

Online Mentoring System for Startups

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Abstract - Mentoring is a traditional method of transferring knowledge and skills from an established professional in an organization to an inexperienced member in the field. Education sector has found mentoring as quite effective tool since long back and with the advent of new technologies, comes an idea of online mentoring, which is also referred to as e-mentoring. Instead of face-to-face meetings, Online Mentoring System (OMS) uses asynchronous, electronic communications to establish and support the relationship between mentor and the mentee using virtual mode. E-Mentoring uses electronic medium to transfer knowledge and skills from mentor to mentee. It primarily focuses on mentee and mentor relationship. Online Mentoring System is a Client-Server model, which acts as an Interface between Mentor and Mentee. E-Mentoring is fundamentally developed to guide mentee for their startups. In order to achieve this, a rating system is also included using which mentors can easily evaluate and sort the performance of the mentee. Effective mentoring programs offer enough flexibility to help meet each mentee's personal needs, yet allow mentoring relationships to flourish within a safe structure.

Key Words: online mentoring, mentor, mentee, business, guidance, server, client, communication

1. INTRODUCTION

The world of work has changed dramatically. The advances in technology, particularly the pervasiveness of the Internet, has facilitated globalization, spawned new businesses, and created a wide variety of innovative work practices and positions.

Current estimates indicate that there are approximately 228 million people who access the Internet in English alone (Global Reach, 2002). The Internet has given rise to a variety of venues, including chat rooms, newsgroups, mailing lists, interactive websites, and text-based virtual environments (Parks & Roberts, 1998). These media, collectively known as computer-mediated communication (CMC), and other forms of technology have contributed to greater career mobility, an increasing emphasis on project work, virtual organizations, and boundary less careers (Sullivan, 1999). Within this changing career environment, knowledge workers have found that relying on a network of mentors to navigate organizational and career complexities can be a significant strategic advantage (Kram & Hall, 1996). This Computer programming and Information Technology are invading each and every sector of education and business also. To

help or to guide people in their startup business using this technology can be also useful nowadays.

E-Mentoring is a software application which is effectively designed to be used in business sector for the purpose of mentoring the startup ideas. This system contains three users who are admin, mentors and students. The user admin is certain person who controls the system working. The mentors are either a professor or an assistant professor or a teaching faculty or anyone who has good business experience who will guide student or mentee for their startup ideas

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

The newest approach in the field of education which works on the line of non-formal education using internet/online services is "Electronic Mentoring" (e-mentoring). E-mentoring is a means of providing a guided mentoring relationship by a mentor using online facilities to a mentee who is anonymous. It is extensively used to support not only skill development in specific areas of business or industrial needs, but also provide training in the self-development process of the recipient or the mentee. This concept can be used in mentoring for new business ideas. The main problem focused in this project paper is to solve problems faced by the startup entrepreneur for building their ideas in real. It is a mentoring platform is a virtual environment for start-up entrepreneur to find consultant and mentor that are skilled in different fields and get help to start their own business.

3. LITERATURE SURVEY

- [1] The authors of the paper, Sandra L. Williams, Justin Kim, College of Education, University of Illinois, USA "E-mentoring in Online Course Projects: Description of an E-Mentoring Scheme", describes the structure and process of e-mentoring scheme designed as an applied learning component with for the students of master's degree in the university. In this paper they define e-mentoring as the process of using electronic means as the main channel of communication between mentor and mentee which involves the passing of knowledge and skills between the parties.
- [2] In the paper published by Kimberly Nicole Rowland

shows the benefits and limitations of e-mentoring compared with traditional mentoring by taking the help of suitable examples and case studies. In his work new and innovative ways to use e-mentoring in an organization are clearly explained. It concludes by stating that objective of mentoring program is to establish win-win situations for all the employees, mentors and also finally benefit the organization.

[3] Ellen A. Ensher, Christian Heun, and Anita Blanchard from USA presented a new methodology of mentoring based on different computer-mediated-communication (CMC) literature. Through this paper they describe how the context of CMC offers a host of unexplored and intriguing possibilities. This study has recommended the researchers and practitioners to explore online mentoring in an organization by suggesting specific propositions for the scope of future study.

[4] A Pilot study [7] was conducted by two institutions, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and Singapore polytechnic to test how successfully a peer-to-peer mentoring system could be established using both the features of synchronous as well as asynchronous communication. This paper's summary mentions the details about the things which worked well and which did not work so well. This study proved that even reserved students expresses his views through the forum, if this is implemented in the internet or any networked environment can certainly be an effective tool for promoting computer-mediated peer-to-peer mentoring. They suggested that well planned and executed projects of mentoring in an organization are possible through the electronic means which are very efficient and effective.

[5] The paper [6] by shrestha et al, "From face-to-face to e- Mentoring: Does the 'e' add any value to mentors?" discusses about the similarities between face-to-face and online mentoring. This paper also reflects on the ways to enhance generic benefits of mentoring using electronic medium.

3. SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Proposed System

The proposed system which is Online Mentoring System provides very easy, clear and effective way of mentoring. This system shows solution to many problems existing in the current system and the proposed system works in the following way:

- Firstly the user admin gathers all the required information of available mentors and mentee. Then he creates login accounts for each one of them.
- Admin can add or remove the mentor and mentee according to curriculum.

