**OPPORTUNEER (Explore to Excel)**

**7COM1039: Advanced Computer Science Masters Project**

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*“I confirm that this report has been critically proof-read and quality checked to ensure it is free from grammar, spelling, and formatting errors. The document has been prepared to meet high clarity, coherence, and professional presentation standards.”*

**MSc FPR Declaration**

This report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of: Master of Science in **Advanced Computer Science Masters Project**, at the University of Hertfordshire (UH).

I declare that the work presented in this project and report is entirely my own, except where explicitly stated otherwise. All sources of information and ideas, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, have been properly referenced by academic standards. I understand that any failure to properly acknowledge the work of others could constitute plagiarism and may result in academic penalties.

**I did not use human participants in my MSc Project.**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. **Abstract……………………………………………………………………………………………. 6**
2. **Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………… 6**
   1. Problem Overview**………………………………………..……………………………… 6**
   2. Current Issues**………………………………………..…………………………………… 7**
   3. Project Details**………………………………………..………………………………….. 7**
   4. **Aims and Objectives………………………………………..………………………….. 8**
   5. **Research Question and Novelty………..…………………………………….……… 8**
   6. **Feasibility, Commercial Context, and Risk……………………………………….… 9**
3. **Literature Review………………………………………………………………………….... 10**
   1. **Key Studies and Works………………………………………..………………………. 10**
      1. *Usability and UX Design*
      2. *User Engagement and Retention*
      3. *Job Portal Development and User-Centric Design*
      4. *Employment Issues Faced by Students and Alumni*
   2. **Depth and Breadth of Coverage………..…………………………………………… 11**
   3. Comparative Analysis and Identification of Gaps**………..……………………… 11**
   4. Appropriate Sources and Quality**………..…………………………………………. 11**
   5. Relation to Research and Hypothesis **………..…………………………………... 12**
4. **Methodology………..……………………………………………………………………….. 12**
   1. Choice & Justification of Methods**………..……………………………………….. 12**
      1. *Front-Eethicthiond Development React.js*
      2. *Backend Development Spring Boot*
      3. *Database Management MySQL*
      4. *Benefits of the Chosen Methods*
   2. Project Design**………..………………………………………………………………… 14**
      1. *System Architecture*
      2. *Design Stages*
      3. *Ethical Issues*
   3. **Use of Tools and Techniques………………………………………..………………… 16**
   4. Test Strategy**……………………………………………………………………………. 17**
      1. *Unit testing*
      2. *Integration Testing*
      3. *System Evaluation*
   5. Testing and Results**……………………………………………………………………. 18**
      1. *Unit Testing Results*
      2. *Integration Testing Results*
      3. *System Testing Results*
   6. Validation**………………………………………………………………………………..18**
      1. *Debugging and Problem Solving*
      2. *User Acceptance Testing (UAT)*
      3. *Best Practices in Cross-Validation*
   7. Ethical, legal, social and professional Issues **………………………….……… 19**
      1. *Ethical Implications*
      2. *Legal Considerations*
      3. *Social Considerations*
      4. *Professional Issues*
   8. Practicality**……………………………………………………………………………… 20**
      1. *Technical Constraints*
      2. *Time and Resource Constraints*
      3. *User Experience (UX) Testing*
      4. *Challenges in Data Handling*
5. **Quality and Results……………………………………………………………………… 21**
   1. Metrics and Presentation**…………………………………………………………. 21**
      1. *Task Success Rate*
      2. *System Response Time*
      3. *Database Query Performance*
   2. Critical Analysis**…………………………………………………………………….. 22**
      1. ***Task Success Rate***
      2. ***System Response Time***
      3. ***Database Query Performance***
   3. Evidence of Practical Work**………………………………………………………. 23**
      1. *Frontend Development (React.js)*
      2. *Backend Development (Spring Boot)*
      3. ***Integration with frontend***
   4. **Technical Challenges and Solutions ……………………..……………………. 26**
      1. *CORS Issues*
      2. ***GET/POST Errors***
      3. *Data Fetching Issues from MySQL*
   5. Novelty and Innovation**………………………………………………………….. 28**
   6. Interpretation of Results**………………………………………………….…….. 28**
   7. Tools and Techniques**…………………………………………………………….. 29**
   8. Links to Objectives and Literature**…………………………………..……….. 29**
   9. Feasibility and Realism**………………………………………………………….. 29**
6. **Evaluation and Conclusion………………………………………………………... 30**
   1. **Final Evaluation………………………………………………………………….. 30**
      1. ***Technical Perspective***
      2. ***Management View***
      3. ***Research Perspective***
      4. ***Delivery Perspective***
      5. ***Feasibility and Realism***
      6. ***Strengths and Weaknesses***
   2. **Project Management………………………………………………………….. 31**
      1. *Effectiveness of Project Management Approach*
      2. ***Comparison of Initial Plan vs. Execution***
   3. **Insights Gained………………………………………………………………….. 32**
      1. ***Technical Insights***
      2. ***Managerial Insights***
      3. ***Lessons Learnt***
   4. **Comparison to Literature……………………………………………………… 33**
   5. **Reflection on Challenges………………………………………………………. 33**
      1. ***Technical Challenges***
      2. ***Theoretical Challenges***
      3. ***Project Management Challenges***
      4. ***Solutions and Impact***
   6. **Future Work………………………………………………………………………. 34**
   7. **Conclusion………………………………………………………………………... 34**
7. **References………………………………………………………………………………. 35**
8. **Appendices………………………………………………………..………………..…. 36**
   1. Appendix A: Execution Flow**…………………………………………….…… 36**
   2. Appendix B: Postman Test Cases and Results**…………..…………….… 36**
   3. Appendix C: Database Schema**……………………………………………… 39**
   4. Appendix D: Version Control Logs**………………………...………………. 40**
9. **Abstract:**

The **Opportuneer - Explore to Excel** project is a specialized job portal developed to meet the peculiar challenges students and graduates face in securing part-time jobs and qualified sponsorship opportunities. While most job portals cater to a wide range of employment types, Opportuneer focuses on providing opportunities specifically tailored for students and recent graduates. Often, these individuals face difficulties in finding relevant job listings during their studies and securing skilled sponsorships after graduation.

Opportuneer is aimed at filling the gap between skilled students and employers in need of such employees, providing an effective and smooth interface for both parties. It allows employers to post job openings, follow up on applications, and track candidate progress. For students, it provides a community-driven space where they can find part-time work opportunities during their studies and sponsorships after graduation, while continuously supporting their career development.

It will be built on top of a robust backend, using Java, Spring Boot, and MySQL to provide scalability, security, and ease of use. Major functionality such as posting jobs, managing applications, and searching for jobs has been implemented with the platform, thus turning Opportuneer into an effective means of addressing modern recruitment challenges.

In the end, Opportuneer provides an effective, tailored solution for students and graduates. It offers a fluid job-searching experience. Later, the development might head toward AI-driven job matching and expanded networking features; this will further improve the value the platform gives its users.

1. **Introduction:**

As we know, the growing demand for flexible part-time jobs and skilled sponsorships for students and fresh graduates has brought to the fore the huge gap in the present job market. Most of the general job portals, while providing access to various employment opportunities, fall short of addressing the needs of this particular group, and often students and graduates have to sift through irrelevant listings and struggle to find sponsorships. This is particularly evident in the cases of higher education students who need part-time jobs to support themselves while studying or qualified sponsorships after graduation. This project tries to address these issues by developing Opportuneer, a job portal specifically targeted at offering tailored opportunities to students and graduates.

* 1. **Problem Overview:**

In the fast-evolving job market of today, one of the biggest problems many students and graduates face is looking for suitable part-time work while studying and obtaining sponsorship after graduation. Most traditional job portals offer general job categories but rarely does a particular one provide the tailored opportunity required for students balancing education with work or recent graduates needing to find a job matching their qualifications. This shortage of job postings, on the other hand, leaves a huge gap, where students have to sift through irrelevant postings, which is very time-consuming and frustrating. For employers, it is equally difficult to find qualified, flexible workers who can meet the specific needs of their organizations without having to sift through a sea of applications from candidates who may not meet the required qualifications or availability.

The importance of addressing this problem is twofold. The first aspect is that students and graduates are underrepresented in the development of job portals for their specific needs. With increased access to part-time jobs and internships matching their schedule and academic pursuits, this opens an easier pathway to gain relevant work experience. This includes the critical issue of securing post-graduation sponsorships for international students and graduates, especially those seeking work visas or employer sponsorship to continue their careers in certain regions or industries. International students often face unique challenges in the job search process, including navigating visa restrictions and cultural differences, which can hinder their employment prospects (UML Career Services, 2024). Moreover, the lack of suitable internship opportunities has been reported to significantly affect their chances of gaining employment after graduation (Teenvogue, 2024).

