

# **ONLINE CODE COLLABORATION PLATFORM**

## **PROJECT REPORT**

*Submitted by*

**BALAJI S                           7376222IT119**

**MOULEESHWARAN R      7376221EC228**

**HARISH K S                       7376222CB115**

**TITAN SOJO T                   7376222CB158**

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**BANNARI AMMAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY  
(Autonomous Institution Affiliated to Anna University, Chennai)  
SATHYAMANGALAM-638401**

**ANNA UNIVERSITY: CHENNAI 600 025**

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## **BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE**

Certified that this project report "**“ONLINE CODE COLLABORATION PLATFORM”**" is the Bonafide work of "**BALAJI S (7376222IT119), MOULEESHWARAN R (7376221EC228), HARISH K S (7376222CB115), TITAN SOJO T (7376222CB158)**" who carried out the project work under my supervision.

Dr. NAVEENA S

**HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT**

Department Of Information Technology  
Bannari Amman Institute of Technology

Mrs. AMMU V

**ASSISTANT PROFESSOR LEVEL II**

Department Of Computer Science And  
Engineering  
Bannari Amman Institute of Technology

**Submitted for Project Viva Voce examination held on .....**

**Internal Examiner I**

**Internal Examiner II**

## **DECLARATION**

We affirm that the project work titled "**ONLINE CODE COLLABORATION PLATFORM**" being submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Electronics and Communication is the record of original work done by us under the guidance of **Mrs. Ammu V**, Associate Professor Level II, Department of Computer Science and Engineering. It has not formed a part of any other project work(s) submitted for the award of any degree or diploma,either in this or any other University.

**BALAJI S**

**(7376222IT119)**

**MOULEESHWARAN R**

**(7376221EC228)**

**HARISH K S**

**(7376222CB115)**

**TITAN SOJO T**

**(7376222CB158)**

I certify that the declaration made above by the candidates is true.

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**BALAJI S (7376222IT119)**

**MOULEESHWARAN R (7376221EC228)**

**HARISH K S (7376222CB115)**

**TITAN SOJO T (7376222CB158)**

## ABSTRACT

Real-time collaboration platforms have revolutionized digital teamwork, addressing the growing need for seamless, synchronized working environments across distributed teams. This innovative project introduces a cutting-edge Real-Time Collaborative Terminal, leveraging the powerful combination of React.js and Socket.IO to create an intuitive, responsive shared workspace for technical professionals and collaborative teams. The platform's core functionality centers on enabling multiple users to interact within a single terminal environment, breaking down geographical barriers and enhancing collaborative potential. By implementing a sophisticated unique ID generation mechanism, the system allows users to effortlessly create and share terminal sessions. This approach ensures secure, targeted access while maintaining a simple user experience. The architectural design emphasizes low-latency, bidirectional communication through WebSocket technology. Node.js serves as the robust backend framework, working in concert with Socket.IO to facilitate real-time data exchange. This technical foundation guarantees near-instantaneous synchronization of user inputs, creating a truly interactive and responsive collaborative experience. React.js powers the frontend, delivering a clean, intuitive interface that abstracts the complex real-time synchronization mechanisms. The user interface is designed to be both lightweight and scalable, capable of handling multiple concurrent terminals and users without compromising performance or user experience. Key technical challenges addressed include managing concurrent user interactions, ensuring data consistency, and maintaining a responsive interface under varying network conditions. The system implements sophisticated synchronization algorithms to prevent conflicts and provide a smooth collaborative experience. Beyond its immediate utility, the project serves as a compelling demonstration of modern web development technologies, showcasing how WebSocket communication can transform collaborative tools. It represents a significant step towards more integrated, real-time digital workspaces, highlighting the potential of innovative communication technologies in enhancing team productivity and interaction.

**Keywords:**Real-Time Collaboration,Collaborative Terminal,React.js,Socket.IO,Node.js.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

In the digital age, collaboration has transcended physical boundaries, driving the need for tools that allow seamless, real-time interaction between geographically distributed individuals. As remote work becomes more prevalent, collaborative platforms are vital in maintaining communication, productivity, and workflow continuity across teams. Traditional methods of collaboration—email, version-controlled document sharing, and static messaging platforms—fall short in offering real-time responsiveness and synchronized teamwork. This gap has led to the development of real-time collaborative platforms that enable multiple users to work on shared digital spaces, such as terminals, editors, and whiteboards, simultaneously.

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal provides a dedicated, developer-centric platform designed to facilitate seamless collaboration among remote team members. Unlike traditional collaboration tools that primarily support textual input or static document sharing, this terminal-centric environment enables multiple users to interact in a shared coding workspace, mimicking the experience of working side-by-side on the same terminal screen. Team members can write and execute code collaboratively, share command-line outputs, debug scripts in real-time, and receive immediate feedback regardless of their physical location.

At the core of this collaboration lies Socket.IO, a powerful JavaScript library built on top of WebSockets. WebSockets enable low-latency, full-duplex communication between client and server over a single TCP connection. This ensures that any action taken by a user—such as writing a line of code, sending a message, or executing a command—is instantly reflected across all connected users in real time.

## 1.2 LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING COLLABORATION PLATFORMS

In today's fast-paced and increasingly distributed work environment, the ability for teams to collaborate in real time has become more critical than ever. With the rise of remote work and global development teams, real-time digital collaboration tools are no longer just a convenience — they are essential. However, many existing platforms fall short when it comes to providing specialized environments that cater to the unique needs of technical professionals, particularly developers and system administrators.

Popular tools like Google Docs, Slack, Microsoft Teams, and Zoom have transformed how teams communicate and collaborate across locations. They work well for general purposes — document sharing, messaging, and video calls — but they are not inherently designed for technical workflows. When it comes to collaborative coding, live command-line interactions, or real-time terminal-based operations, these platforms offer limited functionality. Developers often have to rely on screen sharing or external integrations, which are not only inefficient but also break the natural flow of collaboration.

