WebMP: Web Mentoring Platform

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Group 6

Introduction

Mentoring is defined as "A relationship in which a more experienced or more knowledgeable person helps to guide a less experienced or less knowledgeable person. The mentor may be older or younger than the person being mentored, but they must have a certain area of expertise."

Mentoring over the internet, called "e-mentoring" has grown in the past decade due to the ubiquity of phones, computers and the world-wide-web. It encompasses all online communication media from e-mails to bulletin boards to Video Conferencing in order to disseminate mentoring aid to all.

The common requirements from such mentoring platforms are summarized below:

- A method to connect mentors to mentees/allow people seeking information to discover experts and establish a channel of communication.
- A method of tracking a mentees' progress, either through tasks or through self-reporting.
- A normalized grading system in which mentors can grade and assess mentees.

E-mentoring in itself brings about multiple benefits some which are listed below:

- Access to experts which otherwise would be limited by geographical boundaries.
- Asynchronous collaboration and communication, this removes the need for always having both channels of communication open.
- A central repository of information. Mentors and mentees both can create a knowledge base which aids in collating their learnings.
- A common system for grading/assessing performance aids in a better understanding of a mentees' standing with regard to their peers.

Requirement Specification

To build such a platform the necessary requirements which were decided after researching popular market products, existing research in the domain of e-mentoring are listed below, segregated by feature, written as user stories.

- User Onboarding
    - Users will be able to create their profiles using college/company email addresses which will be used to facilitate verification.
    - Users will be able to add their basic information in the profile.

- Users will be able to add their fields of interest, qualifications and goals.
- Users will be able to choose to keep their private information hidden to alleviate their privacy concerns
- User Discovery
    - Mentors and Mentees will be matched according to the interests, qualifications and goals as entered in their profile
    - Mentors will be able to choose who they want their mentee(s) to be from the list of all mentees they matched with
    - Mentors will have the option to anonymously mentor Mentees. Mentees will not be able to see their Mentor's name in this case but will be able to see other information of interest such as qualifications
- User Actions
    - Mentor actions
        - The mentor should be able to set their area of interest/expertise and set how much time they're willing to spend on mentees.
        - Mentors are able to communicate with mentees through either text/video the latter which can be facilitated through existing video conferencing solutions.
        - Mentors are able to gauge a mentees performance through a metric which they decide and is normalized by the application.
        - Mentors are able to share material, which is then compiled to a central knowledge base for the mentee.
        - Mentors are able to work with both groups and individual mentees, without any change in communication channels or a centralized information repository.
        - Mentors are able to view a mentee's progress and can assess by assigning milestones, viewing a progress report, and by taking tests.
        - Tests can be standardized or the mentor can upload their own tests, which work on a common "deadline" principle.
    - Mentee actions
        - The mentees are able to "discover" mentors and have the ability to request guidance.
        - Mentees are able to specify their learning goals/parameters and this is communicated with the mentors.
        - Mentees are able to create a central knowledge base where they can organize and store learning materials, resources shared by the mentor, etc.

- Mentees are able to utilize a text/video conferencing through the application to communicate with the mentor.
- Mentees are able to complete deadlines and are graded based on a score which is scaled based on the performance of other mentees on the platform.
- Mentees are able to upload progress reports, assigned work, etc.
- Mentees are able to link 3rd Party collaboration tools such as GitHub in order to record progress.
- Mentees are able to form "study groups", a collection of people with a similar learning goal.
- Such study groups are assigned common assignments while taking in individual contribution as a grading metric.

- Platform-specific
  - Communication
  - Knowledge sharing

    Sharing research papers, articles, blogs etc forms a solid foundation for many e-learning endeavours, the knowledge base aims to compile the information into a sorted list to make referencing, and access easier.
    - A mentor can share resources with their mentees or mentee groups which are then compiled for easier access within the application.
    - The mentor is then able to reference the former while giving out tasks.
    - Mentees are able to add their own resources to the said repository, which is likewise accessible to the mentor,

Platform Specifications
- **TBD**

Execution Plan
- **TBD**

Evaluation Metrics
- **TBD**