

PROJECT PROPOSAL

Project details

Title : Interconnected E-Court System

Student Name : Dinesh Madugalle

Registration No : 73622

Supervisor :

Second Supervisor :

Date Submitted : 07/04/2021

Date Approved :

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Introduction

The access to justice is of paramount importance for a healthy democracy and public participation in governance. The traditional legal procedures are very much outdated and have been in use for years with its inherent limitations that fails to increase access to justice, speedy delivery of justice or active public participation. It is noteworthy at the outset, that though any changes introduced to the judicial process should be enacted through an Act of the Parliament, now digitalization of the judicial process is a change that cannot be resisted because as stated in the famous Latin maxim (*Iustitia dilata est iustitia negata*) “justice delayed is justice denied.”

The Information Technology can be utilized to minimize delays and remedy most of the short comings of a traditional legal system. Most of the countries, including few South Asian countries have already started the digitalization of the court procedures. Nonetheless, as a country ranked 85th of 193 of the E-Government Development Index, Sri Lanka is far from effectively adapting and implementing a support system that will help to digitalize the court procedures.

As a solution for the aforementioned shortcomings of traditional court procedures, an interconnected E-court system that allows the attorneys, relevant parties and law enforcement authorities to file cases, file the documents, access court journals will streamline the judicial process and pave the way to reduce delays in justice.

Background and Motivation

It was reported that there was a backlog of 750,000 pending cases (Thilakawardene, 2021) before the covid19 pandemic and it doesn't take a genius to understand the fact that post-pandemic backlog is much more worse. This backlog, among other things, results in crowded prisons; further delays, which ultimately results in denial of justice. Further, the Sectoral Oversight committee on Legal Affairs (anti-corruption) & Media, issuing recommendations pertaining to the Expeditious and Efficient Administration of Criminal Justice stated that the average length of time from the date of occurrence of commission of a serious criminal offence that should be prosecuted at the High Court, till the date of the conclusion of prosecution at the High Court is 10.2 years (Sectoral Oversight Committee on Legal Affairs (Anti-Corruption) and Media, 2017). However, the public perception and the experience of the writer of this proposal is that more complex court proceedings with appeals take up to 20 years to fully reach the end.

The Comparison of the above data with a country that has a digitalize court system is enough to reach the positive impact of the use of Information technology on the judicial process. The digitalization process of the Korean system has been initially started in 1970's and has been continuously embracing new technologies to its system. The efficiency of the South Korean court system is well acknowledged. As an example, South Korean court proceedings typically take between six months to a year at the first instance from the filing of a complaint to a judgment (Kim and Bang, 2020).

The Sri Lankan judiciary has also taken few, but very important steps towards digitalizing its procedures in recent years. The online e-filing system (<http://efiling.supremecourt.lk/>)

introduced for Fundamental Rights petitions stands out as a very timely change that stands out from the rest of the changes that have been introduced. However, the existing system is very basic which only allows to file Fundamental Right cases.

The writer of this piece of writing is of the view that a more comprehensive system that will interconnect law enforcement authorities, judiciary and public is required; and delays in the Sri Lankan justice system is worth remedying due to innumerable reasons, including to speed up court proceedings, minimize paperwork, increase the availability of 24/7 access to justice, enhance transparency, enhance document security. And the best mechanism to use remedy the aforementioned defects/shortcomings is none other than digitalization of the justice system.

Court process in any country involves many complexities and learning those demands years of systemic learning. The writer of this piece of writing possesses the required experience and multi –disciplinary academic qualifications to propose innovative ideas that will solve the shortcomings stated herein.

Problem in Brief

The delays in the justice system are increasing day by day throughout the whole court system, which produces many adverse effects including time consuming process and increase costs involve. Through digitalization of the court process time taken and the costs will be reduced. A streamlined, cost effective process will increase public trust in the judicial adjudication process and enhance direct involvement of the general public in the court process.

Aim

The main aim is to develop a comprehensive interconnected court support system that will connect law enforcement authorities, judiciary and public which shall reduce unwanted delays.

To develop the front end of the Application HTML and CSS will be used, while Java will be used to develop the back End and the Data Base will be developed using My SQL.

Objectives

The following can be listed as main objectives of this project:

- a. Critically analyze the root causes of the delays in the court system;
- b. Based on the findings of (a) above, critically evaluate how delays can be remedied;
- c. Developing an interconnected system that will reduce delays;
- d. Evaluating the usability and success of the proposed system;
- e. Based on the (d) above, changing the proposed system as required; and

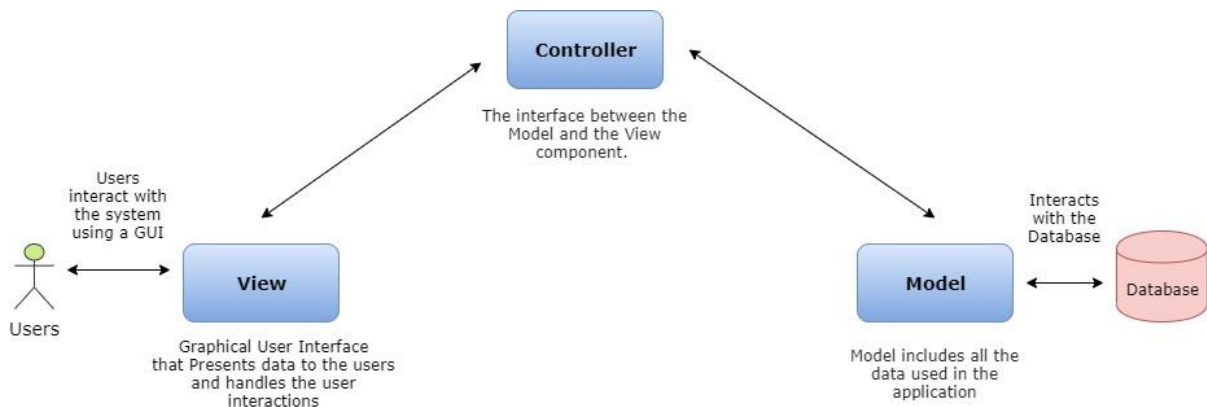
- f. Preparing final documents analyzing every aspect of the problem domain and proposed solution.

