Messaging Application for Tenant, Landlord and Agent in Ireland

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

MSc I.S. with Computing

at Dublin Business School

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MSc I.S. with Computing 2017-18

**Declaration**

I, Jigar Deepak Patel, declare that this research is my original work and that it has never been presented to any institution or university for the award of Degree or Diploma. In addition, I have referenced correctly all literature and sources used in this work and this this work is fully compliant with the Dublin Business School’s academic honesty policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Acknowledgement**

**Abstract**

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**Chapter 1**

1. **Introduction:**

In recent years, Ireland has encountered a great increase in the number of International students and it is one of the hottest destination to study abroad. As there are many famous universities and colleges like Dublin Business School, Trinity College Dublin, University College Dublin etc. and famous multinational companies like Google, Facebook, Apple, Dell, IBM and many other companies which attract students and professionals to come to Ireland for their career. There are a lot of other reasons like, English as a local speaking language, similar lifestyle like UK, work visas after graduation for example 2 years of work visas for Indian students, and no tension about Brexit (Istead, 2017). According to O'Brien (2017), there is a significant increase in the application of international students to Irish universities and most of them are non-EU. Universities has encountered increase in the number of applications in which University College Cork (UCC) had 40% and University College Dublin (UCD) had 26% of increase and non-EU students are mostly from the countries like India, China, United States of America and Canada (O'Brien, 2017). Since the number of students have increased, there will be a problem for them to search accommodation into their budget and time.

Currently, Ireland is facing housing crisis which is directly affected to the people looking to rent an apartment. The average time taken to find a proper accommodation in Ireland is usually between one to two months, but some may find it earlier. According to Lyons (2017), the rental market conditions showed by Daft.ie rental report in September 2017, was in bad state. The rent in other parts of the country has approximately risen by 45%, but at the same time, there was approximately 70% increase in rents in Dublin (Lyons, 2017). The reason to increase the rent at a faster rate is because of the lack of property supply, and in this situation, landlords will be in a great profit if they rent out their apartment. In the month of August 2017, property available to rent throughout Ireland were less than 3000 and was 20% down as compared to the previous year which happened for the first time in Ireland history. There were 4800 properties available to rent nationwide and almost half of the property was in Dublin at a time in early 2007 (Lyons, 2017). In 2017, there were roughly 1000 properties available to rent and that is because, the rent has increase by 50%. As this rental crisis was never known before, this will directly have linkage to the homelessness crisis which will eventually affect the students. In such crisis, if the tenants get an eviction notice from the agent or landlord, it is very difficult for tenants to search and shift into new apartment.

After a lot of difficulties in viewing of unaffordable and unacceptable apartments due to the housing crisis, the renter has found one apartment finally to move in. Even after finding the correct apartment, there are lot of issues in that apartment that you won’t be able to see through your naked eyes. To get those issues solved, the tenants should first contact his/her house agent and explain the problems, and then the agent will contact the owner of the house to seek permission whether to make any changes or repairs in the house. So basically, there is a communication gap between house tenants, agent and landlord. To overcome this communication gap between the house tenants, agent and landlord, this application can be used as a medium to report house related issues and convey the message to the correct person. This will help to save a lot of time and get the work done much quicker.

1. **Research Question:**

**How can we reduce the communication gap and housing problems faced by renters in Ireland using mobile messaging application?**

Through this research, my primary aim is to reduce the communication gap between the landlord, agent and tenants which leads to disputes between them and eventually eviction notice to tenants. The artefact implementation of this research will help all the renters regardless if they are international students or local renters to report house related problems like, if the window or window curtain rod is broken, plug point not working properly, heating system failure etc. to the owner of the house or agent directly using the user specific messaging mobile application. This mobile chat application will also be a medium for landlord, tenants and agents to solve the disputes between them. All the information regarding the Rights and Obligation for landlord and tenant, and dispute resolution information website links is added under HELP section, which will prevent all the users to go outside of the mobile application to hunt for information. There will also be an option for house agent or landlord to rate the tenants of the house according to their behavior.

1. **Practical benefits of the research and mobile chat application:**

* As this mobile chat application will help to reduce the communication gap between landlord, tenant and agent and help them to resolve any dispute.
* The house agent and owner can manage more than one house by creating separate groups and adding tenants in the respective house groups in one single mobile application.
* Tenant can only be added by the house agent in the respective group, as tenants can only stay in one house.
* As a tenant point of view, reporting house related problems by clicking picture is added on the chat application.
* Agent can upload legal documents of the house on the group with tenants and landlord included.
* Agent or owner can schedule meeting with the tenants through group chat.
* An agent can rate a tenant on the application according to his behavior or any issue. This will help eliminate the need of the reference letter from the previous agent or landlord and only agent can search the username of a tenant to check the rating.
* The websites links of Citizens Information is added in the application.

1. **Dissertation Roadmap:**

The Dissertation is divided into different chapters. First chapter illustrates an introduction and background of the dissertation and details the problem. Chapter two is about the literature review given below.

1. **Scope of the research:**

* This research is focused in designing and implementing a mobile chat application for Android operating system and focusing on specific users such as landlord, tenants and agent.
* The mobile application must be able to send, receive messages and, search and rate a specific user i.e. a tenant.
* This research will also provide information related to tenant and landlord law, effects of housing crisis on renters, and information regarding Threshold and Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

1. **Limitation of the research:**

* The development of the mobile application is very vast and have several dimensions, it is very difficult to cover all the aspects of mobile development in a single research.
* Currently, there are many mobile Operating Systems (OS) like iOS, Android, Windows etc. available, so implementing the chat application for every OS is difficult.
* Posting a feedback for a user by another user is difficult and storing the feedback data in backend is also challenging. This feature will require more time to implement and will be available in version 2 of the application.
* As this research is regarding the chat app for landlord, agent and tenant. The main goal is to send and receive messages from specific users. Hence, End-to-End Encryption (E2EE) for the messages has been neglected and is beyond the scope of this research.
* For O-Authentication, I wanted to use SMS API, but the SMS packs or bundles from service providers are paid and hence couldn’t implement.

1. **Major contributions of this research:**

This research highlights the relationship between an agent, tenants and landlord. It discusses the effects of housing crisis, disputes and the need to resolve the communication gap between landlord, tenant and agents. It also discusses that, through the implementation of a mobile chat application, communication gap will decrease and hence there will be no cases filed to Residential Tenancies Board. It explains the practical benefits of the mobile chat application and there will be all the needed information for landlord and tenant in this research as well as mobile application. This research will ultimately contribute and improve the relationship between landlord, agent and tenants.

**Chapter 2**

**Literature Review:**