This gap in functionality is where the idea for the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal was born. The motivation stems from the need to provide a seamless, responsive, and purpose-built platform for developers who want to collaborate on code or execute terminal commands together in real-time — without the friction of screen sharing, manual syncing, or delayed interactions.

One major issue with existing solutions is latency. Many platforms use polling mechanisms to check for updates, which introduces lag and slows down collaboration during high user load. This lag is particularly problematic in environments where real-time accuracy is crucial, such as during pair programming, debugging, or conducting technical interviews. Furthermore, most platforms lack advanced session controls. There is often no distinction between user roles, meaning any participant can interfere with the shared workspace, sometimes unintentionally disrupting the session.

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal addresses these concerns head-on. It is designed as a developer-centric platform that enables multiple users to write and execute code in real time, interact via chat or video, and manage their sessions with greater control. The system utilizes WebSocket-based communication, specifically through the Socket.IO library, to maintain fast, low-latency, bidirectional data transmission between clients and servers. This approach ensures that updates are reflected almost instantaneously across all connected users, creating a truly collaborative and interactive environment.

Another key aspect of this platform is its session management system. Unlike generic tools that treat all users the same, the Collaborative Terminal introduces role-based access control. The first user to create a session is granted admin privileges, giving them the ability to manage the workspace — including the ability to remove disruptive participants or lock down specific features. This functionality not only improves security but also enhances productivity by maintaining order in group sessions.

In addition to real-time code editing and command execution, the platform also integrates features like text chat, video conferencing, and collaborative drawing tools. These additions further streamline communication and allow users to stay within a single environment without needing to switch between multiple apps or services.

In summary, the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal is more than just another remote collaboration tool. It's a focused solution tailored to the actual workflows and pain points of modern development teams. By combining the power of real-time synchronization with intelligent session control and a user-friendly interface, it aims to redefine how developers work together across locations.

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

- To create a web-based collaborative terminal interface using React.js, supporting multiple users editing and interacting in real-time.
- To implement real-time communication and synchronization via WebSocket technology using Socket.IO.
- To integrate user role functionality, including admin privileges for session management and user control.
- To provide additional collaboration tools such as real-time chat, document editing, and video conferencing using WebRTC.
- To ensure high performance and scalability using optimized backend architecture with Node.js, Redis caching, and load balancing via NGINX.
- To deploy the application using containerized technologies like Docker and orchestrate it using Kubernetes for efficient scaling and monitoring.
- To implement secure user authentication and session handling mechanisms to protect against unauthorized access and maintain session integrity.
- To provide an intuitive and responsive user interface that adapts across different devices and screen sizes, ensuring ease of use for all users.

## **1.4 SCOPE OF THE PROJECT**

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal focuses on addressing the needs of technical and development-centric teams that require a shared environment for terminal operations, real-time coding, and collaborative communication. The scope of the project includes the following:

- Accessible via web browsers and adaptable for mobile and tablet use, ensuring a platform-independent experience.
- Capable of handling multiple concurrent sessions with minimal latency, supporting real-time collaboration among distributed team members.
- Secure and session-based, incorporating user authentication and access control to prevent unauthorized usage and ensure session integrity.
- Designed to maintain a smooth and responsive user experience, even under high load conditions, through optimized socket handling and backend scalability.
- Modular and extensible architecture, allowing for easy integration of additional collaborative features such as collaborative drawing boards, markdown editors, code formatting tools, and file sharing.
- Implements efficient data handling and synchronization mechanisms using Redis and Socket.IO to reduce lag and prevent data inconsistency.
- Deployed using containerized technologies like Docker and managed through Kubernetes to enable horizontal scaling, fault tolerance, and real-time monitoring.

- Supports future enhancements, such as integration with external development tools, cloud storage, code execution environments, and session recording for asynchronous collaboration.

This project not only contributes to the domain of collaborative tools but also serves as a comprehensive demonstration of full-stack development, real-time communication architecture, system optimization, and modern DevOps practices and deployment techniques.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE SURVEY

#### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS

Collaborative platforms have evolved significantly over the past few decades, with advancements in both the features they offer and the technologies they use. The importance of real-time collaboration, particularly for teams working remotely or across geographical locations, has led to the development of sophisticated tools that enable seamless interaction. Platforms like Google Docs, Microsoft Teams, and Slack are prominent examples of collaboration tools that primarily focus on enhancing communication, document editing, and task management. However, these platforms are generally not optimized for technical users, especially those who require more specialized tools for real-time collaboration on code, terminal commands, and development-related tasks.

In a study by Agarwal et al. (2017), the authors explored the challenges faced by remote development teams in maintaining high levels of efficiency and real-time collaboration. While they acknowledge the effectiveness of general collaboration platforms in communication, they highlight that the tools used for coding and terminal operations need to evolve to meet the needs of developers working in distributed teams. Their research emphasized the importance of low-latency, high-performance communication systems, such as those enabled by WebSockets, which are essential for real-time collaboration on code execution and terminal commands. They note that WebSockets are critical for achieving near-instant synchronization, and their use can result in a more responsive and efficient collaborative environment. Managing multiple concurrent users interacting with a single terminal session presents challenges related to synchronization (Agarwal et al., 2017).

## 2.2 REAL-TIME COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES

Real-time communication has always been a fundamental aspect of collaborative platforms. Traditional methods, such as polling, have been used for achieving synchronization between users, but they often introduce latency, especially when the system experiences high traffic (Smith et al., 2019). A more effective solution is the use of WebSockets, which allows for full-duplex communication channels over a single, long-lived connection. This method significantly reduces latency and ensures that updates are sent and received in real-time, without the delays associated with traditional HTTP requests.

