

Brown Q&A Site

(So for those who aren't quite in the loop, it seems like the general sentiment is that the Brown Dining Site project doesn't have all that much workability, so during Miguel's meeting with Dean Zia an idea came up for a new project)

Context

Even though plans for Fall 2020 are unclear at the moment, even if we are on campus, lots of things are going to be digital, to support social distancing measures.

Dean Zia expressed interest in a kind of Q&A site to facilitate remote learning and connect students, sort of like Stack Exchange. This could be a forum for current students and alumni as well as incoming students, and maybe even professors, to discuss questions about classes, share opportunities/events, etc.

There is pretty much no identical platform meeting this use case, but we may want to avoid overlapping with these too heavily: Facebook groups (e.g. Dear Blueno), Piazza (during-course, course-specific topics), Brown's Gmail ecosystem, ASK/CAB (which aren't super interactive).

Throwing Out Ideas and Things To Consider

Yo yall can add on anything you think of below!! Doesn't have to be super detailed

1. Anonymous: possible to have questions be "anonymous" to other student-level users, like in Piazza;
2. More-scalable interaction: Piazza gets really clunky when the message boards get heavily clogged with many messages or follow-ups, something to address that might be nice;
3. Login: possibly tie-in to Brown SSO so we don't have to reinvent an entirely new backend to handle user logins; this also makes the accessibility of the platform a lot higher;
4. Digital main green:
5. Subgroups: possibly allow creation of sub-groups / sub-forums, but then we run into potential issue of overlap with other platforms;
6. Direct messaging: this may turn out really bad, but it might be nice to have (or it might be a terrible idea)?
7. Your idea here: in the future, this may also be a good platform for FSAB to get ideas from students, and more generally it may be a good platform for just any groups to connect with a larger audience
8. Consider message visibility?: who can see messages and the identities of their posters would probably have a significant impact on what is posted
9. Links: Ways to make specific posts linkable/shareable to other platforms like Facebook, like Piazza @123
10. Tags: ways to tag specific courses/departments, so you can quickly filter for a particular class. Similar to subgroups maybe, but public? Subgroups are great for more honest

conversation e.g. if all professors could see posts, people might not have been so honest about the APMA 1650 situation for next semester on Dear Blueno.

11. Saving posts: Sometimes on Piazza there's a post I want to come back to but don't want to write down the @ number or forget the text in it. So having a "save"/"favorite" button would be good.
12. Importing from Dear Blueno: totally just an idea, but to launch the site we could import all CS-related posts from Dear Blueno with their corresponding answers. Once people can search through them by class, keyword, topic, etc. , they'll realize how useful the Q and A site is.
13. [Here]