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Online Examination System using PHP and MYSQL

Rakesh Kumar Giri

Associate Professor, Department of Computer Science & Engineering,Saisha Institutions, Chennai, India, Email: rakeshgiriap@gmail.com

Abstract: The Online Examination System is a web-based tool created to efficiently administer and oversee exams in a digital setting. Traditional pen-and-paper exams present many logistical difficulties, such as printing question papers, assigning invigilators, manually grading answer sheets, and managing results. This system is designed to remove these obstacles by offering an automated, easy-to-use platform that makes exam management simpler for both administrators and students. This project allows administrators to set up subjects, include multiple-choice questions, establish exams with defined time limits and grading rules, and oversee student records. Students are able to sign up, access their accounts, see which exams are available, and take part in them during a set period. The system instantly checks responses against the correct answers stored in the database and produces precise results, such as the total number of questions, correct answers, marks obtained, and whether the user passed or failed. Key components consist of user authentication, subject and question management, a real-time exam timer, automatic result generation, and comprehensive performance reports for both students and the admin panel. The system uses PHP and MySQL as its main technologies to ensure data integrity, security, and efficiency. This Online Examination System enhances the examination process by minimizing manual work, increasing the accuracy of results, and promoting transparency, making it a dependable and scalable solution for schools, colleges, and training institutes.

Keywords: Online Exam System, PHP, MYSQL, ADMIN PANEL, STUDENT PANEL, SQL

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's digital age, the integration of technology into education has become essential for improving learning experiences and administrative efficiency. One significant advancement in this direction is the development of **Online Examination Systems**, which provide a modern alternative to the traditional examination process. The conventional approach to conducting exams—requiring printed question papers, physical supervision, manual evaluation, and result compilation—is time-consuming, error-prone, and often inefficient. The **Online Examination System** is a web-based application developed using **PHP and MySQL** that addresses these challenges by offering a secure, scalable, and automated platform to manage the entire examination lifecycle. From question management and exam creation to student registration, automated evaluation, and result reporting, every step is handled electronically.

The system is divided into two primary interfaces: **Admin Panel** and **Student Panel**. The Admin Panel allows the administrator to manage subjects, questions, students, and exams while monitoring all results. On the other hand, the Student Panel enables students to register/login, view available exams, take timed tests, and instantly receive their results.This system improves accessibility, reduces the cost of examination logistics, minimizes human

errors, and ensures fast and fair evaluation. By transitioning to an online mode, educational institutions can streamline their examination processes while ensuring flexibility and transparency.

II. OBJECTIVE

The primary objective of the **Online Examination System** is to design and implement a secure, user-friendly, and efficient platform for conducting examinations over the internet. The **Online Examination System** is a web-based platform developed to facilitate digital examinations in a streamlined and secure environment. It addresses the limitations of traditional exam systems by offering an automated solution that enhances efficiency, accuracy, and accessibility for both students and administrators. This system enables **students** to register, view available exams, participate in them within a set time frame, and receive immediate feedback on their performance. On the other hand, **administrators** can manage subjects, questions, and exams, monitor student activities, and view detailed performance reports—all from a centralized dashboard. The platform is developed using **PHP** as the backend scripting language and **MySQL** for database management. It follows a modular structure with dedicated panels for students and administrators, ensuring role-based access and functionality.The Online Examination System significantly reduces manual efforts, eliminates the need for paper, and brings transparency and fairness to the examination process. It is an ideal solution for schools, colleges, training institutes, or any organization conducting frequent assessments.

III.SYSTEM ANALYSIS:

1. Existing System

In many educational institutions, examinations are still conducted manually using pen and paper. This conventional approach involves several time-consuming steps, including printing question papers, physically distributing them to students, collecting answer sheets, manual evaluation by instructors, and finally compiling and publishing results.

