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Medical Education

Django & LaTeX: experience in developing the system for the preparation of methodological guidelines for studying the discipline "Human Anatomy"

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Abstract

The article shows the possibilities of integration of Django web framework and typesetting program LaTeX to automate the creation of methodological guidelines for students by the example of the discipline "Human Anatomy". The developed system demonstrates the possibilities of separating work on the content and reducing the time for adherence to visual style considering the peculiarities of discipline teaching.

Keywords

methodological guidelines; Django; LaTeX; human anatomy

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Teaching of any discipline is a time-consuming process involving various components [6, 10]. This include the development of thematic plans of lectures, practical classes, seminars, laboratory classes; the search for new sources; the study, approbation and implementation of scientific school experience in the educational process [1, 4, 7]. The preparation of teaching and learning materials, methodological guidelines for students in particular, is equally important. The latter serve as a kind of an "orienting point" in the period of the "information explosion" and help students focus on the most important aspects while learning the discipline.

The process of methodological guideline preparation is not only academic; this is to some extent a creative process. It requires a lot of concentration as it is necessary to briefly and concisely summarize the most important information considering intradisciplinary and cross-disciplinary integration, lecture material, as well as to provide students with self-assessment tools. As a consequence, methodological guidelines become a handbook with which students work while studying the discipline. This, in turn, imposes an additional requirement, namely quality document design. Has anyone asked themselves the following question in the process of preparing such guidelines "What is the right amount of characters on each line for the readability of the text? What margins should be chosen? Is there a better typeface than Times New Roman?" Perhaps, no one has. In the publishing industry, the observance of standards that help readers better understand the text is considered a must. Most academic staff usually develop teaching and learning materials using a WYSIWYG

(What-You-See-Is-What-You-Get) editors such as MS Word. Such approach has a significant disadvantage, namely the inability of separating the contents of a document from its design. TeX - document markup language for desktop publishing, has achieved great popularity in the scientific world [9]. There are currently many variations of this system; however, TeX-based document preparation system LaTeX is the most popular among them. It offers an impressive arsenal of tools for preparation of well-structured documents [2].

Methodological guidelines are a structured document with clearly defined issues and a specific content. The process of its preparation is time-consuming, as it is necessary to focus on the contents of the document, as well as to take care of the formatting. Therefore, we have decided to use LaTeX instead of MS Word for preparation of teaching and learning materials with a subsequent compilation of TeX-documents to PDF files. At the same time, the application of such formatting to the documents for different specialties is time-consuming as well, as it is necessary to learn the staff being responsible for desktop publishing and making amendments in the existing guidelines in the future how to use this program [5, 11].

In other words, we need a system which allows us to quickly enter data, modify them, generate TeX-documents and compile them to PDF format. At the same time, it must support multiple sessions and access rights of many users (methodological guidelines for different specialties are developed by many authors), be flexible, able to quickly adapt and easy to maintain. Moreover, it does not require academic staff to have any knowledge of LaTeX, allowing them to focus on the academic content of the document.

To develop such a system, we chose Django - a Python Web framework for developing web apps with the support of object-oriented programming paradigm and architectural pattern similar to the Model-View-Controller (MVC) pattern [8]. App development does not require much time; since the application contains separate modules, it allows user to quickly make amendments while maintaining system functionality.

First, we developed a system (app) architecture. Any application built in Django is based on the model. In this case, a model contains the data for each methodological guideline specified in the fields. In the final document, these fields will be reflected as various sections of methodological guideline ("Relevance", "To know", "To be able to", "To review", etc.). Since the structure for different specialties will be the same an abstract model was created and separate models for various specialties were created on its basis.

Since the primary goal in teaching human anatomy is the ability to differentiate and demonstrate anatomical structures, and to apply knowledge acquired to clinical situations [3, 6, 10], the following sections of methodological guidelines are of particular attention:

- "Schemes for Independent Work". In the process of studying "Human Anatomy", students are offered to analyze the schematic images of certain anatomical structures. For convenience, we decided to create a separate application for the images, and in the field of the corresponding model, only the title of the scheme file is written. A legend for the scheme is stored in the text file of the corresponding structure on the server.
- "Tests for Self-Assessment of Knowledge" students are offered to identify the anatomical structures illustrated in the figures. In this case, the model field contains only prefixes of image file names, while files themselves are placed in the corresponding catalogs on the server.
- "Case Studies" as well as schematic images are located in a separate application. The file with a question pool is prepared as a standard text file (with the.txt file extension) and placed on the server.

Methodological guidelines must certainly contain the following information: the specialty they are developed for; the explanatory note; the list of theoretical questions to the final module control; the list of references, etc. To store these data, a separate model was created. The model fields contained the path to the files of a question pool and the legend of the schematic images.

