, non-domain specific

## Object Recognition and AI

Object recognition refers to the process of teaching a computer how to identify and classify objects within digital images or videos. It's like teaching a child to recognize different objects such as cars, chairs, or animals. Artificial intelligence, or AI, is the field of computer science that deals with creating machines that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, and problem-solving. AI techniques like deep learning, which is a subset of machine learning, are often used in object recognition systems to train algorithms to recognize and classify objects. This technology has a wide range of applications, from self-driving cars to medical diagnosis to robotics. (Tech Target, n.d.)

### Object Detection

Object detection is a technique in computer vision that involves detecting objects of interest within an image or video stream. Finding the object(s) within a picture and categorizing them into various categories are the goals of object detection. Since object detection requires locating and recognizing multiple objects inside a picture, it is a more advanced technique than object recognition (Patel, 2020).

### Cascading classifiers

Cascade classifiers One kind of machine learning technique used in computer vision for object detection is called a cascading classifier. In their groundbreaking study "Rapid Object Detection using a Boosted Cascade of Simple Features" published in 2001, Viola and Jones introduced them for the first time. The approach is based on the concept of "cascading" the solution of a complex detection problem into several smaller, easier sub-problems. (Michael Jones, 2001)

The basic idea behind cascading classifiers is to use a series of classifiers, each with increasing complexity, to detect objects of interest. Utilizing a series of classifiers, each with a higher level of complexity, to find things of interest is the main notion underlying cascading classifiers. The input image is classified as either containing the object of interest or not by each classifier in the cascade using a collection of features. Each classifier's attributes are chosen based on their capacity to distinguish between positive and negative samples. (Lee, 2022)

One of the main advantages of cascading classifiers is their ability to achieve high detection rates with low false positive rates. This is accomplished by employing several classifiers, each of which is trained to quickly reject negative samples. As a result, there are fewer false positives because the algorithm can swiftly reject pictures that don't include the object of interest. (Bąk, 2023)

When used in object detection tasks like face detection, cascading classifiers have been shown to be highly accurate and effective. (Bąk, 2023).

### Classifier Background (Haar-like features)

Classifiers are based upon Haar wavelets theory using Haar-like features, which are extracted from images using rectangular filters and then fed into a classifier to learn to distinguish between different classes based on the extracted features.

An image feature type used in computer vision for object detection is called a Haar-like feature. They have the name of the Haar wavelet, which Alfred Haar, a Hungarian mathematician, initially proposed in 1909. (Seal, n.d.) The mathematical function known as the Haar wavelet can be used to break down a signal or image into a collection of wavelet coefficients.

By comparing the average pixel values in adjacent rectangular regions of an image, Haar-like features can be extracted from the Haar wavelet. The difference between the sum of pixel intensities in a rectangular region with a light color and the sum of pixel intensities in a rectangle region with a dark color is the precise definition of Haar-like features (Arunachalam, 2014).

These rectangular areas can be positioned anywhere in the image and come in a variety of sizes and shapes. It is feasible to gather details about the texture and structure of a picture at various levels of granularity by computing Haar-like features at various scales and positions in the image.

The Viola-Jones object detection technique, a well-liked algorithm for face detection in photos, makes use of Haar-like features. In this approach, a classifier is trained to differentiate between positive instances (pictures containing the item of interest, such as faces) and negative examples (images devoid of the object of interest), using a set of Haar-like characteristics computed for each sub-region of an input image. (Tyagi, 2021)

One of the advantages of using Haar-like features for object detection is their computational efficiency. They are suitable for real-time applications like video surveillance since they are rapid and effective to compute utilizing integral images. (Bąk, 2023)

## Parking Business Sector

Parking management software is expected to see a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 12.8% and expand to a global market size of $11.3 billion by 2024. Additionally, it is anticipated that the market for artificial intelligence (AI) in parking management will increase by 20% yearly to $1.5 billion by 2025. With these numbers in mind, it is obvious that the parking sector needs creative solutions that can harness the potential of AI to enhance parking management.

### Irish Trends

These statistics suggest that there are several factors that could encourage people to drive more in the future, such as improved traffic congestion, access to parking, and lower costs. This is where the Perfect Parking application can help, by reducing the traffic congestion and reducing the fuel prices. (CSO.ie, 2019)