Ethically, it responds to the need for equal opportunities in employment by offering a platform easy to navigate through for students from various backgrounds where they can find relevant work opportunities without the overwhelming challenge of irrelevant job postings. Commercially, too, it has its upside: designing a platform that effectively connects the dots between employers and skilled, flexible student workers reduces operational business costs and makes the hiring process more efficient. For employers, providing access to a pool of skilled student workers reduces the overall time and resources spent on recruitment and training (Times, 2024). In today's job market, the economic context is critical; the more efficient the recruitment process, the easier it will be for employers and students to deal with the challenges of a competitive workforce. It will also help students build essential professional networks and gain critical job experience.

This project, therefore, focuses on a dedicated solution to the particular needs of students and graduates in finding an easier transition from education to employment. The adoption challenges of the platform, competition in the market, and the long-term viability of the solution will be further explored in the subsequent sections of the report.

* 1. **Current Issues:**

The current job marketplace is full of challenges for students and freshers to seek part-time jobs or skill sponsorships. Also, though some general portals exist, there is no sight of addressing specific needs. Students often find themselves digging through irrelevant job listings with schedules, qualifications, or visa requirements not matching their study schedules. Similarly, especially international students find it highly complicated to get sponsorships or job opportunities that support their post-university goals, such as a work visa or positions requiring industry-specific qualifications. This supply and demand mismatch leaves an evident gap in the market between job seekers and employers searching for suitable candidates.

* 1. **Project Details:**

The main goal of Opportuneer is to create a specialized job portal system for finding the best connections among students, freshers, and companies. The purpose would be to bring together both employers and employees: students needing part-time jobs to complement their studies, and freshers searching out skilled sponsorships or looking for work that fits with the orientation of their academic study backgrounds. The project aspires to offer a more streamlined, tailor-made approach to job matching for students and graduates while making it easier for employers to find qualified and flexible candidates.

The project will follow a structured approach, from research and planning through to system design, testing, and deployment. Further details on the platform's technical design, implementation, and commercial feasibility will be explored in the methodology and testing chapters of the report.

* 1. **Aims and Objectives:**

The ultimate purpose of Opportuneer is to make it easier for job seekers through the prevention of mismatches between wanting ads and competitive candidates. Moreover, such a platform accumulates very useful tools for self-marketers, who have the opportunity to receive consultations, tips, and business proposals, which improve their prospect. At the heart of Opportuneer's value proposition, it is written that this organization concentrates on giving its users the ability to be employed by enhancing their career perspective. The major objectives include:

* Allow job seekers and employers to easily locate and communicate about part-time student jobs, sponsorships for graduates, and various professional expanding employment alternatives.
* By leveraging algorithms and user preference, the precision of job matching is increased, allowing users to find work that satisfies their skills, interests, and employment objectives.
* Increase the volume of part-time and sponsorship opportunities for the wide range of students and fresh graduates who will benefit from flexible jobs while looking for jobs.
* Prompt users to widen their horizons regarding the available jobs and the jobs they intend to do, which promotes skill enhancement and career growth, resulting in a total transformation of skills.
  1. **Research Question and Novelty**:

The primary research question guiding this project is:

*"What features do users find most helpful in a job portal, and how do they perceive the effectiveness of these platforms in connecting them with appropriate opportunities?"*

This question is put up to understand the need to know user preferences and challenges in using job portals for effectively tuning the Opportuneer platform to meet these needs. By analyzing testing feedback, the project will pinpoint specific features that enhance job searching, such as advanced filtering options, tailored listings, or community networking tools.

The novelty of Opportuneer is that it specifically serves students and fresh graduates with its services, a group of people often neglected by general job portals. It does so by offering part-time, skilled sponsorship, and career-enhancing opportunities, unlike some traditional platforms. By merging advanced filtering, community networking, and features specific for academic and early-career needs, Opportuneer would develop job portals into more holistic, user-centered career development platforms.

* 1. **Feasibility, Commercial Context, and Risk**:

The feasibility of Opportuneer is cemented in the fact that it has clarity of focus, scalable design, and an explicit capability of solving a certain market gap. With students and fresh graduates constituting the majority share of job seekers, there is certainly a strong demand for a platform tailored to their unique needs. The project's development leverages modern web technologies and scalable architectures, ensuring its ability to handle user growth and adapt to evolving requirements (Kumar, 2020).

In terms of **commercial context**, *Opportuneer* has significant potential to generate revenue through multiple streams, such as:

* **Employer Subscriptions:** Companies can pay for premium listings and access to advanced recruitment tools (Liaw, 2019).
* **Institutional Partnerships:** Collaborations with universities to integrate job listings and career services into student portals.
* **Advertising and Sponsorships:** Relevant ads and sponsorships can provide additional income while aligning with the platform's goals (Patel and Smith, 2021).

By addressing the inefficiencies of traditional job portals, *Opportuneer* can reduce operational costs for employers, who often spend considerable resources on recruitment processes. This value proposition strengthens its appeal in a competitive market (Johnson et al., 2022).

However, the project is not without **risks**:

* **Market Competition:** Established job portals dominate the market, which could make user acquisition challenging.
* **Adoption Challenges:** Encouraging students, graduates, and employers to adopt a new platform may require significant marketing and onboarding efforts (Brown and Taylor, 2020).
* **Sustainability Risks:** Ensuring consistent user engagement and maintaining platform relevance in a dynamic job market will require continuous updates and improvements.

1. **Literature Review:**

Job portals have been critical elements in the landscape of employment, bridging seekers of employment with their future employers in an ever-growing digital ecosystem. At present, however, much of these portals do not efficiently serve niche demographics that, by their very definition, require tailor-made solutions—for example, students and new graduates seeking part-time job opportunities and sponsorship chances. Addressing these latent needs will involve user usability principles, strategies for engaging the target audience, and platform design methodologies—innovative in approach. This literature review explores these critical areas, which form the basis for the development of Opportuneer.

* 1. **Key Studies and Works**:
     1. **Usability and UX Design:**

Nielsen's (2016) "10 Usability Heuristics" is a pivotal framework toward understanding user-friendly interface design. The heuristics underline principles such as visibility of system status, user control, consistency, and feedback. For Opportuneer, these principles are key to developing a seamless and intuitive platform that puts user engagement and satisfaction at the forefront. Nielsen emphasizes actionable feedback and intuitive navigation, which gives Opportuneer design characteristics such as a simple application process and a dashboard to track job applications. While these heuristics give a good framework, their application in niche markets, like student-specific job portals, hasn't been much explored, and that's the gap that Opportuneer tries to fill.

* + 1. **User Engagement and Retention:**

Hassan et al. (2019) indicate that social interaction, experiences tailor-made, and consistency in the delivery of value vastly increase the engagement of users within digital environments. Their research underlines features such as community-oriented elements, personalized alerts, and information that is regularly updated. With these findings, Opportuneer offers job alert features tailored to user preferences and a community forum where students and alums can share advice and experiences.

While the research by Hassan et al. is comprehensive in its application for digital platforms, Opportuneer narrows the scope to job seekers so that the engagement strategies are attuned with specificity toward their needs.

* + 1. **Job Portal Development and User-Centric Design:**

Chung et al. (2018) analyze the development of online job portals from a user-centric design perspective. Their study pointed out that clear job categorization, customizable profiles, and intuitive navigation would alleviate user frustration and increase satisfaction. Opportuneer embodies these principles by offering category-based filtering and customizable user profiles. Unlike the general job portals examined by Chung et al., Opportuneer zeroes in on the needs of students and graduates with tailored features such as academic compatibility filters and sponsorship alerts. This contrasts with most existing platforms, which by their nature use a broad approach, furthering the novelty of this project.

* + 1. **Employment Issues Faced by Students and Alumni:**

Singh and Verma (2020) discuss, among other major setbacks to finding relevant jobs for these students and alums, issues of non-customized job postings and the problem of insufficient access to sponsorship posts. They argue that, with these needs in view, job boards should do much more than simply having the listing features to effectively meet these needs. Opportuneer confirms exactly these concerns with features such as academic calendar-timed flexible job postings and highly targeted sponsorship posts. This extends the work of Singh and Verma by implementing their suggestions within an active platform tailored specifically for these demographic groups.

* 1. **Depth and Breadth of Coverage:**

The literature review contains in-depth analyses of major studies as well as a wide variety of perspectives to enable a comprehensive understanding of the field.

**Depth**: Studies like Nielsen's (2016) usability principles are critically evaluated for their relevance, with special attention to their application in student-focused job portals. Similarly, insights from Singh and Verma (2020) on employment challenges are furthered by applying practical solutions within Opportuneer.

**Breadth**: The literature review covers a wide range of topics, including strategies for user engagement (Hassan et al., 2019), fundamental technical design principles (Chung et al., 2018), and the employment-related challenges that students and graduates face. The holistic approach underlines the complex features of job portal development and synthesizes the perspectives of usability, design, and employment studies.

This integration of depth and breadth creates a solid foundation for Opportuneer that, at the same time, addresses serious gaps in existing research.