- The user admin also assigns a group of mentee to each mentor.
- The details of sessions attended by mentee are entered into the system periodically.
- The user mentor starts mentoring the mentee after login in the application using the profile details, problem statement etc. of the mentee.
- The user mentee can also initiate for any guidance or solution to problem faced by the mentee to their respective mentor.
- Mentors after logging in the system will view all the information of the mentee like their past history, projects, progress, etc.
- Mentee can also view two different ratings, provided by the system for each mentor as per their experience and their successful mentoring results, and other is given by mentees out of 10.
- Apart from these two ratings the system also provides another rating which is weighted average of above two ratings, which provides the overall performance of the mentor.
- Mentee can evaluate the performance of mentee by sorting the students according to these ratings.
- Depending on the information available of each mentor, Mentee can give right feedback to the mentor.

Working of the proposed system is as shown in the figure:

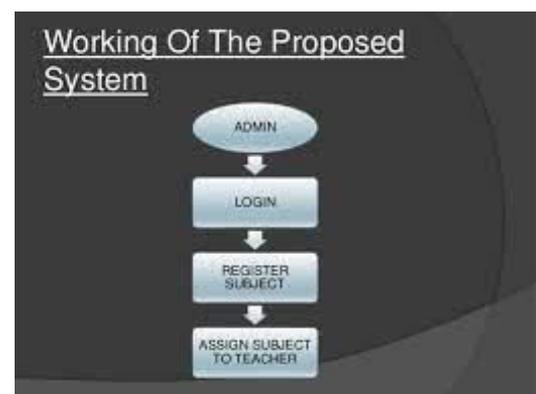


Fig. 1 Proposed system of online mentoring system

3.2 Architecture

Online Mentoring system makes use of two tier architecture that acts as an interface between the mentor and the mentee. OMS is developed on a client-server model that has a user application on client side and the data source on the server side. This system is built under java runtime environment using complete object oriented programming

techniques to handle the real world challenges in the system. The complete frontend is designed and developed with the help of Java architecture. The backend data is handled by MySQL.

The following figure 2 gives the complete architecture of the system, which depicts all the three users i.e. admin, mentor and student and also inter-relationship between them. Overall the system contains like one admin under which many mentors and each mentor has set of mentee and at the same time the mentor is wittingly taking the mentees for giving valuable counseling for the improvement of the student in an academic institute.

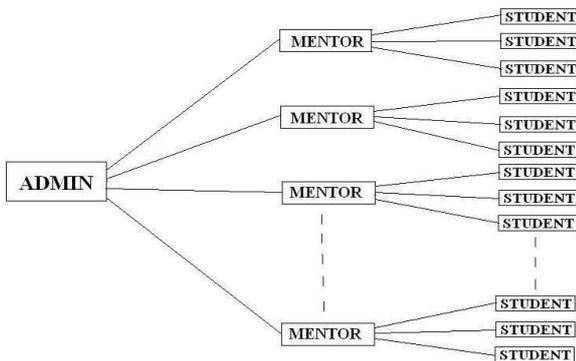


Fig. 2 Architecture of the Online mentoring System

4. RESULT

Online mentoring system application is developed with the help of the concept of software development life cycle (SDLC) and implementing the architecture of java.

5. CONCLUSIONS

This system is user friendly and easy to use as it is based on simple client-server model. In future, one more important user, parent can also be added into the system. In addition to this it can also be programmed with android so that it will become a mobile application, hence converting this system into a Ubiquitous mentoring system which is easily accessible to parents as well as the mentors and mentee. Hence it will allow the mentors to dedicate more time whenever they wish and can give much precise feedback that will give proper guidance and right solution to the problems of mentee.

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Here Fig. 3 represents the Entity-Relationship (E-R) diagram of Online Mentoring System which is useful in describing and designing the database used in implementing the OMS application. This figure shows entities, relationships, attributes, cardinalities, keys, weak entities, weak relationships etc.

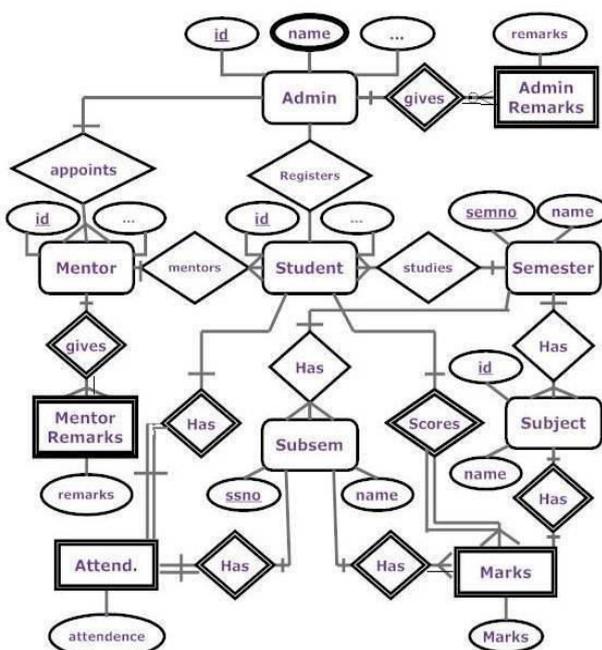


Fig. 3 Entity-Relationship Diagram