At the next stage, a layout of methodological guidelines was created using the LaTeX system: there were determined page dimensions, margins, typeface, location of the content elements, visual style of a methodological guideline itself, and the elements to ensure the creation of internal hyperlinks were developed. The developed layout is presented in Fig. 1. The layouts for applications "Mandatory Schemes" (Fig. 2), "Question Pool for Self-Assessment of Knowledge" (Fig. 3), "List of Theoretical Questions to the Final Module Control" (Fig. 4) were built as well. It should be noted that this system formats the text automatically (the style of section headings, list spacing, numbering style, creation of nested lists using different markers, placing the text in columns). The parameters of the environment for graphic images allow the user not to choose image size as the system determines their size and location independently.

As the Django functional allows you to quickly create app templates for interaction with users, we want to pay special attention to the controller. Django calls its controllers views. It is the controller that receives a request from the user to create TeX file of future methodological guidelines. First, the request is sent to the database, and the settings alongside with initial data are received (language, course of study, specialty, reference list, etc.). The next stage includes reading the file of schematic image legend. For this purpose, we created a special class SchemeParser. The controller creates a SP object of a certain class, sends request to its method (the argument of which is the path to the file of schematic image legend) and the data obtained are stored in SP attribute. Similarly, for the analysis of a question pool, the controller creates a QP object of a specially created class QuestionParser, the request is sent to the method and the data obtained are stored in QP attribute.

Then, the controller creates an object of GenerateLatex-File (GLF) class and the objects of SP and QP created during previous stages pass to its constructor. It is the GLF object that is responsible for the final version of TeX file of methodological guidelines. First of all, the document preamble, title page, explanatory note, etc. are created on the basis of the source data. In other words, the template contains all the information that must precede or accompany methodological guidelines. Then, in the cycle, the method responsible for filling a methodological guideline template based on the data obtained from the corresponding table of the database is requested. This method substitutes the data in the created template, as well as searches for files of images for "Tests for Self-Assessment of Knowledge", sends request to the corresponding attributes passed at the stage of the GLF object initialization, the SP and QP objects; if the attributes of these objects contain the data for a specific methodological guideline, the corresponding La-TeX formatting commands are created and added to the final version of the document. It should be noted that this is not about the placement of the schematic images or case studies; it refers to the creation of the commands which will serve as hyperlinks to the corresponding pages in the applications.

After processing the data of all methodological guidelines, the process of app creation using the GLF object method starts. For example, the attribute of the SP object containing the data on the schematic images is analyzed and the information added to the final version of the document is generated. Then, the attribute of the QP object is analyzed. According to the specified algorithm, the method continues to "assemble" the applications in a given sequence: "List of Questions to the Final Module Control", "Knowledge Assessment Tools", etc. At the final stage, the list of references is created.

After creating TeX file, the request is sent to the GLF object method which requests the external program (e.g. pdflatex compiler) to generate PDF files. The fact that the created document contains internal hyperlinks, which significantly facilitate document navigation, is of great importance. Both pagination and arrangement of textual content in the form of internal hyperlinks is an automatic process (Fig. 5). The system created in Django involves not only the aforementioned classes; it contains many other methods and functions. However, our objective was not to present technical documentation for system maintenance, but the possibilities of integrating different means to automate routine tasks in the process of preparing teaching and learning materials. In addition, the aspects that allow making adaptation in accordance with the specificity of discipline teaching are reflected. The user does not need to spend any time for adherence to visual style thereby focusing on the academic content of the document.

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Django & LaTeX: experience in developing the system for the preparation of methodological guidelines for studying the discipline "Human Anatomy" - 4/6

тема 28

СИСТЕМА НИЖНЬОЇ ПОРОЖНИСТОЇ ВЕНИ. СИСТЕМА ВОРІТНОЇ ВЕНИ. ФОРМУВАННЯ, ТОПОГРАФІЯ, ПРИТО-КИ ВКАЗАНИХ ВЕН. ВНУТРІШНЬООРГАННЕ КРОВОНО-СНЕ РУСЛО ПЕЧІНКИ, СЕЛЕЗІНКИ.

Актуальність

Синтезовані аналітичні знання ангіоневрологічних особливостей будови тіла людини абезпечать майбутнім лікарям грунтовне розуміння функціонування організму як у цілому, так і зокрема в кожній конкретній галузі медицини.

Знати:

- 1. Формування, хід, топографію та місце впадіння нижньої порожнистої вени.
- Парієтальні притоки нижньої порожнистої вени.
 Вісцеральні притоки нижньої порожнистої вени.

- Оклеральна притока поляном порокласто вени.
 Формурания, хід, топорафію та розгалуження ворітної вени.
 "Чудесну веному сітку "печінки.
 Характеристику основних приток ворітної вени.
 Анатомічну та внутрішню будову нечінки, функцію.
- Особливості кровоносного русла печінки.
- 9. Особливості кровоносного русла селезніки (червону пульпу відкриту та закриту циркуляції).

Вміти:

- 1. Диференціювати і продемонструвати нижню порожнисту вену та її основні при-
- Даференціювати і продемонструвати ворітну вену та її основні притоки.
 Диференціювати і продемонструвати "чудесну венозну сітку"печінки.
 Диференціювати і продемонструвати червону пульцу селезніки.