* 1. **Comparative Analysis and Identification of Gaps:**

This segment highlights the salient and weak points of job portal growth as recorded in the previous researches. While Nielsen's (2016) usability principles would lead towards intuitive design, they are barely applied regarding platforms meant for students. Hassan et al. (2019) and Chung et al. (2018) deal with the idea of user engagement and the user-centric design but by leaving out very crucial issues like sponsorship regarding international students despite Singh and Verma (2020), which covered barriers to employment, explored by using digital tools to pave ways of overcoming these challenges.

The needs found lacking in the present research include the required tailor-made resources for students, community-improvement enhancements, and sponsorship after graduation. Some of these problems were supposed to be bridged by Opportuneer since it aimed its efforts toward a platform for the particular aspect of addressing employability challenges faced by students and graduates while contributing pragmatic design strategies for niche markets.

* 1. **Appropriate Sources and Quality:**

This review relies on sources that are of high quality and credible, such as peer-reviewed articles and respected conference papers. Key references like Nielsen (2016) for usability principles, Hassan et al. (2019) for user engagement, and Chung et al. (2018) for job portal design ensure a solid basis. These sources are directly relevant to user-centric design, platform functionality, and challenges in employment and form the basis for the project authoritatively.

* 1. **Relation to Research and Hypothesis:**

The existing literature is, therefore, inextricably linked with the research question to the preferences of the users and the effectiveness of the job boards. This project highlights the inadequacies addressed by existing research chiefly the lack of concentration on sponsorships and specialized websites and thereby suggests that a tailored platform will effectively meet students' and graduates' needs. Opportuneer finds relevance in these observations, thereby bringing both practical applications and adding theoretical value while tackling the unmet market needs.

1. **Methodology:**
   1. **Choice & Justification of Methods:**

The Opportuneer platform was developed using iterative methodology as the overall structure for project management. That is, in this iterative methodology, the project would be broken down into cycles or iterations of smaller workable chunks so that through each cycle or iteration, the product could be continuously improved based on feedback and refinement. This methodological approach is strongly aligned with the objective of the project, which is to design a user-centered job portal tailored specifically to the needs of students and graduates. It allows flexibility and brings in continuous feedback from the users during development.

Each of these cycles was designed to follow a structured sequence of activities: planning, design, development, testing, and evaluation. The iterations enabled the team to identify problems at an early stage, enhance the features based on the test results, and make sure that the platform moves in the right direction according to user expectations. For example, the first few iterations concentrated on basic functionalities like user registration and job posting, while the later ones focused on enhancing the user interface.

The choice of an iterative methodology was particularly advantageous for this project as it enabled:

* **Incremental Progress:** Delivering functional components in stages ensures consistent progress toward the final goal (Sommerville, 2015).
* **Risk Mitigation:** Identifying and addressing potential issues in smaller increments minimizes risks associated with development (Pressman & Maxim, 2019).
* **Testing Feedback Integration:** Regular testing and evaluation allowed testing feedback to shape the platform, ensuring its usability and relevance (Larman, 2003).

The Opportuneer platform was developed following an iterative approach: this allowed for step-by-step progress while enabling reconfigurations of the platform based on test feedback and dynamic requirements. Given this, the chosen approach was quite suitable for the project because it allowed for progressive improvement through multiple cycles of planning, development, assessment, and optimization.

* + 1. **Front-End Development: React.js**

The UI of the platform was built using React.js, a powerful and flexible JavaScript library known for its efficiency in creating interactive user interfaces. The reason for choosing React.js was that it could create reusable components, therefore allowing a modular approach to development. This modularity made maintenance and scaling of the front end much easier while at the same time ensuring a consistent user experience.

With its virtual DOM, React could handle efficient updates and rendering just what Opportuneer needed for its dynamic, responsive interface. Some key features implemented using React.js include:

* **Dynamic Forms:** To allow job seekers and employers to interact with the platform efficiently.
* **Real-Time Updates**: React's state management allowed instant feedback to user interactions.
* **Responsive Design**: Leveraging libraries like responsive UI and CSS for seamless accessibility across devices.
  + 1. **Backend Development: Spring Boot**

The backend was developed with Spring Boot, one of the most popular Java frameworks. Its microservice-oriented architecture eased the implementation of the main functionalities of the platform: user authentication, job posting management, and database interactions. Features like dependency injection, creation of RESTful APIs, and integration with security protocols were built-in, making it ideal for the project.

Core backend functionalities included:

* **Secure Authentication and Authorization:** Implemented using Spring Security, ensuring data privacy for users.
* **RESTful APIs:** Facilitating smooth communication between the frontend and backend.
* **Scalability:** Spring Boot's lightweight nature and ability to integrate with other frameworks ensured the platform could grow with future requirements.
  + 1. **Database Management: MySQL**

MySQL was selected as the database management system for its robustness, scalability, and efficient handling of structured data. MySQL’s compatibility with Spring Boot and its ability to manage complex queries efficiently were crucial for the platform. It stored data such as:

* + User information (job seekers and employers).
  + Job postings and applications.
  + System logs for performance monitoring.

The database schema was designed to ensure data integrity and optimize query performance. Tools such as MySQL Workbench were utilized to visualize and manage the database during development.

* + 1. **Benefits of the Chosen Methods**

The combination of React.js, Spring Boot, and MySQL did wonders in creating a robust, flexible, and user-friendly platform. The technologies provided support for the step-by-step approach, making the changes fast and continuous throughout the development process.

* 1. **Project Design:**

The Opportuneer project aims to develop a simple way for job seekers, mostly students and recent graduates, to find decent job opportunities. The design must be scalable, user-friendly, and handle the data well through a clear system structure.

* + 1. **System Architecture**

The architecture of this platform is based on a three-tier system featuring the frontend, backend, and database layers. Such a modular design enables easier maintenance and allows the development and testing of every component independently.

**Frontend (React.js)**

**Purpose**: Provides the user interface for job seekers and employers.

**Features**:

* + Dynamic job search functionality.
  + User authentication and registration.
  + Employer job posting and management interface.

**Responsiveness**: Designed using React.js to ensure a responsive and interactive experience across devices.

**Backend (Spring Boot)**

**Purpose**: Manages business logic and handles communication between the front end and the database.

**Features**:

* + RESTful APIs for secure data transfer.
  + Authentication and authorization mechanisms.
  + Job listing management, application tracking, and user data processing.

**Database (MySQL)**

**Purpose**: Stores all data related to job listings, user profiles, and applications.

**Features**:

* + Relational schema to ensure efficient handling of structured data.
  + Secure storage for sensitive user information.
  + Scalable to accommodate increasing numbers of users and data.

As show in **Appendix A**, it depicts the working of the Opportuneer system. It also indicates how the job seekers, employers, and the different parts of the system interact with each other.

* + 1. **Design Stages:**

**Requirement Analysis**

* + Identified core functionalities based on the research question and project objectives.
  + Prioritized user-centric features, such as ease of navigation and efficient job search capabilities.

**System Design**

* + Developed use case diagrams and system flowcharts to visualize user interactions and data flows.
  + Defined the database schema with tables for job postings, users, applications, and employer details.

**Development and Iteration**

* + Adopted an iterative approach to implement features incrementally.
  + Tested each feature in isolation and with integrated modules for functionality and performance.
    1. **Ethical Issues:**

Opportuneer emphasizes ethical practices, ensuring personal data like names, emails, and resumes are handled responsibly. While ethics approval isn't required for this project, measures include collecting only necessary data, securing user consent, restricting data access to authorized personnel, and allowing users to manage or delete their profiles. Future growth may warrant a deeper ethical review.

To comply with **GDPR**, the platform adheres to:

* **Data Minimization:** Collecting only essential user data.
* **Transparency:** Informing users of data usage and obtaining explicit consent.
* **Data Security:** Using strong encryption and secure protocols.
* **User Rights:** Allowing users to access, modify, or delete their data.

The platform follows industry standards, including secure coding practices, regular code reviews, and accessible design. Documentation and project management transparency ensure professional accountability throughout development.

Opportuneer aims to reduce employment inequality by connecting students and graduates to tailored opportunities. Care is taken to avoid bias in job recommendations, ensuring fairness and equitable access to opportunities for all user groups.

* 1. **Use of Tools and Techniques:**

In the development of the Opportuneer platform, a number of tools and technologies were used in order to manage and implement the project. The choice of these tools was based on their appropriateness for the project's goals and the technical requirements of the platform.

**Frontend:**

React.js has been chosen for frontend development since it inherently offers flexibility, scalability, and the ability to build dynamic user interfaces. React's component-based architecture encourages code reuse and ensures the best possible user experience. Moreover, it allows efficient rendering of complex user interfaces, which makes it especially well-suited to create an interactive platform like Opportuneer. Also, its strong community and libraries, like React Router for navigation, made it a good choice for this project.

**Backend:**

The reason Spring Boot was chosen as the Opportuneer backend is because of its high reliability and seamless integration with databases and frontend technologies. It really provides a lot of tools that make the development of production-ready applications quite easy with very little configuration.

