

Project 3.1 mit-off Merry's Design Doc Draft

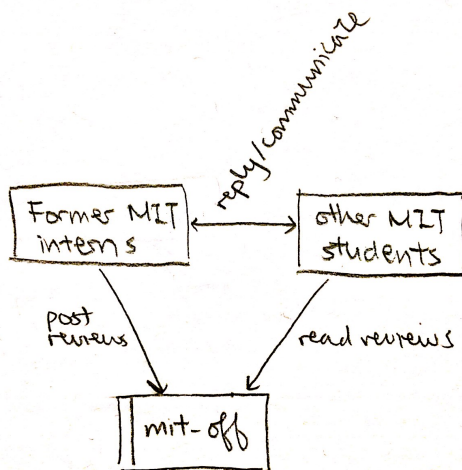
Overview

mit-off is a web application that allows MIT students to post and see each other's reviews of companies.

Purposes

1. Help MIT students learn about and find companies they want to work at from the people they trust.
2. Build stronger communities for MIT students who have shared professional interests.
3. Help MIT students get a better understanding of the industry ecosystem.

Context



Concepts

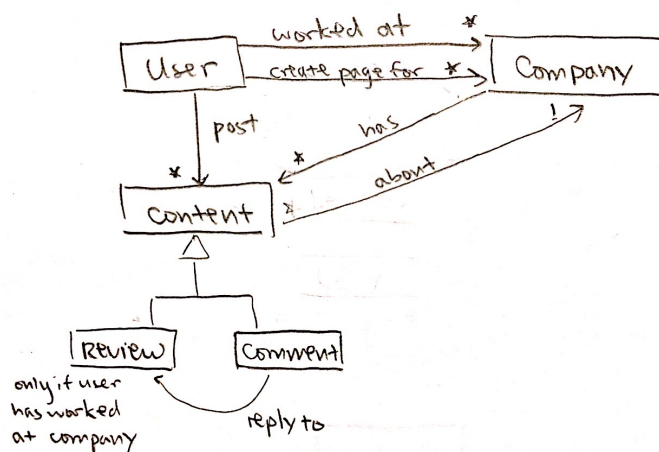
Review: about a company; post a review

Reply: to a review; reply to a review

Favorite: support/bookmark a review/reply; favorite a review/reply

Interest: support/bookmark a company; indicate interest in a company

Data Model



Design Challenges

Audience Scope

The first decision is to decide the audience of our app. Our options include:

1. Everyone on the internet + companies
2. Students + companies
3. MIT students + companies
4. MIT students

We decided to limit our scope to MIT students (4) because we care about improving the job finding experience for MIT students, and we think that establishing trust within the members of a platform is important.

Also in the interest of establishing trust, we decided not to include companies as a separate class of users. While many apps choose to include companies for the sake of having a viable business model, since profitability is not a goal in this class, we chose to not compromise trust for the possibility of money.

It is easy to implement (4) using MIT certificates.

Company Pages

We are not including companies as a user on the site, but we will still need reviews to be about, and grouped by, company. In order to do this, we will have company pages that people can post reviews on. Company pages can be created by anyone who wants to talk about or learn about that given company (similar to how anyone can ask a question about anything on Quora).

To reduce duplicate company pages, we will count on the user to self-regulate. If they try to create a company page with a name that already exists in our database, we will show the user of other company pages with the same name, and ask if they really want to create a new page.

Review regulation

Given only MIT students get to access to app, we need to decide who get to post reviews. We can choose from:

1. Any MIT student
2. MIT students who have worked at the company before

While choosing (1) may allow more people to provide what they know, we decided to value quality over quantity of information. We want to restrict the propagation of gossip, and ensure that the people who talk about a certain company have had first-hand experiences with whoever/whatever they are talking about.

To implement (2), it would be difficult to enforce that only former MIT employees review their respective companies (just as it is difficult to enforce that only those above 18 visit websites selling alcohol). A realistic solution is to only allow people to review if they are able to fill out a form regarding details of their employment (dates, location, project). In addition, since each review will be tied to the person's identity (we are using certificates), we will trust that people will not blatantly lie and compromise their reputation.