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Musicco: A Social Media Platform for Musicians

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby declare that this research together with all of its content is none other than that of my own work, with consideration of the exception of research based information and relative materials that were adapted and extracted from other resources, which have evidently been quoted or stated respectively.

Signed,

..... *Steve Olsen Michael*

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Abstract

Entertainment industry is without a doubt, composed of a big part of the economy of a nation. Within our modern world where media such as movies, games, and music is considered dominant in our everyday lives, people often find ways to express themselves or even to get attention from others by using technologies. As of today, social media like Facebook and Twitter is almost within everybody's reach. Due to the ease of accessibility as to the existence of mobile smartphones. To some, it may serve as chance for them to generate income. The huge amount of users of these mobile applications serves as a motivation for a whole lot of people in pursuing the latter idea. Not only that, it may serve as tool to promote oneself qualities and abilities, an assist to gain recognition and fame. Though, a generalized platform would be harder to manage as it will engender low focus onto the original targeted audience or costumers. Thus, a proposed system was designed to be a specific platform, particularly into music, to challenge the outcome that may come.

Abstrak

Industri hiburan tidak diragukan, terdiri daripada sebahagian besar ekonomi negara. Di dalam dunia moden kita di mana media seperti filem, permainan, dan muzik dianggap dominan dalam kehidupan seharian kita, orang sering mencari cara untuk mengekspresikan diri mereka atau bahkan mendapat perhatian daripada orang lain dengan menggunakan teknologi. Sehingga hari ini, media sosial seperti Facebook dan Twitter hampir berada dalam jangkauan semua orang, ini disebabkan kemudahan akses dengan kewujudannya telefon pintar mudah alih. Bagi sesetengah orang, ia boleh memberi peluang kepada mereka untuk menjana pendapatan. Jumlah besar pengguna aplikasi mudah alih ini berfungsi sebagai motivasi untuk banyak orang dalam mengejar idea tersebut. Bukan itu sahaja, ia boleh berfungsi sebagai alat untuk mempromosikan sifat dan kebolehan diri sendiri, ia membantu dalam mendapatkan pengiktirafan dan kemasyhuran. Walau bagaimanapun, platform umum akan menjadi lebih sukar untuk dikendalikan kerana ia akan memberi tumpuan rendah ke khalayak sasaran atau pelanggan yang asal. Oleh itu, satu sistem yang dicadangkan telah direka untuk menjadi platform khusus, terutamanya dalam muzik, untuk mencabar kemungkinan hasil yang akan tercipta.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Title

Musicco: A Social Media Platform for Musicians

1.2 Introduction

In this modern age, technology has helped people in many ways. It connects people regardless of the distance, provides information with access just from the tip of our thumb, and so much more. Social media is undeniably one of these helpful technologies, the application such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, all these applications has successfully connected people in so many ways. Social media also has been a platform for business companies to promote their products or sales.

Recently, social media has frequently been used by people to go viral, to promote one's commercial value. For example, people with singing talent or that is proficient in skills that involves musical instrument, they would go for social media applications in order to attract attention from other people, to get fans and also to promote their albums. An example of these applications is 'Smule', a singing application that allows its user to set up a digital recording studio in your mobile phone and share their recorded clips with other users. It also implements a feature that allows the user to sing with major artists around the world.

This shows how social media can also be applied in the music industry. Music industry plays a big part in the entertainment world, ranging from vocalists to musicians. It consists of young and talented artists that are eager to promote their skills. No doubt, social media application will be useful for them in terms of marketing and business.

1.3 Problem Statement

Recognizing talented musicians or performers is not an easy task, it goes the same with trying to get people's attention using talent. To know the true potential of these performers, one must first see the talent with their eyes themselves. At the same time, to get others to recognize your talent, one requires a platform or a space for them to be able showcase their talent.

Taking an example from the past, live agents, a person responsible for booking and routing tours, gigs, festivals, and generally any personal appearances for an artist or a band (AWAL. 2018), are the one to discover their performers through trusted sources, like a management company they have a pre-existing relationship with, not the artist. It is very uncommon for an artist or a performer to approach a live agent instead since these agents most probably ignore any unsolicited invitations by musicians they do not know. These limits artists to get the chance to first present their talents and ability before being rejected.