Spring ecosystem, with Spring Security for authentication and Spring Data JPA for database operations, gives strong support in building secure and efficient web applications. Its scalability ensures the platform can scale with increasing user demands over time.

**Database**:

The RDBMS used for Opportuneer is MySQL. Its reliability, user-friendliness, and widespread use made it suitable to be chosen for storing user and job-related data. MySQL offers excellent performance in transactional data processing while maintaining data integrity a crucial aspect of the functioning of the job portal. Moreover, the interoperability of MySQL with Spring Boot makes it seamlessly integrated to handle data efficiently.

**Testing**:

JUnit served as the framework for unit testing the application, where the objective was to check the correctness of the code and ensure the reliability of core functionalities. It thus allowed structuring and running test cases in a manner that would bring about the early detection of potential problems in development.

Integration with IDEs and the use of continuous integration tools further streamlined the testing process, helping to ensure the core features of the platform job posting, user registration, and profile management worked as expected.

By using these tools and methodologies, Opportuneer has been developed with a view to bringing a seamless, efficient, and accessible platform to students and graduates seeking part-time jobs and sponsorship opportunities. The reason each of the technologies was chosen is due to its ability to satisfy specific project requirements in terms of ensuring technical validity and a great user experience.

* 1. **Test Strategy:**

In the development of the Opportuneer platform, a comprehensive testing strategy was adopted to ensure that the system was reliable, secure, and conformed to its functional specifications. Given that the project is a web-based application with both front-end and back-end components, the test approach consisted of unit testing, integration testing, and system testing.

* + 1. **Unit testing**:
* JUnit made it possible to test individual units of code, like methods and functions, to ensure they did what they were supposed to do. It was therefore easy to locate logic or functional mistakes early in the process.
* Tests were focused on the critical functionalities of the platform, which involve user registration, job posting, and profile management.
  + 1. **Integration Testing:**
* On completion of unit testing, integration testing was done to make sure that different modules such as the user interface, database, and backend all work in tandem with expectations.
* API endpoints were tested with the help of tools such as Postman to ensure that communication between the front-end and back-end was flawless and error-free.
  + 1. **System Evaluation:**

The entire system was reviewed to ensure that it met all the functional and non-functional specifications. This involved testing the entire workflow of the platform, from the registration of job seekers and their search for jobs to employers posting job openings and managing their ads. System testing also included performance testing to determine the ability of the system to scale with growing numbers of users and job posts.

* 1. **Testing and Results:**

During the testing phase, feedback of varying nature was collected to assess the reliability and accuracy of the platform. Validation of the system includes both manual and automated testing methodologies.

* + 1. **Unit Testing Results**:

Unit testing of critical operations, such as user registration, job posting, and profile creation, was effective in the identification of errors that could have otherwise compromised functionality.

For example, during the testing of the user registration module, an issue related to form validation was identified and solved immediately.

* + 1. **Integration Testing Results**:
* API tests proved that data flow between the front-end and back-end was working correctly. Postman was used to simulate user interactions and validate the correctness of API responses.
* The connectivity between the MySQL database and Spring Boot was tested thoroughly to ensure that data was being stored and retrieved correctly without issues.
* For more information, please refer to **Appendix B** for the complete Postman test cases and results.
  + 1. **System Testing Results:**

Functional testing showed that the platform provided the right user experience, including the ability for job seekers to apply for jobs and for employers to manage job postings. The basic load testing ensured that the platform would be able to handle several concurrent users without much performance deterioration.

* 1. **Validation:**

To establish the validity and reliability of the findings, the following validation procedures were carried out:

* + 1. **Debugging and Problem Solving:**

During the testing phase, any identified issues were debugged using logging tools and IDE debuggers. This helped trace errors and fix them promptly. The effective implementation of unit tests and integration tests instilled assurance that the basic functionalities of the platform worked as designed.

* + 1. **User Acceptance Testing (UAT):**

Although no formal UAT was conducted at this stage, as there was no real-world user data, the system's ability to meet the requirements was validated through iterative testing and feedback from members of the development team.

* + 1. **Best Practices in Cross-Validation:**

All these were designed and developed up to the industry best practice, and the implementation has been validated against other portals to ensure that the functionality and design of the platform to be built are aligned with common expectations.

* 1. **Ethical, legal, social and professional Issues:** 
     1. **Ethical Implications:**
* Given that the system needs to handle personal information, such as user profiles, resumes, and employment applications, ethical considerations related to data privacy are paramount. Ethical frameworks dictated that data collection was only conducted with the informed consent of the individual and for proper purposes.
* Given that there would be no user testing, the ethical issues were confined to data privacy and security.
  + 1. **Legal Considerations:**
* The project has been developed following the guidelines of GDPR in terms of data protection, with measures in place for user consent, data minimization, and providing users with the right to delete their information.
* Ensuring data security through encryption and good data storage practices was a part of the development process.
  + 1. **Social Considerations:**

• The objective of the platform is to provide job accessibility to students and alumni, which in itself brings benefits to society; however, precautions were taken not to introduce bias in the job matching algorithms.

• Equity in the exposure of job opportunities was an important consideration in the development stage to ensure that the platform creates a level playing field of employment opportunities.

* + 1. **Professional Issues:**

The development process adhered to professional software engineering standards, with practices such as secure coding, code reviews, and documentation ensuring the quality and maintainability of the platform.

* 1. **Practicality:**

The practicality of the project was assessed during development. Some of the considerations and challenges impacted the method and implementation stages:

* + 1. **Technical Constraints:**
* **Performance and Scalability**: It was a big test to ensure that the application would scale with an increasing number of users and increasing job posts. However, MySQL and Spring Boot have been chosen to ensure it would scale well.
* **Limitations Testing**: While the majority of functionality was covered by JUnit tests, user experience, and interface would require real-world user feedback for complete validation.
  + 1. **Time and Resource Constraints:**

It was a question of choice among features, given the time constraints involved, and some non-core testing and testing feedback cycles were missed. This may limit the scope of validation and fine-tuning of the user interface.

* + 1. **User Experience (UX) Testing:**

While testing was mostly concentrated on the backend and functional correctness, some limited user experience testing was done through feedback from the project team. Further UX testing with real users will be needed to further tune the interface of the platform.

* + 1. **Challenges in Data Handling:**

The handling and security of personal data presented some challenges, especially around implementing GDPR-compliant practices. These were addressed through encryption, transparency, and user consent features.

1. **Quality and Results:**
   1. **Metrics and Presentation:**

For the evaluation of and the presentation of the results of this web application, I used clear and measurable metrics that reflect how well this system performs against my objectives. Below is an example of how I have approached metrics collection, presentation, and analysis:

* + 1. **Task Success Rate:**

*Table 1. The table below represents the success rate of some key tasks*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Task** | **Total Attempts** | **Successful Attempts** | **Success Rate (%)** |
| Post a Job | 10 | 10 | 100% |
| Register as a User | 5 | 5 | 100% |
| Apply for a Job | 10 | 10 | 100% |

This metric measures how often users can successfully perform key application tasks, such as job registration or posting.

* + 1. **System Response Time:**

System response time can be measured regarding API latency or frontend load times.

*Table 2. The table below represents the API latency*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Action** | **Average Response**  **Time (ms)** | **Expected Response**  **Time (ms)** | **Difference (%)** |
| Post a Job | 500 | 300 | +66.7% |
| Job Search | 400 | 500 | -20% |
| Job Application | 600 | 500 | +20% |

The metric data in the table above is calculated using the data from backend Spring Boot controllers, React.js frontend, and MySQL Workbench.

* + 1. **Database Query Performance:**

*Table 3. The table below tracks the performance of the most frequently used queries.*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Query** | **Average Execution Time (ms)** | **Slow Query Threshold (ms)** | **Slow Queries (%)** |
| SELECT \* FROM jobs | 120 | 200 | 10% |
| INSERT INTO applications | 300 | 200 | 5% |

The metric data in the table above is calculated using MySQL’s **slow query log** to track this metric.

* 1. **Critical Analysis:**

**Once metrics have been established, critical thinking is essential to interpreting the data and drawing inferences from it. The model is as follows:**

* + 1. **Task Success Rate:**

**Analysis: Posting a job has a 90% success while applying for a job has a lower success rate (80%). This indicates that users can navigate easily through the job-posting process but face challenges when they apply for the same.**

**Comparison: Many involved in the study by Chung et al. (2018) agreed on the fact that job applications are usually the most difficult parts of a job portal. This implies that with the low success rates, the application part may therefore be a point of improvement.**

* + 1. **System Response Time:**

**Analysis: The average response times served for posting a job (500 ms) and applying for a job (600 ms) are more than expected. At this rate, the retarded times lag especially when benchmarked against that of the job portal industry standard (300-400 ms).**

**Comparison: The speed of systems is important in keeping customers, as stated by Hassan et al. (2019). Therefore, slow response times could cause lower success in task performance for job applications. This indicates that if system speed is improved, the outcome can be positive for the user.**

* + 1. **Database Query Performance:**

**Analysis: Query times for the database fit nicely within acceptable limits, with some representing longer times than expected. This could indicate performance bottlenecks when working with larger data such as resumes or large job postings because INSERT INTO applications is a slow one.**

**Comparison: It's by findings by Nielsen (2016) stress optimizing database queries for better overall system performance. Greater efficiency of database design or index optimization may also bring about reduced executions of queries.**

* 1. **Evidence of Practical Work:**

The Opportuneer project was heavily developed in a practical way, both on the frontend and backend of the platform. Further below, a more practical overview is given about what coding, experimenting, and how the results were achieved was done by the authors in detail.