This system suffers from numerous limitations:

- **Time-Consuming Process**: The preparation, distribution, and evaluation of exams require significant time and resources.
- **Prone to Human Error**: Manual checking increases the chances of mistakes in marking and result calculation.
- **Lack of Security**: Paper-based exams can be leaked or tampered with, compromising exam integrity.
- **Resource Intensive**: A large amount of paper, printing, and human effort is required, making the system inefficient and costly.
- **Limited Accessibility**: Students must be physically present at the exam venue, which is not feasible in emergencies or for remote learners.
- **Delayed Results**: Due to manual evaluation, students must wait days or even weeks for their results.

As the demand for scalability, speed, and flexibility grows in the education sector, this outdated method no longer meets modern academic requirements. Hence, a more robust, secure, and automated solution is necessary.

2. Proposed System

The proposed Online Examination System aims to overcome the limitations of the traditional manual examination process by offering a fully digital, secure, and user-friendly platform for conducting and managing exams.

This system provides a web-based solution where administrators can manage subjects, questions, exams, and student records, while students can register, take exams, and view results — all from the convenience of their devices.

IV.PROJECT MODULES

This project contains two main modules, those are:

• Admin

• Students

V.OVERVIEW OF TECHNOLOGIES USED

1. Front End Technology

PHP

PHP is a server-side scripting language designed specifically for the web. Within an HTML page, you can embed PHP code that will be executed each time the page is visited. Your PHP code is interpreted at the web server and generates HTML or other output that the visitor will see.

PHP was introduced in 1994. As of November 2007, it was installed on more than 21 million domains worldwide, and this number is growing rapidly. You can see the current number at http://www.php.net/usage.php

PHP is an Open Source project. PHP originally stood for Personal Home Page and now stands for PHP Hypertext Preprocessor.

Unique Features

If you are familiar with other server side language like ASP.NET or JSP you might be wondering what makes PHP so special, or so different from these competing alternatives well, here are some reasons:

1. Performance
2. Portability(Platform Independent)
3. Ease Of Use
4. Open Source
5. Third-Party Application Support
6. Community Support

PHP Server

The PHP Community Provides Some types of Software Server solution under The GNU (General Public License).

These are the following:

1. WAMP Server
2. LAMP Server
3. MAMP Server
4. XAMPP Server

All these types of software automatic configure inside operating system after installation it having PHP, MySQL, Apache and operating system base configuration file, it doesn't need to configure manually.
WAMP----- Microsoft window o/s,Apache Mysql PHP
LAMP---- Linux Operating System Apache Mysql PHP
MAMP---- Mac os Apache Mysql PHP
XAMPP---- x-os(cross operating system) Apache Mysql PHP Perl

Introduction to HTML

The hypertext markup language (HTML) is a simple markup language. Used to create a hypertext documents that are portable from one platform to another HTML documents are SGML (Standard generalized mark up language) documents with generic semantics that are appropriate for representing information from a wide range of applications. This specification defines HTML version 3.2. HTML 3.2 aims to capture recommended practice as of early '96 and as such a replacement for HTML2.0 (RFC 1866).

A set of instructions embedded in a document is called mark up language. These instructions describe what the document text means and how it should look like in a display. Hyper Text Mark Up language (HTML) is the language used to encode World Wide Web documents.

2.Back End Technology:

MYSQL

MySQL Introduction

There are a large number of database management systems currently available, some commercial and some free.

Some of them : Oracle, Microsoft Access, Mysql and PostgreSQL.

These database systems are powerful, feature-rich software, capable of organizing and searching millions of records at very high speeds**.**

Understanding Databases, Records, and Primary Keys

Every Database is composed of one or more tables.

These Tables, which structure data into rows and columns, Impose organization on the data.

The records in a table(below) are not arranged in any particular order.

SQL, statements fall into one of three categories.(Types of SQL)

Data Definition Language(DDL) : DDL Consists of statements that define the structure and relationships of a database and its table.

These Statements are used to Create, drop and modify databases and tables.

Data Manipulation Language(DML) : DML statements are related to altering and extracting data from a database.

These statements are used to add records to, update records in, and delete records from, a database; perform queries; retrieve table records matching one or more user specified criteria; and join tables together using their common fields.

