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CS 4000

Study Station

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Introduction

Project Overview

Time management and organization are two essential skills that many college students struggle with. In order to achieve better performance in their classes, a large number of students turn to productivity applications to improve their studying efficiency. Although there are already tons of productivity applications currently on the market, I would like to introduce a new application that combines simple yet cutting edge techniques in to a single web-application. Study Station is an application that is designed to help college students plan and organize their study time while eliminating distractions. The techniques that Study Station combines to accomplish this goal are outlined below:

The Kanban Technique. The Kanban technique is a technique that utilizes what is called
a Kanban Board in order to create a visualization of an individual's or team's workflow.
 Typically, a Kanban Board is a white board that is divided into three categories: To Do,
 Doing, and Done. Using sticky notes, tasks are placed and moved from section to section

depending on the status of the task. Study Station will create a virtual Kanban Board that aligns with the course schedule and other needs of the student.

• The Pomodoro Technique. The Pomodoro technique is a time management method in which tasks are broken down into short bursts or intervals. Each interval is followed by a short break, and after successfully completing four intervals the individual is rewarded with an extended break. Typically, a Pomodoro interval is 25 minutes in length with the short breaks ranging from 3-5 minutes and the extended breaks ranging from 15-30 minutes after the completion of four consecutive intervals. Study Station will incorporate a timer that mirrors the Pomodoro technique. Additionally, users will have the option to list any distracting websites such as Twitter or Facebook and Study Station will temporarily block access to those sites while an interval is in progress.

Study Station will combine these two techniques by allowing students to assign individual tasks on their Virtual Kanban Board a designated number of Pomodoro intervals, and Study Station will track the number of intervals completed for each task. Study Station will also include charts and graphs so that users can monitor their progress, and a calendar that integrates with either Google or Apple calendars to help prevent users from missing deadlines.

Objectives

To develop a web application that creates the optimal online environment for college students to manage their study habits.

To further my knowledge of web application development- to include the construction of databases, implementing the Model View Controller framework, and integrating client-side rendering with server-side rendering to elevate the performance of Single Page Application techniques.

MVC

The Model View Controller (MVC) 5 framework is a web-development framework that falls under Microsoft's ASP.NET umbrella. The purpose of a web-application framework is to simplify the development process of web applications. Web application frameworks typically help developers to better organize their code while granting them easy access to common libraries that are frequently utilized by web developers.

MVC5 is the latest version of the MVC framework. As indicated by the name, the MVC framework makes web development easier by separating code into three different components: Models, Views, and Controllers.

Models are classes that are dedicated to organizing data that will be used by the Views and the Controllers. In MVC, Models are similar to header files in C++; they essentially create skeletons of objects that can be referenced every time a new instance of an object needs to be created.

Views within the MVC5 framework contain all the code that will generate the User Interfaces that the users will see. In MVC5, it is possible to create views that serve as Single Page

Applications (SPA's) that utilize both server-side and client-side rendering. On the initial page load, html/css and c# code can be utilized to quickly render the page from the server side, and each subsequent action can be rendered on the client-side using Java Script (to include Jquery and JSON files) in order to save time. The Views receive information from the Controllers, and then display that information on the screen using these methods.

Controllers contain the majority of the functionality of an MVC web-application, and determine what happens to the data that passes through. Controllers can use Data Access Objects (DAOs) to retrieve information from a database, and then organize and manipulate that information using Models. After manipulating and determining what happens to various information, that information can then be passed to the View to be displayed in the User Interfaces.

