

Prior Art

Discord

Discord (<https://discord.com>) is an instant messaging and digital distribution platform that has many similarities to our application. The similarities would be means of communication such as direct messaging, voice channels, text channels, servers and the ability to send links and upload documents. However, our application has additional features that discord does not such as the ability to schedule meetings with others. In addition to that our application is more education oriented. Therefore the users will be able to find scholarships, tutoring for classes, study guides, and open lesson plans so the user can further their knowledge. However, Discord allows for a larger scope of users, essentially anyone and for any purpose. Due to the educational nature of our application, we will narrow the target audience to UWM students/faculty. Additionally, discord also allows users to share their screen and video call, features that if we had the time, resources, and experience would add to our project as well.

Navigate

A feature we want to implement would allow students to schedule meetings with tutors, professors, or students. Before they schedule a meeting they will be provided a section in which they could describe what they want to talk about. When thinking of this, only one website came to mind that allowed us to do this: Navigate (<https://uwmilwaukee.campus.eab.com>). We identified this website as one of our competitors because it rivals one of our main features. Here a student is able to schedule meetings with their advisor and provide a description on what they want to talk about. Having the ability to schedule meetings is the only similarity between our sites. When building out this feature we plan on making the user interface more friendly than that of Navigate. Another difference between our site and Navigate is that a user does not have to bounce from one website to another trying to schedule a meeting. Our site will allow the user to have these tools directly available to them.

RateMyProfessor

The features in our application that relate to reviews and feedback are inspired by RateMyProfessor (<https://www.ratemyprofessors.com>). This existing solution covers all of the core parts of our review system, such as an overall rating using a scale and a

space for reviewers to comment on their experiences. The major difference will be the scope of the reviews. Some of the features that RateMyProfessor has, such as looking at all professors in a specific school, will not be necessary. Our application will also allow students to communicate directly with professors in order to ask questions prior to taking a class that they teach. This integration is something that is not offered by any other application we could find.

UWM scholarship portal or other scholarship websites

The UWM scholarship portal (<https://uwm.academicworks.com>) is similar to our application in the sense that they both allow users to find scholarships. However, our application has significantly more features including communication with the professors and tutors who are rated, as well as other students. In addition to this, our application allows for the creation of study groups.

Canvas

Canvas (<https://uwm.edu/canvas/home>) is an educational app which is similar to ours. Since both applications are educational, they both have structured classes and give a user the ability to create modules and upload material to the page. However, the key difference between Canvas and our application is the restriction of the classes that the individual is in. In Canvas, a user is directly enrolled into set classes. Our application allows the user to explore different classes by allowing them the ability to choose what subject they want to learn about and join study groups regardless of your enrollment. In addition to this, our application will allow users to schedule meetings with each other, and be able to communicate not only through direct messaging, but with voice calls as well. This includes all user permission levels.

Conclusion

The scope of our project is to incorporate all of our competitor features within these websites/applications into one user-friendly website. The functionality of our website is mainly targeted towards UWM students. In the future we hope to implement our website for multiple colleges. As of right now, if a user was on one website, Canvas for example, and they wanted to schedule a meeting, they would then have to go to a different website. After scheduling the meeting, they would need to go to another app like Discord to meet with. With our website, all of these features would be encompassed

in a single app so users do not feel overwhelmed by the several apps they may need just for educational purposes. The website will include many of our competitors' features but expand upon them and consolidate all useful student tools within one place. While creating this report, search phrases such as "professor review site" and "scholarship site" were used to identify existing applications that have features similar to or exactly like different aspects of our application. We relied on a combination of our personal experience as a student with these sites, frustrated with the myriad of resources we need to keep track of, as well as a short review of how each of the different sites function by visiting them and navigating different pages on the websites.