Placement Management System

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Outline

Origins

The Placement Management System (PMS) orginated from the School of Electrical and Mechanical Engineering. Despite a number of innovations in practice by Mr Laird within the school, several remaining problems prompted its initial development:

Problems with non web enabled database

1. Students created and submitted their CVs early in the year, leaving them "frozen in time";

2. Lists were produced for each company, and students had to regularly travel in to review the notice board;

3. The process was slow;

4. Valuable academic time was diverted from more useful activity.

Origins

We began to explore the possibility of online solutions to these problems.
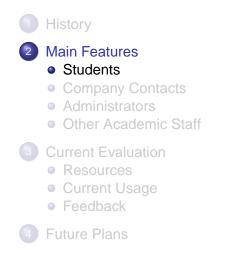
Timeline of development

1. In 2000/2001 Dr Turner plans and supervises a final year student project to investigate the feasibility;

2. The project is successful and Dr Turner develops the first release of the software for use in 2001/2002;

3. The system is augmented continuously and in 2002/2003 dissemination leads to plans for integration with WebCT and the forthcoming PDP System.

4. It is adopted by three schools in Informatics (to become Engineering) from 2003/2004.

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Features
Students (preplacement)

The PMS isn't the only system to support placement preparation.

Other Resources

- A great deal of resources are made available to the students using WebCT, in the form of generic briefing materials about placement, and in many cases course specific material.

- The PDP System is extremely useful in capturing information that will help the student in placement, for example, CV creation and goal setting.

- The PMS allows transparent access to students from both these systems (no additional login required).

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Features
Students

Key features for Students

- Students can review and enter information around the clock and from any location.
- Students can edit their CVs online, and update them constantly (this is now a feature of the PDP System);
- Students can very flexibly search for and view company and vacancy details, and apply to vacancies by "attaching" a CV and a cover letter if they wish;
- Students can easily see which companies and/or vacancies have been added or altered in a given time period or since their last visit.

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Students

Key features for Students ... continued

- Students can access relevant resources placed online for them. These resources can be in a general area added by administrators, or could be "company resources", uploaded by a company for any purpose. Careful security is applied to uploaded files.

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Features
Placed Students

Students on placement will also use the system.

Features for placed students

- to read important announcements;
- to obtain information on assessment, health and safety etc.;
- to see the results of assessments recorded in the system;
- to fill in evidence of their health and safety compliance.
- In addition they will also obtain information on their academic tutor, including a photograph and their contact details.

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Student Vacancy Search

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Student Application List

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Features
Company Contacts

Key Features for Company Contacts

- Contacts can edit their own contact information to help keep it current;
- They can also edit information about the company and any vacancies, producing much richer and current information, and a sense of ownership for the company;
- Companies can decide to allow online applications (the great majority do), or to require their own dedicated application procedure.

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Features
Company Contacts

Key Features for Company Contacts ... continued

- Contacts can see relevant resources made available to them, and companies have space allocated for resources they wish to make available;
- Contacts can view all students that have applied for vacancies, together with information on their availability, application time, cover letters, attached CVs etc.
- The list of student applications is triaged into those students who they have placed with themselves, those students still available, and those students who are no longer available.

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Administrator Company Student List

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Administrator Resource List

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Administrator Vacancy Editor

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Features
Administrators

Both academic and clerical staff administer the PMS, and we
will use the term administrator for both here.
Administrators can access, view and edit information as all
other users, based on strict access controls. This enables them
to "see" what their supported users "see".

Features for administrators

- When these users first login, they see all the recently
  changed / created companies and vacancies. Like other
  users they can examine any vacancy on the system.
- Of course, they can also search for vacancies via flexible
  forms.

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Administrator Home Page

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Administrator Vacancy Viewer

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Company Editor Search Results

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Features
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Features for administrators

- On a big, multi school system it is important administrators only see what they need;
- Strict policy based security defines an upper limit on the allowed activities of a given admin user;
- In addition, admin users are limited to specified schools and / or courses (for which other policies can be defined if needed).
- Root users are above the security system, they create admin users and assign policies and can take all actions on all students unconditionally.

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Administrator Admin Editor

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Administrator Policy Editor

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Administrator School / Course Security

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Features for administrators ... continued

- administrators can gather information on all students for which they have appropriate permissions;
- this can be on an individual or cohort basis;
- they can also export a spreadsheet of important statistics on a cohort for further or detailed analysis.

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Administrator Student Status

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Administrator Student Lists

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Administrator Student Lists

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Features for administrators ... continued

- at a glance the system status page reveals a great deal of information about the most recent usage of the system.

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Administrator Status Page

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Administrator Status Page

Placement Management System | System Status - Mozilla Firefox

File   Edit   View   Go   Bookmarks   Tools   Help

Staff Users

There are 118 staff users in the database, of which the 10 most recent visitors are listed below.

Username	Real name	Last access
amoore1	Dr Adrian Moore	2005-06-13 19:51:53
dirvine	Dr David Irvine	2005-06-13 16:37:25
dpatterso	Dr David Patterson	2005-06-13 14:48:56
sdaly1	Ms Sheila Daly	2005-06-13 13:09:06
nevans	Dr Noel Evans	2005-06-13 11:53:28
rmckeown	Mr Robert McKeown	2005-06-13 10:13:50
kgilmour1	Dr Ken Gilmour	2005-06-13 14:53:01
mmorgan	Mrs Margaret Morgan	2005-06-09 14:44:24
jblakley	Dr Jim Blakley	2005-06-09 11:39:01
jquinn1	Mr Justin Quinn	2005-06-08 16:49:28

Company Contact Users

There are 1401 company contact users in the database, of which the 10 most recent visitors are listed below.

