

## Lost and Found System

Name of system (Sean):

### Introduction

School is a place where students lose their personal belongings, which is a problem that happens commonly and daily to a great extent. Cards for identification, wallets, cellphones, notebooks, and other important school materials are the types of things that get lost most frequently around the school area. The trouble to find their lost things in a good way is what students feel when they want to get their things back after they lose them (Torres & Mendoza, 2023). A majority of schools' outdated lost and found systems rely on the security office or admin desk that serves students in a manual manner where students personally have to go and report missing items or check if someone has found their belongings. This conventional method is inefficient and not very friendly because it demands students to spend enough time going back and forth to these offices, but they do not receive a guarantee that their wanted item will be there (Garcia et al., 2024).

Another big problem is that most of the students are not even aware of the place where they could take the lost items. Though some schools might provide lost and found boxes, students are not always familiar with the whereabouts of such boxes or how to utilize them properly. This misunderstanding makes it doubly difficult for the students to access their lost items. Besides that, if one thinks of the scenario in which the owner of the lost item is unaware of how to hand it over, then we can reasonably conclude that the item may not even reach the correct owner (Alvarez et al., 2022).

Such a situation calls for establishing a lost and found system that not only effectively resolves the issue of losing things at school but also adds a high level of convenience to the whole process of reporting, submitting, and searching for missing belongings. The smart lost and found system presented in this study is a school belongings website transforming these tasks into lighter and more speedy experiences than ever before. Contrary to the conventional ways such as record books and office visits that are still in use, the current online solution gives a chance for students whereas by using their phones or laptops they are able to view all the reported missing items. The system also collects significant information for each case, which includes the color, the condition, the location where it was found or lost, and the date. Additionally, students will be allowed to generate accounts in their individual student numbers, year level, and course thus securing only verified students to be able to claim the items (Martinez & Santos, 2024).

One of the advantages this platform offers is the construction of trust within the community of a school. The platform has a feature called "Returned" where students can track down their lost items as this is the place where owners and finders meet under the successful return of the items. By using this element, the system can show the users the effectiveness of it and make more students willing to try this way of communication. There is additionally a component named "Immediate" for things that require an intervention without delay like important papers or valuable stuff. If they want to receive the results sooner, students may even offer a reward to these high, priority items (Reyes, 2024).

The researchers aim to achieve the effect of lessening the stress of losing school belongings' stress through the creation of this web-based platform. Instead of wasting time searching all over the place or abandoning the search, students will have a proper system that guides them in reporting, monitoring, and getting back their lost items in an effective way. Not only is this system great for individual students, but it also serves as a vehicle for the school community to become more honest and responsible.

### **Background of the Problem**

The risk of losing their personal belongings is something that students have to face every school day. Incidents of leaving a notebook in the classroom, dropping a wallet in the hallway, or misplacing an ID card in the cafeteria happen quite often and cause a great deal of trouble. According to studies, students who lose essential things are subjected to psychological disorders such as stress and anxiety, which may negatively affect their academic performance (Cruz, 2023). For instance, when a student is not able to find their ID, they might be restricted from entering certain school facilities or taking exams. Moreover, the loss of a cellphone or wallet can cause monetary difficulties because such items need to be newly purchased.

The core issue is that the existing lost and found systems in schools within the Philippines have become obsolete and are no longer serving their purposes well. The majority of educational institutions still practice conventional ways in which students have to go to the security or admin office in person to make an inquiry about their lost items. Torres and Mendoza (2023) stated that this method has numerous disadvantages. To begin with, the offices are open for a limited number of hours only, thus, students can check for their belongings at certain times only. Moreover, the descriptions of the articles found are usually done in a hurry in the logbooks without a lot of detail, therefore, recognizing specific items is tough. Furthermore, there isn't a system that is designed to connect the owners of lost items with the staff in charge of the found items, thus, the recovered items are left unclaimed for weeks, or even months, lying in stores waiting for their owners.

In addition, numerous Filipino students are not informed about the proper lost and found procedures undertaken in their schools. The research conducted by Garcia et al. (2024) found out that a majority of students are not only unaware of the lost and found office location but are also clueless on how to report a missing item correctly. The lack of information literacy concerning school services leads to low recovery rates, which implies that most of the lost items are not returned to their rightful owners. Students have to spend their limited allowances on buying things again that they have lost, which puts some financial pressure on their families.

The problem will be more serious if we consider the honest students who come across lost items but are clueless about the next steps. If there is no clear and comfortable way for them to submit the things they found, some students may simply leave the item at the spot where they found it or take it with them for a while, hoping that the owner will come and look for it. Others might consult their friends or post on social media, but these informal ways are neither dependable nor systematic (Villanueva et al., 2023).