However in today's era, with the help of rapidly growing technology, our music industry has been able to upgrade and transform through digitalization as stated by Storstadmo (2017). Live agents are no longer deemed necessary in getting a hit in music production while trying to generate revenue from it. The digitalization changes the whole way the music industry worked and changed the business model the industry was built upon.

The problem is currently there are only few known applications that serve specifically as a platform for these musicians and artists to showcase their talent. When actually a number of it is what these performers need, as it provide opportunity for them to expose themselves and to get attention from the audiences. These social media platforms are one of the factors that keeps the music industry alive today.

1.4 Objectives

- (A) To gather requirements and analyse existing applications that are related to come up with the features and design of Musicco, a mobile application for artists and live agents.
- (B) To develop a new Android mobile application called Musicco that will act as a platform for artists to showcase their talent online.
- (C) To include a function that filters musical talents into categories in the mobile application.

1.5 Methodology

The methodology that will be used in this project is the Waterfall Model. This methodology has been chosen because the manner of this Android application development follows the phases that exist in it. Figure 1 shows the Waterfall Model phases:

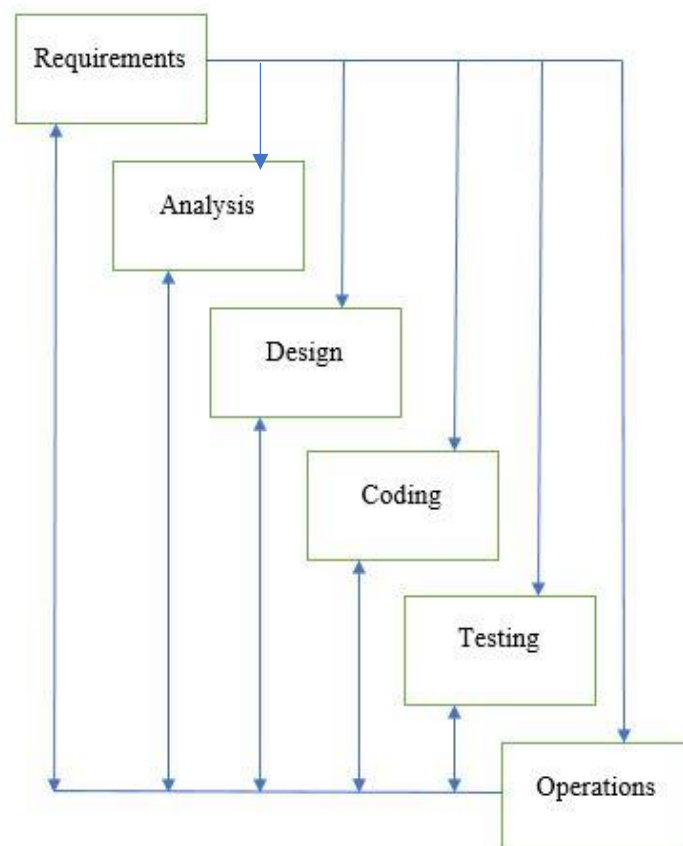


Figure 1 Waterfall Model

1. Requirements

Requirements Phase is the initial phase of the Waterfall Model, where requirement specifications take place. This is where the potential requirements of the Android application, Musicco, are methodically analysed and written down.

2. Analysis

This second phase is where the system will be analysed. During this stage, Musicco will be analysed in order to properly generate the models and business logic that will be applied to it.

3. Design

The third phase involves the technical requirements of the development. This phase covers the technical design requirements of Musicco, such as its programming languages, data layers, services, etc.

4. Coding

This phase is where the coding of the whole application takes place. Musicco's models, business logic, and service integrations will be implemented here as well.

5. Testing

The fifth phase is where the application is being tested by other developers and users. Musicco will be tested during this stage to discover issues that still required to be resolved and improved.

6. Operation

The final phase of the Waterfall Model is where the application is ready for deployment to a live environment. Musicco is expected to be deployed during this stage. Also, Musicco will be undergoing maintenance and update in this phase.

1.6 Scope

The mobile application will be developed only on the Android platform. It is developed for those who are working as musicians and those who are interested in displaying their musical talent. It is focused on becoming a platform for these people to showcase their talent, thus, it is not meant to be developed for live agents or for talent-scouting purposes although, the application will consist of functions that includes talent-scouting feature. For this project, notifications will not yet be implemented in the application. It will be designed as an online platform; thus, offline mode will not be available.

