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Get-Together: A Web-Based Platform for Organising, Booking, and Management of Venues, Services, Events, and Commodities

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Abstract

Planning an event is often a complicated and demanding process that requires the coordination of several independent service providers, including venue managers, caterers, decorators, entertainers, musicians, vendors, and many others. Relying on traditional booking approaches usually means depending on manual communication or third-party agencies, both of which can introduce unnecessary delays, scheduling conflicts, higher costs, misunderstandings, and limited room for personalisation. This research proposes a comprehensive web-based platform designed to simplify the booking and management of event-related services and commodities. The system aims to deliver a smooth and intuitive experience where users can explore multiple options, compare services based on different criteria, customise their event requirements, and confidently select the most suitable providers. By removing intermediaries and enabling direct interaction between clients and service owners, the platform enhances transparency, reduces expenses, and minimises logistical challenges. Key features include automated scheduling tools, real-time availability tracking, a user-friendly interface, secure payment processing, and a strong focus on data protection. This study discusses the system's architecture, design strategy, and implementation technologies, highlighting its potential to modernise and significantly improve efficiency within the event management sector.

Keywords: Event management, booking, organising, normalisation, artificial intelligence

INTRODUCTION

This project provides most of the basic functionality required for any event type. The system allows the user to select the date of the event, plan the event, estimate the cost of organising an event, and book required services/commodities for an event.

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Event planning involves various tasks, including finding and booking suitable venues and availing of services such as catering, decoration, entertainment and many more. Traditionally, this process has been time-consuming, stressful, requires a lot of human effort, is overpriced, and has a high chance of failure due to some errors and faults, with event organisers frequently facing challenges in integrating with multiple service providers and managing bookings and multiple participants efficiently. The emergence of digital platforms has provided an opportunity to streamline these processes, making it easier for event organisers or customers to plan and execute successful events, while saving a lot of money, time, and effort and can explore more

categories and options for an event. For service providers, this system will help them manage their bookings, workers, business, advertisements and a lot more, so they can expand their business and reach to more customers and generate more jobs.

BACKGROUND

Event planning and management have become an essential part of modern society, catering to a wide range of functions such as weddings, corporate conferences, birthday parties, concerts, college fest, anniversaries, festivals, exhibitions and a lot more. The success of an event depends on various factors, including venue selection, catering services, decorators, and entertainment providers. Traditionally, these services were booked through third-party event planning agencies or manually one by one, requiring customers to rely on intermediaries to manage their event needs or to roam in the city and reaching out to them one by one and then explaining them everything and trying to match according to their schedule, and negotiating with prices, no feedback/reviews from their past clients, no price transparency, unnecessarily opting for facilities which are not required at all, and no confirmation of getting high-quality services at desired time [1]. This means there is always a small risk of an unwanted situation, which might occur and can lead to conflict and arguments later. And in case of cancellation of service, what about a refund? And also, service providers do not have any information about the customer they are dealing with. Whether he is genuine or not, whether he will pay or not, whether he will take charge of the service he opted for and a lot more are there [2].

Various platforms serve for event management and venue bookings, such as BOOKiiIT, Celebration, the Zhengzhou University online booking system for sports venues, and the online university facilities reservation system, among others. BOOKiiIT was built to tackle problems such as the absence of knowledge of available spaces, the existing/traditional system being boring, improper management of booking, clashes in booking, and communication failure [3]. So, it was a space management system that was built by research fellows of the Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Delhi [4]. The Event app was a hall/venue management software that was used to administer the venue and hall bookings for colleges and their departments. Their whole focus was on venues, and their target audience was the administrators of the colleges, such as the dean and the head [5]. Skedda was the platform that used to help and take lecture rooms on rent/lease [6]. Celebrations was the web portal for searching for venues. Its main highlights were payment, customer booking and the hall [7]. Zhengzhou University's platform was the university sports venue booking system. It is used to book venues for sports events, play sports in the university, or book space for organising a sports event [8].

EXISTING SYSTEM

We have studied and visited many websites that are related to our topic, "event management system". There are similar platforms for the event management system; some of them are working, and some are not. But all of them involve a third party to book all the needs in the event that there is no direct contact between the user and the vendor [9]. They focus on a very limited area, and users will not be able to find everything they need under one platform. The system will face difficulty in adjusting to future needs and might fail in the international market and trend. System maintenance will be costly and difficult as the system is not scalable, reliable, and will not be able to handle vast amounts of data smoothly and effectively, and data might be repeated, and manipulating data might affect the system, and might damage the system. Adding more functionalities to the system is much more difficult and might require vast changes in the architecture of the system [10]. No scope and discussion of bringing Artificial Intelligence into the system.

Disadvantages

While platforms like Party One, Book Events, and others have made event planning more accessible, they still come with several limitations that affect both users and service providers.