Interconnected E-Court system

There shall be four main parties that will be able to access this application:

- a. Law enforcement officers will be able to add details about the persons arrested and based on the offence committed application will request further information. Set of predetermined information will be shared with relevant magistrate court.
- b. Attorneys will be able to file litigations and pay stamp fee;
- c. Judicial Officers will be able to add the current status of the pending cases.
- d. Members of the general public, who is a plaintiff, accused, suspect or defendant will be able to check the status of the relevant cases and download the judgment.

All these parties will use the application using a Graphical User Interface. And the details entered will be stored in the database. There will be an intermediate layer which handles requests from users, processes the entered data, and renders a response back to the users. Based on these application features MVC architecture will be best suited to design this application.



Resource Requirements

Resources of a wide array will be used;

- Acts of the Parliament, including Criminal Procured Code and Police Ordinance.
- Program Development text books.

- Information from the World Wide Web.
- A computer with access to Internet and relevant software to develop the proposed system.

Deliverables

The final deliverable will be a comprehensive web application that shall interconnect law enforcement authorities, judiciary and general public. In succinct, the law enforcement authorities and judiciary will be able to input data on the pending litigation; institute legal actions and the general public will be able to access the current status of pending litigation.

Suggested Starting Point

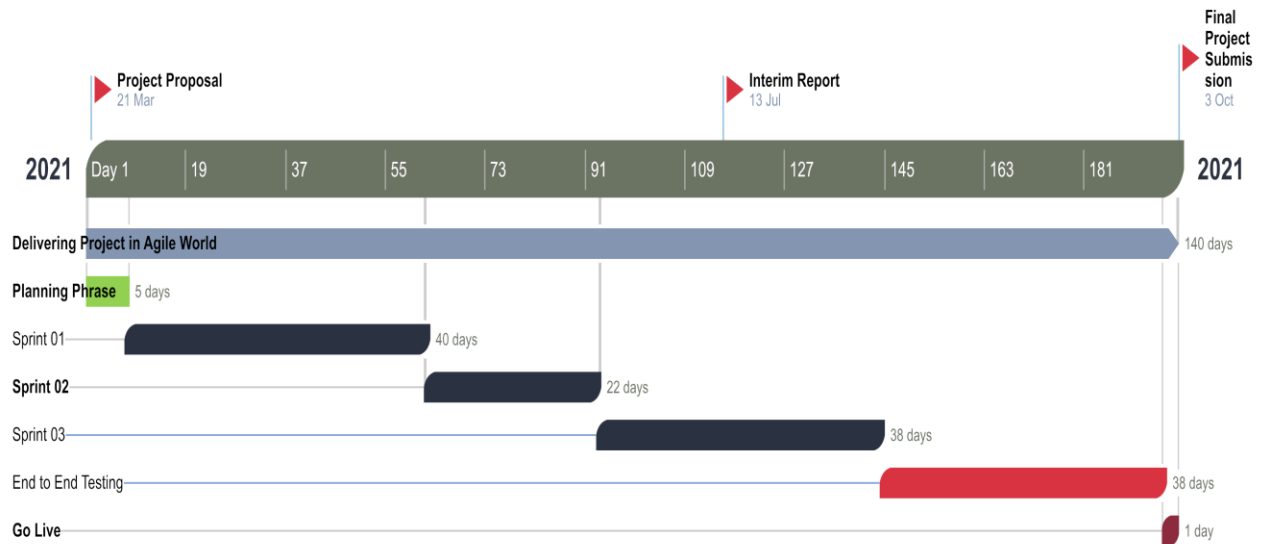
Two separate SWOT analyses will be done as the first step:

- Initially, a comprehensive research will be done on the e-Court systems of other countries, and a SWOT analysis pertaining to it; and
- Secondly, a SWOT analysis will be conducted on the existing e-filing system.

Based on the findings, the scope of the proposed system will be decided and other components of the project will be decided.

Project Plan

E-Court System



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**BSc. (Hons) Computing/BEng. (Hons) Networking / BEng. (Hons)
Software Engineering**

Project Proposal Approval Form

Name in Full	:	<input type="text" value="Dinesh Salinda Bandara Madugalle"/>		
Registration No	:	<input type="text" value="73622"/>	LMU No:	<input type="text"/>
Batch No	:	<input type="text" value="SE Batch 15"/>		
Course	:	<input type="text" value="BEng. (Hons)Software Engineering"/>		
Project Topic	:	<input type="text" value="Interconnected E-Court System"/>		
Supervisor Comments	:	<input type="text"/>		
Approved by the Supervisor	:	<input type="text"/>	Student's Signature:	<input type="text" value="Salinda"/>
Date Collected	:	<input type="text"/>	Supervisor's Signature:	<input type="text"/>