Many students now prefer to use social media for lost and found communication, which leads to the creation of group chats or posting on school pages. Despite that, this way of communication is not without its faults. Posts can be easily buried under other materials and thus, are hard to locate later. Besides, as there is no verification system, deceitful claims in that someone pretends to be the owner of an item while in reality, they are not, can occur. Furthermore, not all students are active on social media or belong to these particular groups, so they are left out of potential matches for the things they have lost (Alvarez et al., 2022).

We also cannot downplay the emotional impact that comes with the loss of one's belongings. Reyes (2024) mentioned that students mostly express their frustration, powerlessness, and even embarrassment when their things are lost. Some kids take the blame on themselves and think what their parents will say when they find out. This emotional luggage hampers their concentration on studies and their participation in class activities. The endless speculation about where their item could be or if they'll ever get it back adds to the stress of the school year, which is already difficult enough in itself.

The Filipino way of life prioritizes the values of mutual help and community support, but if these two cultural traits are not supplemented with appropriate systems, they are not used effectively for lost and found incidents. Martinez and Santos (2024) elucidate that the students are willing to assist each other in general, but they require the necessary tools and platforms that would facilitate and make successful this cooperation. A digital lost and found platform could turn this inherent willingness to help into a concerted effort that is organized and thus, it benefits everyone in the school community.

Moreover, time plays a very significant role in this issue. The chances of finding a lost item decrease with the passage of time. Documents of great value could end up in the trash, gadgets may get broken or stolen, and clothes might be taken unknowingly by someone. There is a need for an immediate and effective way through which students can lodge a report and look for their belongings so that the odds of them getting their lost things back will be high. The presently utilized manual methods are incapable of providing the necessary speed and convenience for the youth of today (Ramos, 2022).

To sum up, losing school things has a direct impact on children's lives financially, emotionally, and even academically. The traditional means of lost and found in the schools of the Philippines are no longer sufficient to cater to the needs of the present generation. The students are the ones who are in dire need of a digital remedy that is not only easily accessible but also supplies comprehensive details, provides security via confirmation, and fosters confidence through openness. This study fulfills the requirements by creating a web-based lost and found system that is custom, tailored for the school setting.

#### Scope & Limitation:

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#### General Objectives:

Specific Objectives Features: (cess)

1. Browse missing items in homepage
2. 'Returned' section to increase trust (opt can also include feedback)

3. Submission of missing items
4. Expand item details (e.g; color, notable physical state, where found etc)
5. Personal Information of each user in 'Account' feature, (student number, yr & course)
6. Submit missing item report
7. 'Important/Immediate' section, may include reward (eto yung feature na lets students set up reward kung talagang mahalaga sakanya mahanap/maisauli agad yung missing item) kau n bhla pano ihandle yung monetary jajaja

### **General Objective:**

To develop \*system name\*, a website that streamlines the process of reporting, submitting, and locating missing items, enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and user trust in handling lost belongings.

Specifically, the study aims to:

1. To design a homepage interface that allows users to browse all reported missing items efficiently.
2. To create a 'Returned' section that showcases items successfully returned to their owners, **with an optional feedback mechanism to promote transparency and user trust.** (literal na optional to kung isasali natin, baguhin na lang itong obj kung hindi)
3. To develop a submission module that enables users to report items they have lost or submit items they have found with ease.
4. To implement expandable item details that include attributes such as color, physical condition, date and place found/lost, and other notable descriptions for more accurate identification.
5. To provide an Account feature where users can manage their personal information, including student number, year level, and course, for verification and accountability.
6. To integrate an 'Immediate' section where time-sensitive or high-priority lost items can be highlighted for faster action and visibility.

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Methodology (denisse)

## **Section: System Implementation and Item Handling Protocol**

### **Item Custody and Reporting Process**

While all found items must be physically surrendered to the Security/Admin Office for safekeeping and liability purposes, the web-based system serves as the primary digital intermediary that facilitates efficient communication, documentation, and matching between finders and owners.

## **The Two-Step Process:**

- 1. Digital Reporting (Student Engagement Point)**
  - When a student finds an item, they immediately report it through the website using their mobile device or computer
  - The system captures detailed information: item description, photo, location found, date/time, and physical characteristics
  - Upon submission, the system automatically:
    - Generates a digital receipt/reference number for the finder
    - Checks for matching lost item reports in the database
    - Sends instant notifications to potential owners who reported similar items
    - Records the finder's contribution to their user profile
- 2. Physical Submission (Security Office)**
  - After digital reporting, the student brings the item to the Security/Admin Office
  - Office staff verifies the item against the digital report using the reference number
  - The item's status is updated to "In Custody at Security Office"
  - The finder receives confirmation that their report is complete