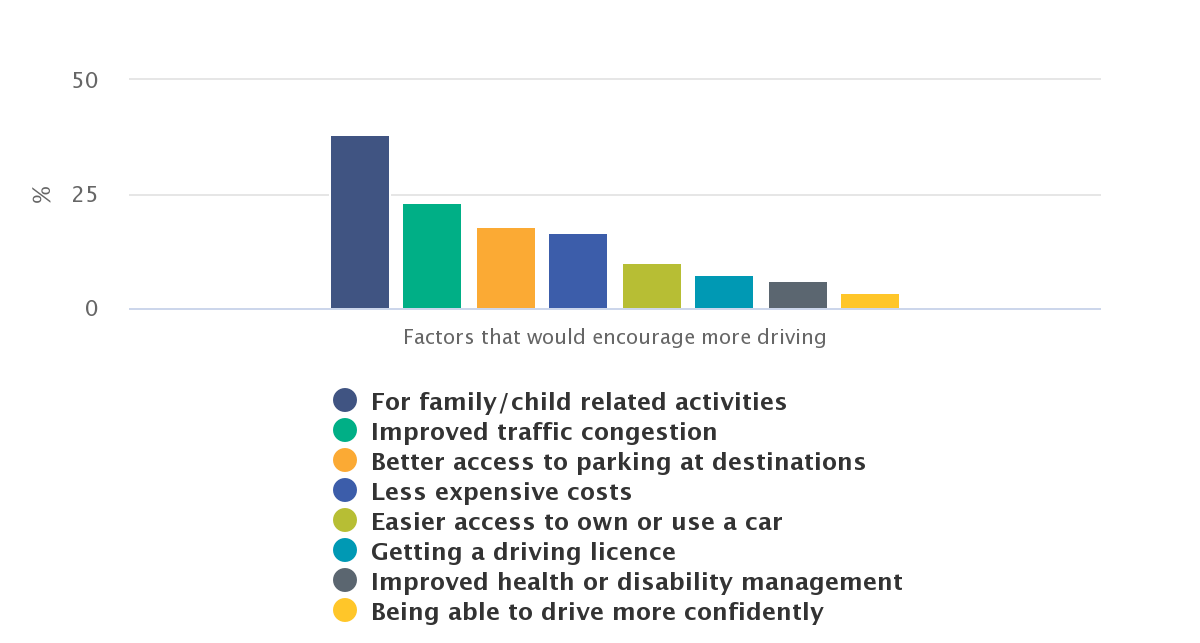


Figure 1: CSO.ie - Factors that would encourage more driving,

### Global Trends

The present approaches for locating parking spaces are inefficient and wasteful, requiring a large amount of time and fuel. People spend an average of 17 hours a year searching for parking spaces, according to (McCoy, n.d.) and Irish people waste four days a year. (Sawer, 2017) the solution intends to end this time and energy waste which will be advantageous to both users and the environment.

It is anticipated that the global market for automated parking systems will increase from $1.3 billion in 2020 to $3.6 billion in 2025. By creating an AI-powered parking management system that can maximize parking spot use, lessen traffic congestion, and more, the Perfect Parking project seeks to meet this expanding need. and improve the overall user experience for drivers. (abdalslam, 2023).

## A Software Solution

By leveraging the latest technologies and market trends, the Perfect Parking project seeks to revolutionize the parking industry and provide a comprehensive solution to the challenges faced by parking operators and drivers alike.

In this project, the parking application is being created for educational purposes to solve the widespread parking issue in our cities. Time is lost, gasoline is consumed, and traffic is backed up due to Limerick City's old and inefficient parking systems. To increase the efficiency of identifying parking spaces and reduce the stress experienced by users searching for parking spaces, a new and creative software solution is required.

The lack of obvious availability of parking spaces is another issue with the present parking schemes. Due to the limited vision created by numerous obstructions like the car's frame, trees, or other vehicles, drivers frequently struggle to find an open parking place. Users now spend much more time and fuel because of this issue.

Furthermore, for new road users, finding parking spaces in a new place can be a challenging task. In Limerick City, students and tourists come from different regions to study or visit, and they must learn the road routes and where the parking is. This lack of knowledge can cause them to be in the wrong lanes and create traffic congestion. However, by providing users with the option to plan their route to the parking of their choice and follow directions on their phones to the car park, the application can help users navigate the city's roads and reduce traffic congestion.

To conclude, there is a pressing need for a software solution to address the problems associated with parking in our cities. Perfect Parking aims to provide a solution that is innovative, effective, and user-friendly, with the potential to reduce time and fuel consumption, improve traffic flow, and create a stress-free parking experience for all road users.

# Analysis and Design

Parking is an issue that contributes to traffic congestion, especially in cities. Cars driving around and around a city for parking adds to the traffic. Cars hovering for parking spots or cars double parked can cause traffic to stop. The purpose of perfect parking is to try and solve the common problem of traffic congestion and scarcity of parking in a city such as Limerick. Perfect parking aims to ease the stress and anxiety that road users face searching for parking by providing live data about availability, pricing, stay-hours, zones, and disability status. Additional benefits include reducing traffic congestion, fuel savings, time and reducing stress.

### Computer Vision: OpenCV

The powerful library OpenCV provides a wide range of features for computer vision applications. It is widely used across many different industries, including robotics, driverless cars, medical imaging, and more.

To extract useful information or features, OpenCV processes visual data, such as photos or videos. Image filtering, feature detection, object recognition, and tracking are just a few of the techniques that OpenCV offers to process and analyze visual data. (Boesch, 2023)

Several pre-trained cascading classifiers, including the well-known Haar cascades for face detection, are available in OpenCV for object detection. A parking monitor app powered by OpenCV will be used to detect if a parking spot has been filled or made empty, further improving the effectiveness of the system.

## The Main Software Application

Perfect Parking is a web application that will allow users to find parking in a city. The application will allow users to search for parking near a specific location and will show the user data the nearest parking to their location.

## The supporting client Applications

The client application sends data to the server and monitors the video feeds. The client application works as a parking lot monitor on certain car parks across Limerick city and provides live updates to the Perfect Parking website once a change in the car park is detected such as a spot becomes available or full.

Sensors could also be used in the same way as the monitor but instead of monitoring video feeds it would send updates to the server once an object passes through it.

## Users/Bots use-case Diagram.



Figure 2: User Use Case Diagram

## System Actors

* Administrator: The administrator is responsible for managing the application. The administrator can add new parking locations to the database and can also remove parking locations from the database.
* User: The user is the person who will be using the application. The user can search for parking near a specific location.
* Guest: The guest is a person who is not logged in to the application. The guest can only search for parking near a specific location.
* Monitor Bot: A monitor is a bot that will be monitoring a car park. The monitor will be updating the status of the car park.

## Use Case Descriptions

### Use Case: Find Parking

Description:

A user searches for parking near a specific location.

**Actors:**

* User

Trigger Event:

* A user wants to find parking near a specific location.

Preconditions:

* The user is logged in to the application.
* The website has permission to access the user’s GPS location.

Post conditions:

* The user is shown a list of parking locations near the location they searched for.

Main Flow:

1. The user details the location they want to find parking nearby:
   * by searching for a specific address in the search bar.
   * by clicking on a location on the map.
   * by clicking on a location on the list of parking locations.
   * using the current location of the user.
2. The application shows the user a list of parking locations near the location they searched for.

Alternative Flows:

* If the user does not have permission to access their GPS location, the user can search for a specific address in the search bar.

### Use Case: Register User

Description:

A user registers for an account on the application.

Actors:

* Guest user

Trigger Event:

* A guest user wants to register for an account on the application.

Preconditions:

* The guest user is not logged in to the application.
* The guest user has not registered for an account on the application.
* The guest has a valid email address.