98

Завдання для самостійної позааудиторної роботи

- 1. Вивчіть матеріал за конспектом лекцій та рекомендованою літературою. 2. Вивчіть:
- Улючно, утворення нижньої порожнистої вени, її притоки.
 Хід, топографію, утворення ворітної вени, її притоки.
 Дайте відповідь на контрольні питания.

Повторити:

- 1. Будову стінок черевної порожнини.
- Будову пахвинного каналу
- Будову інсключатьного илипера.
 Будову і топографію органів черевної порожнини.
 Будову і топографію органів малого тазу.
 Будову печінкової часточки.
 Внутрішню будову селезінки.
- Хіл і топографію очеревини.
- Хребтові венозні сплетення.
- 9. Розподіл судин великого кола кровообігу.

Контрольні питання:

- Нижия порожниста вена: формувания, хід, топографія, місце впадіння.
 Паріетальні притоки нижньої порожнистої вени.
 Поперскові вени: формувания, хід, топографія, притоки.

- Попереков веш: формування, хід, топографія, притоки.
 Нісперьлаїні притоки пилькимої пороклипстої вени.
 Ниркова вепа: формування, хід, топографія.
 Надлирникова вепа: формування, хід, топографія.
 Значникова вепа: формування, хід, топографія, лозоподібне венозне сплетення яечка.
 Ченникова вена: формування, хід, топографія, лозоподібне венозне сплетення яечка. чника.
- чика.
 Печінкові вени: формування, хід, місце внадіння.
 Ворітна вена: формування, хід, топографія, розгалуження
 Основі притокя ворітної вени: загальна характеристика.
 Анатомічна будова, топографія печінки. згалужения

- 13. Внутрішня будова печінки, функція.
- Болу грана оддова коровосного русла печінки.
 Чудесна венозна сітка"печінки.
 Чудесна венозна селезінки.

99

Обсяг самостійної роботи на занятті

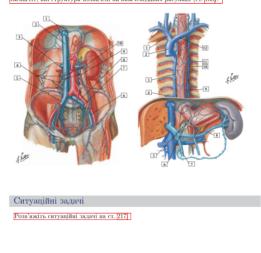
Для засвоєння теоретичних знань та відпрацювання практичних навичок студенти, скені викладачем, самостійно працюють з вологими преі ратами, опрацьовують контрольні питання, схеми, тестові завдання вхідного та вихідного рівнів

Схеми для самостійного опрацювання

Проаналізуйте схеми на ст. 153, 152

Тести для самоконтролю знань

Визначте, які структури позначені на нижчеподаних рисунках (ст. 100]?



100

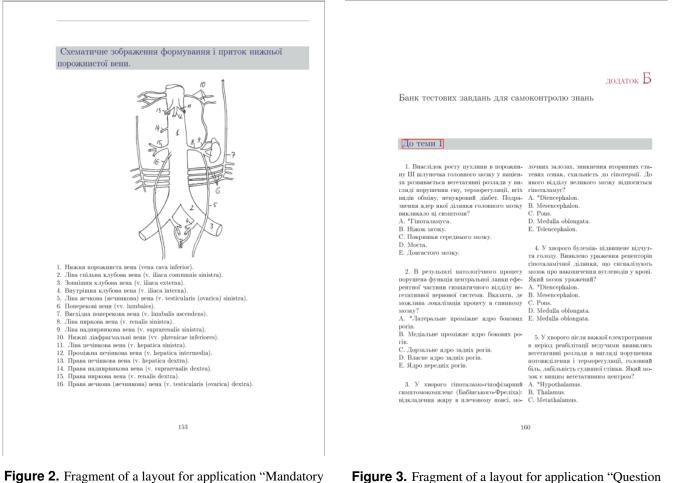


Figure 2. Fragment of a layout for application "Mandatory Schemes"

Figure 3. Fragment of a layout for application "Questio Pool for Self-Assessment of Knowledge"

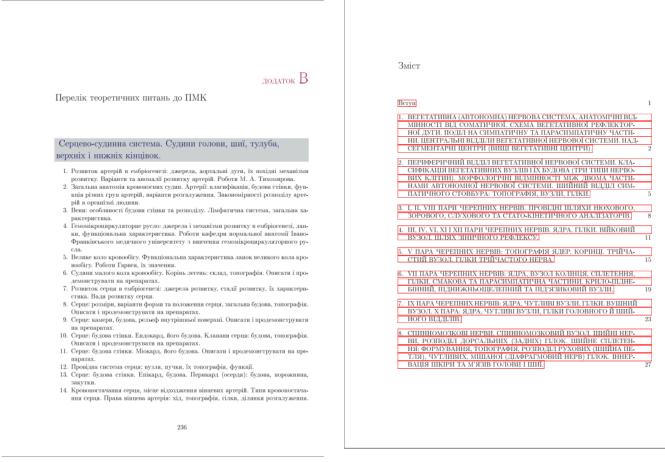


Figure 4. Fragment of a layout for application "List of Theoretical Questions to the Final Module Control"

Figure 5. Fragment of the content of methodological guidelines (the themes of lessons are reflected as hyperlinks to the corresponding pages in the document)