## **Rationale for Office Custody:**

This hybrid approach addresses several critical concerns identified in existing literature. Garcia et al. (2024) emphasized the need for accountability in lost and found systems, which is achieved by centralizing physical custody with trained personnel. Maintaining items at the Security Office ensures:

- **Liability protection** for student finders who are relieved of responsibility once items are submitted
- **Security and safety** of valuable items in a monitored environment
- **Verification capability** by authorized personnel who can properly authenticate claims
- **Neutral third-party** handling that prevents direct disputes between students

## **Student Engagement Mechanisms:**

Despite physical surrender, students remain actively engaged through several system features designed to recognize and incentivize participation:

1. **Recognition System** - Each reported found item is credited to the finder's profile, creating a visible record of community contribution. Martinez and Santos (2024) noted that Filipino students value community recognition, making this feature culturally appropriate.
2. **Impact Tracking** - Students can see when items they reported are successfully claimed, providing closure and reinforcement of their positive action. The 'Returned' section showcases these success stories, creating a culture of trust and participation.
3. **Immediate Notification Advantage** - The system's real-time matching capability means potential owners are alerted within minutes rather than days. This speed demonstrates the tangible value of using the platform versus traditional methods.

4. **Streamlined Process** - Compared to manually filling out logbooks at the office, digital reporting takes significantly less time. Students can submit reports anywhere on campus immediately upon finding an item, rather than waiting until they can physically visit the office.
5. **Dashboard Monitoring** - Students can track all their activities (items reported, claims submitted, items returned) in one centralized location, maintaining their connection to the process even after physical submission.