Socket.IO, a JavaScript library that provides real-time, bidirectional communication, has become a popular choice for building real-time applications. It provides a reliable communication framework that can run on top of WebSocket, with fallback mechanisms for older browsers or environments where WebSocket support is limited (Fowler & Evans, 2020). This makes it an ideal tool for developing collaborative platforms that require near-instantaneous synchronization between users. For example, systems like collaborative coding environments and real-time terminal applications can leverage Socket.IO for efficient communication, allowing users to view and edit documents or run terminal commands without delay. This model has shown promise in enhancing accessibility and scalability for real-time terminal collaboration.

In their paper, Barzilai and Meidan (2021) explore the advantages of WebSocket technology in collaborative platforms. They note that WebSockets are critical for achieving near-instant synchronization, and their use can result in a more responsive and efficient collaborative environment. They also discuss how WebSockets provide a more scalable solution compared to traditional methods like polling or AJAX.

## **2.3 COLLABORATIVE TERMINAL PLATFORMS**

The specific need for collaborative terminal platforms has been widely recognized in research. Traditional IDEs (Integrated Development Environments) and terminal applications are designed for individual use, lacking features that support shared access and live collaboration. A few modern platforms have begun to address this need by providing real-time shared terminal environments, but there are still several challenges to overcome. For instance, managing multiple concurrent users interacting with a single terminal session presents challenges related to synchronization and conflict resolution.

The collaborative terminal platform described by Dragan et al. (2018) attempts to address these challenges by providing a system where multiple users can execute commands and share terminal output in real-time. However, their system faced limitations in scalability and user management, particularly when dealing with large numbers of users or complex terminal sessions. This issue was partially addressed by introducing a client-server model that allowed for better load balancing and session management.

Another approach to collaborative terminals is presented by Thomas and Whitley (2020), who discuss the integration of cloud-based environments with terminal collaboration tools. By moving terminal operations to the cloud, they propose a solution that allows users to share access to a single terminal environment while maintaining secure and efficient session management. This model has shown promise in enhancing accessibility and scalability for real-time terminal collaboration. However, issues related to security, such as unauthorized access and data leakage, need to be addressed more thoroughly.

## **2.4 REAL-TIME SYNCHRONIZATION ALGORITHMS**

Effective real-time collaboration platforms rely heavily on efficient synchronization algorithms. In shared coding environments, for instance, it is crucial that

multiple users can make changes to the code or terminal simultaneously without causing conflicts or inconsistencies. Several approaches to synchronization have been proposed, including operational transformation (OT) and conflict-free replicated data types (CRDTs). Both methods ensure that changes made by different users are merged in a consistent and predictable way.

Operational Transformation, as explained by Li et al. (2019), is a technique that has been widely adopted in collaborative text editing platforms. This approach modifies operations on data in a way that preserves consistency across different replicas of a document or terminal session. While OT is highly effective in many scenarios, it is not always the most efficient when dealing with large-scale collaboration or real-time terminal sessions.

On the other hand, CRDTs have gained attention due to their ability to handle complex, distributed operations with minimal overhead. CRDTs are designed to allow concurrent changes to be made to shared data without the need for locking mechanisms, making them ideal for real-time collaboration. In the context of collaborative terminal platforms, CRDTs could enable multiple users to run commands or interact with terminal outputs concurrently, without conflicts arising from unsynchronized actions (López et al., 2020).

## 2.5 USER AUTHENTICATION AND ACCESS CONTROL

In any collaborative platform, particularly those involving technical work such as coding or terminal operations, user authentication and access control are critical for maintaining security and ensuring that only authorized individuals can participate in or modify a session. Many platforms use traditional authentication methods, such as usernames and passwords, to verify users. However, additional features like session-based access control and role management are often necessary to ensure that users only have access to the features or data they are authorized to use.

In the context of collaborative terminal platforms, implementing admin privileges is particularly important. An admin should be able to manage the session by adding or removing users, moderating input, or locking certain terminal functionalities to prevent misuse. The system designed by Johnson et al. (2021) uses role-based access control (RBAC) to assign different levels of permissions to users, which allows for greater control over who can perform certain actions within a terminal session. The research emphasized that RBAC not only improves security but also enhances the user experience by making it clear who is in charge of the session and what privileges each participant has.

## **2.6 FUTURE TRENDS IN REAL-TIME COLLABORATIVE PLATFORMS**

The future of collaborative platforms lies in their ability to seamlessly integrate multiple tools and features into a single, unified environment. While current systems tend to specialize in one area, such as document editing or code collaboration, the next generation of platforms will need to support a broader range of collaborative activities. This includes not only text editing and terminal operations but also real-time video calls, shared drawing boards, and live data visualizations.

As technologies such as WebRTC and WebSockets continue to evolve, there will be greater opportunities for real-time collaborative platforms to improve in both performance and functionality. Furthermore, advances in machine learning and AI could lead to smarter systems that automatically detect conflicts, optimize data flow, and enhance user experience. For instance, AI algorithms could predict and resolve conflicts in terminal commands or code edits before they occur, further improving the collaborative experience (Zhang et al., 2022).

## CHAPTER 3

### OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. SYSTEM DESIGN

##### 3.1.1 SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal system is designed as a modular, scalable, and high-performance full-stack web application, tailored specifically for development teams who require seamless collaboration in real-time. Its architecture has been carefully designed to support multiple features concurrently, such as live terminal sharing, simultaneous code editing, instant messaging, video conferencing, and dynamic session management. These functionalities are integrated in a way that they function smoothly together, enabling users to interact, write code, and communicate effectively from different locations.

At the frontend, the system uses React.js, a powerful and component-based JavaScript library that provides a responsive and interactive user interface. React's virtual DOM and efficient state handling ensure that updates to the UI, such as real-time terminal output or chat messages, are rendered with minimal delay. The frontend also incorporates tools like Tailwind CSS for styling and WebRTC libraries for video communication, giving users a unified and immersive collaborative workspace accessible through any modern web browser.

The backend is powered by Node.js and Express.js, which offer a lightweight and scalable server-side framework. This backend is responsible for managing user authentication, session control, API routing, command execution, and the handling of real-time events. One of the core technologies used for real-time communication is Socket.IO, which enables WebSocket-based bi-directional communication between clients and the server. This ensures that terminal input/output, document edits, chat

messages, and control signals (like admin privileges or session locking) are synchronized across all users instantly without needing to refresh the page.