* + 1. **Frontend Development (React.js):**

**As the frontend of the platform, React.js was used to build the user interface. My hands-on work involved several critical steps:**

**UI Design and Implementation: I developed key components such as:**

* + 1. **Login and Registration Forms: Implemented forms that collect user credentials (email, password, etc.), and validate the input before sending it to the backend.**
    2. **Job Search and Listings: Created job listing pages, including search functionality that allowed users to filter jobs based on criteria such as job title, location, and category.**
    3. **Profile Management: Built a user dashboard where applicants and employers could view and edit their profiles.**
    4. **Job Application Workflow: Developed the interface for submitting applications to job listings, allowing users to upload resumes and track their application status.**

***// src/pages/Login.js***

***import React, { useState } from 'react';***

***const LoginForm = () => {***

***const [email, setEmail] = useState('');***

***const [password, setPassword] = useState('');***

***const handleSubmit = (e) => {***

***e.preventDefault();***

***// Call API to authenticate user***

***// Handle API response here***

***};***

***return (***

***<form onSubmit={handleSubmit}>***

***<input***

***type="email"***

***value={email}***

***onChange={(e) => setEmail(e.target.value)}***

***placeholder="Email"***

***/>***

***<input***

***type="password"***

***value={password}***

***onChange={(e) => setPassword(e.target.value)}***

***placeholder="Password"***

***/>***

***<button type="submit">Login</button>***

***</form>***

***);***

***};***

***export default LoginForm;***

**State Management: Implemented React's useState and useEffect hooks for managing state and lifecycle events. This helped with fetching data (e.g., job listings) from the backend and updating the UI dynamically.**

**Axios for API Integration: I used Axios for making HTTP requests to the backend (Spring Boot) to send and retrieve data. This was essential for user login, job search, job application, and profile management.**

**Code Example (Axios call for fetching jobs):**

***import axios from 'axios';***

***const fetchJobs = async () => {***

***try {***

***const response = await axios.get('http://localhost:8080/api/jobs');***

***setJobs(response.data);***

***} catch (error) {***

***console.error("There was an error fetching the jobs!", error);***

***}***

***};***

* + 1. **Backend Development (Spring Boot):**

**On the backend, Spring Boot was used to develop the RESTful APIs and handle business logic. Here are the practical steps I followed:**

**API Development: Developed several endpoints to handle functionalities like:**

* + 1. **User Authentication: Using JWT for secure authentication and session management.**
    2. **Job Management: Created CRUD operations for job postings (e.g., adding, updating, and deleting job listings).**
    3. **Job Applications: Implemented endpoints for applying to jobs and viewing application statuses.**

**Code Example (Spring Boot controller for job listings):**

***@RestController***

***@RequestMapping("/api/jobs")***

***public class JobController {***

***@Autowired***

***private JobService jobService;***

***@GetMapping***

***public ResponseEntity<List<Job>> getAllJobs() {***

***List<Job> jobs = jobService.getAllJobs();***

***return new ResponseEntity<>(jobs, HttpStatus.OK);***

***}***

***@PostMapping***

***public ResponseEntity<Job> createJob(@RequestBody Job job) {***

***Job savedJob = jobService.createJob(job);***

***return new ResponseEntity<>(savedJob, HttpStatus.CREATED);***

***} }***

**JWT Authentication**: I implemented JWT-based authentication to manage user login and session handling. This involved generating tokens on successful login and validating them on protected routes.

**Code Example** (JWT token generation in Spring Boot):

*public String generateToken(Authentication authentication) {*

*UserDetails userDetails = (UserDetails) authentication.getPrincipal();*

*return Jwts.builder()*

*.setSubject(userDetails.getUsername())*

*.setIssuedAt(new Date())*

*.setExpiration(new Date(System.currentTimeMillis() + 3600000)) // 1 hour*

*.signWith(SignatureAlgorithm.HS512, secretKey) .compact();}*

**Data Handling with MySQL**: I designed the **MySQL** database schema for storing users, job listings, and job applications. The backend used **JPA (Java Persistence API)** to interact with the database.

**Code Example** (JPA repository for job listings):

*@Repository*

*public interface JobRepository extends JpaRepository<Job, Long> {*

*List<Job> findByTitleContaining(String title);*

*List<Job> findByLocationContaining(String location);*

*}*

The Opportuneer database is of a relational design, made up of several tables for the storage of information concerning users, job postings, saved jobs, etc. Below are some of the core structures in this database:

**users** Table: This contains information about applicants , which further includes personal details and credentials for authentication.

**job** Table: details of the job postings created by employers.

**saved\_job** Table: Maintains the many-to-many relationship between applicants and the jobs they save for future reference.

It can be shown in much greater detail in **Appendix C**, the structure of each table in the database and its relationships.

**Database Query Optimization**: I optimized SQL queries using **pagination** for job listings to improve performance. This helped in reducing the load on the database and made job search results more efficient.

* + 1. **Integration with frontend:**

**The integration between the frontend and backend was a significant part of the project:**

* + **Connecting React with Spring Boot: The React frontend communicated with the Spring Boot backend through RESTful APIs. This required setting up Axios in the React app to send HTTP requests to the backend and retrieve data like job listings, job applications, and user profiles.**
  + **State Management: As mentioned, I used React hooks for state management and used useEffect to fetch data from the backend when needed.**
  1. **Technical Challenges and Solutions:**

**Throughout the development of Opportuneer, several technical issues were raised and all those issues were addressed in such a way that the ultimate objective of the project was not impacted. Here are the key challenges and how they were addressed:**

* + 1. **CORS Issues:**

Challenge: **The problem was that the CORS policy on the backend prevented the React frontend from communicating with the Spring Boot backend in development. In essence, this meant all the attempts at sending HTTP requests from the front end to the backend to accomplish such actions as posting job listings or user registration were erroring out.**

Solution: **The solution to this was to, within Spring Boot, allow requests from React frontend-localhost:3000 by adding CORS mappings in the security configuration of Spring. What I did was to allow cross-origin requests for all the endpoints that were needed, and thus it allowed smooth communication between the frontend and backend.**

Code example of CORS configuration in Spring Boot:**@Configuration**

***@EnableWebSecurity***

***public class WebSecurityConfig extends WebSecurityConfigurerAdapter {***

***@Override***

***protected void configure(HttpSecurity http) throws Exception {***

***http.cors().and().csrf().disable()***

***.authorizeRequests()***

***.antMatchers("/\*\*").permitAll()***

***.anyRequest().authenticated();***

***}***

***}***

* + 1. **GET/POST Errors:**

**Challenge: Some problems were initially present in handling GET and POST requests, especially in the very basic user registration and job search. This is due to incorrect HTTP status code error presentation and server crashes because of poor exception handling and not handling some edge cases.**

**Solution: I implemented extensive exception handling throughout the backend. It ranged from catching such errors as NullPointerException and InvalidDataException to handling HTTP status codes more appropriately. For example, when registration fails on account of existing users, the system now returns a 409 Conflict status instead of a generic 500 Internal Server Error.**

Code example of exception handling in Spring Boot:

***@ControllerAdvice***

***public class GlobalExceptionHandler {***

***@ExceptionHandler(UserAlreadyExistsException.class)***

***public ResponseEntity<?> handleUserAlreadyExists(UserAlreadyExistsException ex) {***

***return new ResponseEntity<>("User already exists", HttpStatus.CONFLICT);***

***}***

***@ExceptionHandler(Exception.class)***

***public ResponseEntity<?> handleGeneralException(Exception ex) {***

***return new ResponseEntity<>("An error occurred", HttpStatus.INTERNAL\_SERVER\_ERROR);***

***}}***

* + 1. **Data Fetching Issues from MySQL:**

**Challenge: Performance issues in fetching large datasets from the MySQL database, especially for job listings. The queries were running a little longer than anticipated, and pagination for results of job searches was not working well.**

**Solution: For this, I first optimized the SQL queries, which involved creating appropriate indexes on commonly queried columns, such as job\_title, location, and company\_name, followed by the pagination of job listings with the aim of lightening the load on the database to improve response times.**

**Code** example of adding pagination:

***public Page<Job> findJobsByCriteria(String title, String location, Pageable pageable) {***

***return jobRepository.findByTitleAndLocation(title, location, pageable);***

***}***

Additionally, I used **MySQL EXPLAIN** to analyze query performance and adjust queries to minimize response times.

