MyLife - Web-based Personalised Diary

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Abstract

"MyLife" is an innovative web-based platform that redefines the concept of journaling. It offers individuals a private and highly customizable digital space for recording personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions, ushering in a modern era for this age-old tradition. The project meticulously progresses through five essential stages: planning, analysis, design, coding, and testing, ensuring a well-structured development process. Users of the "MyLife" platform can craft their digital diaries to align precisely with their unique preferences and styles. Its web-based nature ensures accessibility from a variety of internet-connected devices, allowing the seamless documentation of thoughts and memories on the go. A notable feature of "MyLife" is its adaptability to individual needs. Users can personalize diary entries with fonts, colors, and formatting options, creating visually captivating representations of their innermost thoughts. The platform also seamlessly incorporates multimedia elements, enabling users to include photos, videos, and audio recordings for a more engaging diary experience. The overarching objective of this project is to promote personal growth, self-awareness, and emotional well-being by offering a digital sanctuary for self-reflection, expression, and meaningful documentation. Whether used as a therapeutic tool, creative outlet, or memory repository, this web-based diary project empowers individuals on their path of self-discovery and introspection. Initial feedback from 38 respondents has been overwhelmingly positive, affirming its potential as a valuable tool for personal expression and growth.

Keywords: Personalized diary; Web-based journaling; Digital diary experience; Self-reflection; Emotional well-being

1. Introduction

"MyLife" is an innovative web-based platform designed to transform the timeless tradition of journaling into a modern, immersive, and personalized experience. The project unfolds through five well-defined stages: planning, analysis, design, coding, and testing, ensuring a structured and seamless development process. This platform provides individuals with a private and highly customizable digital space to document their personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions. Users of "MyLife" can meticulously craft their digital diaries to align with their unique preferences and styles, with seamless accessibility across various internet-connected devices. A standout feature of "MyLife" is its remarkable adaptability to individual needs. Users can personalize diary entries with diverse font styles, colors, and formatting options, creating visually captivating representations of their innermost thoughts. The platform also seamlessly incorporates multimedia elements, enabling users to effortlessly include photos, videos, and audio recordings for a more engaging diary experience.

The overarching mission of "MyLife" is to nurture personal growth, self-awareness, and emotional well-being by offering a digital haven for self-reflection, expression, and meaningful documentation. Whether used as a therapeutic tool, a creative outlet, or a repository for cherished memories, this web-based diary project empowers individuals on their path of self-discovery and introspection. The online diary was found to serve as an interactive platform (Kawaura et al., 2010), and diaries have garnered greater acknowledgment as essential tools for psychological relief, notably amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Shaw et al., 2023). Diary writing fosters self-assurance and provides individuals with a method to monitor their personal growth (Shelton-Strong and Mynard, 2021). It acts as a release valve for stress and anxiety, enabling individuals to unburden themselves of negative thoughts and emotions onto its pages, potentially leading to fresh insights and solutions.

"MyLife" stands out among the options for online diaries due to its simplicity and user-friendly functionality. Users can write entries, customize their diary content and appearance, and insert images, all of which are stored in an online database for easy access. This web-based platform provides a comprehensive and accessible solution to enhance personal well-being and self-reflection through the practice of digital journaling.

2. Literature Review

Online diaries have a rich history and versatile applications extending beyond mere daily life documentation, proving to be valuable tools across various fields. Serving as repositories (Sakri & Ishak, 2023), they meticulously archive personal insights and experiences with a deliberate purpose. Subsequently, the repository can be utilized as a reference center for future endeavors (Shu et al., 2022; Mirza et al., 2020) or employed as a reminder tool (Raman et al., 2021). In the realm of qualitative research, diaries prove their worth as a valuable instrument (Vermaas and Wijngaert, 2005). Diaries facilitate the acquisition of meticulous and contemporaneous insights, as exemplified in the study by Saeidzadeh et al. (2021), particularly within the realm of self-management activities. The convergence of user-friendliness and the ability to customize interview inquiries holds the potential for cultivating a more comprehensive and nuanced dataset, ultimately deepening the understanding of the subject under scrutiny.

