International Journal of Engineering Technology and Management Sciences
Website: ijetms.in Issue: 3 Volume No.8May - June – 2024
DOI:10.46647/ijetms.2024.v08i03.018 ISSN: 2581-4621

Campus Lost: Connect and Recover

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***Abstract*—** The Campus Lost and Found web application aims to address the inefficiencies of traditional lost and found systems in college settings. By providing a centralized platform for reporting and retrieving lost items, this application enhances user convenience and promotes a sense of community. Key features include user authentication, detailed item listings, and robust security measures to prevent misuse. This paper discusses the rationale, design, implementation, and benefits of the application, emphasizing its role in creating a connected and secure campus environment.

Keywords— Lost and Found, Web Application, College Campus, User Authentication, Community Engagement, Data Security

I. INTRODUCTION

Losing personal belongings is a common issue in educational institutions, leading to disruptions and inconvenience for students. Traditional lost and found systems, which rely on physical repositories and manual record-keeping, are inefficient and prone to errors. A digital solution can streamline this process, making it easierfor individuals to report and retrieve lost items a web-based database system resides on an internet server. the database can be accessed through a web browser. a distributed system is a system consisting of a collection of autonomous machines connected by communication networks andequipped with software systems designed to produce an integrated and consistent computing environment.

Distributed systems are helpful in letting the users to co- operate all the activities in a more effective and efficient manner the key purpose of the distributed systems is represented by resource sharing, openness, concurrency,scalability, fault tolerance and transparency.in this project,

we designed and built a lost and found web application with basic functions similar to the lost and found portals available online: user registration, login/logout, changing user password, posting lost items, and posting found items.

Additionally, the application includes advanced search functionality, allowing users to filter posts by category, date, and location, making it easier to match lost and found items. we also implemented a notification system that alerts users when an item matching their description is posted. theplatform supports image uploads for more accurate identification of items and provides contact information exchange features to facilitate direct communication between users. to ensure data security, the application employs encryption for sensitive information and regular backups to prevent data loss. moreover, the user interface is designed to be intuitive and mobile-friendly, ensuring accessibility across different devices. by incorporating these features, the application aims to streamline the process of reuniting lost items with their owners, enhancing user experience and

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efficiency.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Conventional methods of managing lost and found items are time-consuming and often ineffective. Students and staff may need to visit multiple locations and interact with different departments to locate their lost belongings. This paper proposes a web-based application to centralize and automate the lost and found process, reducing the time and effort required for item recovery Lost or forgotten belongings are a regular occurrence in a busy college setting, which causes annoyance and irritation for staff, instructors, and students. Even with efforts to create centralized lost and found systems, the approaches used now are frequently ineffective and difficult to use, which prolongs search durations and lowers the likelihood of finding missing objects returned to their original owners. These problems are made worse by the lack of an efficient digital platform, which makes it more difficult for those who have lost something to get in touch with others who have found it.

Fig 1. Lost items

It is imperative that a comprehensive Lost and Found program designed especially for the collegiate community be created in order to address these problems. The goal of this program is to give users a convenient, centralized platform where they can report missing objects and simply acknowledge those who have discovered them. This solution aims to improve the overall experience of the college community by using technology to increase the efficiency of lost and found procedures and the likelihood of finding lost goods and their owners. With a feature-rich suite of functions, the proposed Lost and Found application for the campus community seeks to transform the way lost things are managed by tackling major issues. People may easily report lost objects using an interface that is easy to use on both mobile and web platforms, making it more accessible and user-friendly. In addition, those who locate items can quickly confirm their find using the app, starting the retrieval procedure. Strong authentication and data security procedures guarantee user privacy and data security, building user confidence and trust. Administrative tools make it easier to track the status of reported items, manage them effectively, and communicate with the appropriate parties.

III. OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the Campus Lost and Found web application are:

- To establish a centralized platform for reporting lost and found items.
- To improve the efficiency and accuracy of the lost and found process.
- To enhance user convenience and accessibility.
- To ensure the security and privacy of user data.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional lost and found systems have significant limitations in terms of efficiency and user satisfaction. Manual record-keeping and physical storage often lead to clutter, mismanagement, and delays in item recovery. Advancements in web technologies have paved the way for digital lost and

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found solutions. These systems leverage databases, user authentication, and real-time notifications to provide a seamless experience. Studies show that digital systems reduce the time required to report and recover lost items, thus increasing user satisfaction. Furthermore, colleges could explore partnerships with local businesses and service providers to expand the reach of their lost and found services. By establishing networks and collaborations with neighboring establishments, colleges can increase the likelihood of recovering lost items and provide students with additional resources for assistance. Another potential solution is to implement physical infrastructure improvements on campus to reduce the likelihood of losing belongings. This could involve installing additional signage and labeling in high traffic areas to help students navigate campus more easily and remember where they've been. Providing secure storage options, such as lockers or cubbies, in key locations across campus could also encourage students to safely stow their belongings when not in use.