Post conditions:

* A user account is created for the guest user.

Main Flow:

1. The guest user clicks on the “Register” button.
2. The guest user enters their details into the registration form.
3. The guest user clicks on the “Register” button.
4. The application creates a user account for the guest user.
5. The guest logs in to the application.

Alternative Flows:

* If the guest user enters an email address that is already registered to an account, the application will display an error message.

Use Case: Login User:

Description:

A user logs in to the application.

Actors:

* User

Trigger Event:

* A user wants to log in to the application.

Preconditions:

* The user is not logged in to the application.

Post conditions:

* The user is logged in to the application.

Main Flow:

1. The user clicks on the “Login” button.
2. The user enters their details into the login form.
3. The user clicks on the “Login” button.
4. The application logs the user into the application.

Alternative Flows:

* If the user enters an incorrect username and password, the application will display an error message.
* If the user enters an username that is not registered to an account, the application will display an error message.
* If the user account is disabled, the application will display an error message.

### Use Case: Update Parking Lot Status

Description:

A monitor bot automatically updates the status of a parking lot.

**Actors:**

* Monitor

Trigger Event:

* A monitor updates the status of a parking lot.

Preconditions:

* The website application is running.
* The monitor is connected to the internet.
* The monitor has a valid API access token.

Post conditions:

* The status of the parking lot is updated.

Main Flow:

1. The monitor sends a PUT request to the application REST API.
2. The application updates the status of the parking lot.

Alternative Flows:

* If the monitor is not connected to the internet, the monitor will not be able to update the status of the parking lot.
* If the monitor API access token is invalid or has expired, the monitor will not be able to update the status of the parking lot.
* If the monitor sends an invalid request to the application REST API, the application will not update the status of the parking lot.
* If the parking lot does not exist in the database, the application will not update the status of the parking lot.

### Use Case: User changes password.

Description:

* A user changes their password.

Actors:

* User

Trigger Event:

* A user wants or is required to change their password.

Preconditions:

* The user is logged in to the application.

Post conditions:

* The user’s password is changed.

Main Flow:

1. The user clicks on the “Change Password” button.
2. The user enters their details into the change password form.
3. The user clicks on the “Change Password” button.

Alternative Flows:

* If the user enters an incorrect password, the application will display an error message.
* If the user enters a new password that does not meet the password requirements, the application will display an error message.

## Identifying the free/busy car parking spaces

A key design goal of the application is to find a low-cost, accurate, and scalable solution to identify if a car parking space is free or busy. To accomplish this goal, the application will use a combination of sensors and machine learning to identify if a car parking space is free or busy. The sensors will monitor the car parking space and will send data to a central server. The central server will then use a machine learning algorithm to identify if the car parking space is free or busy.

## Machine Learning / Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Machine learning is a subset of artificial intelligence (AI) that uses algorithms to learn from data and make predictions. Machine learning is a key component of the application as it will be used to identify if a car parking space is free or busy. The machine learning algorithm will be trained using data collected from the sensors. The machine learning algorithm will then be used to identify if a car parking space is free or busy.

## A look to the future

While developing the Perfect Parking application there was a challenge when it came to incorporating parking sensors into the application. Due to budget and time constraints, it was determined that such sensors were beyond the scope of the project. While doing the project it was recognized that parking sensors would have been a valuable addition to the application but understood that this would require collecting large amounts of personal data from users. Since the project was not focused on data collection, the idea of the parking monitor came to light and so took priority over the parking sensors.

### Sensors

Overhead Cameras will watch the car parking space and will feed the video stream to a local client application. The local client application will use machine learning algorithms to identify if a car parking space is free or busy. The local client application will then send the status of the car parking space to the central server if it detects a change in the status of the car parking space.

### Collecting of data

When tech companies are building applications such as parking applications, they are given a budget by the parking company, and this enables them to put in these parking sensors or put in barriers to gather the real-time data for the users. This is where there is a big problem with gathering this data for Perfect Parking, since TUS carpark and other car parks in the city is monitored by another parking company called APCOA there is limitations gathering this data. Since Perfect Parking is on a very small scale, gathering real-time data is going to be nearly impossible. One solution would be to build a parking space sensor using a raspberry pi and putting this down in a parking space in either the college or in the city, with doing this brings even more problems, these problems being:

* Permission must be sought from APCAO to allow a sensor to be placed on their parking premises.
* If permission is granted the sensor would only be on a raspberry pi it could easily get damaged or stolen.
* Only one sensor could be built for one single parking spot which wouldn’t gather much real-time data for the users.

## Development limitations

This being a trial application, with a limited budget and permission problems, for the purpose of a university project, the client application will receive a video stream from a pre-recorded local video file instead of a camera.

## Database design

Diagram

Description automatically generated

Figure 3 - Database Design

The database for this project comprises three tables: "User", "ParkingLotMonitor", and "ParkingLot". Login information for users of the parking application is kept in the "User" table. The "ParkingLot" table keeps records of each parking lot's name, address, image, operating hours, and method of payment while the "ParkingLotMonitor" table keeps track of parking availability for monitored car parks. The "ParkingLotMonitor" table is linked to the "ParkingLot" table through the "ParkingLotId" column to enable the parking application to track parking availability at each location.

## User Parking Sequence diagram

A screenshot of a computer

Description automatically generated

Figure 4- User Parking Sequence Diagram

this is the sequence diagram of the process where a user is searching for parking near their location using the application. The user asks the app if there is parking available near their GPS location on Henry Street.

To check if parking is available in each lot the software queries multiple parking lot monitors:

* Henry St Parking Lot Monitor
* Lower Hartstonge Parking Lot Monitor
* Mallow Street Part1 Parking Lot Monitor
* and Mallow Street Part2 Parking Lot Monitor

The Henry St Parking Lot Monitor responds that parking is 97% available, the Lower Hartstonge Parking Lot Monitor responds 87%, MallowStreetPart1ParkingLotMonitor 65%, and Mallow Street Part2 Parking Lot Monitor 45%.