Method

The following steps outline the process in which I executed the Study Station project:

- 1. Planning. Determine the exact functionality of the application, how users can interact with the application, what information needs to be stored, and so forth. During the planning stage, every user interface/ web page needs to be outlined and organized, and how they will interact with the user, each other, and the database needs to be determined.
- 2. Execution and Information Sharing. Determine the best course of action/revision control software to utilize in order for you to monitor and track my progress. Most likely will end up using a Visual Studio shared repository. Also will look into using Lync (Skype for

- business) which is available for download on Raiderlink in order to conduct live demos throughout the semester.
- Views. Create the user interface for each page within the web application utilizing CSS and HTML.
- 4. Database Integration. Build and create database tables to store information.
- 5. *Model.* Create model classes to organize data from the database into objects for ease of use within the Views and the Controller
- 6. Controllers. Using C# or C++, create a controller that contains methods/functions that incorporate and determine what happens when the page is loaded and when users interact with the user interface.
- 7. View Interactions. Use C# or C++ for the initial server-side rendering of the page in the Views to display the saved information. Use Java Script and Java Script components to handle client-side rendering and manipulate data based on user interaction in the Views/user interfaces.
- 8. *Clean Up.* Go through and clean up code by fixing formatting, adding missing comments, and removing any unnecessary components.
- 9. *Test*. Test all aspects of the application. Ensure that there are no bugs or security loopholes within the application.
- 10. Submit. Submit the application for grading.

Resources

The following resources are applications that I utilized throughout the process:

GitHub – Even though this was an individual project, I utilized GitHub for source control in order to learn more about code collaboration practices such as, merging code, branching, pushing, pulling, and so forth to better prepare myself for team projects in the future. I also used GitHub as a way to easily make my code viewable for grading purposes.

Visual Studio – I decided to use Visual Studio for this project because it is the Integrated Development Environment that I am the most familiar with, and it goes hand and hand with the MVC5 framework. GitHub also has software that can be integrated with Visual Studio that made committing and sharing code a lot easier.

MySQL – Although unsuccessful, I downloaded and attempted to use MySQL to store and organize data and practice database integration and creating data tables.

Google Chrome – All of the testing of Study Station was done using Google Chrome with a local host.

Execution

GitHub

https://github.com/laurenoutloud/StudyStation

The first thing I did was log on to GitHub and create a Study Station repository to manage my application.

Create a new repository A repository contains all the files for your project, including the revision history. After creating the Study Repository name i laurenoutloud → / Station repository, I Great repository names are short and memorable. Need inspiration? How about bookish-disco. Description (optional) downloaded software from GitHub that allows Anyone can see this repository. You choose who can commit for integration with You choose who can see and commit to this repository. Visual Studio's Team Initialize this repository with a README This will let you immediately clone the repository to your computer. Skip this step if you're importing an existing repository Add .gitignore: None ▼ Add a license: None ▼ (i) Explorer and cloned the

had created on GitHub to Visual Studio. I later realized that it would have been easier to download the extension first and then create the repository directly from Visual Studio, but I was able to gain some valuable experience with cloning repositories.

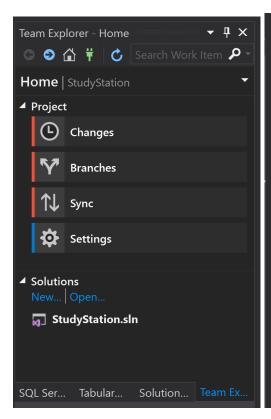


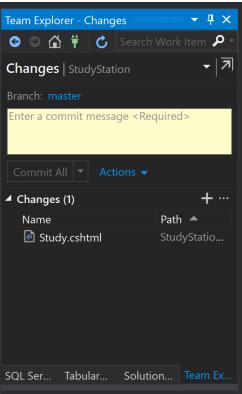
Create repository

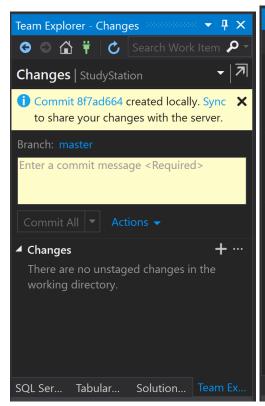
After setting up my Study Station repository in Visual Studio, I created a branch from the master branch (even

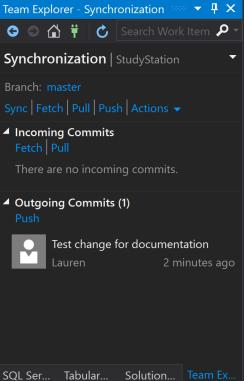
empty repository that I

though it had no code) for me to write my code. Although I did not commit code to GitHub that often, I was able to learn how to commit changes from the branch that I created and push them to the master branch using Visual Studio's Team Explorer.