The impact of losing items extends beyond mere inconvenience, affecting students' emotional well-being, academic performance, and campus resources. However, by implementing proactive measures, leveraging technology, and fostering a culture of community and collaboration, colleges can work towards reducing the incidence of lost belongings and creating a more supportive and inclusive campus environment for all.

V. SYSTEM DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE

A. Overview

The system architecture of the Campus Lost and Found application follows the client-server model to ensure efficient and secure user interactions. The application comprises various modules, each catering to specific functionalities such as user authentication, item management, and notifications. Firstly, the application addresses the issue of communication gaps that often hinder the retrieval of lost items. In a traditional system, the information about found items might not reach all potential claimants promptly. With a web-based platform, notifications can be sent instantly to users who have lost similar items, significantly increasing the chances of a swiftreunion.

B. User Authentication and Security

User authentication is facilitated through a secure login system, allowing only authorized users access to the platform. Registration is done using institutional email addresses, and multi-factor authentication (MFA) is employed for added security. All data transmissions are encrypted to safeguard sensitive information. Secondly, the visibility of lost and found items is greatly enhanced through a digital platform. Traditional systems often rely on physical notices or word-of-mouth, which can be easily overlooked or forgotten. A web application provides a centralized and easily accessible database where users can post and search for lost and found items at any time. This continuous visibility ensures that items are more likely to be noticed and claimed, reducing the number of unclaimed items languishing in lost and found offices.

C. Item Listings and Search Functionality

User authentication is facilitated through a secure login system, allowing only authorized users access to the platform. Registration is done using institutional email addresses, and multi-factor authentication (MFA) is employed for added security. All data transmissions are encrypted to safeguard sensitive information. Secondly, the visibility of lost and found items is greatly enhanced through a digital platform. Traditional systems often rely on physical notices or word-of-mouth, which can be easily overlooked or forgotten. A web application provides a centralized and easily accessible database where users can post and search for lost and found items at any time. This continuous visibility ensures that items are more likely to be noticed and claimed, reducing the number of unclaimed items languishing in lost and found offices.

D. Database Management

The backend utilizes a scalable database management system such as MySQL or MongoDB. The database is designed to handle large volumes of data efficiently, with regular backups to prevent

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data loss. Advanced query optimization techniques ensure fast and accurate search results.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

A. Technology Stack

The application utilizes a combination of front-end and back-end technologies. HTML, CSS, and JavaScript are used for the front-end, while Node.js or Django powers the back-end. MySQL or MongoDB is chosen as the database management system for their reliability and scalability. Its non-blocking, event-driven architecture handles multiple concurrent connections efficiently, making the application scalable for a growing user base. Node.js also allows developers to use JavaScript for both frontend and backend development, simplifying the development process and promoting code reuse. The extensive ecosystem of modules and libraries available through NPM (Node Package Manager) accelerates development by providing pre-built components and functionalities. Additionally, Node.js's native handling of JSON facilitates seamless data exchange between client and server.

B. Development Methodology

The development process follows agile methodologies, allowing for iterative development and continuous feedback integration. Key stages include requirement gathering, design, development, testing, and deployment.Express.js provides a middleware system that allows developers to extend the functionality of their applications by adding middleware functions to the request-response cycle. Middleware functions can be used for tasks such as parsing request bodies, handling authentication and authorization, logging requests, and error handling. For a lost and found project, middleware can be used to validate user input, authenticate users, and handle errors gracefully Mongoose allows developers to define schemas to represent the structure of the data stored in MongoDB. For a lost and found project, developers can define schemas to represent lost items, found items, users, and any other relevant entities. These schemas define the properties and data types of each entity, providing a clear structure for the data stored in the database. MongoDB is designed to scale horizontally across multiple servers, allowing it to handle large volumes of data and high throughput applications with ease. This scalability makes it suitable for applications that require storing and processing large amounts of data,

such as a lost and found project that may accumulate a large number of items over time. Multer simplifies the process of handling file uploads in Node.js applications by parsing incoming multipart/form-data requests and extracting uploaded files. Multer allows users to upload multiple files simultaneously, making it suitable for applications that require bulk file uploads. Multer provides options for specifying the destination directory and file naming conventions for uploaded files, giving developers control over where and how files are stored on the server. React employs a virtual DOM (Document Object Model) to efficiently update the UI in response to changes in application state. Instead of directly manipulating the browser's DOM, React creates a lightweight representation of the DOM in memory and compares it with the previous version to determine the minimal set of changes needed to update the actual DOM.