Username	Real name	Last access	Company
mrobinson1	Ms Michelle Robinson	2005-06-13 22:11:08	BIC SYSTEMS LTD
ccroucher	Ms Caroline Croucher	2005-06-13 16:52:52	Littelfuse Ireland Ltd
mgraham	Mr Martin Graham	2005-06-13 16:51:14	Wrightbus Ltd - IT Dept
pnixon	Mr Phil Nixon	2005-06-13 16:13:44	Ulster Community & Hospital Trust
jcowan	Mr Joe Cowan	2005-06-13 15:51:33	Keylite Roof Windows
mmcquilla	Mr Michael McQuillan	2005-06-13 14:58:53	Randox Laboratories Ltd
fmckenna	Miss Fiona McKenna	2005-06-13 14:28:54	Century Homes Ltd
mallen	Ms Michelle Allen	2005-06-13 14:05:14	DARD
cbarton	Mrs Catherine Barton	2005-06-13 13:31:39	Barton Industrial Services Ltd
jdoherty1	Mrs Jennifer Doherty	2005-06-13 11:51:35	Moyola Precision Engineering Ltd

Student Users

There are 1894 student users in the database, of which the 10 most recent visitors are listed below.

Username	Real name	Last access
14157104	Mr SJ McClure	2005-09-05 14:52:00

Done

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Features for administrators ... continued

- the system can create reliable record keeping by its main functionality, automated logging and a facility of notes that can be created but never deleted nor edited.

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Administrator Log Viewer

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Features for administrators ... continued

- resources can be uploaded or manipulated;
- automated mail templates may be edited (which the system used periodically for predefined events);
- assessments can be edited to allow for staff to record them on the system.

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Administrator Resource Editor

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Administrator Mail Template Editor

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Administrator Assessment Editor

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Features
Other Academic Staff

Other academic staff use the system, for them the features are:

- an ability to maintain and update their contact information;
- they are able to view all contact information for students they are a tutor for, and also (if the assessment regime is defined) to assess the student online.
- they also have access to appropriate resources.

In addition course directors have access to the student information systems for students on their courses, allowing them to better manage their cohorts.

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Resources

Resources Required

- the system is standards compliant, and will view in all compliant browsers, including text mode.
- developed with open source software, GNU/Linux, PHP, MySQL, Apache.
- designed to be lightweight (on resources) and efficient.
- can be run on hardware often discarded as obselete (currently Pentium 200), soon to migrate.

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Current Usage

The system is used 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Over the last year over 8 gigabytes of data was transferred. Currently the system supports the following, with many more to be added:

Students	1825
Staff	118
Administrators	32
Super Admin Users	2
Company Contacts	1425
Total Users	3400
Companies	1213
Vacancies	435 (New)

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Feedback

The system has been well receieved by all stakeholders.
Constructive criticism has been received as well, and this has
led to major improvements in the system.
The University of Ulster cited the system in its recent (April
2005) QAA institutional audit SED as an example of best
practice. The audit team requested a live demonstration of the
system.

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Feedback
Students pre placement

Student pre placement

"The support offered by the placement web site is exceptional; it is simple to use, very efficient and dependable. It is very reassuring to know that the staff behind the system are so dedicated and competent. This service in my opinion is invaluable, without it I think many students would have great difficulty in securing so many places in industry. In making relations and communication easier and faster between prospective employers and students the site portrays a very professional attitude, which is in my opinion, gives UUJ students an immediate edge."

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Feedback
Students on placement

Student on placement

" I would like you to know that I feel the website is more that sufficient and useful while on our placement and provides us with ample information to complete the tasks required."

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Feedback
Academic Tutor

Academic Tutor

"I am the Academic tutor for 3 students on placement. I have used the new system and have noted the following; 1. the system is fast, user friendly and provides all the information that I need to make contact with the student, the employing organisation and the industrial contact. 2. all the necessary information is also provided in relation to assessment procedures, timescales, deadlines etc. I find this facility particularly useful."

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Feedback
Companies (Multinational)

Companies (Multinational)

" I only used the web the once yesterday and i thought it was very good. Easy to use and very straight forward, and believe me it would need to be for someone like me.
Very user friendly."

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Feedback
Companies (SME)

Companies (SME)

" I have found the web-based system a valuable tool in assisting in gaining visibility of the course content, grades and ambitions of students seeking placement opportunities. The system also provides my company, as employer, with the information required to ensure the students' requirements are met by the placement position. I would recommend that all students seeking placement opportunities and their resultant placement employeers have access to this or a similar resource. It has provided our company with the visibility we needed while removing the leg work of recruiting."

Future Plans

There is still a great deal planned for the future development of the system. For example:

- further adapting the system to deal with diverse practice as it is required by different faculties, schools and courses;
- closer integration with the WebCT and PDP Systems;
- restructing of existing code towards an improved framework agreed by developer meetings;
- extensions to the existing automated email systems;
- improvements in the scalability of the system.