Summary of the project

This project aims to explore how people are currently using LinkedIn and how they could potentially use it differently. The study will focus on understanding how users currently use LinkedIn for personal and professional networking, the significant challenges they face when using LinkedIn, and the most useful features of LinkedIn, as well as those that can be improved. The goal is to identify areas for improvement and help LinkedIn enhance its features and user experience to meet the evolving needs of its users. Specifically, the study aims to understand the problems that job-seekers face while searching for jobs on LinkedIn and to suggest potential solutions to those problems To achieve its objectives, the project will use a multi-stage work plan. The three-stage work plan will allow the project team to gather qualitative and quantitative data and insights from job-seekers on their LinkedIn usage and experiences.By improving its user experience and addressing user concerns, LinkedIn can remain competitive and maintain its reputation as a leading professional networking platform.

Introduction and Background

Among various social media platforms, LinkedIn stands out as the leading business-oriented social networking site. One of the biggest professional networks in the world, LinkedIn has over 700 million members spread over more than 200 nations, and it is still expanding quickly.

Our project aims to go deeper into understanding how people are currently using LinkedIn and how they might like to utilize it differently. Professionals now frequently use LinkedIn to expand their networks, position themselves as subject matter experts in their fields, and discover new employment prospects. Yet LinkedIn is more than simply a tool for job searching. It offers many features such as LinkedIn Learning, LinkedIn Pages, LinkedIn Sales Navigator, LinkedIn Recruiter, etc. As part of our project, we plan to explore various aspects of LinkedIn, including how users currently use LinkedIn for personal and professional networking, the significant challenges that users face when using LinkedIn, and the most useful features of LinkedIn, as well as those that can be improved.

By understanding the user's perspective and identifying areas for improvement, we can help LinkedIn enhance its features and user experience to meet the evolving needs of its users. We intend to perform user surveys, interviews, and data analysis to understand the user's perspective and give suggestions on how LinkedIn can improve its features.

Project Goals and Questions

What do we hope to learn?

We aim to come across problems that current users face while searching for Jobs on LinkedIn. Since we ourselves are students who are searching for internships we feel that there is a scope for improvement on certain features in LinkedIn. We aim to talk to as many students as possible who are looking for full-time roles/internships so that we can get a wholesome idea on all the possible problems and their potential solutions.

Why is it important to learn it?

- Since job-seekers extensively use LinkedIn to search for full-time roles/internships, it is important for it to be as efficient as possible so that the current users have ease in navigating on the platform
- Since LinkedIn has a good reputation in the job market, it's important for them to maintain it so that they can attract job-seekers in the future as well.
- Since there are a lot of job platforms like Indeed, Handshake etc. which are some tough competitors of LinkedIn, it's more important for it to be top notch in order to stand out from its competitors.

What questions will your study answer?

Our study will give us an indication of how satisfied or dissatisfied current users are with the various features of LinkedIn. It will also tell us the major reasons as to why people are using this platform and what are their expectations from it. Finally, analyzing the general trends from the responses would give us an idea on what areas of the platform LinkedIn needs to focus on and improve to ensure maximum user engagement and growth.

Work Plan

1. Identifying the problem or opportunity, understanding the research question, and defining the study's scope are the first steps in defining the aforementioned research objective.
2. Desk research is the second stage before implementing any research methodologies. It is a process of reviewing previous research findings, articles and interviews to gain a broader understanding of the research question.
3. User research can be conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. We will use ethnographic interviews, usability testing, and surveys as our main research methodologies based on our study questions and objectives.

   a. **Ethnographic interviews:** We chose ethnographic interviews as they are a powerful method as they give a comprehensive insight of the user's context, behavior, and beliefs. They provide rich, qualitative data about the user's experiences and perspectives.

   Data Collection and Recruitment: We are planning to conduct in-person and remote interviews of users based on our research question and different demographic attributes. We will record the interviews using audio or video recordings and written notes. We will reach out to potential participants through LinkedIn groups, personal contacts and explain to them the purpose of our study, how we plan to conduct the interview, and what we hope to gain from the study.

   Conducting interviews: We'll leave the questions open-ended and non-directed to maintain objectivity, which will motivate the participants to provide detailed, unbiased responses. Examples of questions include: How often do you use LinkedIn? How do you use LinkedIn to connect with others? What do you think of LinkedIn's features and tools?

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To measure subjective metrics such as quality, we will use the "deconstruct the construct" approach and analyze the sub-components instead such as performance, features, reliability, and aesthetics.

b. **Usability Testing:** One of our main tasks is to understand how users are currently using LinkedIn and how they might like to use it differently. The text emphasizes that the "The best way of gaining actionable and testable insights is not to ask, but to observe" therefore in our usability test we would try and observe the chosen participants go about performing their usual activities on LinkedIn. It would be important to create the right context to observe the user behavior (for e.g people might be using LinkedIn while being engaged in other activities, in that case we would have to recreate the same environment). After shortlisting and recruiting our participants we will try to follow a master/apprentice model of enquiry wherein we will ask the participants to walk us through certain tasks (like applying for jobs etc) and observe them as they do so. In the end, through this usability test we will be able to glean some concrete insights on the improvements that can be made for the application.

c. **Surveys:** Surveys are a quantitative research methodology that gathers information from a broad spectrum of target audiences, including individuals who might not be able to take part in other kinds of user research like interviews or usability testing.