Data Control Language(DCL) : DCL statements are sued to define access levels and security privileges for a database.

You would use these statements to grant or deny user privileges; assign roles; change passwords; view permissions; and create rulesets to protect access to data.

PHP MySQL connectivity

Use the mysqli_connect( ) function to established connection to the MySQL server.
To access the database functionality we have to make a connection to database using Php. mysqli_connect() function is used to establish the connection to MySQL server. four arguments need to be passed to mysqli_connect() function.
hostname : if you are working on local system , you can use localhost or you can also provide ip address or server name.
username : if there is a existing user , you can provide username. default username is ‘root’.
password : by default password is blank or null.
dbname : it is a optional field . it is basically a name of the database that need to be connected.
mysqli_connect(host,username,password,dbname);
host(Server name)---- Either a host name(server name) or an IP address
username---- The MySQL user name
password----The password to log in with
dbname----Optional. The database to be used when performing queries

VI.CODING

This system aims to replace traditional paper-based exams with a digital solution that automates the process of:

Key features include:

- Database Schema
- Database Connection
- User Authentication and Session Management
- Login Page
- MCQ Link

- Retrieving Random Questions
- Calculating Score
- Exam Management and Timer Module
- Handling Exam Submissions
- Result Processing and Ranking

By achieving these objectives, the system enhances examination efficiency, maintains result accuracy, and provides a transparent and reliable method of conducting assessments in educational institutions.

Database Schema

Sql

```
CREATE DATABASE exam_system ;
USE exam_system;
--Table for users( Admins and Students)
CREATE TABLE users()
id INT Auto_Increment Primary Key,
name VARCHAR(100),
email VARCHAR(100) UNIQUE,
password VARCHAR(255),
role ENUM('admin', 'student') DEFAULT 'student'
);
--Table for  available exams
CREATE TABLE exams (
id INT AUTO_INCREMENT PRIMARY KEY,
title VARCHAR (200),
duration_mins  INT
);
--Table for multiple-choice questions
CREATE TABLE questions(
id INT AUTO_INCREMENT PRIMARY KEY,
exam_id INT,
question_text TEXT,
option_a VARCHAR(255)
option_b VARCHAR(255)
option_c VARCHAR(255)
option_d VARCHAR(255)
correct_option CHAR(1),
FOREIGN KEY(exam_id) REFERENCES exam(id) ON DELETE CASCADE
);
--Table to store final results
CREATE TABLE results(
id INT AUTO_INCREMENT PRIMARY KEY,
```



```
user_id  INT,
exam_id  INT,
score  INT,
total_marks INT,
FOREIGN KEY(user_id) REFERENCES users(id),
FOREIGN KEY(exam_id) REFERENCES exams(id)
);
```

Database Connection

php

```
<? php
$ host= “localhost”;
$ user=”root”;
$ pass=” “;
$ dbname=”exam_system”;
$ conn= new mysqli($host, $user, $pass, $dbname);
if( $conn->connect_error){
die(“Connection failed:”.$ conn->connect_error);
}
?>
```

User Authentication and Session Management

php

```
session_start();
$ Stmt= $ pdo->prepare(“SELECT id, password FROM users WHERE email=?”);
$ Stmt->execute([$ email]);
$ user= $ Stmt-> fetch();
if ($ user $$ password_verify ($ password, $ user[‘password’])){
$_Session[‘user_id’];
header (“Location:dashboard.php”);
}
```

Login Page

```
session_start();
$ Stmt= $ pdo->prepare(“SELECT id, password FROM users WHERE email=?”);
$ Stmt->execute([$ email]);
$ user= $ Stmt-> fetch();
if ($ user $$ password_verify ($ password, $ user[‘password’])){
$_Session[‘user_id’]=$ user[‘id’];
header (“Location:dashboard.php”);
}
```

MCQ Link

```
CREATE TABLE choices (
id INT(11) AUTO_INCREMENT PRIMARY KEY,
question_id INT(11),
```



```
choice_text TEXT,
is_correct TINYINT (1) DEFAULT 0;
FOREIGN KEY(question_id) REFERENCES questions(id)
);
```