1.7 Significance of Project

The main purpose of the development of this project was to help anyone that is interested in promoting their musical talent to the music industry, by providing an online platform for them to promote their skill and talent. This ease the process of discovering talented artist in the future.

Also, it will encourage young people nowadays to involve themselves with beneficial activities that involve music, avoiding negative activities such as taking drugs and alcohol.

The success of achieving this goal will not only help those who are in the music industry but also potentially helps to provide small revenue or profit for Android developers, just by maintaining and further improving this application. It serves as a business opportunity for young developers, indirectly benefiting our industry sector.

1.8 Project Schedule

Chapter 1 will be conducted in 5 days which includes making a project proposal. Chapter 2 and 3 will be conducted within a period of two months before the submission of Final Year Project

1. The other final three chapters will be conducted during the next semester.

Task Name	Duration	Start	Finish	September			October				
				2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Chapter 1	5 days	Wed 12/09/18	Mon 17/09/18								
Chapter 2	20 days	Tue 18/09/18	Sun 07/10/18								
Chapter 3	40 days	Mon 08/10/18	Fri 16/11/18								
Submission of FYP1	14 days	Mon 19/11/18	Sun 02/12/18								
Chapter 4	75 days	Sun 30/12/18	Sun 17/03/19								
Implementation	61 days	Sun 30/12/18	Fri 01/03/19								
Developer testing	7 days	Mon 04/03/19	Sun 10/03/19								
Usability testing	7 days	Mon 11/03/19	Sun 17/03/19								
Chapter 5	28 days	Mon 18/03/19	Sun 31/03/19								
Analysis of result	14 days	Mon 18/03/19	Sun 24/03/19								
Discussion	14 days	Mon 25/03/19	Sun 31/03/19								
Chapter 6	7 days	Mon 01/04/19	Sun 07/04/19								
Submission of FYP2	7 days	Mon 08/04/19	Sun 14/04/19								

November				December				January			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

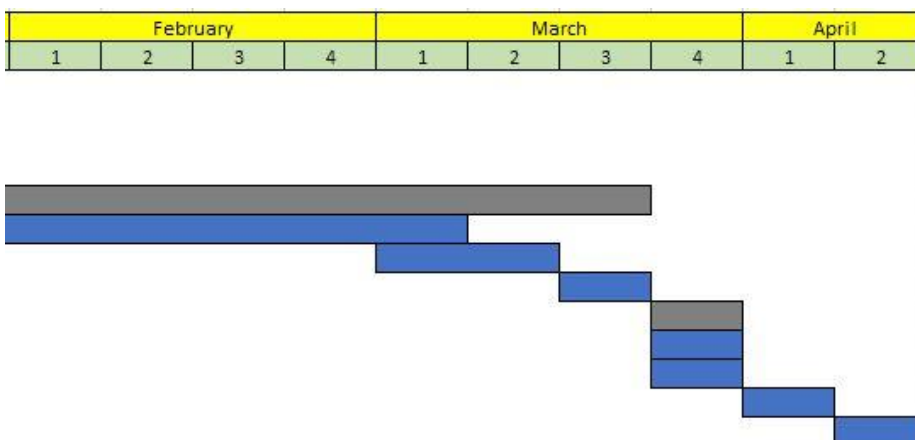


Figure 2 Project Schedule

1.9 Expected Outcome

An Android application prototype called Musicco that acts as a platform for artist or people that is interested with music to display or promote their musical skills and talents online, in turn, getting jobs and hopefully land a contract with live agents. Also, a Final Year Project report will be produced.

1.10 Project Report Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter of this project depicts the background of the proposed project which serves as a guideline and reference for the overall purposes of this project. This chapter consists of a project title, an introduction, a problem statement, project objectives, proposed methodology, project scope, the significance of the project, project schedule, and expected outcome. The project title and introduction briefly explain small details of how the idea of developing Musicco came to be. Problem statement describes the absence of a dedicated social media platform for musicians and how it is a problem nowadays. Project objectives clearly state what the main purpose of developing Musicco is. Meanwhile, the methodology explains this project would be implemented based on the Waterfall Model. In addition, project scope indicates limitation and constraints of the features in Musicco. The significance of the project describes how convenient Musicco is in terms of solving the issue faced. On the other hand, project schedule shows the planned dates for tasks that are needed to be carried out with the help of a Gantt Chart. Finally, the expected outcome describes the result of the proposed project, which is a Final Year Project report and the development of the Android application, Musicco.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two reviews a thesis about how social media application has been an important component in the music industry and also, two existing application that possesses similar

functionality with Musicco. The limitations, constraints, and features of these applications will be determined and examined. The examined data will be analysed for development purpose. The two existing applications that will be reviewed are Soundcloud, and Smule Sing.