Data Collection and Recruitment: Our questions are going to be concise and unambiguous, and they include multiple-choice, Likert scale, and closed-ended questions. We will reach out to potential participants through LinkedIn groups, personal contacts and explain to them the purpose of our study. We will potentially use google forms to collect the data.

Conducting surveys: We will pilot test the survey initially to make sure the questions are understandable, and it can be finished in a reasonable period of time with a small group of LinkedIn users. Following that, we'll circulate the survey to the appropriate target audience via LinkedIn groups and direct contacts.

4. Analyse all the data: After conducting all the three research methodologies we will analyze the results and try to identify any recurring themes and patterns that would have emerged. We will start this process by formatting our raw data (notes from interviews, survey results etc) in a manner that is suitable for sharing and discussing. Then we will have to categorize and sort the data into different groups and look for any common themes and connections between these groups that can help us answer our research questions.

Schedule and Project Management

We have divided the project into 4 main phases with multiple tasks in each phase. The table and Gantt chart below explains our planned workflow in more detail-

Phase	Task	Assigned To	Timeline
1	Desk research (literature review)	Team	03/13/2023 - 03/20/2023
2	Finding our target audience - Coming up with a screener	Harshitha, Shashank, Tanya	03/20/2023 - 03/22/2023
2	Recruiting process, Scheduling interviews	Sakshi, Asmita, Surbhi	03/20/2023 - 03/25/2023
2	Framing interview questions for Ethnographic interviews	Harshitha, Asmita, Surbhi	03/26/2023 - 03/31/2023
2	Framing interview questions for Surveys	Dhiraj, Tanya, Sakshi	03/26/2023 - 03/31/2023
3	Conduction of Ethnographic Interviews	Harshitha, Asmita, Surbhi	04/01/2023 - 04/20/2023
3	Conduction of Usability testing	Shashank, Dhiraj	04/01/2023 - 04/20/2023
3	Conduction of Online Survey	Tanya, Sakshi	04/01/2023 - 04/20/2023
4	Analysis of Ethnographic Interviews	Harshitha, Asmita, Surbhi	04/21/2023 - 04/30/2023
4	Analysis of Usability testing	Shashank, Dhiraj	04/21/2023 - 04/30/2023
4	Analysis of Online Survey	Tanya, Sakshi	04/21/2023 - 04/30/2023
4	Organizing findings and creating a report	Team	05/01/2023 - 05/05/2023
4	Final Presentation	Team	05/06/2023 - 05/10/2023
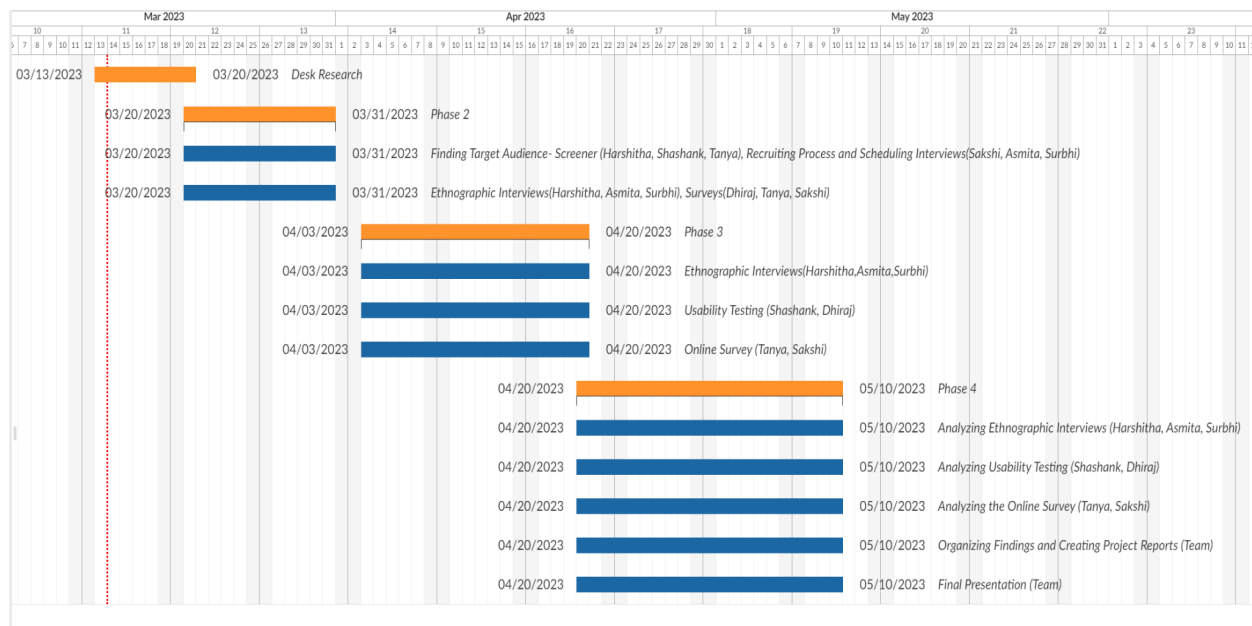
We will hold weekly Zoom meetings and use Slack to stay updated and communicate regularly.