VII. USER EXPERIENCE AND FEEDBACK

A. User Interface Design

Feedback from early adopters has been crucial in refining the application. Notable improvements based on user feedback include: Ease of Reporting and Searching: Users have praised the straightforward processes for reporting lost or found items and searching the database. The simplicity and clarity of these processes reduce the time and effort required to use the application. Timely Notifications: Users have appreciated the timely notifications about matches or updates related to their reported items. This feature keeps users informed and engaged, increasing the likelihood of recovering lost items. Advanced Search Filters: In response to user suggestions, advanced search filters have been implemented. These filters allow users to narrow down search results based on criteria such as item type, location, and date, making it easier to find specific items.

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Improved Notification Settings: Users now have more control over their notification preferences. They can customize the frequency and type of notifications they receive, ensuring that they get relevant updates without feeling overwhelmed.

B. User Feedback and Improvements

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VIII. CASE STUDY: SURVEY ANALYSIS

A. Survey Methodology

A pretesting survey was conducted among 100 students to gather data on their experiences with the current lost and found system and their expectations from a digital solution. Key components of the survey methodology included: Sample Selection: 100 students were randomly selected to ensure a diverse representation of the student body. Questionnaire Design: The survey included both quantitative and qualitative questions, covering topics such as the frequency of lost items, the effectiveness of the existing system, and the perceived benefits of an online platform. Data Collection: The survey was administered both online and in person to maximize participation and collect comprehensive data.

B. Survey Results

The survey results highlighted significant insights into the existing lost and found system: Frequency of Lost Items: 70% of students reported having lost personal items on campus at least once. This high incidence underscores the need for an efficient lost and found system. Impact of Lost Items: 50% of these incidents resulted in significant inconvenience, including delays, missed deadlines, and emotional stress. Satisfaction with Current System: The majority of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current lost and found system, citing inefficiencies and lack of timely updates as major issues. Preference for Digital Solution: Over 80% of respondents believed that a web- based solution would be more effective in managing lost and found items, providing real-time updates and improving the chances of recovering lost items.

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C. Analysis and Insights

The survey provided valuable insights that informed the design and development of the Campus Lost and Found application:

Need for Real-Time Updates: Respondents emphasized the importance of receiving real-time updates about lost and found items. This insight led to the development of a notification system that promptly informs users of relevant updates. Secure Data Management: Concerns about the security of personal information highlighted the need for robust data protection measures. As a result, the application incorporates advanced encryption and secure authentication methods. User-Friendly Interface: The survey indicated a strong preference for a user-friendly interface. This feedback guided the design of a clean, intuitive interface that is easy to navigate and use.

IX. SECURITY AND PRIVACY CONSIDERATIONS

A. Data Encryption

To protect sensitive user data, the application employs industry-standard encryption algorithms. Key features include:

Encryption of User Credentials: User passwords and other credentials are encrypted both in transit and at rest, ensuring that they cannot be intercepted or accessed by unauthorized parties. Encryption of Personal Information: Personal details such as contact information and item descriptions are encrypted to maintain user privacy and prevent misuse.

B. Secure Authentication

The application uses secure authentication methods to verify user identities, including:

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA): Users are required to provide two or more forms of identification (e.g., password and verification code) to access their accounts. This reduces the risk of unauthorized access. Regular Security Updates: The authentication system is regularly updated to address new security threats and vulnerabilities, ensuring ongoing protection for user accounts.

C. Privacy Policies

Clear and comprehensive privacy policies are in place to inform users about data collection and usage practices:

Transparency: Users are clearly informed about what data is collected, how it is used, and who has access to it. User Control: Users have control over their personal information and can request the deletion of their data at any time. This empowers users to manage their privacy according to their preferences.

D. Regular Audits

Regular security audits are conducted to identify and address potential vulnerabilities: Proactive Measures: Security audits involve thorough reviews of the application's code, infrastructure, and security protocols to detect and fix issues before they can be exploited. Compliance: Audits ensure that the application complies with industry standards and regulations, providing users with confidence in the security of their data.

X. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Impact on Campus Life

The Campus Lost and Found application is expected to significantly improve the efficiency of the lost and found process:

Reduced Time and Effort: By streamlining the process of reporting and searching for lost items, the application minimizes the time and effort required from students and staff. This leads to quicker recovery of lost items and less disruption to daily activities. Minimized Stress: The efficiency and reliability of the application reduce the stress and anxiety associated with losing personal items, contributing to a more positive campus experience.

