

Project Description

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App name: PolyChord

App Category: Educational Music Web App

Application Overview and Description

PolyChord is an online synthesizer that allows the user to play a virtual piano with either their keyboard, or a MIDI instrument through WebMidi Integration. What separates PolyChord from other online synthesizers is that it will recognize chords that the user inputs as they play them on the virtual piano. In fact, the primary intent of PolyChord is to be an application for recognizing and learning chords: it is not built to replace the many existing online synthesizers. In our experience, the best way to learn music theory is to play around with it and practice it yourself, and PolyChord is built to encourage that type of learning. Current tools for chord recognition are clunky and slow, designed for reference purposes, not for making music. By combining an online synthesizer and a chord recognizer PolyChord aims to provide a fast, easy, and fun way for musicians to explore and learn chords.

Furthermore, PolyChord plans to implement further tools to encourage exploration of chords and chord progressions. This is accomplished via two features, chord suggestions and a chord library. Chord suggestions take a sequence of user inputted chords and provides a suggestion to continue the sequence. Giving the user potential musical ideas that they wouldn't have thought of themselves, and urging them to explore new chord progressions. The second of the features, a chord library, is a collection of all the different types of chords. By selecting a tonic and a chord type the digital synthesizer will play the chord and show the user how to play the selected chord themselves. This gives the user an easy way to learn new types of chords, amplifying the rate of exploration.

Overview of similar Applications

midi.city

midi.city is an online synthesizer with many different sound options, drum kits, and WebMIDI integration, allowing the user to use either their keyboard or a MIDI instrument. This application is similar to our concept in that it is a web app that allows piano-style input through multiple channels, and provides some good basic synth options. PolyChord improves upon this by adding chord identification as you play, helping musicians who tend to learn by experimentation see what chords they've found by ear. PolyChord will then further their learning and experimentation by suggesting chord progressions based on the chords they are playing.

Chord Identifier

There are many different chord identifiers out there with different subsets of our desired feature-set, but none of them are quick or easy to use. The best one that we were able to find was the Piano Chord Finder from scales-chords.com but even there the input is still slow and clunky, requiring the user to check boxes over the notes to enter the information of the notes. PolyChord aims to provide the functionality of a chord identifier with the easy input of online synthesizer, allowing the user to identify chords simply by playing them.

ChordChord

ChordChord is an online chord generation tool: it can play chords (with piano fingerings), as well as play chord progressions. ChordChord also takes input from the keyboard, but it does not identify the chords played through that input. This application is similar to PolyChord in that it shows chord fingerings on a piano, and allows the user to generate chord progression based on their “feel”, but does not give the “proper” names of the chord progression. PolyChord improves on this by identifying chords as you play by default, with the option to generate chords and chord progression, as well as relating the “feeling” of the chord with it’s “proper” name. These improvements allow the user experience to be more free flowing while also more educational, encouraging more broad use than simply a point of reference: it is designed to be a tool for learning.