Midterm –Interactive Media II

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Reflection Paper:

We started this project with a vision of creating a bridge of communication and interaction between students in different departments and programs within Teachers College. “ANET” short for “Academic Network” is a platform where students can connect with other students that may share their same or similar academic interests. When we started tackling the project, we knew that the final version of the vision was going to take some time. We wanted to create a landing page where users can easily select what they are looking for, sign up, log in, learn more about us, or simply get relevant academic news in one place. The goal is to have at least 3 main functionalities in this site. One is for students to create a profile, where they can use LinkedIn to fill in some of their profile information. Then users would be able to search for other students based on their interests. The second feature, would be to create a chat room where users can create topic chats or just use it to private messaging another student with the purpose of working together on a project or maybe asking for a job opportunity that a particular user knows is available. The third function would be a news page where users could get up-to-date and reliable information from the latest Teachers College tweets, or most recent ideas (pins) from key education leaders at Pinterest. We still have space to add a few more news feeds from reliable sources and will be asking early adopters for input on this feature. We soon discovered that even creating a Minimum Viable Product (MVP), we struggle to create functions that for experienced developers would seem easy, but for us it was a challenge. As an example, using the API from LinkedIn for sign in purposes. We were able to get the API keys and code to call LinkedIn. The authentication window popped up, but it seems we also needed to authenticate with a back-end server to store that user info and pull other data in order to populate user profile. We had a similar experience working with the Twitter API. We were able to use NODE to get the latest tweets from users, but we needed a back-end server to store the data and deploy it into the HTML file. We are adding the node files into our repository for informational purposes and future use. We were able to get the sign in page working, where we asked users information about themselves. We store the information in variables and then printed that information out after user was finished. We still have a lot of work to do, but this project is turning into something interesting that potentially could have a disruptive effect on education.