3. Existing system analysis & alternative solutions

3.1. Introduction

In this section, we will focus on several systems that provide part of the functions in ours. Then we will have a closer look into some alternative systems mentioned on our group discussion and explain the reason why they were abandoned.

3.2. Existing system

In this part we will have a look at all kinds of systems that provide one or more same functions as ours do. Mainly we will focus on those which can:

1. Raise a vote(quick vote or ordinary vote)
2. Discuss in groups.
3. Share a file or document.
4. Summarize a discussion or class and get some feedbacks.
5. Provide a convenience access to the system.

3.2.1. QQ

QQ is a multifunctional social system that covers most of the functions above. So we will compare QQ with our system, judging by factors listed above one by one.

For raising a vote, QQ doesn’t perform well for the following reasons. Firstly, You should create a QQ群 if you want to raise a vote. A group discussion, with a more convenient access to create, however, does not provide such service. This means you should pay much time on creating a QQ群 before you can raise a vote, which is not what we expected. Moreover, a vote in a QQ群 does not provides a clear view about whether a member has voted or not. Besides, vote in QQ does not support large-scaled vote like a democracy note in a department.

For group discussing, QQ provides a free environment for everyone to chat freely. This may be not what a group leader has expected. Freely chat will lead to chaos and turn a discussion into a chat. What’s worse, when several topics is discussed together, one can hardly point out which topic a message is for. This will cause collisions between topics and bring confusions to all the members.

For the third factor, QQ does well in providing file transporting service. This includes uploading, saving files in server, and downloading. Yet this is also not so perfect because everyone can upload a file. This kind of over-convenience will lead to piles of spam files, for there is no ask for permissions to group leaders.

For the last factor, QQ does not provide any similar functions, making summary after a meeting or a class impossible. Of course a leader can upload an outline as a file, and ask for a feedback as a discussion. Yet such information will soon be flushed away by loads of spam information.

In conclusion, QQ provides a reliable service in sharing files, but its drawbacks are also apparent. The freedom it provides causes big troubles in finding useful information. Unfortunately, such cases are common while using QQ, which will easily turn a discussing group into a chatting room, or a sharing platform into a messy net disk. All in all, QQ is not for formal or semi-formal discussion, but just for chatting.

3.2.2. Clicker

A clicker is a terminal device that can send signals to a certain receiver. The receiver, usually a computer, can then display the result on the screen. Unlike QQ, which has a vast variety of different functions, the only function of this system is voting.

Clicker performs well in group discussions, for it can display the voting process during voting and the result after the voting is over. This means that a leader can have an instant view on the voting process. With a Clicker, a vote can become more 直观. The terminal device, however, is so simple that it can provide choices only from 0 to 9. The voting process is strictly restricted due to this 单一性. Moreover, the system can only support quick votes, like a little question in a class, or a decision on a meeting. Such system is also not proper for

However, the use of such system is also strictly restricted. Firstly, it does not provide any other additional functions, making it hard to be widely spread. Besides, the system relies on the terminal device to work, while the terminal device is easy to be forgotten or lost. In this case, the function of this system will be badly damaged. This is definitely what we do not want to see. What we need is a system with a higher reliability, at least everyone can access to this system regardless of place and condition.

Thus, clicker is clearly not a system we expected. Though it performs well in voting, it does not provide any other alternative functions. Depending largely on hardware, it is low in poor in extensibility. Such restrictions make clicker less satisfying.