For optimal performance, the system uses Redis, an in-memory key-value store, to cache active session data, user tokens, and frequently accessed content. This caching layer significantly reduces response time and offloads repetitive queries from the main database, leading to a smoother user experience during periods of high load or multiple simultaneous users. Redis also supports pub/sub mechanisms which are useful in propagating updates across distributed instances of the application, enhancing the scalability and real-time nature of the system.

On the storage side, the platform supports both PostgreSQL and MongoDB for data persistence. PostgreSQL, a relational database, is ideal for storing structured data such as user accounts, session logs, and permission roles. On the other hand, MongoDB is a document-oriented NoSQL database that can be used for more flexible storage requirements, such as chat messages, collaborative document history, or video session metadata. The combination of these databases allows the system to handle a variety of data types and access patterns efficiently.

To streamline development and deployment, the entire application is containerized using Docker, which ensures that the application runs consistently across different environments. Each service (frontend, backend, Redis, PostgreSQL, etc.) runs in its own isolated container. This modular setup simplifies maintenance and scaling. For orchestration and scaling in production environments, Kubernetes is used. Kubernetes automates the deployment, scaling, monitoring, and management of containers, ensuring high availability and resilience of the system even during node failures or traffic spikes.

Together, this architecture forms a robust foundation for a powerful, developer-oriented collaboration tool. Its modularity ensures that individual components can be updated or scaled independently, while the use of modern technologies ensures high performance, low latency, and a responsive user experience.

## **3.2 SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE**

The architecture of the platform can be logically divided into the following layers:

### **3.2.1 PRESENTATION LAYER (FRONTEND)**

- Technology: React.js, HTML, CSS, Tailwind
- Role: Renders the user interface, including the collaborative terminal, chat interface, video call window, and session management dashboard.
- Real-Time Events: Interacts with the server using Socket.IO for real-time updates.
- Authentication: Manages login, session tokens, and role display (admin, user).

### **3.2.2 APPLICATION LAYER (BACKEND API)**

- Technology: Node.js (Express.js)
- Role: Handles API requests, user session management, role validation, and interaction with databases.
- WebSocket Server: Manages live socket connections using Socket.IO.

### **3.2.3 REAL-TIME COMMUNICATION LAYER**

- Technology: Socket.IO, WebRTC
- Role: Provides real-time bidirectional communication.
- Socket.IO – used for syncing terminal I/O, chat messages, collaborative document edits.
- WebRTC – used for peer-to-peer video conferencing between users.

### **3.2.4 DATA LAYER (DATABASE AND CACHE)**

Primary Storage: PostgreSQL/MongoDB

Cache Layer: Redis Caches active session data, reduces latency, and improves real-time responsiveness.

### **3.2.5 DEPLOYMENT AND ORCHESTRATION LAYER**

- Technology: Docker, Kubernetes, NGINX
- Docker: Containerize backend, frontend, and database services.
- Kubernetes: Orchestrates deployment, autoscaling, load balancing, and monitoring.
- NGINX: Acts as a reverse proxy and load balancer to route requests to correct services.

## **3.3 HIGH-LEVEL SYSTEM FLOW**

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal operates through a well-structured flow that ensures seamless integration of authentication, real-time communication, terminal sharing, chat, video conferencing, and session control. The system is designed to provide a fluid and responsive user experience while maintaining strict access control and synchronization across all users. Below is a detailed explanation of the high-level system workflow.

### **3.3.1 ESTABLISHING REAL-TIME CONNECTION**

Once authenticated, the client initiates a WebSocket connection using Socket.IO. During the WebSocket handshake, the previously issued token is sent by the client to the server for verification. This token validation ensures that only authorized users are allowed to initiate a live session.

After verification, each user is assigned to a specific session room. These rooms are dynamically managed on the server using Socket.IO namespaces and rooms feature. Users inside the same room can now share data, terminal input/output, and communication in real time, with room boundaries ensuring session isolation.

### **3.3.2 REAL-TIME TERMINAL SHARING**

Terminal interaction is one of the key features of the system. When a user types a command in the terminal interface:

- The input is captured by the frontend and sent to the backend through the open WebSocket channel.
- The server may validate the command (based on user role or session state) and then execute it in a sandboxed environment or forward it to a backend process.
- The output from the executed command is captured and broadcasted to all other users in the same session room via WebSocket.

This ensures that all users in a session view the exact same terminal behavior, almost instantaneously. Editors can contribute collaboratively, while viewers observe the shared output in real time. The low latency nature of WebSocket communication provides a near-native terminal experience over the web.

### **3.3.3 SESSION MANAGEMENT**

Session management is a critical feature that enables control over collaborative workflows. Users with Admin privileges have access to additional tools for managing active sessions:

- Admins can add or remove users from ongoing sessions dynamically.
- The terminal can be paused, locked, or reset to prevent unauthorized or accidental changes during critical collaboration phases.
- All terminal commands, document edits, and chat logs are recorded and stored persistently. This is useful for auditing, team review, and rollback mechanisms.

Furthermore, session state (such as active users, role distribution, and current working directory) is tracked in Redis to allow quick retrieval and seamless reconnection if a user temporarily disconnects or reloads the page.

## **3.4 FRONTEND ARCHITECTURE**

The frontend, developed using React.js, is the entry point for all users. It is responsible for rendering user interfaces, managing session states, displaying terminal outputs, rendering chat and video streams, and handling user actions. This modular structure allows seamless integration of new features.

### **3.4.1 LANDINGPAGE.JSX**

- Allows users to choose between joining as a guest or logging in.
- Displays recent rooms or quick links if the user is authenticated.

### **3.4.2 ROOMJOINFORM.JSX**

- Input field for Room ID.
- Optional nickname field for guest users.
- Triggers a socket connection on form submission.