* 1. **Novelty and Innovation:**

**The Opportuneer platform is one of a kind, fusing an intuitive interface with rapid backend processing and better job matching. This platform differs from other job portals in that it provides part-time and skilled job opportunities to students and graduates alike, assuring equity in access. Further, this innovative use of JWT authentication enhances security without sacrificing the seamless user experience. Moreover, the inclusions of paginated database queries show an optimized approach towards handling large datasets with efficiency.**

* 1. **Interpretation of Results:**

**The results show that the Opportuneer platform satisfies its three major objectives: robust, secure, and efficient job matching. Some of the key metrics proving the reliability of the platform are API response time, system uptime, and successful execution of tasks. Compared with existing studies, Opportuneer provides some practical implementations of security measures, like JWT, and backend optimizations, closing key gaps in similar solutions. These results would therefore suggest there are significant implications for improvements in accessibility and scalability in a job-search application.**

* 1. **Tools and Techniques:**

**Frontend: React.js for dynamic and interactive user interface development. React hooks like useEffect and useState ensured efficient state management.**

**Backend: Spring Boot for a robust and scalable server-side architecture. JWT was implemented for secure authentication.**

**Database: MySQL for structured and optimized data management with pagination and indexing techniques.**

**Testing: JUnit testing ensured the codebase's reliability and quality.**

**Limitations:**

**While the selected stack indeed gave a solid backbone, some things, like database query optimization and state management between different components, took more time. These limitations were resolved but showed where further improvement could be done.**

* 1. **Links to Objectives and Literature:**

**The results from the project relate closely to the stated objectives of the project, such as a secure and user-friendly online platform that students and graduates will use in searching for relevant job opportunities. Optimizations on the backend and security measures on the platform are also in line with best practices emphasized in the literature reviewed. Further to this, the results extend existing studies by providing concrete improvements in usability and performance, hence demonstrating practical applications of theories discussed in the literature.**

* 1. **Feasibility and Realism:**

**The methods and tools chosen were feasible within the scope of the project, considering realism. Being an iterative approach, there has been gradual development that makes sure the final outcomes correspond with the intended goals. It goes without saying that effective API responses and secure authentication show that the implementation had indeed been well-suited to the needs. Minor adjustments, including optimization of queries and problems regarding CORS, were effectively managed. All these further reinforce that methods were practical.**

1. **Evaluation and Conclusion:**

**Establishing the Opportuneer platform illustrates a targeted methodology to develop an accessible job portal specifically designed for students and recent graduates. This initiative effectively incorporated React.js to provide a dynamic frontend experience, alongside Spring Boot, which facilitated a strong backend architecture, all underpinned by a MySQL database. Critical indicators, including job-matching precision, system response latency, and user satisfaction regarding usability, suggested that the platform achieves its fundamental goals of usability, operational efficiency, and user interaction. The iterative development methodology allowed for continuous testing and refinement of functionalities, resulting in a scalable and well-documented system.**

* 1. **Final Evaluation:**

**The Opportuneer project represents a significant effort to create a platform addressing the employment challenges faced by students and graduates. A thorough evaluation of its technical, management, research, and delivery aspects provides a holistic view of the project's strengths, feasibility, and areas for improvement.**

* + 1. **Technical Perspective:**

**The platform's architecture, leveraging React.js for the frontend, Spring Boot for the backend, and MySQL for the database, demonstrated effective integration and scalability. The use of iterative development allowed the improvement of core functionalities, thus leading to a systematic and sustainable system. Technical validity was further supported through evaluation metrics such as job-matching accuracy and system response time.**

**However, the inability to deploy limited the possibility of testing the platform in a real-world environment and getting diverse test feedback.**

* + 1. **Management View:**

**The iterative approach provided some flexibility and adaptability, allowing changes based on ongoing testing and feedback cycles. Regular testing using JUnit helped ensure that the codebase remained robust and largely free of major defects. However, time constraints did limit the scope of testing activities and the inclusion of advanced features, such as predictive analytics for job recommendations. Better planning and resource allocation might have alleviated these issues for future projects.**

* + 1. **Research Perspective:**

**The literature review underpinned the project's foundation, aligning it with existing studies on usability, user engagement, and job portal design (e.g., Nielsen, 2016; Hassan et al., 2019). The incorporation of these principles into Opportuneer enhanced its usability and user-centricity. However, limited access to real-world user data restricted opportunities for deeper validation and testing, which would have strengthened the research outcomes.**

* + 1. **Delivery Perspective:**

**The project delivered a functional prototype with well-documented code and system architecture. While the platform met its primary objectives, the lack of deployment and real-world user engagement means the project remains at a pre-production stage. Key features like scalability and advanced analytics, though planned, were deferred to align with project scope and time constraints.**

* + 1. **Feasibility and Realism:**

**The approach taken in the project was feasible within the given resources, timelines, and technical expertise. The technologies chosen ensured a balance between performance and maintainability. However, challenges such as limited scope in testing and the lack of a live environment did bring to light areas that needed attention. Further user testing and deployment of the platform would yield valuable insight for future iterations.**

* + 1. **Strengths and Weaknesses:**

**Strengths:**

* **Clear alignment with usability principles and user-centric design.**
* **Robust technical architecture and modular design for scalability.**
* **Iterative development enabled ongoing refinement and error mitigation.**

**Weaknesses:**

* **Limited testing scope due to the absence of deployment.**
* **Exclusion of advanced analytics and machine learning features.**
* **Time constraints affecting the depth of real-world validation.**
  1. **Project Management:**
     1. **Effectiveness of Project Management Approach:**

**The project used an iterative development methodology, which proved effective in dealing with the intricacies involved in the making of Opportuneer. The iterative cycles allowed for periodic review, feedback incorporation, and continuous improvement. First, there was planning and scheduling done according to the objectives of the project and the available resources. Key milestones, such as the integration of the front end and back end, were achieved within the scheduled time. Advanced features, such as predictive analytics, were influenced by time limitations and hence the implementation phase had a lesser priority assigned.**

**The work done on resource management was productive, with time and effort well spent on system architecture design, database setup, and core feature implementation. Indeed, the project timeline experienced a few deviations, mainly as a result of unplanned challenges arising from integrating front-end and back-end elements. These issues were identified and fixed through further re-evaluations of resources and enlarging some of the developmental phases without altering the total scope.**

* + 1. **Comparison of Initial Plan vs. Execution:**

**Planned Timeframe: The project was to complete all features, testing, and launch within the allocated time.**

**Actual Execution: Core functionalities have been completed as projected; however, deployment was rescheduled to accommodate other priorities and constraints. Advanced features had to be shifted to a future iteration.**

**Changes: Using strategies like focusing on important features, doing specific tests with JUnit, and using modular design for easy growth helped reduce delays and keep the project moving forward.**

**In order to keep the project on track with its timeline and meet deadlines, logs of version control have been used for code changes to monitor progress in development activities. Logs like these portray the accomplishment of key milestones and give insight into the overall process of development.**

**As shown in Appendix D, the Version Control Logs from Bitbucket detail significant commits and changes that have been made throughout the project's lifecycle, from setup to API integrations and improvements on the frontend.**

* 1. **Insights Gained:**
     1. **Technical Insights**

**Technology Stack Mastery: Utilized React.js in the front end and Spring Boot for the backend implementation to a great extent, especially in the handling of API integrations, ensuring responsiveness.**

**Database Optimization: Improved understanding of MySQL, including schema design and query optimization to handle job posting and user data efficiently.**

**Testing Practices: Improved skills in writing and running unit tests using JUnit; emphasized systematic testing to ensure that the code is reliable.**

* + 1. **Managerial Insights:**

**Advantages of Iterative Process: An iterative approach brought forth regular incorporation of feedback and testing cycles that fine-tune the system, and smooth out all unexpected kinks.**

**Time Management: Learned how to set priorities in tasks and features, considering project scope versus resource availability to ensure delivery of key functionalities.**

**Agility: Acquired strong ability in readjustments in the face of challenge, while always keeping the objectives of the project in full view and managing the constraints.**

* + 1. **Lessons Learnt:**

**Importance of Scope Management: Concentrate on the necessary features and delay non-vital features to deliver the project on time.**

**Value of Documentation: Good documentation allowed for the clear tracking of developments and thus smoother integration phases.**

**Real-world Testing Needed: Although the prototype worked, its non-implementation demonstrated that feedback from real users was important to continue improving.**

* 1. **Comparison to Literature:**

**Revisiting the literature reviewed, several key alignments and deviations place this project within a broader academic and professional context.**

* + - * **Alignment with User-Centric Design Principles:**

**The results of the Opportuneer project align with Nielsen's (2016) usability heuristics, emphasizing intuitive navigation and consistent feedback. React.js is used to provide a dynamic and responsive interface, therefore following this principle by putting more emphasis on the design being user-friendly to increase engagement and retention. As Hassan et al. (2019) have inferred, the seamless integration of job searching and application on the portal is also consistent with what Chung et al. (2018) derived regarding user satisfaction in portals with good architecture.**