Finally, the application then sends a response to the user indicating that there are 3 parking lots available near their location, with the names Henry St, Lower Hartstonge, and Mallow Street Part1.

## Agile Development

Agile development is a software development methodology that emphasizes flexibility, collaboration, and iterative development. Agile development teams divide the work into smaller, more manageable chunks called "sprints" rather than working on a project in a linear fashion with a precise plan set in stone from the beginning. A working prototype or product increment that can be tested and evaluated is produced by each sprint, which lasts typically two to four weeks. Agile development promotes regular communication and collaboration between team members and stakeholders and favors working software over documentation. The Agile manifesto identifies four basic values: valuing people over processes and technologies, emphasizing working software over thorough documentation, prioritizing communication with customers over contract negotiations, and reacting to change over planning ahead. (atlassian, n.d.)

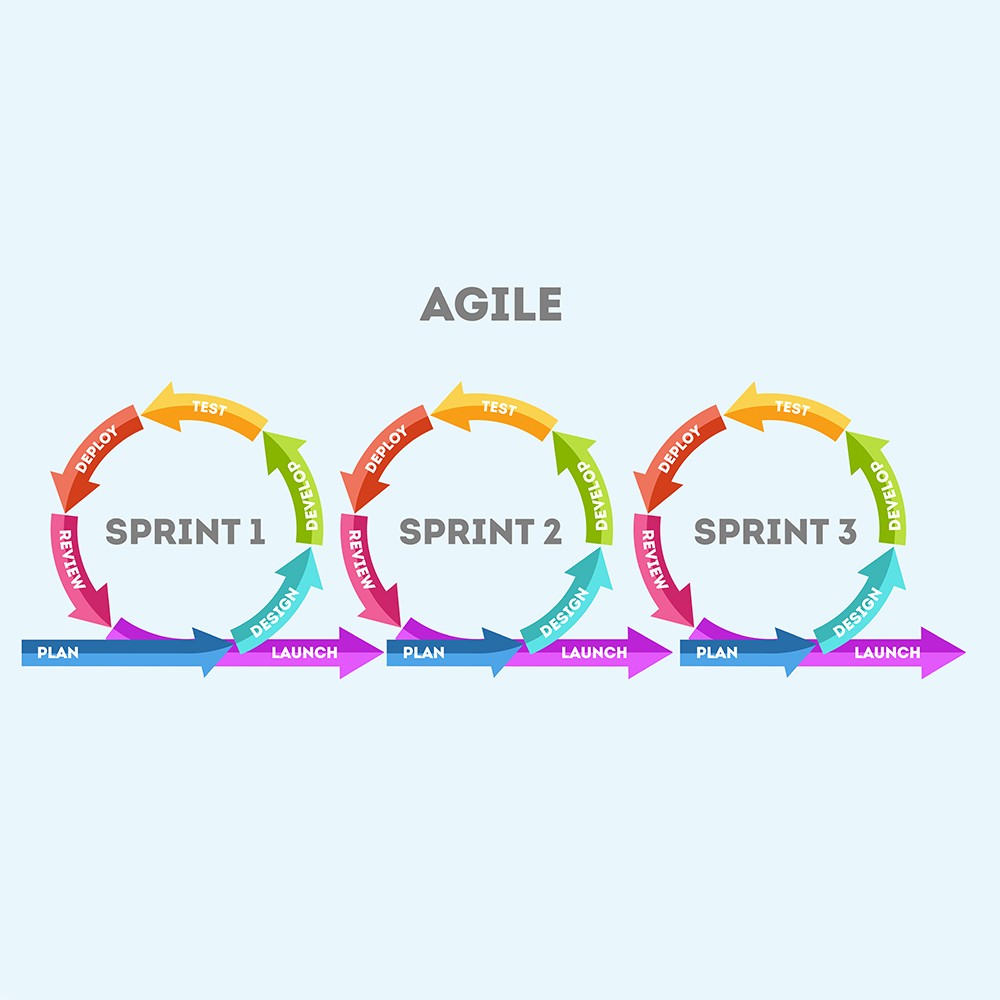


Figure 5: Agile Development (Feer, 2020)

# Implementation

In this chapter the implementation of Perfect parking is discussed with regard to (1) .. (2) .. (3) .. and 4

## Object Recognition in Images

Object recognition in images is a popular computer vision task that involves detecting and localizing objects of interest within an image. This can be achieved using various techniques, such as feature extraction, machine learning, and deep learning. OpenCV is a popular library for computer vision and image processing that provides various tools and functions for performing object recognition.

The project implements object recognition using OpenCV. The project uses the Haar Cascade Classifier, which is a machine learning-based approach for object detection. The Haar Cascade Classifier works by detecting features in an image that are characteristic of the object being detected, such as edges, corners, and lines. These features are then used to classify the object. Haar Cascade Classifiers can be trained to recognize specific objects, such as faces, eyes, and cars, and the code is able to detect and localize these objects within an image.

The project code uses the Haar Cascade Classifier to detect and recognize different objects within an image. The project also implements various pre-processing techniques, such as image resizing and normalization, to improve the accuracy of the object detection.

## How Object Recognition and AI Is Used in Perfect Parking

The project makes use of the free and open-source OpenCV computer vision library to identify and track vehicles in designated parking spaces as well as to deliver real-time updates on parking spot availability. The programme overlays the designated parking spaces into the video, initialising them as available or occupied dependent on the presence of cars.

In the project, deep learning methods were used to train the object recognition system to identify and categorize parking spaces as occupied or vacant. This makes it a strong and adaptable tool for monitoring parking spaces, the program was able to learn and adjust to various lighting situations, car shapes and sizes, and other environmental parameters. The program was able to correctly identify when a car was present in a location by analyzing the average pixel intensity within the marked area after being trained on sizable datasets of labelled photos.

## Client and Server Architecture with Rest framework

### The Monitor

The Perfect Parking Server receives parking status data from client applications. A client monitor app is responsible for processing video and determining if parking is available. A proof-of-concept project by Olga Rocheeva was sourced on GitHub and built upon to work with Perfect Parking. (Rocheeva, 2018)

To setup a client, an administrator must mark out the spaces in an image of the video field before running the client application.