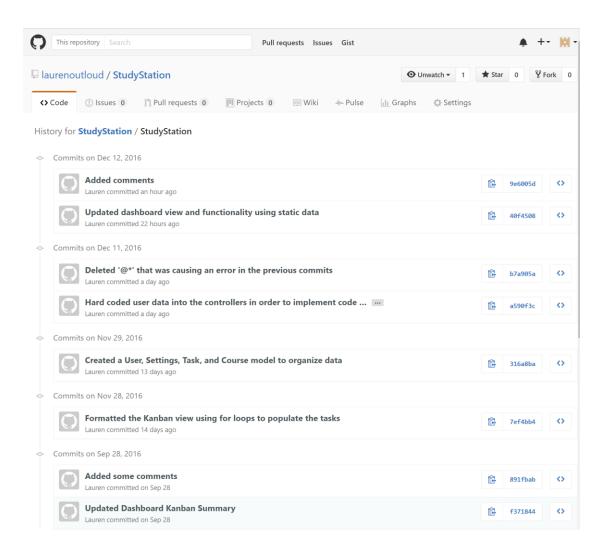








After pushing changes from Visual Studio, they became visible on GitHub.com under the Study Station repository.

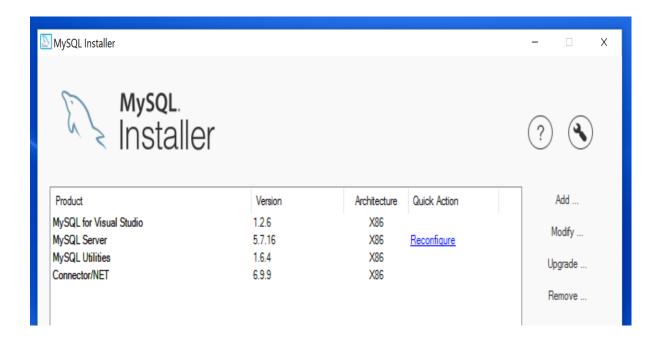


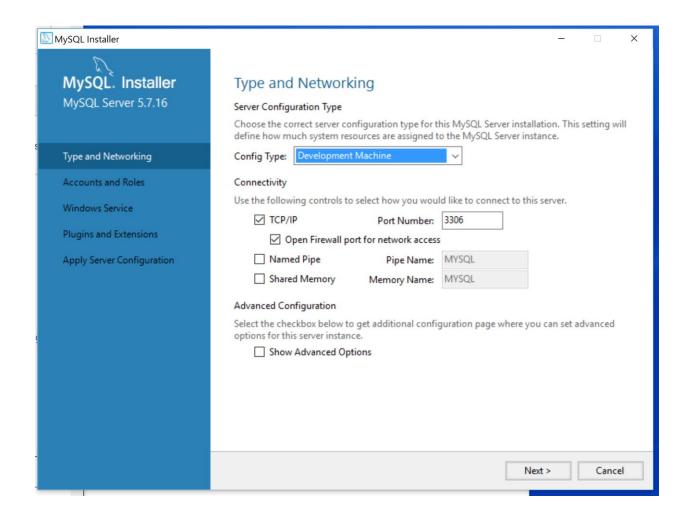
Throughout this semester, by trial and error I was able to learn how to effectively use GitHub as a tool for code management and version control.