Additionally, Yi (2008) leveraged diaries as a qualitative research method to explore teachers' perception and utilization of rating schemes. The study delves into the utility of diary studies in elucidating how teachers perceive and apply rating schemes. In this context, three English teachers in Korean high schools assessed 224 student scripts, diligently maintaining diaries during the evaluation process. Their ratings encompassed both subjective assessments and standard scales. The analysis of their diaries unveiled rating patterns, challenges associated with rating schemes, and their comprehension of these systems. These findings underscore the worth of diaries in assessing raters' perceptions of rating schemes, evaluating assessment validity, and identifying areas where additional support and guidance may be required. This research highlights the promising potential of diaries within the realm of assessment and rating schemes. Within the discipline of psychology, Shelton-Strong and Mynard's study (2021) illuminated the positive impact of maintaining a confidence-building diary (CBD) on Japanese university students learning a new language. This practice yielded increased positive emotions, psychological support, and sustained motivation. Similarly, Shaw et al. (2021) delved into the role of diaries in the context of media consumption during the COVID-19 pandemic, underscoring the significance of moderating news exposure to safeguard mental well-being. These studies underscore the adaptability of diary-keeping, whether in bolstering motivation or in managing media consumption to enhance mental health.

In the educational realm, Yüce's (2020) study investigated the use of the online diary platform Penzu in foreign language lessons. Language teachers expressed strong support for integrating Penzu into foreign language instruction, particularly to enhance students' writing skills. Moreover, online diaries have proven beneficial in the medical field, as seen in the "My Epilepsy Diary" (Le et al., 2011). This free web-based application aids individuals in tracking their epilepsy condition and assists clinicians in personalized management. The study highlights the feasibility of monitoring individuals with epilepsy through online diaries, offering valuable insights into this specific medical community. In project evaluation, Cohen et al (2006) introduced interactive online diaries as an innovative approach. They facilitate real-time communication between evaluators and program implementers, providing a comprehensive understanding of project development, challenges, and solutions. When used alongside traditional evaluation methods, interactive online diaries address issues such as self-reporting bias and effectively document project progression. These varied applications of online diaries underscore their adaptability and utility in diverse contexts.

3. Methodology

The project comprises five distinct phases vital for its successful execution:

Phase 1: Planning
This initial phase involves a comprehensive examination of the project's goals and significance. Gathering information from relevant research papers and articles pertaining to the project is a key focus, aiding in problem statement analysis and scoping the MyLife application. Additionally, this phase outlines activities and expected outcomes for future work.

Phase 2: Analysis
During this stage, the project team seeks input from the general public to understand their expectations of a web-based personalized diary. Functional and non-functional system requirements are meticulously delineated, resulting in a detailed requirement specification.

Phase 3: Design
The design phase employs various methods, including UML diagrams, use case diagrams, activity diagrams, and class diagrams, to create the foundational structure of the system. The outcome encompasses interface and database design, along with the creation of storyboards essential for understanding the application's flow.

Phase 4: Coding/Implementation
With the logical system structure in place from the design phase, the implementation phase commences. This involves translating the design into functional code, resulting in the development of a prototype of the system.

Phase 5: Testing
The final phase involves unveiling the project's outcome and includes tasks such as data conversion, rigorous testing, and the evaluation of the MyLife application to ensure its functionality, performance, and reliability.

4. MyLife: Functionalities and Interfaces

The MyLife application serves two primary roles: users and admin, each endowed with specific functionalities to enhance their experience within the platform (Figure 1).

User Functionalities: Users are the core audience of MyLife, and their capabilities are tailored to maximize the benefits of this personalized diary platform. They can initiate their journey by logging into their accounts securely and efficiently. For newcomers, MyLife offers a straightforward registration process to create their personal diaries. Once logged in, users can access their previous diary entries, enabling them to reflect on past thoughts and experiences. Furthermore, they possess the ability to manage their diary content, including creating new entries, editing existing ones, and removing entries if necessary, ensuring a well-organized digital journal. Users can also enhance their entries by managing multimedia content, such as photos, videos, and audio recordings, providing a rich and engaging diary experience. Lastly, users can actively participate in shaping the platform by offering feedback and suggestions, ensuring that MyLife continuously evolves to meet their changing needs and preferences.