To determine whether a car is present in the spot, the client python file motion\_detector.py checks the average pixel intensity within the parking spots and comparing it to a threshold value. A location is regarded as available if the average intensity is below the threshold value and seen as occupied if it is above.

1. def detect\_motion(self):

2.     # ...

3.     coordinates = self.\_coordinates(p)

4.     logging.debug("coordinates: %s", coordinates)

5.

6.     rect = open\_cv.boundingRect(coordinates)

7.     logging.debug("rect: %s", rect)

8.

9.     new\_coordinates = coordinates.copy()

10.     new\_coordinates[:, 0] = coordinates[:, 0] - rect[0]

11.     new\_coordinates[:, 1] = coordinates[:, 1] - rect[1]

12.     logging.debug("new\_coordinates: %s", new\_coordinates)

13.

14.     # ...

15.

16.     mask = open\_cv.drawContours(

17.         np.zeros((rect[3], rect[2]), dtype=np.uint8),

18.         [new\_coordinates],

19.         contourIdx=-1,

20.         color=255,

21.         thickness=-1,

22.         lineType=open\_cv.LINE\_8)

23.

24.     mask = mask == 255

25.     self.mask.append(mask)

26.     logging.debug("mask: %s", self.mask)

27.     # ...

28.

Protecting Private Data (Useranems, passords)

The code in the server consists of five Python files: color.py, coordinates\_generator.py, drawing\_utils.py, motion\_detector.py, and main.py. The code provides functionality to generate coordinates for an image and detect motion in a video using OpenCV.

Let's look at the architecture of the Monitor code, starting with the entry point, main.py. This script handles command-line arguments using argparse, parses the YAML data file generated by coordinates\_generator.py and passes it to motion\_detector.py. If an image file is passed as an argument, it generates the YAML file with the coordinates. main.py then calls the detect\_motion() function of the MotionDetector class in motion\_detector.py.

The MotionDetector class is the main driver for motion detection. It reads frames from the video and compares them to the previous frame using cv2.absdiff(). If the difference is above a certain threshold, it marks the frame as containing motion and uses the cv2.findContours() function to find contours around the moving objects. It then loops through each contour and checks if it is inside any of the regions defined by the YAML file. If a contour is found inside a region, it sends an HTTP POST request to a specified URL using the requests library.

The CoordinatesGenerator class in coordinates\_generator.py is responsible for generating the YAML data file. It reads an image file and allows the user to click on four points to define a region of interest. It then writes the coordinates of the rectangle defined by those points to the YAML file. The class uses cv2.namedWindow() and cv2.setMouseCallback() to handle mouse events and updates the image displayed to the user with each mouse click.

The draw\_contours() function in drawing\_utils.py is a utility function for drawing contours and labels on an image. It takes an image and a set of coordinates, draws the contour around the coordinates, and places a label on the contour with a specified color, font, and thickness.

Finally, color.py contains colour constants that are used in other files.

In terms of architecture, the code follows a modular design pattern, with each file containing a set of related functions or classes. The main entry point is main.py, which coordinates the execution of the other files. The code uses several third-party libraries, including OpenCV, numpy, and requests. The MotionDetector class communicates with an external system using HTTP POST requests, making it easy to integrate the motion detection system with other systems.

### Server

The server-side code for this Django project consists of several files, including admin.py, apps.py, models.py, serializers.py, urls.py, and views.py.

admin.py registers the app's ParkingLot and ParkingLotMonitor models with Django's admin site.

apps.py defines the app's configuration, including its name and default auto field.

models.py defines the ParkingLot and ParkingLotMonitor models. The ParkingLot model has fields for id, name, address, hours, isPaidParking, latitude, longitude, image, and parking\_spaces. The ParkingLotMonitor model has fields for id, parkingLot, name, latitude,longitude, probabilityParkingAvailable, free\_parking\_spaces, dateTimeLastUpdated, status, and image.

Diagram

Description automatically generated

serializers.py defines the serializers used to convert the ParkingLot and ParkingLotMonitor models to JSON format for use in the app's API.

urls.py defines the app's URLs, including paths for the home page, parking lots list, parking lot detail page, user registration,

user login, user logout, and API endpoints for the ParkingLot and ParkingLotMonitor models.

views.py contains the logic for rendering the app's web pages, handling user input, and providing data to the app's API endpoints. It includes functions for rendering the home page, parking lot list, parking lot detail page, user registration, user login, and user logout pages. It also includes functions for handling API requests, including getting a list of all parking lots, getting details for a specific parking lot, and updating the parking lot monitor data.

Overall, the client-side code is responsible for providing a user-friendly interface for the app, handling user input and interactions, and communicating with the server-side code to retrieve and display data.

### How They Work Together

The client and server communicate with each other through the REST API service. When the client sends a request to the server, it includes information such as the endpoint to access, any data to send in the request body, and any headers to include with the request. The server-side code receives the request and processes it, querying the database or performing other operations based on the data included in the request. The server then sends a response back to the client, which includes a status code indicating whether the request was successful or not, any data to include in the response body, and any headers to include with the response. The client-side then processes the response, displaying the data on the website for probability of parking available so the user can view it. This cycle of request and response is how the client and server are linked together in a web application.

Graphical user interface, text, application

Description automatically generated

Figure 6: How they work together

## Project Management

under the headings of (i) sub-topic 1 (cf. 1.1.0), and (ii) sub-topic 2 (cf. 1.1.1)

### Weekly Meetings

This chapter will begin by outlining the (cf. 1.1) for the purpose of writing a Report for a Project and outlining paragraphs.

### Code Style Guide

## Source Control and versioning

For source control and versioning, GitHub was utilized to manage the codebase for the project. GitHub was chosen because of prior experience using it during other studies, and it provided a reliable platform for version control and collaboration with the supervisor.

To keep the code organized and easily manageable, the repository was organised into different branches for each week of development. This allowed for easy upkeep and to keep track of changes made during each week and easily roll back to previous versions if needed.