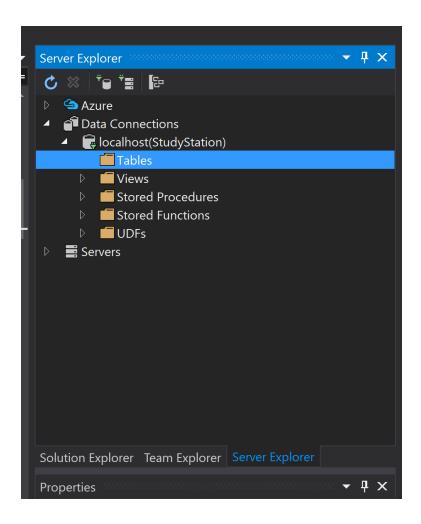
MySQL

I tried numerous times to install MySQL on my computer, but was unsuccessful. I was initially able to create a Study Station database, but when I tried to add any information to it I kept receiving an endless amount of errors. First I downloaded MySQL Installer to assist with

downloading a version of MySQL that was compatible with Visual Studio, then I created a Study Station database using Visual Studio's Server Explorer.







Because I was unable to successfully create a database for my application, I continued with static data that I hard coded into the controllers. As a result, I had to recreate that data in every single controller. Also, any changes made in the view are not saved, and cannot be accessed from other parts of the application.

Style Sheets

When I created my MVC5 project with Visual Studio, it was accompanied by various pre-written bootstrap code that contained different themes and designs. However, I did not utilize any of the bootstrap code in this project, and I created main.css to serve as the style sheet for this application.

```
Content
 a bootstrap-theme.css
 a a bootstrap-theme.css.map
 bootstrap-theme.min.css
 6 ■ bootstrap-theme.min.css.ma
 a a bootstrap.css
 • bootstrap.css.map
 a a bootstrap.min.css
 6 ■ bootstrap.min.css.map
 Controllers
fonts
Infrastructure
Models
obj
   Scripts
```

The main.css style sheet contained all of the css code related to the formatting and design of the application. This includes text color, background color, font family, margins, display options, and so forth.

While _Layout.cshtml is a view, I consider it as a type of style/formatting file because it serves as a skeleton for each page within the application. All of the code written on this page is used by every single view to avoid having to rewrite code such as the Navigation bar on every single page.

```
| Livox, vir. Inc.) | Cox, vir. Inc.) | Cox, vir. Inc.) | Cox, vir. Inc. | Cox, vir. Inc.) | Cox, vir. Inc.) | Cox, vir. Inc. | Cox, vir. Inc.
```

I set the default layout to the _Layout.cshtml so that every time the application starts, _Layout.cshtml is the default layout.

Models

I created three models for the Study Station application: User.cs, Course.cs, and Task.cs.

```
→ 🎉 ID
StudyStation
                                              ▼ StudyStation.Models.User
     1  □using System;
            using System.Collections.Generic;
           using System.Web;
          pnamespace StudyStation.Models
                    public int ID { get; set; }
                    public string FirstName { get; set; }
                    public string LastName { get; set; }
                    public string Birthday { get; set; }
                    public string PhoneNumber { get; set; }
                    public string Email { get; set; }
                    public string Password { get; set; }
                    public int IntervalLength { get; set; } //the length of each study interval
                    public int ShortBreakLength { get; set; } //the length of each short break
                    public int LongBreakLength { get; set; } //the length of each long break
                    public int LongBreakAfter { get; set; } //number of intervals to be completed before a long
                    public int DailyIntervalGoal { get; set; } //the goal number of daily intervals the user wou
                    public List<Course> Courses { get; set; } //a list of Course objects to allow a user to have
```

User.cs is a class that is designed to represent a user. It contains user information such as first name, last name, etc., as well as the various user settings such as interval lengths. The User model also contains a list of Course objects that represent each course the student has created.

The Course model was very simple. It contains a CourseName variable that will be displayed on the Kanban wall and other various parts of the application as needed, and a list of Task objects for when a user assigns a task to a course.