Chapter 3: Requirements, analysis, and design

In this chapter, the requirements for Musicco will be identified and discussed. These requirements will be classified into two which is: functional and non-functional. The project will be explained with much more details in conjunction with the requirements for the development of Musicco. Diagrams of the architecture of the features in Musicco is produced in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Implementation

Chapter four describe the whole development process of the proposed project. The development will be done using Android Studio for the user-interface and application features functionality and Firebase as the database for the back-end section. Using these tools, it is possible to develop an Android application that was specified in the scope section of Chapter 1. Google Android-related libraries will be used as well. These include the libraries that are related to establishing the connection with the database in Firebase and also functions that exist to ease developer in designing their application. The implementation of this project uses the programming language, Android-java, in its development.

Chapter 5: Testing

This chapter is carried out after the implementation stage is done. Testing on Musicco will be carried out to find hidden defects or issue that exist. These defects will then be eliminated with debugging. This chapter will run parallel with chapter 4 to prevent huge impact as the development process going on.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

The final chapter is where consideration is taken regarding the potential features and additional functionalities that can be implemented on Musicco for further enhancement and upgrade. This step will be taken after the whole project has been completed. The conclusion will describe whether Musicco has met its objectives, produced the desired result or task, and also if it has successfully overcome the problem that was previously mentioned in the problem statement section of Chapter 1.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Chapter Introduction

The Google Play Store consists of huge amount of music-related applications to be downloaded by its users. These application helps trending artists nowadays to promote their latest music production. Other than that, there are also social media applications that is now being used by fellow artists and musicians to gain fame.

This chapter of the project will discuss about two existing system that has similar features and functions as of Musicco, a review on an article regarding how social media application has been useful to the music industry will be conducted beforehand. The two existing systems are SoundCloud, and Smule Sing!. These application will first be introduced in terms of their features and functions. Later, it will be compared amongst each other and analysed in terms of its strength and weakness respectively. The proposed system, Musicco, will also be further introduced in terms of its features and functions at the end of this chapter.

2.2 How Social Media transformed the music industry – A review on the work by Sondre Decser Storstadmo.

2.2.1 Review Introduction

2.2.1. 1 About the Author

Storstadmo (2017) has worked on a master thesis to discuss about in which ways the digitalization has changed the A&R profession and to which extent it is still relevant in the music industry today. It touches the topic on what and how the A&R works and also on the evolution of the music industry with the influence of technology advancement.

2.2.1. 2 About the Work

Sondre Decser Storstadmo is a master student studying in the Faculty of Fine Art, specifically in the department of Popular Music of the University of Agder. His thesis, “In which ways has the digitalization changed the A&R profession - A&R in today’s digital industry” was considered as a valuable resource and is stored among the Master's theses in Music Management collection.

2.2.1. 3 Motivation of this Review

Storstadmo (2017) thesis, “In which ways has the digitalization changed the A&R profession - A&R in today’s digital industry” has been chosen to be reviewed in this project as it contains the information on the method that is being used by artists today to attract attention from their targeted audiences. It elaborates about the current trend that is being applied by them in order to showcase their talent and also how to be successful on it. These information is valuable for the project as it provides insights on how today’s music industry works in real life.

2.2.2 The Meaning of A&R

A&R or also known as Artists and Repertoire, is a division in a record label responsible for scouting, overseeing the process of developing recording artists, negotiate contract deals, making sure the artist is happy and pursue them to make records as stated by the author. In the paper, it was mentioned that an A&R man’s job include going to live shows, listen to demos received from the press, contacts or other people. It is convenient to assume that live agents, having doing the similar tasks, is one of those who are working in this division.

It was also stated that the role of the A&R person differs based on the size of the company that the person is working at. The smaller its label, the more intertwined the roles will be. For example: the A&R man can be both the scout, manager and the director, or all three. The article explained that for the biggest companies that have the need for more people, there