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ITWS Term Project Plan

**TaSC**

**(*Tutor and Student Connection*)**

**Proposal:**

For our project, we are making a networking application to connect students and tutors on campus. This will be implemented along with the current ALAC tutor system we currently have in order to make tutoring more efficient for both parties. Each student and/or tutor will have a personal account on the site, similar to a forum page. Each student can view the profiles of tutors and their proficient subjects, and can request help. Tutors can view the profiles of students and offer help in their specified subjects. TaSC can view the profiles of both. Each account will be saved in a database.

Along with the personal help requests/offers, we will also include a forum for students who need minor help. This includes students who need a simple question answered, but don’t need the one-on-one assistance a normal tutoring session provides. The forum will also be separated by course, allowing a student/tutor to search for that specific course in order to keep the forum more organized. The questions/answers will be public in order to minimize spam(i.e. students with the same or similar questions).

RPI has a large population of students who need tutoring, and even though there is already the ALAC tutoring system in place, it is not sufficient. There are many times in ALAC, especially in the computer science sessions, where the queue for help overflows and the time runs out while there is still a long list of students waiting for help. The reason for this is because some subjects, like computer science, require some personal attention that can be time consuming, making group tutoring sessions only partially effective. As of right now, there is no application that can effectively connect RPI students to each other so that every student can find a tutor. TaSC will be the first to quickly connect students who need the help and tutors who are looking for work. There is a clear demand on campus for an application that serves this purpose due to the crowded ALAC sessions. Additionally, the head of ALAC will sometimes email tutors about students looking for private tutors. This application can make this process much easier and connect the students and tutors directly. Finally, if this project is successful, we can even bring it to ALAC and see if we can incorporate it into RPI’s system already in place.

**Information Architecture:**

Our application will have three main pages: a homepage, a tutor/student search page, and a discussion forum page. The homepage will have the login for the students and the tutors, where they can identify themself as a tutor or a student or both. It will have links to both of the other two pages and display information about the application and the purpose it serves.

The tutor/student search page is where the connection happens. The navigation of this page begins with the user navigating to the tutor/student search page through the homepage. The user then enters the subject field that they are looking for a tutor in, or vice versa, and then a list of the tutors (or students) are displayed. The user can then click on a tutor to view their profile and have the option to message them. A student can search for tutors in a specific subject area, which will display a list of tutors. Students can view the tutors and read their description in order to determine which tutor will best suit their needs. We also are considering to implement a rating system of tutors, although we are still weighing this as a necessary feature as most tutors will come and go, which will not allow enough time for the accrual of ratings. Tutors can also search for students in a field they are interested in tutoring in and offer their help. When a connection is made, the tutor and student will be able to message with each other directly on the site in order to establish a time and place of meeting, along with other important details. They will also be able to view full profiles, and potentially connect on other platforms, such as LinkedIn. This page’s main function is simply for tutors and students to find each other and connect, so that they can find a match and receive the help they need.

The third page is a discussion forum. To navigate through this page, the user navigates from the homepage to the discussion forum page, and then chooses which subject to view its discussion page. The reason we are including a discussion forum in our application is for situations where students need a quick help on a certain problem as opposed to a full tutoring session. This will make it easy for students to ask questions and have them answered in the comfort of their rooms as opposed to having to go to ALAC or another place for small questions. Our incentive to have tutors answer questions is implemented through through the upvotes of answers and participation in the forum. When searching for a tutor in subject area, the tutors that have answered the most questions and have the most upvotes will be placed higher on the page. The discussion page will serve as a supplement for tutor only in the small cases where a student does not need a full-time tutor.

Our main focus field for this project is Area 5: Put real data in a database, cookie, session storage, or local storage. The secondary focus for our project is Area 2: Javascript interactivity to improve user experience. We will focus on putting information into a database because we need to store all of the information of the users, along with archiving the discussion forum posts. Our secondary focus is to create a good user experience, so that students and tutors can find each other quickly and painlessly. We will incorporate the other three areas accordingly to make our website well-built and functional.

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| **Contributors** | **Date** | **Task Description and Status**  ***Key:***  ***Haven’t Started: Blue***  ***In-Progress: Yellow***  ***Done: Green*** |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 3/05/18 | Project Proposal Due |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman | 3/08/18 | Discussed functionality of the application |
| Wilson Wong | 3/15/18 | Researched different websites that facilitate the mock-up of applications |
| Jonny Koppelman | 3/20/18 | Split up the HTML,CSS,JavaScript/JQuery and Database development between the group |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 3/26/18 | Progress Plan |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 3/29/18 | Design Mockups |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 04/05/18 | Finalize Mockups |
| Jonny Koppelman | 04/11/18 | Finish the front end (HTML/CSS) |
| Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 04/15/18 | Finish attribute and style related Javascript/JQuery functions |
| John Gay | 04/17/18 | Finish Database setup (Schema and tables) |
| John Gay, Wilson Wong | 04/19/18 | Finish Database related Javascript/JQuery functions |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 04/23/18 | Get rid of any bugs and inefficiencies in the application. |
| John Gay, Jonny Koppelman, Wilson Wong | 04/26/18 | Finish Project |