Although the Task model will eventually contain variables such as "number of completed intervals", "date created", and "date completed", I was only able to implement two variables. The first variable is the Status variable, which indicates whether the task is classified as To Do, Doing, or Done (1= To Do, 2 = Doing, 3= Done). The second variable is Text, which allows users to write the details of the task.

Controllers

While I have created six controllers for this application, only three of them contain functionality of substance at this point in time, so I will only elaborate on those three.

```
Controllers

CalendarController.cs

CalendarController.cs
```

Because I was unable to set up a database, the KanbanController.cs, DashboardController.cs, and SettingsController.cs all currently share a similar functionality. All three controllers contain a function that creates a temporary user. When accessed, the controllers call that function to create a new user, adds the user to the Viewbag so that it can be accessed from the Views, and then open their respective Views.

```
| Substitution | SettingsControllers | Sett
```

In the CreateUser() method, I use the models to create static data to be tested and manipulated in the views. More details on this method can be found in the comments for the code for the Kanban Controller, Dashboard Controller, or Settings Controller.

Views

Home

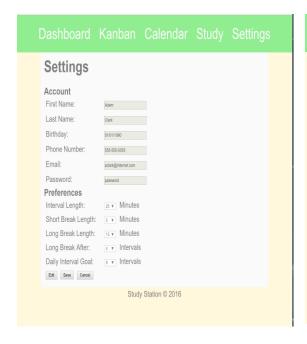
```
ViewBag.Title = "Home";
a*TODO: Once application is integrated with database, figure out a way to verify a user's credentials as well
    user by passing information entered in this view back to the controller 6
<div class="container">
    @*Form Begins<mark>*@</mark>
        @*Create div tag of class login*@
<div class="login">
            <h3>Log In</h3>
            <button class="button">Log In</putton>
        <div class="signup">
            <h3>Sign Up</h3>
            <div class="label">First Name:</div> <input type="text" name="firstName" class="text" /><br />
            <div class="label">Last Name:</div> <input type="text" name="lastName" class="text" /><br />
            <div class="label">Birthday:</div> <input type="text" name="birthday" class="text" /><br />
            <div class="label">Phone Number:</div> <input type="text" name="phoneNumber" class="text" /><br /</pre>
            <div class="label">Password:</div> <input type="text" name="lastName" class="text" /><br</pre>
            <div class="label">Retype Password:</div> <input type="text" name="lastName" class="text" /><br /><br/>
            <button class="button">Sign Up</button>
```

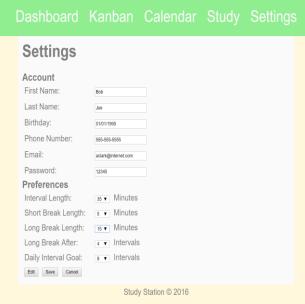
In the Home Page View, I created both a login and a sign up section with textboxes for users to input their information. This View (and all other Views) contain a <form></form> tag because once this application is integrated with a database, when a user clicks either the Log In button or the Sign Up button, the View will submit the information to the controller. The Controller will then either add the user to the database or verify that the username and password that were entered are correct.

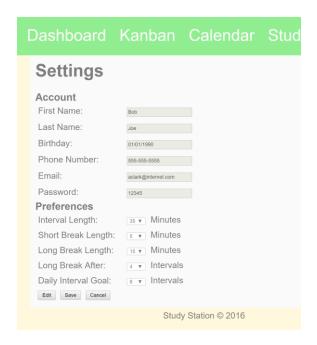
	Dashboard	Kanban	Calendar	Study	Settings	
Home						
Log In Email: Password: Log In		Sign Up First Name Last Name Birthday: Phone Nur Email: Password: Retype Pa	mber:			
Study Station © 2016						

Settings

The Settings view contains code that creates textboxes for users to view/edit their personal information and select boxes for users to update their settings. This View also contains Java Script that enables all of the settings when the Edit button is selected, saves and disables all the settings when the Save button is selected, and cancels any changes when the cancel button is selected.