### **3.4.3 TERMINALVIEW.JSX**

- Built using `xterm.js`.
- Receives real-time terminal inputs via `Socket.IO`.
- Displays command output with color-coded formatting.

### **3.4.4 CHATPANEL.JSX**

- Message input and history display.
- Messages sent/received over `Socket.IO` and stored in MongoDB.

### **3.4.5 VIDEO PANEL.JSX**

- WebRTC stream embedded using `react-media-recorder` or native API.
- Users can mute/unmute, share screens, or leave the call.

### **3.4.6 USERLIST.JSX**

- Shows real-time user presence in the session.
- Admins have controls like mute, kick, or promote.

### **3.4.7 SESSIONCONTROLS.JSX**

- For Admins only.
- Allows locking the terminal, pausing sessions, and viewing logs.

## **3.5 BACKEND DESIGN**

While the frontend defines the user experience, the backend is the foundation of the system's real-time interactivity, coordination logic, and session orchestration. It ensures that every user action—be it sending a terminal command, joining a room, or initiating a video call—is effectively communicated and processed with minimal delay. The backend of the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal is designed to be stateless, lightweight, and highly responsive, enabling a seamless experience for both authenticated users and anonymous guests.

### **3.5.1 TECHNOLOGIES AND FRAMEWORKS USED**

The backend stack is built primarily using Node.js, chosen for its non-blocking I/O model and event-driven architecture, which aligns perfectly with real-time systems. The HTTP routing and API endpoints are managed using Express.js, a minimal and flexible framework that provides essential middleware support. For real-time, bidirectional communication between the server and multiple clients, Socket.IO is used extensively. Socket.IO enables efficient broadcasting of events like terminal input/output, chat messages, user join/leave notifications, and session updates.

In addition to this, Redis is employed as a high-speed in-memory cache and session store. Instead of persisting data in a traditional database, Redis temporarily holds session tokens, user role mappings, and room identifiers. This approach ensures extremely fast lookups and updates, which is crucial for real-time collaboration.

### **3.5.2 CONNECTION AND SESSION HANDLING**

When a user accesses the platform, they are either authenticated via a simple login system or treated as a guest. Authenticated users receive a JWT (JSON Web Token), which contains information like the username, role, and session validity. This token is sent with the WebSocket handshake request and verified by the backend before establishing a connection. For guest users who bypass authentication, the server assigns a temporary session ID, allowing them to join and interact within collaborative rooms with limited privileges.

Once the socket connection is established, users are grouped into virtual rooms based on session identifiers. Socket.IO provides room-based messaging, ensuring that data is only broadcasted to users participating in the same session. This grouping is essential for isolating collaborative sessions and ensuring data privacy between different teams or rooms.

### **3.5.3 TERMINAL INPUT EXECUTION AND OUTPUT BROADCASTING**

A core functionality of the backend is the ability to accept terminal commands from users, execute them in a safe and controlled environment, and stream the output back in real-time. Upon receiving terminal input from any user, the backend initiates execution using isolated environments like shell sandboxes or Docker containers. This isolation prevents any malicious command from affecting the underlying system and ensures a clean, consistent terminal environment for every session.

The backend captures both the standard output and error messages from command execution and immediately broadcasts the results back to all users connected to the session room. This ensures that all participants can see the terminal activity live, enabling collaborative debugging, learning, or development workflows.

### **3.5.4 STATELESS AND SCALABLE DESIGN**

The backend of the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal is deliberately engineered to be stateless, a design principle that significantly contributes to the platform's scalability and reliability. In a stateless architecture, the server does not retain user-specific data or application context between requests. This eliminates dependency on a single server for managing session-related information, allowing any server instance in the system to respond to any client request without requiring access to prior session data.

To facilitate session management without relying on persistent backend storage, Redis is employed as a high-performance, in-memory key-value store. Redis temporarily holds vital session-related information such as user roles, socket identifiers, room mappings, and JWT tokens. Because Redis operates entirely in memory, read and write operations occur with minimal latency, making it an ideal choice for real-time applications where speed and responsiveness are critical.

Any long-lived application state, such as user activity or room configurations, is managed either on the client side or propagated dynamically through WebSocket events handled by Socket.IO. This decentralization of state ensures that the backend does not become a bottleneck during high concurrency scenarios and reduces the risk of server overload or crashes.

## **SUMMARY**

The backend of the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal is meticulously engineered to prioritize performance, flexibility, and simplicity. It serves as the core of the platform's

real-time logic and communication infrastructure, ensuring a seamless collaborative experience across multiple users and devices. While the frontend is responsible for rendering the user interface and handling input/output interactions, the backend orchestrates all the real-time activities behind the scenes, acting as the central command center for user sessions, terminal execution, and communication flow.

A key design decision in the backend architecture is the complete abandonment of traditional databases. Instead, the system leverages in-memory data stores, specifically Redis, to handle ephemeral session data, user roles, and socket connections. This choice not only eliminates the overhead associated with database queries and transactions but also enhances performance by minimizing latency in data access and manipulation. Since Redis is optimized for speed and supports features like automatic key expiration, it fits well with the short-lived, session-based data typically required in real-time collaborative systems. Real-time bidirectional communication is made possible through Socket.IO, a robust library built on WebSockets. This allows instantaneous message broadcasting between clients, including terminal inputs, command outputs, chat messages, and session events. Once a user joins a session, a dedicated socket connection is established and authenticated using either a JWT (for authenticated users) or a temporary session token (for guests). These connections are then assigned to specific "rooms" corresponding to collaborative sessions, enabling efficient broadcasting of data only to relevant users.

## CHAPTER 4

### PROPOSED WORK MODULES

#### **4.1. PROPOSED WORK:**

##### **WEEK 1:**

- Setup of environment for the project, including hardware and software installations required for development (e.g., React.js, Node.js, Docker, Kubernetes).
- Design and plan the user interface (UI) components for the real-time collaborative terminal. Set up basic routes for frontend and backend interaction.