The disadvantages of the existing system were:

- Limited customisation options available,
- High service charges and hidden fees,
- Lack of direct communication between users and vendors,
- Limited vendor availability and regional coverage,
- No transparency of cost,
- Opting for unnecessary facilities,
- Complex booking process,
- Customer support issues,
- Fake review and vendor credibility,
- Lack of real-time availability and instant booking,
- No end-to-end event management features.

The main purpose of the system, which is to save time, lessen human effort, and reduce conflicts of date and availability, is not being tackled as much as it should be: Users cannot be fully assured of their bookings, and conflicts might appear later, Scaling systems to any number of users, cities, categories, vendors, booking, and payment is very complex, and the system might not be suitable and may fail drastically if it tries to fit the international market.

PROPOSED SYSTEM

The main objective of this event booking and servicing system is to provide a cost-effective, all-in-one platform for customers and businesses to plan and organise events without the problem of coordinating multiple participants separately. The system is built to deal with the challenges faced in traditional or existing event planning systems, such as high costs, lack of transparency, communication gaps, making the whole booking process easy, and limited service options.

By bringing venue selection, catering, decoration, entertainment, photography, and additional event services into a single platform, users can efficiently manage their events without needing a third-party event planner or organiser.

The system aims to provide a centralised platform where users can browse, compare, and book the required services related to an event under one roof. This system will make the whole booking process smooth and will reduce event planning stress, ensure transparency in pricing and service offerings, allow users to select vendors based on reviews, quality of work, and real-time availability, Enable direct vendor communication to remove middlemen and reduce unnecessary charges, Enhance customer convenience with features like chatting with assistant, reaching out to the team in easy steps, receipt of payment and booking, digital contracts, and online payment processing. In case of cancellation, full support to users.

METHODOLOGY

The development of our system involves a basic tech stack to ensure a robust, dynamic, and user-friendly platform. It was kept very basic intentionally so that the system could be built completely and on time. The basic structure and functionalities were built using HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, providing a solid basis for the web pages. To enable advanced manipulation and dynamic updates of the web pages, we implemented advanced JavaScript techniques such as AJAX (Asynchronous JavaScript and XML) for asynchronous web page updates, along with jQuery and jQuery-UI to enhance interactivity, user experience, and ensure that content gets updated over the web page without refreshing the whole page.

For the user interface (UI) and overall user experience (UX), we employed Bootstrap (version 5), which offered a responsive and mobile-first framework, along with AOS (Animate on Scroll) for nice and engaging scroll animations. Google Fonts was used to improve the visual appeal and typography of the system.

PHP (Hypertext Pre-processor) served as the primary server-side scripting language, facilitating efficient handling of backend operations and server-side logic, while JavaScript was used for client-side scripting. Database management was handled using SQL (Structured Query Language) and MySQL, ensuring secure and efficient storage and retrieval of data. The database was carefully designed and normalised to allow easy manipulation without affecting the system's integrity. This made the overall database architecture robust, scalable, practical, reliable, fast, secure, cost-effective, and easy to maintain, and will improve the overall performance of the system.

To send emails from the system side to the client side safely and securely, we used PHPMailer. The development and design processes were assisted by several tools such as Canva for graphic design, Figma for designing and visualising web page layout and structure, StarUML for creating UML diagrams, eraser.io for designing databases, creating Entity Relationship (ER) diagrams, XAMPP for a local web server environment, and Microsoft-365 for documentation and collaboration.

This combination of tools and technologies allowed us to build a complex system with a seamless user experience, robust backend operations, and dynamic web functionalities, which can fit in any market across the globe, can be scaled easily, is easy to maintain and update, can handle a large audience and many more benefits.

PROCESS FLOW

Use Case Diagram

The use case diagram in Figure 1 shows the basic use cases of this system.