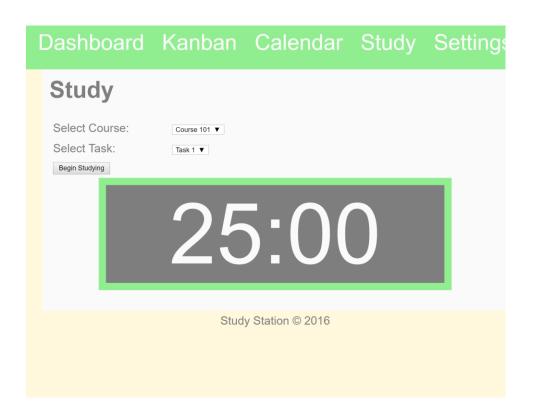






Study

The Study View is where the Pomodoro timer is located. I was unable to successfully use Java Script to create a countdown timer without additional plugins. When the timer is finally implemented, a "Intervals Completed" variable will be added to the task model to keep track of the number of intervals that have been completed for each task. The timer will countdown based on the interval/break settings selected by the user.



Calendar

I also was unable to integrate a calendar. When a calendar is implemented, the "date created" and "date completed" variables will be added to the task model to keep track of when a task was created and when a task was marked as "Done".

Kanban

The Kanban view creates a table that has been designed to look like a Kanban wall. Using the temporary user that was created in the controller, the Kanban View loops through each task in each course and checks their status. If the status is 1, it adds the task to the To Do column, if the status is 2, it adds the task to the Doing column, and if the status is 3 it adds the task to the Done column.



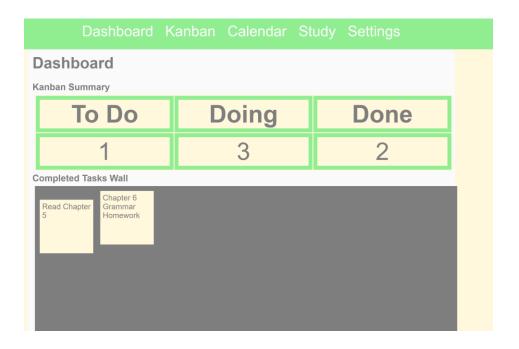
Dashboard

The Dashboard View contains code that loops through all of a user's tasks and keeps track of the number of task in each status category. It uses a table to display the totals. The Dashboard View also loops through all of the tasks and displays all of the tasks that have been completed.

When the calendar and timer have been completed, this dashboard will also contain a date select to view how many tasks were completed during a specific time frame, and to show that information graphically.

```
Dashboard.cshtml * X

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20
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4 (h3) Kanban Summary:/h3> 2 leader of summary section 2
25
26
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28
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31
31
32
4
foreach (var course in ViewBag.CurrentUser.Courses) //use a for loop to loop through all of the course if (var task in course.Tasks) //use a for loop to loop through all of the course if (task.Status == 1) //if the task status is 1, incremement the To Do Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 2) //if the task status is 2, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 2) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks counter (total tasks.Status == 3) //if the task status is 3, increment the Doing Tasks
```



Conclusion

This semester I learned how important it is to do research and planning before starting a project. Because I jumped straight into coding, I ran into a lot of problems that were essential to my success with this application. The three main problems I came across were not being able to use MySQL, not being able to integrate a calendar, and not being able to figure out how to write code for a countdown timer.

While I had a lot of setbacks this semester, I did learn a lot of valuable skills as well. The Study Station project was the first project that I have implemented with GitHub, and I am now more comfortable with version control. As a result, I am better prepared for future classes in which we must collaborate with different students together on a project. I also learned a lot more about Visual Studio because this was my first time using Visual Studio as an individual to implement a project instead of just using it to compile and run code.

References

https://github.com/

https://www.visualstudio.com/