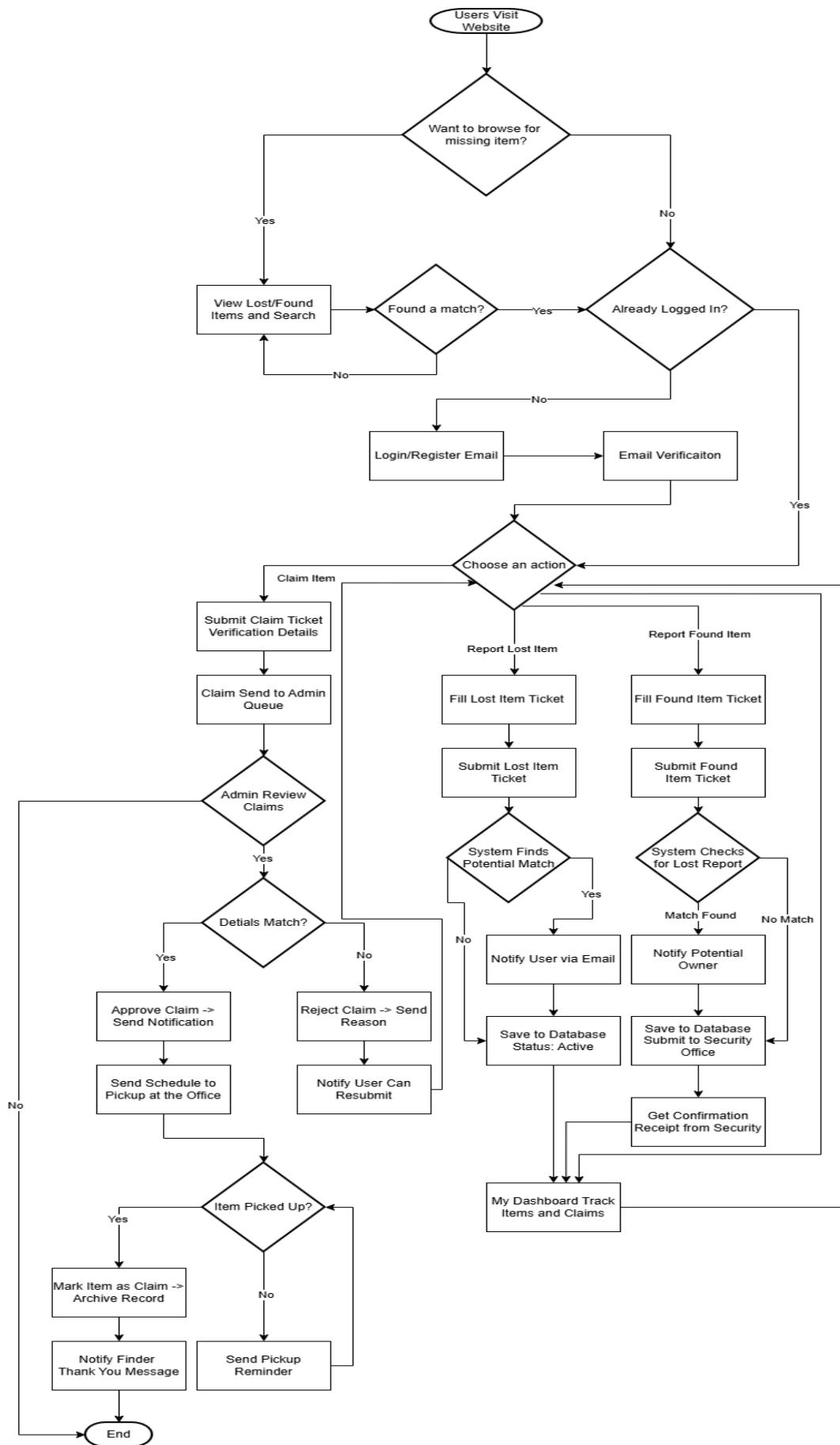
#### **Claim Verification Process:**

When a student believes they have found their lost item in the system:

- They submit a claim request through the website with verification details
- The Admin reviews both the original report and the claim details
- If approved, both the finder and owner are notified
- The owner schedules a pickup at the Security Office
- Upon successful retrieval, both parties are notified of the completed transaction
- The finder receives acknowledgment for their contribution

This verification step, as noted by Alvarez et al. (2022), prevents fraudulent claims that plague informal social media-based systems while maintaining the convenience of digital communication.

Flowchart (flowchart):



Note:

## USER TYPES

1. **Students** - Primary users who lose and find items
2. **Faculty/Staff** - Can report found items and help moderate
3. **Security/Admin Office** - Manage the system, verify claims, handle item custody
4. **Guest/Visitor** - Limited view-only access to search for items

## KEY FEATURES

### For All Users:

- **Browse Lost Items** - Gallery view with photos, descriptions, categories
- **Search & Filter** - By category (phone, wallet, ID, books, etc.), date, location found
- **Item Details Page** - Full description, location found, date, contact method

### For Registered Users (Students/Faculty):

- **Report Lost Item** - Form with description, date lost, location, category, photo upload, urgent
- **Report Found Item** - Similar form for items they've found
- **Claim Request** - Submit claim with verification details (describe item features not shown in photo)
- **My Dashboard** - Track your reported lost/found items and claims
- **Notifications** - Get alerts when similar items are reported

### For Admin

- **Verification System** - Review claims, approve/reject with reasons
- **Item Management** - Mark items as claimed, archived, or disposed after retention period
- **Analytics Dashboard** - Statistics on common lost items, recovery rates
- **User Management** - Handle registrations, suspicious activity

### Additional Features:

- **Location Pins** - Campus map showing where items were found
- **Anonymous Posting** - Option to hide identity while reporting
- **Success Stories** - Wall of reunited items to encourage participation

## **Scope**

The scope of the Lost and Found Website is to provide a campus wide system that helps students, faculty, and staff in reporting, searching, and retrieving their lost items. As a part of the core functionalities, the system allows users to view a gallery of reported items, use search and filter tools, and access the full details of an item.

Students and faculty as registered users may report both lost and found items through online forms that include descriptions, categories, and photo uploads. They can also file claim requests, and monitor their reports through a personal dashboard. When a similar item is posted, the system sends a notification to the user to help them get their belongings faster.

On the other hand, the system allows the admin or security to check the authenticity of the claims, control the item status, and keep track of the user activity through the user logs. In addition to the features mentioned above, the scope covers features like anonymous posting, campus location pins, and a success stories page.

## **Limitations**

This system is designed only for campus related lost and found cases and is not applicable to areas outside the school premises. The system depends on users providing accurate and truthful information; therefore, false or misleading reports may still occur. Even though faculty or administrative staff can review the reports to find any fake submissions, this is a manual process and not fully automated, which limits the system's reliability.

The smart matching feature operates at a simple level and cannot always provide exact matches. The system requires internet access, so users cannot report or search for items offline. The admin or security office is still responsible for the physical confirmation of the items, so the claiming process cannot be fully automated. The accuracy of location pins is dependent on how accurate the information provided by users. Guests and visitors have limited access and cannot submit reports unless they create an account.

UI

School Lost & Found System

Findie School Lost & Found

Dashboard

Search Items

Report Lost Item

Report Found Item

Notifications

Profile

Logout

3

Share

### Dashboard

Welcome back! Here's what's happening with lost and found items.

Report Lost Item

Lost something? Report it here to help others return it to you.

Report Found Item

Found something? Help reunite it with its owner by reporting it.

Total Items Lost

**127** +12% from last month

Items Found

**89** +8% from last month

Items Claimed

**64** +15% from last month

Recent Items

Black Backpack

Nike backpack with laptop compartment, found near the library entrance

iPhone 13 Pro

Black iPhone with a blue case, lost in the cafeteria during lunch

Chemistry Textbook

Advanced Chemistry textbook with notes inside, left in Room 204