Additionally, the supervisor was added as a collaborator on the repository, allowing him to view the progress and provide feedback on the code and documents. This facilitated effective communication and ensured that the project was aligned with the objectives.

One significant advantage of using GitHub was that it provided a safe and secure backup of the code. In the event of file corruption, it would be possible to pull down the last push request and continue the work without losing progress.

Overall, the use of GitHub as a source control and versioning tool allowed for effective management of the development of the Perfect Parking project, collaborate with the supervisor, and ensure the safety and integrity of the codebase.

## Tools Used

Tools:

* VS Code, a code editor that provides an excellent development environment.
* Anaconda, a package management, and deployment tool that made it easy to install and manage required libraries and dependencies.
* GitHub, a code repository that allowed for version control and collaboration with my supervisor.
* Microsoft Word, which was used to write the thesis.
* Canva, a graphic design platform used to create the project poster.

Languages and Frameworks:

* Django Python web framework, which allowed for rapid development of the project and easy maintenance.
* OpenCV, an open-source computer vision and machine learning software library, which was used for image processing and analysis.

By utilizing these tools, languages, and frameworks, the project was able to be completed more efficiently, with greater accuracy and precision.

## Django Rest API

Django is a popular web development framework that is written in Python. It provides a set of tools and features that make it easy to build complex web applications quickly and efficiently. Django was created by Adrian Holovaty and Simon Willison in 2005, it features a vast collection of classes, libraries and modules that can be implemented in individual projects. With Django, you can create web applications that follow the Model-View-Controller (MVC) architecture, which helps to separate the different components of your application and make it easier to manage. Additionally, Django comes with a lot of built-in functionality, including an ORM for database interactions, an admin interface for managing site content, and a templating system for rendering HTML pages. Overall, Django is a powerful and flexible framework that is well-suited for building all kinds of web applications. (Johnson, n.d.)

### Perfect Parking with Django

The Perfect Parking application was created using the popular web framework Django for a variety of reasons.

Firstly, Django is a high-level web framework that follows the Model-View-Controller (MVC) architectural pattern, which promotes code organization and separation of concerns. This allows for the development of complex programmes with numerous components without compromising the maintainability of the code.

Secondly, Django provides a lot of built-in functionality out of the box, which saves time and effort during development. For example, Django includes an Object-Relational Mapping (ORM) system that allows developers to interact with databases using Python objects, as well as a robust authentication system for user management.

Thirdly, Django has an engaged community that actively supports the framework's growth and upkeep. This indicates that a wide variety of third-party packages and extensions are readily available and can increase the capabilities of the framework and speed up development.

Along with these benefits, Django's outstanding documentation, scalability, and security capabilities are some of the other benefits of adopting it for web development. Django is also open-source and free, which makes it available to a variety of developers and organisations.

Overall, the decision to use Django for the Perfect Parking application was based on its combination of ease of use, built-in functionality, and strong community support, which makes it a popular choice for building web applications of all sizes and complexities.

## Anaconda

Anaconda is a popular distribution of the Python programming language that is widely used for data science and scientific computing. It comes with a sizable number of pre-installed libraries and tools that are frequently used in these domains, including Jupyter Notebook, NumPy, Pandas, and Matplotlib. (Root, 2020)

Anaconda is designed to make it easy to set up and manage Python environments, which are essentially separate installations of Python with their own dependencies and libraries. When working on several projects with various requirements, this is especially helpful because it enables you to keep them separate from one another. (Root, 2020)

The Conda package manager, which lets you easily install, update, and manage additional software packages and libraries, is included with Anaconda in addition to Python and its libraries. When working with non-Python libraries that are necessary for your project, this can be helpful. (McKinney, 2022)

Utilising Anaconda has several benefits, one of which is how much easier it makes it to set up a Python environment for data research or scientific computing. It removes the need to individually install and configure each library, which can be a time-consuming and error-prone operation, by offering a pre-built distribution with many of the frequently used libraries already installed. (O Reilly, n.d.)

Overall, Anaconda is a robust and adaptable tool that is well-liked by those who work in data research and scientific computing. Researchers, developers, and data analysts all favour it because of how simple it is to use and the extensive library of tools that are already installed.

### How to Install Anaconda

* Download the Appropriate Anaconda installer from the [Anaconda Website](https://www.anaconda.com/download/)
* Open VS Code and open a new terminal window by selecting "Terminal" from the top menu and then selecting "New Terminal.
* Navigate to the directory where you downloaded the Anaconda installer using the command **cd <directory>**.
* For example, if you downloaded the Anaconda installer for Windows and saved it in your Downloads folder, you would type the following command in the terminal:

1.     cd Downloads

* Run the Anaconda installer by typing the command **bash <Anaconda installer filename>** in the terminal, where **<Anaconda installer filename>** is the name of the Anaconda installer file you downloaded.

1. bash Anaconda3-2021.05--x86\_64.sh

* Follow the instructions in the Anaconda installer to complete the installation process.
* Once the installation is complete, you can use Anaconda in the VS Code terminal by activating the Anaconda environment with the command **conda activate**. You can then use the various Anaconda packages and tools in the terminal as needed.
* For example, if you want to use the Pandas library in your Python script, you can first activate the Anaconda environment by typing the following command in the terminal:

1.     conda activate

* Then, you can import the Pandas library in your Python script using the following line of code:

1.     import pandas as pd

* This will allow you to use the various functions and methods provided by the Pandas library in your project.

# Testing and Results

## Unit Testing

Unit tests are a type of software testing that involves testing individual units or components of a larger software system. Unit testing's goal is to verify that every single piece of code is operating as intended and adhering to design specifications. (TechTarget , 2023)

In most cases, developers write unit tests as they write the application's code, these tests are usually automated. They are made to be quickly and regularly executed, enabling programmers to and correct flaws early in the development cycle. (Ingrassellino, 2021)

Developers write code to test every individual function, method, or class in the software system during unit testing. To make sure that the code generates the desired output for each combination of inputs, they supply test data and anticipated results for each unit before running the tests. (Kolodiy, n.d.)

