CSE 403 Project Proposal: Bulletin

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Overview

One of the biggest issues in a growing company is communication among all levels of staff. Social networks like Facebook and Twitter have revolutionized interpersonal communication, but the inability to separate personal communication from workplace communication results in them not being appropriate on the job. Bulletin is influenced by social networks, but it's main goal is to allow members of a specific group to communicate easily with each other by posting status updates, and avoiding unrelated information. The benefits of Bulletin are that it keeps everyone in the group updated and feeds posted in Bulletin makes status updates quicker and easier to digest than email.

Bulletin will have the user create an account and login to use the site. The main organizational structure of Bulletin is based around the idea of private groups. Groups are a way to organize feeds such that only updates posted to a group can be viewed by users who belong to that group. A user can create or join groups, and the user can post only to a group that he/she belongs to. The major benefit of groups is that it separates and organizes feeds to show only information that is important at that time. By having separated feeds, this web-application can be used in a business environment without having distractions from other private personal feeds.

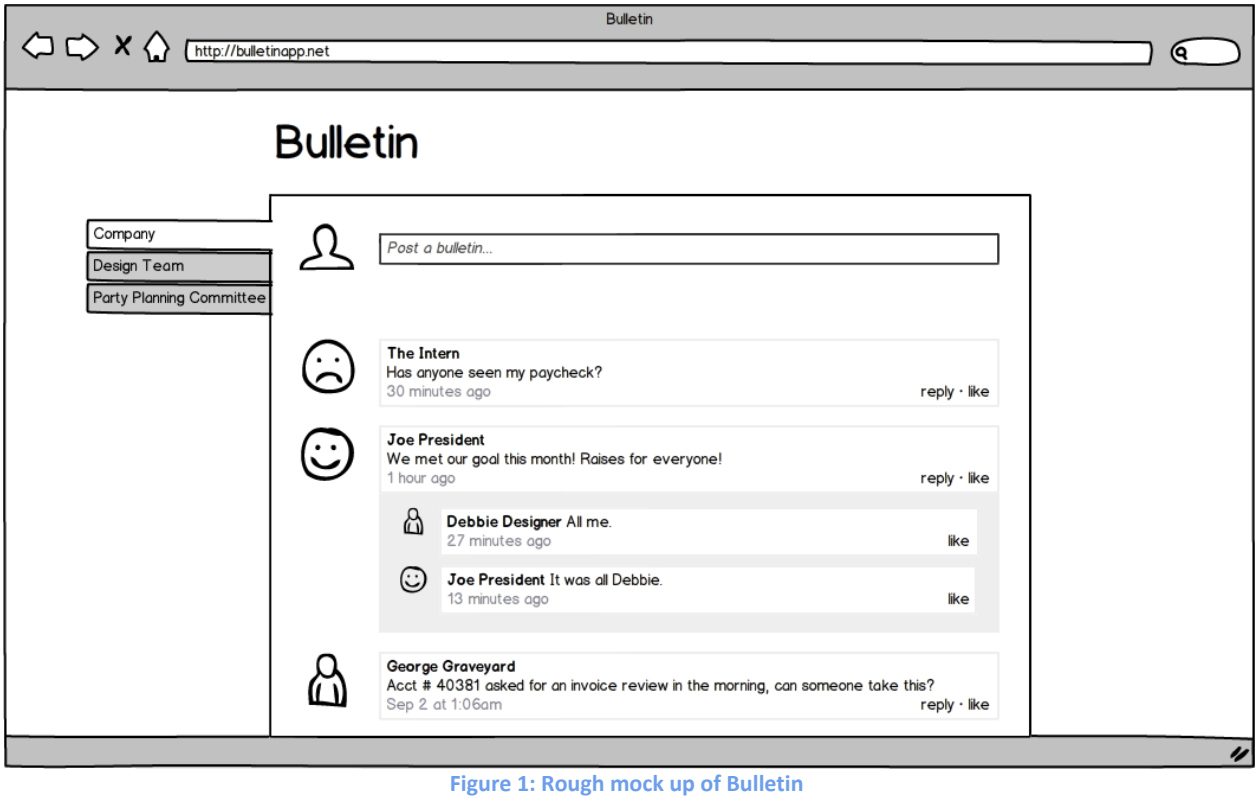

Figure 1: Rough mock up of Bulletin

Proposed Technology

The primary programming language will be Ruby and the web framework will be Ruby on Rails. The frontend of the web framework will be written in php, html, and javascript as supported by Ruby On Rails. The web page will be hosted on a Heroku server and data will be stored in the free PostgreSQL

database that comes with Heroku. Git will be used as the version control (which is already enforced from Heroku). Instead of reimplementing user authentication, Facebook OAuth authentication will be used for user authentication (which can be done with php or other external Ruby libraries).

In terms of team communication, google docs will be the primary resource for placing documents. Google calendar will be used for deadline reminder and for scheduling group meetings. Code review will be done with either with git or upload.py (http://code.google.com/p/rietveld/wiki/UploadPyUsage). Bug tracking will be done with google docs (unless there is a better way that will be introduced in class).

Minimum Viable Product

The minimal viable product will be a web-application that allows one to log in via Facebook, join and create groups, and post feeds or comments to feeds. Here is a summarized list of MVP features:

1) Facebook OAuth user authentication
2) Creating groups
3) Joining groups
4) Posting updates to a group
5) Commenting on updates

Future Features

Above and beyond the minimum functionality described above, some other additions to Bulletin might include:

1) Ability to attach documents/pictures to posts
2) Integrated chat
3) Highlighting/bumping up “hot” topics
4) Ability to remove posts/comments
5) Posting to multiple groups
6) “Like” a feed
7) User profile