Admin Functionalities: The admin role serves as the custodian of MyLife, responsible for overseeing user management. Admins have the authority to add new users to the platform, extending access to those eager to join the MyLife community. Additionally, admins can initiate communication with users by sending feedback or important notifications, fostering an interactive and user-centric environment.
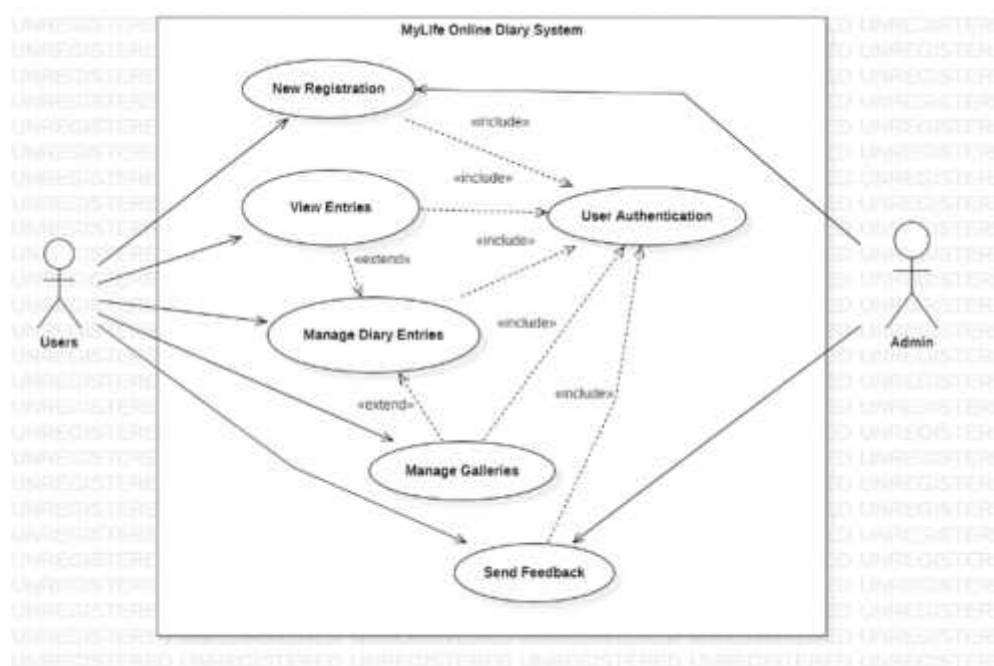

Figure 1: Use Case Diagram for MyLife

Figures 2 to 5 offer a glimpse of the MyLife interface. The "New User Registration" interface, as depicted in Figure 2, serves as the entry point for individuals aspiring to join the MyLife community. It streamlines the registration process, ensuring a user-friendly and secure onboarding experience, allowing new users to quickly become part of the MyLife platform.

Figure 3 presents the "New Entry Interface," a fundamental component of MyLife. This interface equips users with the essential tools to create and document new diary entries, facilitating the seamless recording of thoughts, experiences, and emotions. It empowers users to construct a personalized digital journal, fostering self-expression and reflection.

The "View Entry" interface, illustrated in Figure 4, grants users access to their previously recorded diary entries. This functionality encourages introspection by enabling users to revisit and review their past thoughts and experiences, reflecting the user-friendly and well-organized approach to managing and retrieving diary content on MyLife.

Figure 5 introduces the "User Feedback Form," a pivotal element that enhances interaction and communication between users and the MyLife platform. Through this interface, users can contribute feedback, suggestions, and input, ensuring their voices play a central role in the platform's ongoing development. It underscores MyLife's dedication to a user-centric approach and the continuous improvement of the digital diary experience.

Figure 3: New Entry Interface

Figure 2: New User Registration

Figure 4: View Entry

Figure 5: User Feedback Form

5. Results

The MyLife usability evaluation method involves user testing and questionnaire completion to assess the platform comprehensively. The evaluation encompasses a site layout assessment that addresses aspects of attractiveness, controllability, efficiency, helpfulness, and learnability. Additionally, an open-ended question section encourages

respondents to provide comments and remarks about the website, fostering detailed feedback. The primary objective of this evaluation is to gauge user perspectives and gather valuable insights regarding the MyLife platform's performance and user experience. The study was conducted with a diverse group of 38 participants, consisting of 21 (55.3%) females and 17 (44.7%) males (Figure 6). The survey was administered in person and through social media channels, with respondents selected at random to ensure a broad spectrum of user feedback and opinions.
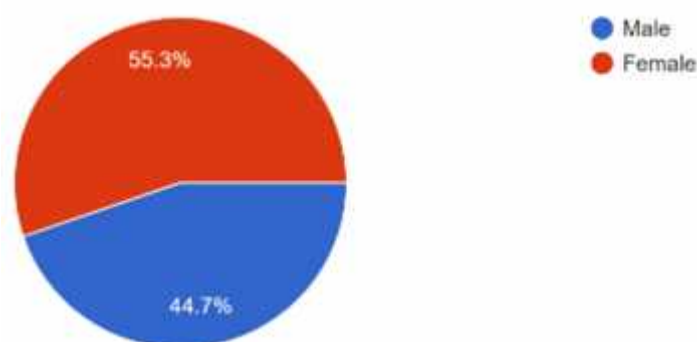