For software to be dependable, manageable, and scalable, unit tests are crucial. They can assist in identifying issues early in the development process, which makes fixing them simpler and less expensive. Additionally, they aid in ensuring that modifications to the code don't ruin already-existing functionality. (Ingrassellino, 2021)

Overall, unit tests are an important part of the software development process and are essential for ensuring the quality and reliability of software applications.

### Unit Tests Used in The Project

this unit test is verifying that the update\_server\_parking\_monitor\_data method is correctly updating the parking monitor data on the server and returning the expected response status code.

1. def test\_update\_server\_parking\_monitor\_data(self):

2.     parking\_monitor\_data = ParkingMonitorData()

3.     free\_spaces\_in\_frame: float = 3

4.     probability\_parking\_available: 0.5  # (3/6)

5.     response: request.Response = RestApiUtility.update\_server\_parking\_monitor\_data(

6.         parking\_monitor\_data, free\_spaces\_in\_frame, probability\_parking\_available

7.     )

8.     expected\_response\_status\_code = 200

9.     self.assertEqual(response.status\_code, expected\_response\_status\_code)

ParkingLot/tests/test.py

To run the tests, open a terminal and enter the code:

1. python -m unittest /parking\_lot/tests/parking\_lot\_tests.py

Unit Test Terminal run command.

## Behaviour Driven Development (BBD) Testing

A software development process called behaviour-driven development (BDD) expands on the ideas behind test-driven development (TDD). But it emphasises cooperation and communication more than ever between technical and non-technical stakeholders. The goal of BDD is to guarantee that everyone involved with the development process is aware of the specifications and goals for the software that is being created. (Tricentis, 2018)

Instead of just developing and passing tests, BDD focuses on defining and implementing the software's expected behaviour. This is accomplished by using the specialised language "Gherkin," which enables programmers, testers, and business stakeholders to specify the desired behaviour of the software in a form that is clear to all parties. (Das, 2022)

One of the key benefits of BDD is that it helps to ensure that everyone involved in the development process is on the same page. The danger of miscommunication and misunderstandings between technical and non-technical stakeholders is reduced by establishing a common vocabulary and outlining the desired behaviour of the software up front. (Das, 2022)

BDD also has the potential to raise the bar on the software that is being created. Developers and testers may make sure that the software satisfies the needs and expectations of the end users by concentrating on the desired behaviour of the product.

BDD also promotes team member participation and communication, which can assist to break down silos and make sure that everyone is working towards the same objective. This can lead to greater efficiency and productivity, as well as a more positive and collaborative working environment. (Testingxperts, 2023)

Overall, Behaviour-driven development (BDD) is an approach to software development that places a strong emphasis on collaboration and communication between technical and non-technical stakeholders. By defining the desired behaviour of the software upfront and using a common language, it can help to ensure that everyone involved in the development process is working towards a common goal and that the software being developed meets the requirements and expectations of the end-users.

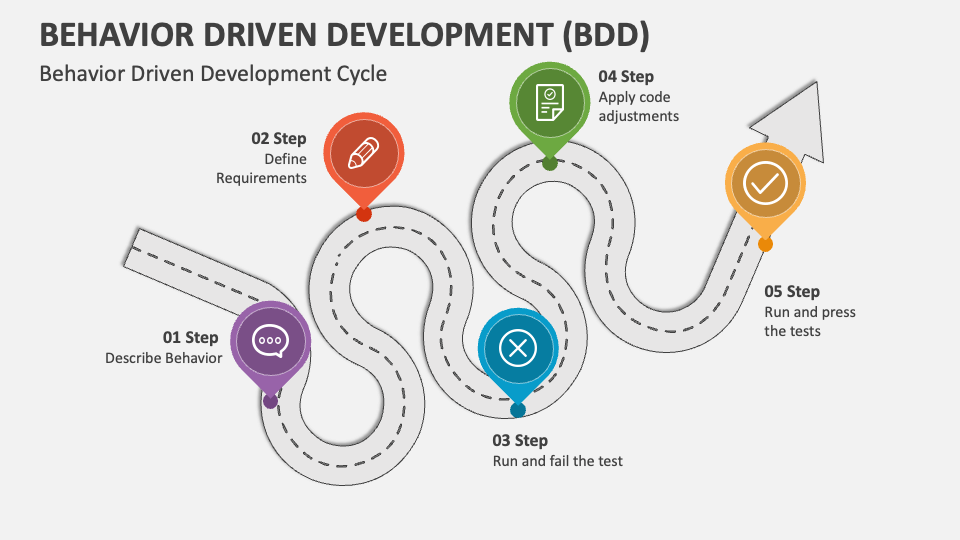


Figure 7: BDD development cycle (Collidu, n.d.)

### BDD In Perfect Parking

BDD testing was not used during the development of the Perfect Parking application due to limited time available for its implementation. As a solo developer in the project, collaboration with others was not possible, the time and effort required for BDD testing was perceived as a barrier to meeting project deadlines.

However, if there were plans to develop a large new project, there are still several reasons why BDD testing would be considered. First, BDD testing can help ensure that software meets the business requirements and user needs, which can result in a higher quality product that better meets the needs of users.

Finally, BDD testing can also help improve developers understanding of the project requirements and improve the efficiency of the development process.

Overall, while limited time and a lack of collaboration may have made it difficult to implement BDD testing in the development of the Perfect Parking application, there are still many benefits to using BDD testing in a new solo project that make it worth considering.

