Section A - 472 words

Description of the scenario

My client is a philosophy student, who lives outside the city. In order to participate in a debate he normally has to travel to a place in the city, which is both time consuming and costly. Although there are some debate forums online, they are usually not very academic. I thought that I could make my IA a website for this that could guide the user into giving more academic answers using structure e.g. a footnote for references in a user's posts.

I propose a debate forum website where users can remotely respond to debates on different topics. Users can view and respond to each other in different sections of the debate. Users can also up or down rate an argument based on what they think of its quality. This will help their problem as they will be able to participate in debates online without having to physically travel there.

Rationale for the proposed product

A debate website using Javascript (with both a front and back end).
I decided to use typescript, a subscript of javascript for this project as it adds typing to objects which can allow for data to be structured in the same format to the backend part of the code, allowing for greater readability. Also, Javascript (compiled typescript) is native to the web browser, and can be used with the client's chrome browser. I will also use the React framework as it’s based on a component structure which will be very useful for a forum website with lots of reused ui components.

The backend will be an API running on Node JS using the express framework. Node js was chosen as it will allow me to use the same language of typescript on both the front and back end, reducing development time. In addition, it is scalable and fast, this will be coupled with the lightweight framework of express which will retain the fast speeds of Node as well as abstracting it as not a lot of technical data is needed. This is because I chose to use a GraphQL api over a REST API, - despite being more complex - as it can reduce the amount of data selected, reducing fetch size and times, which the client explicitly requested. Moreover, different structures of data can be sent which will mesh well with typescript, these defined structures will allow me to meet my clients specific debate structure needed (whilst also being extensible). PostgreSQL will be used for the database as the website will not need to change a lot as the debate format should be kept similar; thus a noSQL database is not needed.

I had a meeting with my client who asked for a debate website where users could create debates and arguments on their web browser. More information is available in the appendix.

Success criteria

Functionality

1. Clients can create their own account
2. Users should be able to create and delete their own posts
3. Users should be able to reference other users replies
4. A post should follow the structure of whatever debate structure chosen e.g. a Topic question, Argument for, Argument against, Rejoinders

5. An argument within a post should have a title / thesis, points , optional citations section, a section for other arguments referenced and arguments that reference this post.
6. Users should be able to give weight to posts and responses in a +1 , -1 point system.
7. You can view a users posts
8. Users can save specific topics
9. Should be able to view a specific post or topic

Accessibility

10. Accessible through their laptop / pc modern web browser (client uses chrome)

Accounts and Security

11. Data around users login information should be encrypted but doesn't need 2 factor authentication.

User experience

12. Should be able to load fairly quickly (a few seconds maximum) and load roughly 20 posts before it needs to load more.
13. The website should look relatively modern / minimalistic,
14. There should be an auto login, so that you don't have to login every time.