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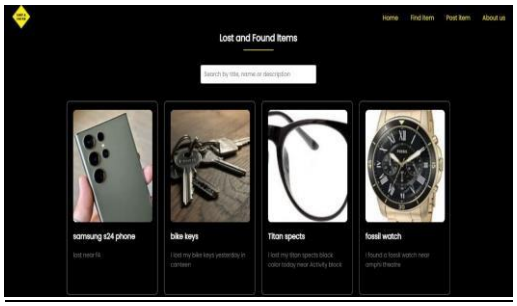
B. Community Building

Community Engagement through Lost and Found Platform

The lost and found application not only serves a practical purpose but also significantly contributes to building a strong sense of community within the campus. By enabling students and staff to assist each other in recovering lost items, the platform promotes mutual support andcollaboration. Here's how:

- Mutual Assistance: Users are encouraged to report found items, which helps their peers retrieve lost belongings. This act of kindness fosters a supportive environment where individuals feel cared for and valued.

- Peer Support: The application creates opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions, strengthening relationships and encouraging a culture of cooperation. When users help each other, they form connections that might not have happened otherwise.



- Sense of Responsibility: Reporting lost and found items instills a sense of responsibility and accountability among users. Knowing that their actions can positively impact someone else's day encourages a more conscientious and community- minded attitude.
- Goodwill and Trust: Regularly seeing acts of honesty and helpfulness can enhance the overall trust within the campus community. As users experience or witness the return of lost items, their faith in the community's integrity grows.

- Inclusivity and Participation: The application can include features that highlight and celebrate stories of returned items and the good deeds of community members. This can motivate more users to participate actively and contribute to the positive culture.

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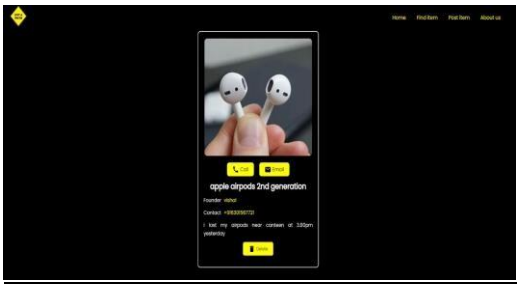

C. Future Enhancements

Integrating Advanced Technologies for ImprovedFunctionality

To ensure the application continues to meet the evolving needs of the campus community, several future enhancements are planned. These enhancements will leverage cutting-edge technologies to improve functionality, security, and accessibility:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Improved Item Matching:

Enhanced Search Capabilities: AI can significantly improve the accuracy and efficiency of item matching. By analyzing patterns and characteristics of reported lost and found items, AI algorithms can suggest potential matches more effectively.

Image Recognition: Incorporating image recognition technology can allow users to upload photos of lost or found items. AI can then compare these images against a database to find matches, even if the descriptions vary.

Predictive Analytics: AI can analyze data to predict trends and common locations where items are frequently lost or found, helping to deploy resources more efficiently.

Blockchain Technology for Secure Data Management: Immutable Records:

Blockchain can provide a tamper-proof record of all transactions related to lost and found items, ensuring the data's integrity and security.

Transparent Processes: With blockchain, the entire process from item reporting to recovery can be made transparent and traceable, building trust among users.

Decentralized Storage: Utilizing decentralized storage solutions can protect user data from centralized points of failure, enhancing overall data security.

Development of Mobile Applications for Increased Accessibility:

User-Friendly Interface: Mobile applications can offer a more intuitive and user-friendly interface, making it easier for users to report and search for items on-the-go.

Real-Time Notifications: Push notifications can keep users updated about the status of their reported items or anypotential matches, improving the chances of quick recovery.

XI. CONCLUSION

The Campus Lost and Found web application offers a moreefficient, accessible, and secure solution for managing lost and found items on college campuses. Positive feedback underscores its potential to transform traditional processes and enhance the campus experience. In our project, we've designed a comprehensive dashboard to facilitate seamless navigation and access to essential functionalities. Users caneasily peruse through displayed contents, ensuring a user- friendly

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experience. The inclusion of a search button enhances efficiency, enabling users to swiftly locate specific objects of interest within the database. Additionally, our platform features an intuitive "Add Item" section, providing users with the capability to seamlessly contribute new items to the database. Furthermore, users can effortlessly manage their contributions, including deletions when necessary, ensuring data accuracy and relevance. To further enhance user engagement and convenience, we've integrated a feature that allows users toupload images directly from their device's camera, streamlining the process of item submission and enriching the database with visual information. A few more features that could be added to the web application are the ability to send emails and text alerts to students when their misplaceditems are located and brought back to the ASI lost and found office; a slightly improved user interface for the listings page, with a dedicated lost and found page; and a strong encryption algorithm for the purpose of authentication. With only one click of the program, administrators should be able to have the web application send an email or text message to their mobile phone automatically. In order to make the current program more user-friendly, I would like to add this capability to theonline interface in future work.

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