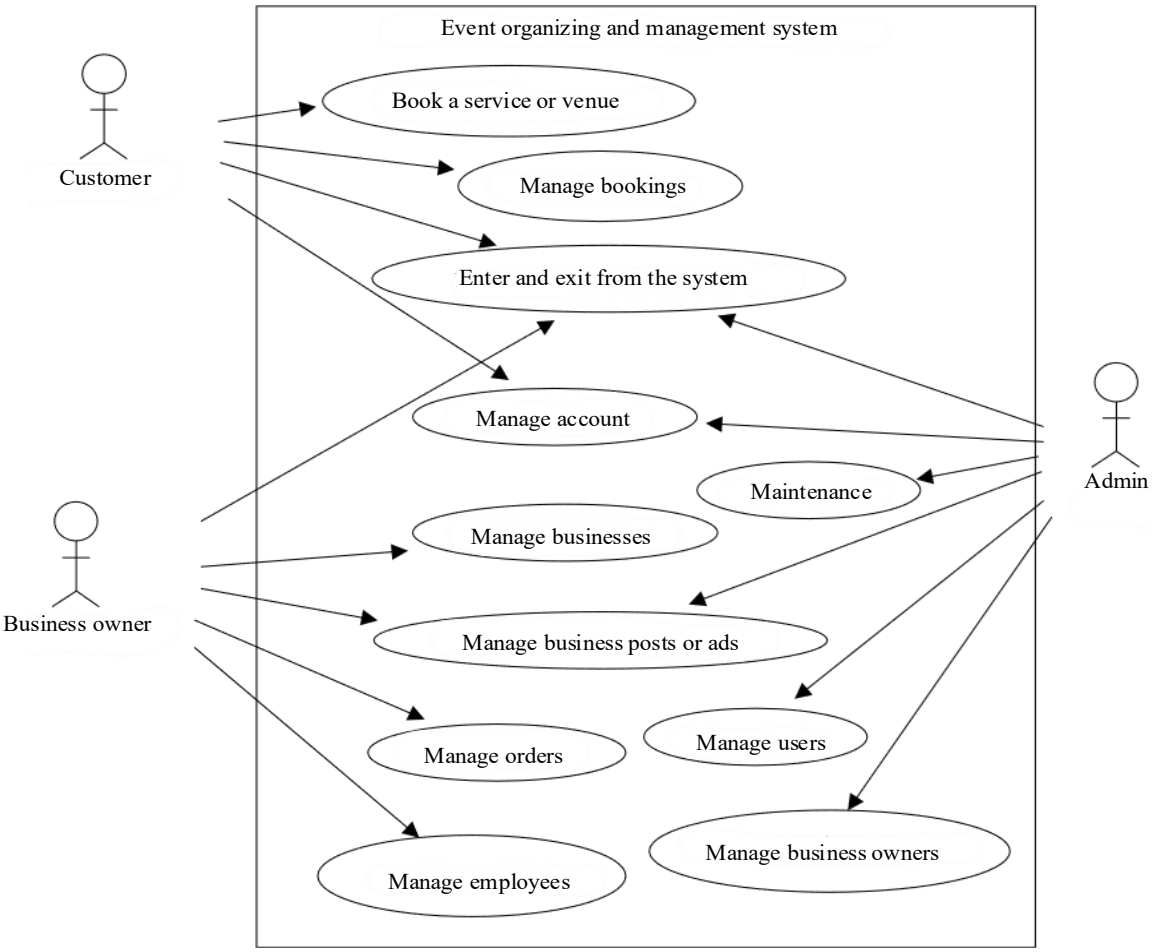

Figure 1. Use case diagram of the system.

Customer

When a Guest enters the system, it arrives on the Homepage. On the Homepage, he can view different categories, features of the system, and customer feedback, and interact with the different components such as the header, footer, search bar, and off-canvas menu. From the off-canvas menu, he can visit different pages such as the About-Us page, the Contact-Us page, the Help page, and the Business Enquiry page, and can Sign-In/Sign-Up for the system.

If the Guest is a customer, then after registering himself as a customer, he will log in to the system. If already logged in, then he can also visit the Profile page, View Bookings page, and Log Out from the system by clicking on the links or buttons present in the off-canvas menu.

Now, on the Homepage, if a Search is made or a category is selected, or a city is selected, then he is redirected to the Result page. And will see Advertisements/Posts related to his needs or his criteria, such as the category he selected, the city from which he belongs, or if not logged in, then after selecting a city, or the search he made. Ads will display only necessary details such as banner/poster of Ad, Title, Short Description, MRP, Net Price, and Ratings. On the Result page, he can apply sorting based on price, date of posting, reviews, etc. He can also apply different Filters such as price range, facilities available, ratings, verified service providers, etc.

Now, if he wants to view all the details of the post, check availability or book it, he will click on it. Then he will reach the Post Details page, where he can view every detail related to the post. Details include all the supporting images of services, title, description, facilities, pricing details, terms and conditions.

Now he can check the availability of Service/Venue/Commodity, and if he is logged in, then he can add it to his cart, or he can book it immediately by clicking on the book now button. If he decides to add an item to the cart so that he can book it later, book multiple things at once or just estimate the cost of organising an event. Now, if he is done with adding items to his cart and wants to book them, then he must check out, or if the user does not add items to his cart and book them directly, then he will be redirected to the payment page/payment gateway. After successful payment, his request for a booking will be made to the business owner. After his approval, his booking will be successful, and he can get the receipt for his booking. The use case diagram in Figure 2 shows the basic use cases of this system. And if somehow, he is unsatisfied with his booking or changes his decision, before his booking date arrives, he can request to cancel his booking after approval from the business owner. His booking will be cancelled, and users can check their booking status on the view bookings page.

And if he wants, he can also ask for help at help page. And on the help page, he can view frequently asked questions, chat with the chatbot, and if he wants, he can talk to our executive.