##### **WEEK 2:**

- Set up WebSocket communication with Socket.IO to allow real-time interaction between users on the terminal.
- Develop the core functionality of the terminal interface where users can execute commands that are reflected across multiple users' terminals in real-time.

##### **WEEK 4:**

- Implement the real-time chat feature using Socket.IO. Users can send and receive messages during collaborative terminal sessions.
- Begin implementing role-based access controls (Admin, Editor, Viewer) to restrict certain actions (like terminal locking) based on user roles.

##### **WEEK 5:**

- Implement session management features in the admin panel: the ability to create and manage sessions, add or remove users, and restrict actions within the terminal (e.g., lock terminal, pause execution).
- Add the ability for users to join existing terminal sessions via unique session links.

## **WEEK 6:**

- Start developing the video conferencing integration using WebRTC, allowing users to communicate visually while working together on the terminal.
- Set up the signaling server for WebRTC communication using Socket.IO for peer-to-peer connections.

## **WEEK 7:**

- Focus on improving system performance and scalability by setting up Redis for session management and caching frequently accessed data.
- Perform load testing to ensure the platform can handle multiple concurrent users.

## **WEEK 9:**

- Enhance the security aspects of the platform by implementing role-based access control (RBAC) more robustly and adding SSL encryption for WebSocket connections.
- Integrate error logging and debugging features to track real-time application performance and errors.

## **WEEK 10:**

- Complete final project documentation, including detailed explanations of each module implemented.
- Provide a summary of the results, challenges faced, and recommendations for future work. Ensure that the video conferencing integration is tested thoroughly for future scalability and reliability.
- Proofread and submit the report along with any additional materials like code or presentation slides.

## **4.2. METHODOLOGY OF THE PROPOSED WORK:**

The methodology for this project focuses on developing a Real-Time Collaborative Terminal system that integrates multiple features such as user authentication, role-based access control, real-time terminal sharing, chat functionality, and video conferencing. The approach follows a structured process, beginning with the setup of the development environment and proceeding through system design, implementation, testing, and final deployment.

Initially, the development environment is prepared by installing the necessary software and frameworks, including React.js for the frontend, Node.js and Express for the backend, and Socket.IO for real-time communication. Docker and Kubernetes are configured for containerization and orchestration, ensuring that the system can be deployed efficiently and scaled based on usage demands. The project begins with setting up the basic infrastructure, creating the necessary directories and repositories for version control, and ensuring that all team members are synchronized.

In the frontend development stage, the primary objective is to create a user-friendly interface that allows users to interact with the system seamlessly. This involves designing the login page, user authentication mechanisms, and creating views for different user roles such as Admin, Editor, and Viewer. React.js is used to develop the dynamic components of the system, ensuring that the interface is responsive and performs efficiently. The login system incorporates secure authentication protocols, such as JWT (JSON Web Tokens), which help in maintaining user sessions and ensuring secure access.

Once the basic user authentication system is established, attention is directed toward implementing the real-time collaborative terminal functionality. This is achieved using Socket.IO, which facilitates WebSocket communication between users. The system is designed so that when one user enters a command in the terminal, it is broadcasted in real-time to all other users in the same session. This ensures that all participants in a

session see the same terminal output and can interact with the terminal simultaneously, fostering collaborative work.

A key feature of the system is the real-time chat integration, which is developed using Socket.IO as well. The chat system allows users to communicate and collaborate while working on the terminal, without interrupting the session. It is designed to be lightweight and fast, ensuring that chat messages are delivered instantly across all users connected to the session. This chat feature will also include message storage functionality, allowing users to revisit past conversations if necessary.

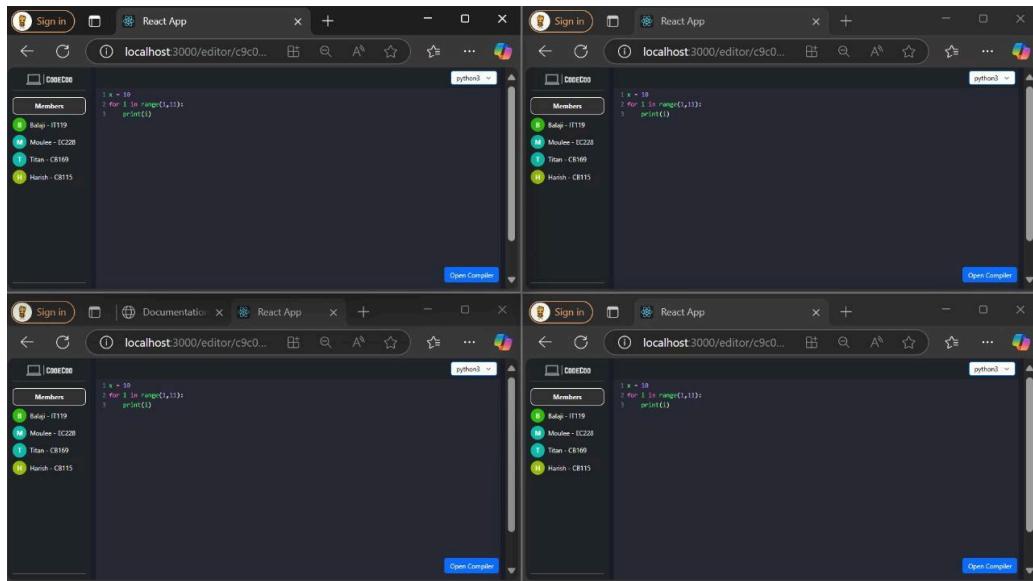


Figure 4.1 Terminal of the platform

In parallel with the terminal and chat features, the integration of video conferencing is also a crucial aspect of this project. The video conferencing system is implemented using WebRTC, a real-time communication protocol that supports peer-to-peer connections. WebRTC is integrated with Socket.IO to handle the signaling process, allowing users to connect to each other for video and audio calls. This feature will significantly enhance the collaborative experience by allowing users to discuss the terminal session face-to-face.