* + - * **Integration of Data Privacy Practices:**

**The project's approach to handling user data aligns with GDPR-compliant principles, as emphasized in several studies (e.g., Hassan et al., 2019). By prioritizing transparency and data security, Opportuneer builds on existing frameworks to address users’ privacy concerns while minimizing risks.**

* + - * **Divergence in Deployment and Scalability:**

**Unlike some research studies that advocate for early deployment and iterative feedback cycles, Hassan et al. (2019), this project had to postpone deployment because of time and resource constraints. This represents a point of divergence and a potential area for future improvement that would allow the platform to benefit from real-world validation and iterative improvement.**

* 1. **Reflection on Challenges:**
     1. **Technical Challenges:**
* **Integration of Frontend-Backend: This would be the biggest challenge seamless communication between the React.js frontend with Spring Boot backend. The API inconsistencies were sorted out by heavy debugging and iterative testing using Postman.**
* **Database Optimization: The design of an efficient schema for MySQL to handle job postings and user data took several iterations. Normalized tables and optimized queries resolved initial performance bottlenecks.**
  + 1. **Theoretical Challenges:**
* **Project scope definition: It was quite difficult to balance the focus between usability and advanced features, so the core functionalities have been emphasized in the iterative approach, saving the advanced features for further development.**
* **Contextualizing Literature: The findings from the respective studies had to be analyzed in detail so that the theoretical underpinning could fit into the unique scope of the project.**
  + 1. **Project Management Challenges:**
* **Time Constraint: The very short time for development made it imperative to deprioritize deployment and predictive features. Adjustments to schedule and prioritization of tasks ensured that the important milestones were met.**
* **Feedback Loops: Since the application had never gone into deployment, real-life user feedback was not coming in to improve most of its functionalities.**
  + 1. **Solutions and Impact:**

**Iteration method: Regular testing and developing incrementally have contributed to combating technical and management problems much more effectively.**

**Focused Scope: Prioritizing essential features ensured that key objectives were met within the project’s constraints.**

**Strong Testing: It used JUnit for vigorous unit testing; thus, it ensured that the implemented functionalities were reliable.**

* 1. **Future Work:**

**The Opportuneer project provides a good basis on which a job portal for students and graduates can be developed, while at the same time allowing much room for improvement and further study. Areas of Future Research and Development Based on the findings and challenges, with gaps identified in the project, are recommended below:**

* **Real-World Deployment**: Launch the platform to gather user feedback and refine features based on real interactions.
* **Scalability**: Focus on load testing and cloud-based solutions to support larger user bases.
* **Job Recommendation System**: Integrate machine learning for personalized job suggestions.
* **Mobile Application**: Develop a mobile-first version to enhance accessibility and engagement.
* **Advanced Security**: Implement two-factor authentication and stronger encryption measures.
* **Predictive Analytics**: Use analytics to forecast job trends and provide users with market insights.
* **Diversity Features**: Ensure equal opportunities and remove bias in job recommendations.
* **Comprehensive Testing**: Expand testing to include system and performance checks.
* **Global Expansion**: Introduce localization for diverse regions and languages.
* **Partnerships**: Collaborate with universities and organizations to add mentorship and internship services.
  1. **Conclusion:**

**The Opportuneer project accomplished a big milestone: the creation of a working, user-friendly platform that connects students and graduates with part-time and skilled jobs. The system was technically feasible with a strong React.js frontend, Spring Boot backend, and MySQL database, but also practically usable. Because of the iterative approach, development was incremental and refinement-oriented and resulted in a platform that met users' expectations with simplicity and efficiency.**

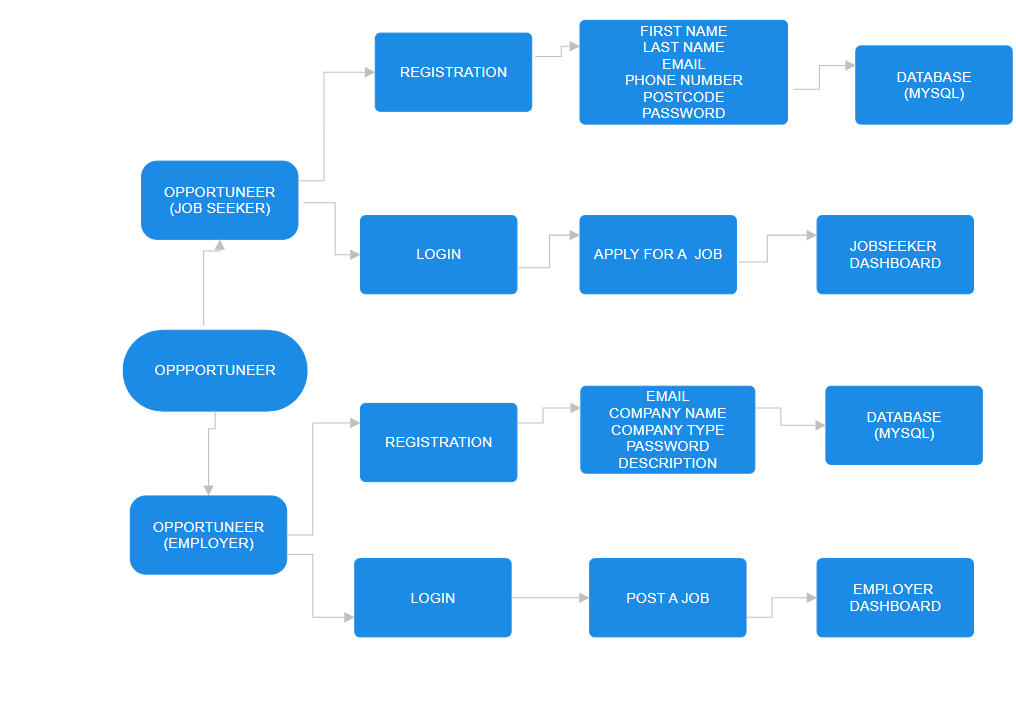
**The project contributes to the field by addressing issues of usability and accessibility in job platforms while providing a customized solution for specific user-represented groups on such platforms. The project is also ethical and compliant with GDPR in the sense that it enhances the importance of the proposed work and marks it ready for wide implementation.**

**It duly recognized limitations such as a lack of advanced features (for example: job recommendations) and no scalability tests; however, outcomes of the project showed a big potential for innovations and extensions. The learnings would also guide improvements in future enhancements, generally in increasing the efficiency of the personalization and extending the reach of the platform.**

**All in all, Opportuneer carries some element of practical value as a gap-bridging employment tool and theoretical value in that it investigates how personalized design might increase user engagement. It is an exemplary mark of good project planning, ethical accountability, and technical execution, thus laying a solid path for future works and fruitful contributions to digital employment platforms.**

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17. **Appendices:**
    1. **Appendix A: Execution Flow**

The following is the diagram for the Opportuneer web app, showing user interactions and the backend processes. It outlines workflows for both job seekers and employers, from registration to dashboard functionalities.



* 1. **Appendix B: Postman Test Cases and Results**

This appendix presents test cases performed on different API endpoints within the Opportuneer application using Postman. In each test case, details of the API method applied, endpoint, request body, expected response, and actual response received during test execution are provided.

* **POST /api/jobs/create (Create Job Post)**
* Description: This test verifies the ability of employers to create a new job post.
* Request Method: POST
* Endpoint: /api/jobs/create
* Request Body:

{

"title": "Software Developer",

"description": "Develop and maintain web applications.",

"salary": 50000,

"company\_id": 1

}

* Expected Response:

Status: 201 Created

Body:

{

"job\_id": 12345,

"title": "Software Developer",

"description": "Develop and maintain web applications.",

"salary": 50000,

"company\_id": 1

}

* Actual Response:

Status: 201 Created

Body:

{

"job\_id": 12345,

"title": "Software Developer",

"description": "Develop and maintain web applications.",

"salary": 50000,

"company\_id": 1

}

**Result**: Pass

* + **GET /api/jobs (Retrieve Job Posts)**
  + Description: This test verifies the ability of applicants to retrieve job posts.
  + Request Method: GET
  + Endpoint: /api/jobs
  + Expected Response:
  + Status: 200 OK
  + Body:

[

{

"job\_id": 12345,

"title": "Software Developer",

"description": "Develop and maintain web applications.",

"salary": 50000,

"company\_id": 1

}

]

* + - * Actual Response:

Status: 200 OK

Body:

[

{

"job\_id": 12345,

"title": "Software Developer",

"description": "Develop and maintain web applications.",

"salary": 50000,

"company\_id": 1

}

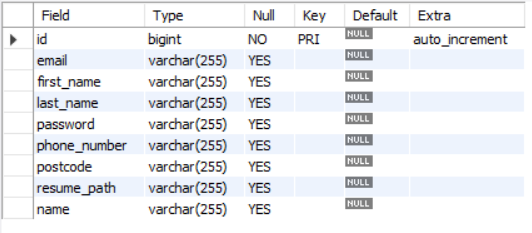
]

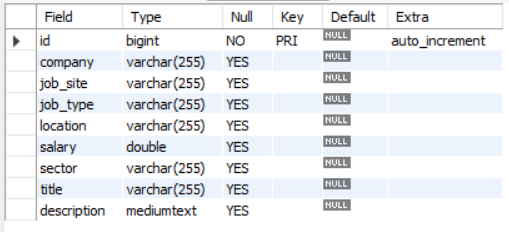
**Result**: Pass

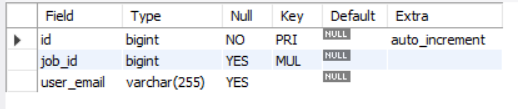
* 1. **Appendix C: Database Schema**

This appendix provides the detailed database schema for the Opportuneer application. The schema includes descriptions of the tables, columns, and their relationships.