Now, if he wants to leave the system, then he will log out of the system by clicking on the log-out link present in the off-canvas menu.

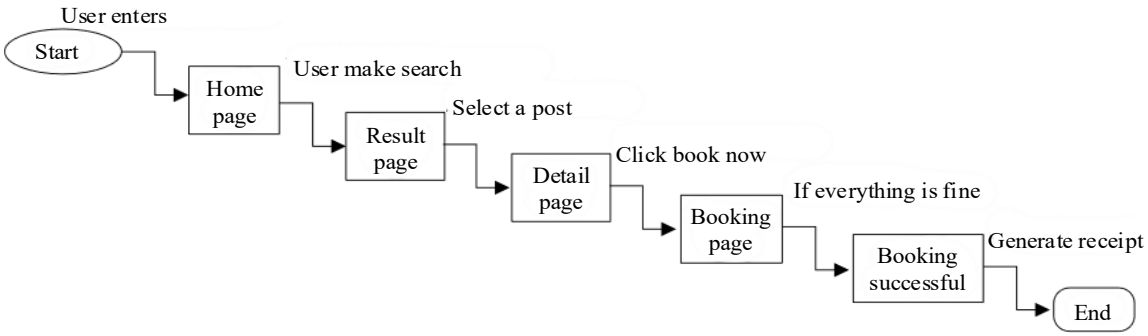

Figure 2. Steps involved in the booking made by the customer.

Business Owner/Service Provider/Freelancer

Now, if the Business Owner arrives on the system, then firstly, he will also interact with the Homepage and sign in, log out, and view the profile, about-us page, contact-us page, header, and footer, which work the same as those of the customer.

He cannot create his account by himself, as the team will verify the person and whether he is legally eligible to provide services and can earn money through our system by providing relevant services. So, when he reaches our system for the first time, he will not have an account. He must visit the For-Businesses page and fill out a form by entering basic business details. The team will contact him soon and will ask for legal documents, licenses, certificates, etc., to make sure he is eligible to use our platform. Now, once the team finds him eligible to use our platform, they will make an account for him and will send login credentials to him at the given email.

Then he can log on to the system using login credentials and can change the password later. Now he will register his business. While he will be registering his form, he will fill in all the details related to his business, such as his business name, business address, business city, business category, business subcategory, license numbers, GST numbers, etc. These details will not be shown to the customers as they are not interested in viewing license numbers and other details.

Now, once he is done with registering his first business, he will go for creating a post. There, he will select the business for which he is creating the post/ad, title of the post, description of the post, pricing details, terms and conditions, images to be shown on his post, facilities available, and many other details that will be shown for his post.

Now, once he is done entering all the details, his post will first reach the admin. Once the admin verifies that all the details in the post are correct and are not inappropriate, then they will approve the post, and then customers can see that post.

Now suppose a business owner gets some private booking or his service will not be available at some date due to some reason, then he can also inform the system about that, and the system will not allow booking for that date, and customers cannot select that date when they are booking for that service. So, this will end the conflict between the customer and business owner, and no argument will happen later. And customers can trust that they will get their service on their booked date.

If the user books some service, then their booking status will be pending, and once the Business Owner approves/accepts the booking, only then can the user generate payment and a booking receipt. As a user can see the booking status, it will end conflicts too, as what if a user books a service, but the service provider is unknown to that booking, so this will create a huge conflict. So, to avoid this conflict, this functionality is added.

This system will facilitate business owners to manage their employees, as most of the service providers have teams and many people associated with them. So, managing all of them is a big conflict, so our system will help solve this problem so that even a single man can manage so many people.

Admin

Now, if the Business Owner arrives on the system, then firstly, he will also interact with the Homepage and sign in, log out, view profile, about-us page, contact-us page, header, and footer, which work the same as those of the business owner.

Now he will have a personal admin dashboard for himself, and from there he can manage business owners, customers, and business posts, handle help queries, handle business inquiry queries, handle the maintenance of the system, and can perform many more activities.

CONCLUSION

We have implemented various concepts of data structures and algorithms (DSA), software engineering, relational database management systems (RDBMS), web technology, cyber security and law, computer architecture, and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to successfully build a robust, reliable, scalable and efficient web-based application software which will be used in many aspects such as problem-solving, research and development, training an AI model, lessen the conflicts arising in an event organizing and management industry and bring down the cost of organizing an event, lessen the availability of date conflicts, handling of a large number of people in a gathering, and save a lot of time, and decrease the overall human and manual efforts.

Future Scope

Future works include adding more new features to our system, such as AI wrong User detection, wrong Business Owner detection, wrong Business Post detection, an AI chatbot, training our AI model so that it can assist everyone accessing our system with a dedicated AI chatbot to handle queries and AI-based suggestion of services and commodities to customers.

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