## Test Driven Development (TDD)

A software development process called Test-Driven Development (TDD) places a strong emphasis on creating automated tests before creating any production code. In test-driven development (TDD), the developer creates a test that outlines a desired software feature or behaviour, runs the test to discover its failure, and then writes the code to make the test pass. The process is then repeated with additional tests until the desired functionality is complete. (Unadkat, 2023)

With TDD, the developer is forced to consider the desired behaviour of the code before actually developing it because tests must be written first. This produces more modular, maintainable code that is also less prone to problems. It also allows for easier refactoring of code later, as the tests act as a safety net to catch any unintended changes that may have been introduced. (Santacroce, 2022)

TDD typically involves theses following steps:

* **Writing a failing test:** The developer purposefully constructs a test that fails even though it defines the desired behaviour of the code. The test is written before writing any code for production.
* **Write the minimum amount of code to make the test pass:** The developer then creates the minimum amount of code required to pass the failing test. This code was written exclusively for the purpose of passing the test.
* **Refactor the code:** When the test passes, the developer can refactor the code without affecting its functionality in order to make it easier to maintain.
* **Repeat:** The developer then repeats the process with additional tests until the desired functionality is complete. (Steinfeld, 2020)

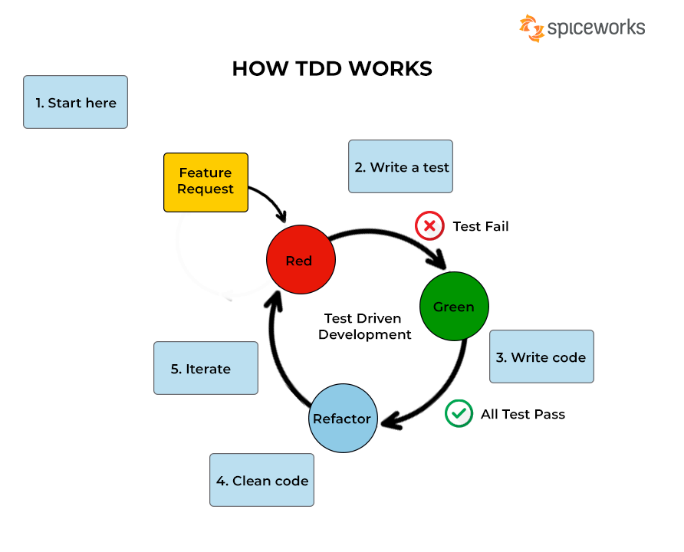


Figure 8: How TDD Works (BasuMallick, 2022)

TDD can help increase productivity in addition to code quality by decreasing time spent on debugging and by establishing a clear set of requirements for the software being built. It does, however, require some upfront effort in writing the tests upfront, which may not be desirable for smaller projects or teams with fewer resources.

Overall, TDD is a powerful technique for writing high-quality, maintainable code, and can be especially useful in larger, more complex software projects.

### TDD in Perfect Parking

TDD wasn’t used in the development of Perfect Parking for several reasons. Firstly, when working on a solo project, it didn’t feel necessary to write the tests because the code could be simply tested as its written. Additionally, it can be difficult to justify the additional time investment required for TDD when working on the project solo. However, even on a solo project, TDD can help to ensure that the code is of high quality and easier to maintain. Additionally, writing tests upfront can help to prevent regressions and ensure that the code works as expected, even if you come back to the project months or years later.

Secondly, TDD also wasn’t used in the development of the solo project, such as the Perfect Parking application, was due to the limited knowledge of TDD and the lack of time to learn how to implement it effectively.

In conclusion, there are several good reasons why TDD might not have been used in the creation of your Perfect Parking. These include the lack of familiarity with TDD and the lack of free time to learn more about it. However, learning about TDD might be a worthwhile time and effort investment if interested in developing abilities and producing higher quality code.

If another project was to be developed in the future TDD would be implemented for several reasons:

Firstly, TDD can help ensure that the code is well-structured and maintainable, which can be especially important for larger projects.

Secondly, TDD can help improve the quality of the code. By promoting modular, reusable, and maintainable code, TDD can ensure that each component of the code works as intended and fits into the larger system.

Thirdly, TDD can increase confidence in code changes. By having a comprehensive suite of tests, developers can be confident that their code changes will not negatively affect other parts of the system.

Lastly, TDD can improve collaboration between developers and teams. By providing a common language for discussing code changes and ensuring that everyone is on the same page in terms of what the code should do, TDD can reduce communication errors and misunderstandings between developers.

In conclusion, using TDD in a software development project can result in higher-quality code, a better user experience, and increased developer efficiency. TDD can ensure the success of upcoming project by identifying problems earlier in the development process, encouraging modular and maintainable code, boosting confidence in code modifications, and enhancing teamwork.

## Functionality

During testing, the Perfect Parking application demonstrated strong functionality in displaying the availability of parking spots based on real-time data collected by the ParkingLotMonitor. The ParkingLotMonitor allows the user to mark out parking spots that they want to be continuously monitored for their occupancy status. Whenever there is a change in the availability of a parking spot the mapped-out spaces turn green for available and red for occupied, the monitor sends the probability of it being available to the Perfect Parking application. The application then displays the availability of the car park to the user in real-time by displaying the probability of available parking spaces, Overall, the application's functionality met the project's objectives and proved to be a valuable tool for drivers seeking parking in urban or congested areas. However, some minor issues were identified during testing, such as if a shadow is casted over a parking spot and it changes the colour gradient in the space the monitor would think that the space is full when in theory it’s not. If the project was to go further in the future this minor issue would be fixed.

## Usability

The usability of the ParkingLotMonitor and Perfect Parking website were both tested during the evaluation process. The ParkingLotMonitor interface was found to be intuitive and user-friendly, allowing a user to easily mark out and monitor parking spots. The monitor also accurately reported the availability of parking spots in real-time, with color-coding providing a clear visual indication of the status of each spot. The Perfect Parking website was also found to be intuitive and easy to use. The website provided an interface where users could view the availability of parking spots in real-time. The website allowed signed-in users to view a car park's availability, and when the car park was selected, it showed a Google map of the parking location, where they could get directions to the car park if they wish. Overall, the usability of both the ParkingLotMonitor and Perfect Parking website was strong, with minimal issues or confusion reported during testing.

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Glossary

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| Term 1 | This chapter will begin by outlining the (cf. 1.1) for the purpose of writing a Report for a Project and outlining paragraphs |
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1. Reflections
2. Project Management
   1. Report Structure