Figure 6: Gender

User feedback provides valuable insights into the MyLife website's performance and user experience. In terms of Attractiveness, a substantial portion of users found the overall design very appealing, with 34.2% strongly agreeing and 31.6% agreeing. Additionally, the color scheme was generally satisfying, as 28.9% reacted very positively and 47.4% reacted positively. The layout and organization of content contributed significantly to attractiveness, with 28.9% very positive reactions and 50% positive reactions. Impressively, all users found the buttons commonly clickable, indicating a user-friendly interface with no confusion. Controllability was another area where users expressed satisfaction. A majority felt it was easy to navigate and control the website's features, with 28.9% finding it very easy and 34.2% considering it easy. The menus, buttons, and navigation options were considered intuitive by nearly all users, as 94.7% agreed. Importantly, 73.7% of users found no aspects of the website's controllability confusing or difficult to use.

When it comes to Efficiency, most users believed that the website effectively fulfilled its primary purpose of keeping diaries online. Specifically, 31.6% found it very efficient, 26.3% efficient, and 42.1% remained neutral. Users also expressed confidence in finding and accessing specific information or entries, with 31.6% finding it very easy, 31.6% easy, and 36.8% neutral. Users reported that there were no repetitive or time-consuming tasks involved in their interactions with the website, highlighting its efficiency. In terms of Helpfulness, the website positively impacted users' productivity, organization, and well-being. Users reported benefits such as tracking daily events, listing tasks, and eliminating the risk of losing their diaries. The website also proved valuable in capturing and documenting thoughts, ideas, and important events. Notably, 86.8% of respondents agreed that the website helped them gain insights into their emotions and behavior patterns.

Regarding Learnability, the majority found it easy to learn to use the website for the first time, with 34.2% considering it very easy and 34.2% easy. Users felt comfortable exploring the website's features to learn more about its capabilities. Suggestions for improvement often centered around enhancing the user interface (UI) to provide an even more user-friendly experience. In response to open-ended questions, a significant percentage of users expressed confidence in recommending the website to friends and relatives for real-world use. The general perception was positive, with users praising the website's simplicity and ease of understanding. Some users suggested that further improvements in the UI could enhance their experience, indicating a desire for continued development and enhancement.

6. Discussion

The findings from the user feedback on the MyLife website reveal a positive and user-friendly digital diary platform. Users appreciated the website's attractive design, with a majority strongly agreeing or agreeing that it was visually appealing. The color scheme and the organization of content also received favorable responses, contributing to the overall attractiveness of the platform. The ease of navigation and controllability of features were well-received, with most users finding it easy to use and understand. Menus, buttons, and navigation options were perceived as intuitive, making the website user-friendly. Users also reported that the website was efficient in serving its primary purpose of keeping diaries online, and accessing specific information was straightforward. The website was deemed helpful in

improving productivity, organization, and self-reflection. Users found it easy to learn to use the website and felt comfortable exploring its features. The findings suggest that the MyLife website holds promise as a valuable tool for personal expression and growth, with users appreciating its usability. However, there is room for further improvement, particularly in terms of user interface design, to enhance the overall user experience.

7. Conclusions

In conclusion, the MyLife web-based diary platform has demonstrated strong potential as a user-friendly and efficient tool for individuals seeking a digital space to document their personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions. The user feedback received through usability evaluation provided valuable insights into the platform's performance and user experience. The findings revealed that users generally found the platform to be visually appealing, easy to navigate, and efficient in serving its primary purpose of online diary-keeping. Users also reported that the website was helpful in improving their productivity, organization, and self-reflection. The majority of respondents felt that the website was easy to learn and comfortable to explore, indicating a positive learning curve. While the feedback was predomiantly positive, there were suggestions for further improvement, particularly in terms of user interface and design enhancements. These insights underscore the importance of continuous development and refinement to further enhance the user experience. Overall, the MyLife web-based diary platform holds significant promise as a valuable tool for individuals seeking a digital sanctuary for self-expression, personal growth, and self-awareness. The feedback from users affirms its usability and potential, highlighting its role in empowering individuals on their journey of self-discovery and introspection.

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