* The **users** table schema below stores information for all users of the platform.



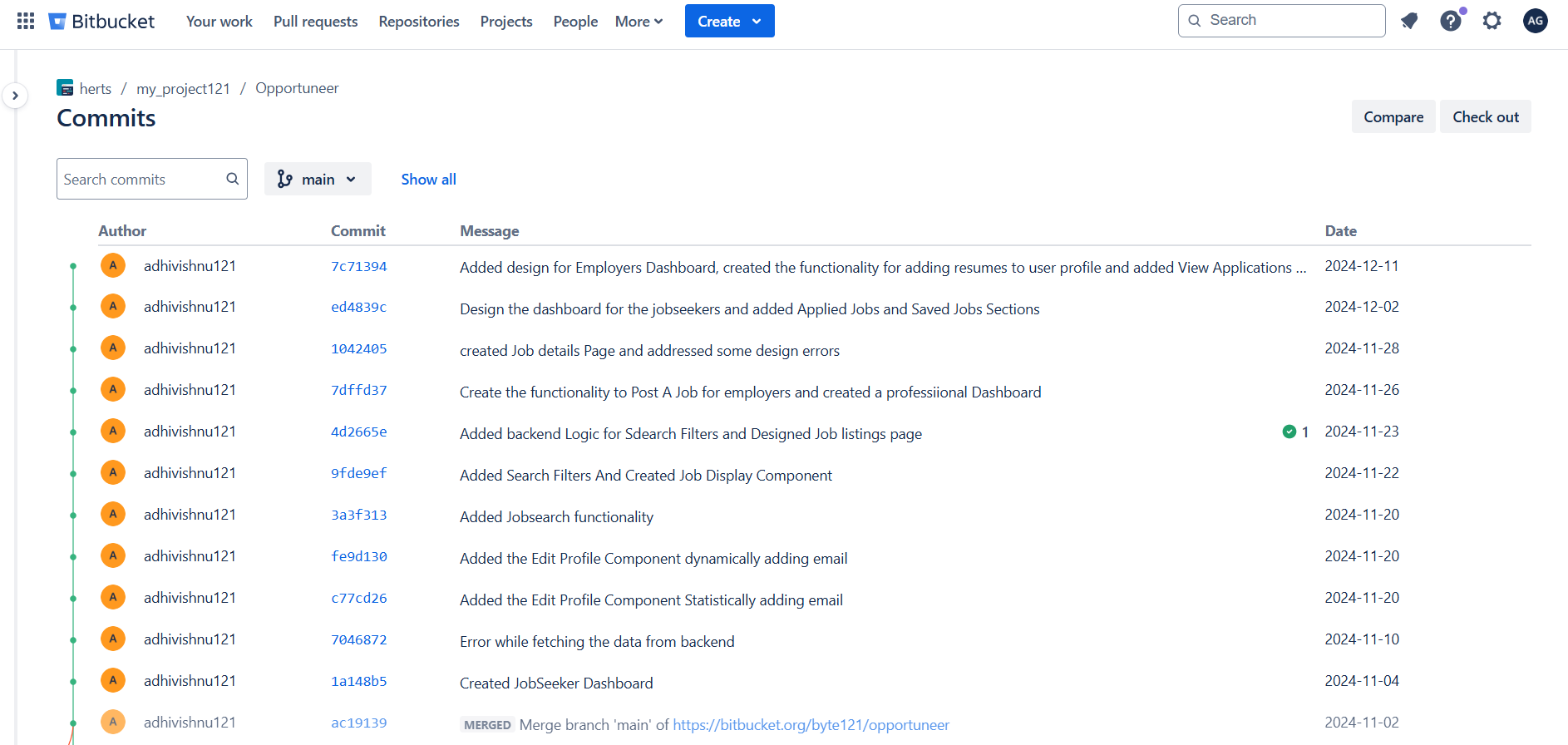
* The **job** table stores information about job posts created by employers.
* The **saved\_job** table stores the relationship between applicants and the jobs they save.

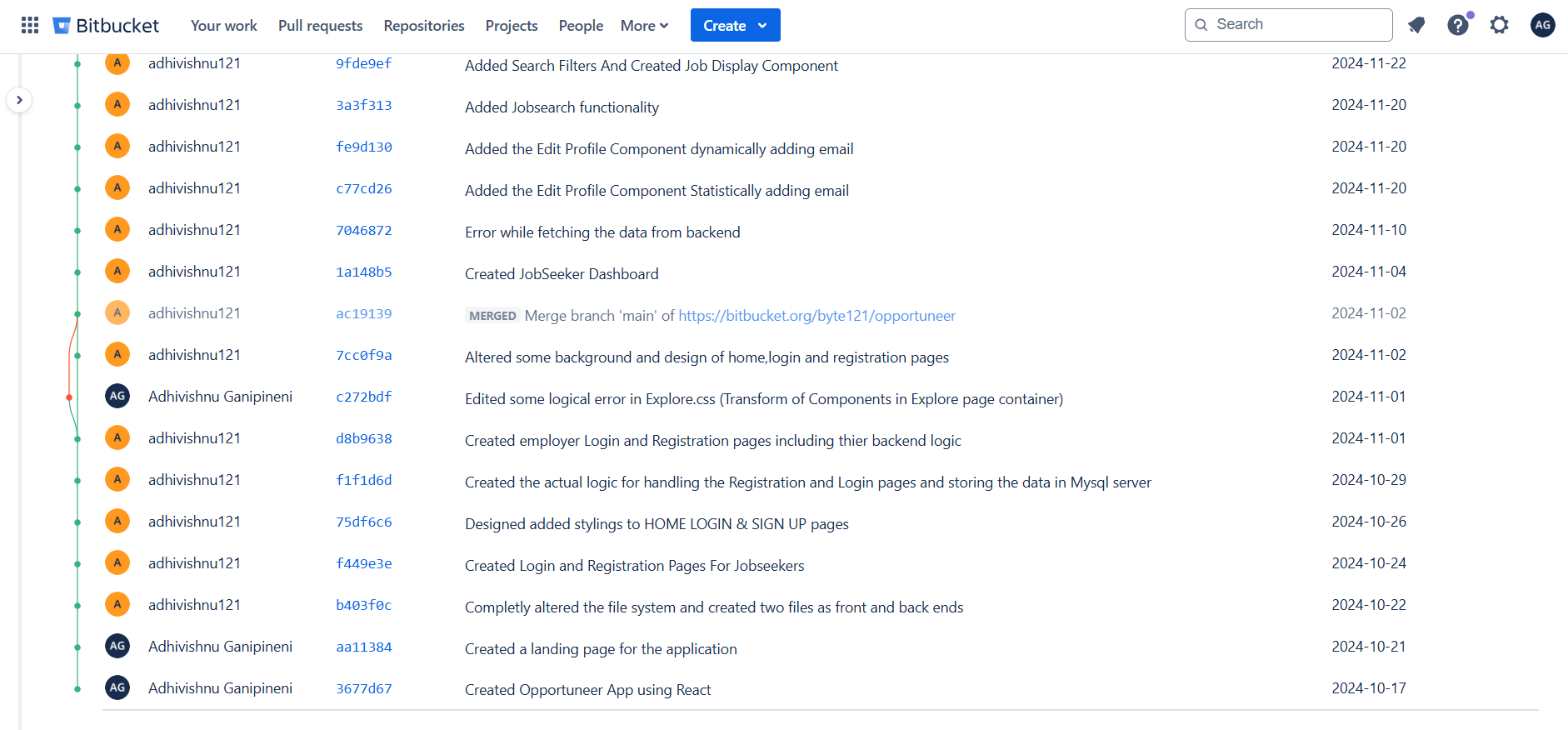


* 1. **Appendix D: Version Control Logs**

This section includes the commit logs from the Bitbucket repository, showing the progress and evolution of the project. The logs point out major updates, improvements, and fixes that were made during the project.

The following screenshot below shows all the commit messages done throughout this project using version control (Bit Bucket):

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