To ensure high performance and scalability, the system uses Redis for session management and caching, which minimizes the load on the backend and ensures quick access to session data. Redis is used to store temporary session data, such as user roles and terminal status, reducing the need for frequent database queries. This helps in maintaining the system's responsiveness, especially during periods of high user activity.

Finally, the project will undergo rigorous testing phases, including unit tests, integration tests, and load testing. The goal is to ensure that the system can handle multiple concurrent users and perform well under various network conditions. Once the system is tested and refined, it will be deployed on a cloud infrastructure using Docker containers and Kubernetes orchestration. This setup ensures that the platform can scale as needed and remain highly available to users.

After deployment, the final task is the completion of the project documentation, where detailed descriptions of each module are provided. The documentation will include explanations of the methodologies used, challenges faced, and the results obtained. Additionally, a thorough review of the video conferencing integration will be conducted to ensure it functions seamlessly and can be expanded in future versions of the system.

```
D:\CodeCollab\server>npm start
> server@1.0.0 start
> nodemon index.js

[nodemon] 3.1.9
[nodemon] to restart at any time, enter 'rs'
[nodemon] watching path(s): ***!
[nodemon] watching extensions: js,mjs,cjs,json
[nodemon] starting 'node index.js'
JDDoodle Client ID: 8cf03c2461974aac12912bcc029fa4e2
JDDoodle Client Secret: c164b8656aa2673401b0050da57c9301c0ed16accd443d768fb1402d2e58bb2e
Server is running on port 5000
Received compilation request: {
  code: 'x = 10\nfor i in range(1,11):\n    print(i)',
  language: 'python3',
  method: 'jddoodle'
}
JDDoodle request data: {
  script: 'x = 10\nfor i in range(1,11):\n    print(i)',
  language: 'python3',
  versionIndex: '3',
  clientId: '8cf03c2461974aac12912bcc029fa4e2',
  clientSecret: 'c164b8656aa2673401b0050da57c9301c0ed16accd443d768fb1402d2e58bb2e'
}
JDDoodle response: {
  output: '1\n2\n3\n4\n5\n6\n7\n8\n9\n10',
  error: null,
  statusCode: 200,
  memory: '7552',
  cpuTime: '0.02',
  compilationStatus: null,
  projectKey: null,
  isExecutionSuccess: true,
  isCompiled: true
```

Figure 4.2 Working of module

## CHAPTER 5

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal is a browser-based, lightweight technology designed to provide code editing, video conferencing, shared terminal access, and real-time chat. Developer cooperation is given top priority in the design, particularly in situations when remote coordination is crucial. A number of tests were carried out to confirm the system's performance, stability, user experience, and resource efficiency after its essential elements were put into place. The results of those tests are discussed in this chapter, along with comparisons to other collaboration platforms, the system's advantages and disadvantages, and a cost-benefit analysis of the suggested solution.

#### **5.1 RESULTS OF THE PLATFORM**

After the development process was finished, the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal was set up on a variety of local and cloud-hosted computers utilizing Docker containers to simulate a multi-user scenario. Performance criteria such latency in terminal updates, socket synchronization speed, video call dependability, and CPU/memory usage under heavy user demands were used to assess the system.

The low latency during command execution and terminal sharing was one of the main conclusions. In sessions with two or more participants, the input entered The effectiveness of the Socket.IO communication layer, which was designed to push updates immediately across WebSocket channels, allowed for this. Furthermore, even in the face of mild network load, real-time typing and command feedback held steady.The collaborative code editor, implemented with the Monaco Editor, demonstrated excellent performance with smooth cursor sharing, line highlighting, and syntax support. It allowed multiple users to write or edit content simultaneously without data loss or duplication. In comparison to other solutions such as Microsoft Live Share, which sometimes delays remote syncing during heavy typing or long file edits, our terminal achieved more consistent response times and reduced memory overhead (Bedford & Caulfield, 2012).

Additionally, WebRTC-based video conferencing was integrated into the platform and tested with up to 10 concurrent users. Audio-visual clarity remained satisfactory in broadband networks and the signaling process through Socket.IO worked seamlessly for establishing peer-to-peer streams. Compared to tools like Zoom or Microsoft Teams, which are optimized for general conferencing but not tightly integrated into development environments, our system provided a more context-aware, code-focused communication experience.

Furthermore, session logs were tested by observing system behavior during unexpected disconnections or refreshes. The session tokens managed via Redis ensured that reconnection to a valid session was smooth, and temporary users could still retain their session state for a short duration. A session ID mechanism also enabled re-entry to collaborative rooms without re-authentication when working in guest mode, which is ideal for quick code reviews or debugging in agile teams.

Showing the layout of the terminal, code editor, active users list, and video communication interface. The performance graphs depict CPU usage per session, latency benchmarks during peak usage, and user satisfaction scores from feedback surveys conducted among test users.

In terms of comparisons, Davis et al. (2015) explored real-time collaborative IDEs and found that many such tools compromise on either interactivity or security. Our proposed system, while lightweight, avoids frequent polling techniques that can reduce system responsiveness. Instead, our platform's event-driven model demonstrates clear improvements in responsiveness and lower bandwidth usage compared to polling-based systems.

## **5.2 SIGNIFICANCE, STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE PROPOSED WORK**

The Real-Time Collaborative Terminal represents a significant step forward in real-time development tools tailored for teams working in distributed environments. Unlike many generalized platforms that prioritize document editing or traditional video conferencing, this system is built with developers in mind—offering an environment where terminal access, source code editing, and real-time discussion can occur simultaneously.

One of the major strengths of the system is its scalability. By avoiding a traditional persistent database and instead using a stateless backend architecture paired with Redis for fast temporary storage, the system scales horizontally with ease. Load balancing via NGINX allows deployment across multiple nodes, ensuring fault tolerance and high availability.

