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| University of Nottingham |
| **Democratic Conferencing Tool** |
| **G52GRP Final Group Report** |
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| gp09-sdb |
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# Executive Summary

**[To be completed after the report content is finalised]**

# Introduction

The purpose of this report is to describe and explain in detail how our group completed our project; the Democratic Conferencing Tool, and all of the stages involved. It will include relevant content from the earlier interim report, while any information that is deemed to be unnecessary will be removed. All documentation completed throughout the project will be present in this report or references made to where it is included within the interim report.

The structure of this report will follow that of the interim report, with the initial section focusing on the problem we hoped to solve as a group, and then move towards the research and planning stage; with sub-headings for the appropriate research sections. The research section will feature condensed material from the interim report, with additions made to account for both changes and any new ideas we have gathered from other sources. After the research is finalised, the focus will shift to individual specifications, with particular interest paid to the technical aspects of the system as that has become the most important part of the project in recent weeks.

**[Introduction to be completed when other sections are written as I’m not sure of the layout yet]**

Research

## Summary of Completed Research

The majority of our research is contained within the interim report, as most of the early focus was upon researching ideas for our system from similar products. This focus has shifted to a more technical aspect as of late; therefore this section will be brief in comparison.

We started with market research into similar web-chat software, in the hope that we could gather ideas that would be suitable for what we wanted to achieve with our system. We looked at a wide range of products, but Google Wave and Effusia Business IM were the most relevant to our plan. We gathered information about how to portray a simple user-friendly interface from these products, Effusia especially, as well as incorporating the idea of leaving short messages to inform other users of your change in status if you were to leave the computer for a certain period of time.

After gathering a small, albeit useful, amount of information from these products, the research shifted onto the technical side of the system, and we began to look into ideas for frameworks that we could utilise as a base for our program. A discussion began about web-frameworks and desktop-based platforms, and a comparison was made in the interim report along with the advantages and disadvantages of each. We then branched further into discussing particular software within each platform and researched a number of products that are both web-based and desktop-based. Having quickly made the decision that we would be using a web-based platform for our software, we had a good idea of which direction we would be heading in regards to the completion of this project.

To allow for ease of communication between group members, we set up on Basecamp; a project management and collaboration tool, which then allowed us to keep in touch with each other far more easily than if we were relying solely on e-mail. At Basecamp, we would all be able to view our progress at the same location, which made things far easier for everyone, as well as having a function for the creation of a ‘To-Do’ list, which allowed us to set tasks for ourselves and one another and keep track of these with the use of deadlines. Once completed, a task can be crossed off the list and you can move onto something else.

Along with the use of this project-management software, we decided to utilise Subversion software (SVN) to create a repository where all of our work could be stored and shared with one another without fear of files conflicting with one another when saved at different locations. This made it possible to keep completely up-to-date with the project on our home computers, as you can access the files at a separate location to where you were working.

**[Summary of Completed Research to be completed along with additional research (JQuery, etc)]**

Functional Specification

User-Interface Specification

# User Interface Documentation

The first section of this documentation will

**[This section shall be formatted]**

## Overall Design

Why did we make the UI as such?

* Usability
  + Simplicity
  + User friendly
  + Neat and tidy looking
  + Not too complicated

Layout

* + Common tabs and links
* Home
* Debates
* Users
* Search
* Help/F.A.Q.
  + Layout and tabs are placed similarly to the initial prototype
  + Clear view of every system functionality

Forms (Button/Tabs/Links)

* + Login (Button/Link ?)
  + Logout (Button/Link ?)
  + Rooms, Profile (Tabs)

Inspiration

* + Various applications such as
  + iChat
  + Adium
  + MSN Messenger
  + Various websites where chatting / forums were present.
  + Facebook

The main designs are based on the functionality of the project. The usability was considered and the designs are made to be simple and based around the initial prototype design with all functions included. Efficiency and user-friendliness are all considered while designing these pages and it is made to be clear and easy to use.

There is a common header where some relevant information can be found such as the “help” page. So the help page will always be there when a user have difficulties in any part of the system. A search bar makes the searching of a room/title/topic easier.

The common footer consists of the SVN Revision number on the bottom right of the page and the developers name/group on the bottom left.

There is also a “Recent” news section. The developers can update users with the new functionality/features.

-Before Logging In/Unregister User

Users/The public will be directed to the Homepage when they first visit the page. There will be an option for register and log in. Unregistered users are not allowed to start a debate or a view the contents of the room. However, they could see the room’s names/titles. They can also see the list of the registered users, but they are not allowed to view the profile of the users without logging in.

-Registering

The most practical way for the registration of this website is the forms, very simple yet effective. Users are required to enter their details and also a valid e-mail address as an email conformation would be sent, right after they click the “Submit” (button/link).

-While logging in

The conventional way of logging in to a website, users are prompted for their (username/email) and a password. These will be in the form of forms. \*\*(There will be an option for forgotten password or username as well just in case the users forget their login details)\*\*

-After logging in

After logging in, the header will show that a user is logged on and it also shows the username. A logout option will be available so that a user can log out anytime he/she likes. A logged on user has the ability to access the Debate Rooms, User Profiles and he/she can start his/her own debate.

## Design Layout

Home

The “Home” section is just a page where the introduction of what our website does.

Nothing too fancy, just a brief explanation with the “Recent Updates” or “Changes” on the right side of the page.

Debates

The debates are displayed as a list. Each debate is wrapped in a box and it takes up a row each. There is a button for creating a new debate, above the list of rooms. The numbers of participants are shown in the left hand side of the name/title of the debate.

Users

In the “Users” page, the registered users are listed. They might have a picture next to their names depending on if they have an account on Gravatar. If they don’t, they would have a “Gravatar” default picture.

Search

---More to be added---

Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ)

The “FAQ” page will contain the questions and answers likely to be asked by a user. Therefore the FAQ will cover the whole system.

---More to be added---

## Inspiration

After doing much research on what design would be best. It came to a conclusion that to have a user-friendly, good looking website, it will be best to stick to the old fashioned simple and nice approach. Nothing too complicated and clear seemed to be the best one to be going for. Therefore, we now have a site whereby it is looking very simple with visible links and tabs for easy access and navigation around the site. The “Frequent Asked Questions” page is accessible by registered and non-registered users.

Before designing the final design, the group had decided that it would be best to keep it around the initial prototype design. Why change something that is already looking good? During the research, various websites and applications had given us the idea on how the debates would be like. There are some websites that have forums and chatting capability. For example, our very own computer science forum page; they have their discussions listed in a list and we(as users) can see the lists of discussions available.

The debates for our project take place in a chatroom with the basic message input field, message displaying field and box where the joined users are shown. The inspiration here comes from a few chatting and instant messaging system, such as Adium on a mac and MSN Instant Messenger on a Window machine. The basic input and display boxes are essential for communications.

On the university’s student union page, they have a polling that students can vote. The results are shown in a pie chart with percentage and different colours representing different opinions.

--More to be added--

Technical Specification

User Specification (System Walkthrough)

Test Data

Project Summary & Reflection

Time Plan

**[Detailed time plan will be added upon completion of the other sections in the report]**