Critical Appraisal

In this project we have created an Oracle SQL Database for a Placement Application Tracking System. Furthermore, we have created both a Desktop Application that will enable the admin to carry out a number of tasks that including adding and maintain students, jobs and applications; and a Mobile application that will enable students to carry out tasks such as view and apply to jobs, view and update their application progress. However, this project does have a number of issues that could be improved in the future.

Firstly, this system has the ability to both add and update students from both the admin and the student application. This means that students and admins will be able to edit a student’s information where the admin accounts have the extra ability to edit for example a student’s name or date of birth should it of been entered incorrectly. Additionally, data integrity has been used where possible which is seen for example in the programme code section which provides the admin with a drop down box to enable them to select which programme that student is on so the admin is not required to remember each individual programme code.

Another particularly successful element was the management reports which enable the admin to view tables of students that are active, inactive, placed and active but not yet placed. Additional information about the student has been displayed such as their email should the admin want or need to contact them. Furthermore, in the management report there is a closing vacancies section that shows a list of jobs that are closing within the next 7 days which would be useful as the admin could use this information to send out reminders to students.

Another worthy part of the system is the management dashboard. The dashboard includes: a stacked bar chart that shows the number of placed and unplaced students of each programme; a pie chart that shows the percentage of the proportion of placed to unplaced active students and a calendar that showing the dates of when each job vacancy closes. Furthermore, on the dashboard calendar the admin is able to click on each job which will produce a page showing that jobs details.

On the other hand there are a number of pitfalls with this system. Firstly, the student web application does not implement student login accounts and currently students are only able to access their accounts by clicking on their name in a drop down menu which is not a sustainable as it makes the system unsecure as any student can access another students information. Additionally, passwords are also held in plain text inside the database and so makes this system very vulnerable to possible attacks. Therefore it is important that passwords should be encrypted when stored in the database.

Overall, it is clear that this system does meet the criteria set out for it in terms of providing all the basic functionality of maintaining the data within the database. Furthermore, it also provides a management reports and a dashboard to enable the admin to view the data in a number of different ways. The key area however, that does need to be rectified is the ability for students to login with a username and password.