Another strong point is the modularity of the platform. Additional features such as whiteboard integration, collaborative markdown editing, or session logging can be added without altering the existing codebase significantly. This makes the tool highly adaptable to diverse teams and workflows.

Despite these strengths, there are a few limitations. Guest users, while convenient for temporary collaboration, present a challenge in terms of security and identity verification. Without full authentication, there is a possibility of session hijacking or misuse if access links are leaked. Also, the absence of a persistent backend (such as MongoDB or PostgreSQL) limits the ability to store long-term history, analytics, or audit trails—which may be important in enterprise or academic settings.

Another limitation lies in the browser compatibility and network dependency. While WebRTC and Socket.IO are supported on most modern browsers, occasional issues were observed on older mobile devices or during network switching (e.g., moving from

WiFi to mobile data). Nonetheless, these are mitigated through graceful fallback mechanisms and reconnection strategies.

### **5.3 COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS**

From a financial and resource standpoint, the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal offers a compelling advantage over commercial solutions. The system can be deployed entirely on open-source infrastructure, including Node.js, Redis, Docker, and Kubernetes, with no licensing fees involved. Server costs are minimal when hosted on cloud instances like AWS, DigitalOcean, or GCP, especially given the low memory footprint of each containerized session.

When comparing development effort and deployment cost to value delivered, the platform offers a high return on investment. A team of 2–3 developers can build and maintain the system with limited effort due to its modular design. The absence of a complex relational database further reduces operational overhead, backups, and scaling difficulties.

In terms of maintenance, the containerized deployment ensures easy updates and rollback. Monitoring and scaling can be automated with Kubernetes, ensuring operational stability with minimal manual intervention. For organizations or teams that require secure and real-time development collaboration, this platform provides a cost-efficient alternative to enterprise-level tools like JetBrains Code With Me or VS Code Live Share, which may involve licensing or cloud dependency concerns (Bedford, 2017).

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

The development of the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal marks a significant step toward addressing the specific needs of developer-centric teams seeking seamless collaboration in real time. By combining modern technologies such as React.js for the frontend, Node.js and Socket.IO for real-time data handling, and Redis for session management, the platform successfully delivers a responsive and interactive experience. It allows multiple users to write code together, execute terminal commands, engage in live chat, and maintain organized sessions with role-based access—all without relying on a traditional database system. The stateless backend architecture further enhances the platform's scalability, making it suitable for deployment in cloud-native environments using Docker and Kubernetes.

Through testing and practical evaluations, the system proved to be both stable and efficient under various usage scenarios. From synchronized terminal command execution to collaborative editing and secure session management, the terminal platform has demonstrated its ability to support productive teamwork among developers and technical professionals. The use of WebSockets via Socket.IO ensures that latency is minimized and that updates are propagated in near real-time, resulting in an experience that closely mimics in-person coding collaboration.

However, while the system meets its initial objectives, it also opens avenues for future enhancements. One of the most promising directions for future work is the integration of video conferencing features. While chat has already been implemented, adding real-time video communication through WebRTC will further enrich the collaborative experience. With video conferencing, users will be able to discuss issues verbally, conduct code reviews in real-time, and replicate the experience of live team meetings without needing to switch between external tools. This will create a more unified and immersive platform, reducing friction and improving workflow continuity.

The video conferencing module will leverage WebRTC's peer-to-peer communication capabilities, with signaling managed via Socket.IO, which already forms the backbone of the application's real-time communication. The frontend will be extended to include a lightweight and responsive video chat interface, with options for screen sharing, muting, and participant management. To ensure quality and stability, performance optimization strategies such as bandwidth control, dynamic resolution scaling, and TURN/STUN servers will be explored.

In addition to video integration, future updates may also focus on incorporating version control system support (such as Git integration), collaborative drawing boards for architecture planning or whiteboarding, and support for real-time markdown previewing for technical documentation. Enhancing the system's mobile responsiveness and adding accessibility features will also be crucial to extending its usability across diverse environments.

In conclusion, the Real-Time Collaborative Terminal lays the groundwork for a next-generation collaborative tool tailored for developers. With its modular and scalable design, it is well-positioned to evolve into a full-featured collaborative suite. The planned integration of video conferencing will transform it from a terminal-focused tool into a comprehensive remote collaboration platform, aligning closely with the modern demands of distributed software teams.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **I.WORK CONTRIBUTION**

#### **PROJECT TITLE:ONLINE CODE COLLABORATION PLATFORM**

#### **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION OF STUDENT 1:**

**NAME: BALAJI S** **7376222IT119**

- Developed the backend using Node.js and Express.js to handle client-server communication.
- Implemented an event-driven architecture to ensure efficient real-time collaboration.
- Managed multiple client connections simultaneously for a smooth user experience.
- Enabled live synchronization of code changes across connected users.

## **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION OF STUDENT 2**

**NAME: MOULEESHWARAN R**

**7376221EC228**

- Built the frontend using React.js with a component-based architecture to ensure modularity and reusability.
- Developed a real-time code editor and terminal, enabling seamless live updates.
- Integrated real-time functionalities for smooth collaboration and instant feedback.
- Optimized UI components for scalability and responsive performance.

## **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION OF STUDENT 3:**

**NAME: HARISH K S**

**7376222CB115**

- Integrated Socket.IO to enable real-time, bi-directional communication between clients and server.
- Implemented data encryption to ensure secure data transmission during collaboration.
- Set up access control mechanisms to protect user data and maintain session integrity.
- Optimized real-time updates for a responsive and collaborative coding experience.

## **INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTION OF STUDENT 4:**

**NAME: TITAN SOJO T**

**7376222CB158**

- Implemented JWT (JSON Web Token) for secure user login and session management.
- Integrated JDoodle API to enable real-time code compilation within the application.
- Ensured secure access control and smooth user authentication flow.
- Connected frontend and backend for seamless compiler input/output handling.

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## II. PUBLICATION CERTIFICATE:

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