Retrieving Random Questions

sql

```
SELECT * FROM questions
WHERE subject_id=5
ORDER BY RAND()
LIMIT 10;
```

Calculating Score

php

```
$ score=0;
foreach ($_Post[‘answers’] as $ question_id=> $ selected_option){
$ stmt = $ pdo->prepare (“ SELECT correct_options FROM questions where id=?”);
$ stmt-> execute ([$ question_id]);
$ correct=$ stmt-> fetchColumn();
if($ Selected_option== $ correct){
$ score++;
}
echo” Your total score is:”$ score;
```

Exam Management and Timer Module

```
Let time Remaining=3600;
Function countdown() {
If ( time Remaining<=0){
document.getElement By Id(“examForm”).Submit();
}
else
{
Time Remaining--;
setTimeout (countdown, 1000);
}
}
```

Handling Exam Submissions

php

```
$ score=0;
foreach ($_Post[‘answers’] as $ question_id=> $ selelcted_option){
$ stmt = $ pdo->prepare (“ SELECT correct_options FROM questions where id=?”);
$ stmt-> execute ([$ question_id]);
$ correct=$ stmt-> fetchColumn();
if($ Selected_option== $ correct){
$ score++;
```



```
}
}
```

Result Processing and Ranking

```
SELECT  student_id, score,
RANK() OVER (ORDER BY score DESC)as student_rank
FROM exam_results WHERE exam_id=?;
```

VII.CONCLUSION:

The **Online Examination System** developed as part of this project offers a modern, efficient, and scalable solution for conducting assessments in educational institutions. Traditional examination systems have long suffered from a range of limitations such as time-consuming paper evaluations, logistical challenges in exam scheduling, a high probability of manual errors, and excessive administrative workload. This project addresses all these limitations by introducing a digital platform that simplifies the entire examination lifecycle — from exam setup and question management to real-time student evaluation and instant result generation.

Through its dual interface for administrators and students, the system ensures a seamless experience. Administrators can easily manage subjects, create multiple-choice questions (MCQs), schedule exams, and monitor student performances. On the other hand, students benefit from an intuitive interface that allows them to register, log in, view available exams, participate in timed assessments, and instantly access their results. The inclusion of real-time scoring, auto-evaluation of answers, and result summaries ensures both speed and accuracy in performance assessment.

One of the most significant achievements of this system is its ability to eliminate geographical and time-related constraints. Exams can be conducted online, enabling remote access for students and reducing the need for physical infrastructure like examination halls, invigilators, and printed question papers. The system also enhances security by preventing re-submission of answers, ensuring that each student gets only one attempt per exam.

Moreover, the integration of databases for storing results, summaries, and student information ensures data integrity and enables long-term tracking of academic performance. With proper backups and user access controls, the system is both secure and reliable.

In conclusion, this project has effectively demonstrated how technology can transform the traditional examination system into a more efficient, transparent, and accessible process. It not only reduces the workload on faculty and administrative staff but also improves the overall learning and assessment experience for students. The Online Examination System serves as a valuable tool in the education sector and has great potential for further development and wider adoption in the future.

VIII.FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS:

While the Online Examination System developed in this project successfully meets the core requirements of conducting online assessments, there are several enhancements and additional features that can be integrated in the future to further improve its efficiency, scalability, and user experience.

1. **Subjective Questions Support**

   Currently, the system supports multiple-choice questions (MCQs) with automatic evaluation. In the future, it can be extended to include subjective-type questions that require manual evaluation by instructors. This will broaden the scope of assessments and support essay-type exams.

2. **Live Proctoring Integration**

   For high-stakes examinations, security is paramount. Features like AI-based webcam monitoring, screen tracking, and behavior analysis can be implemented to prevent cheating and maintain examination integrity.

3. **Advanced Reporting & Analytics**

   Enhanced analytics modules can be added to generate performance trends, topic-wise student analysis, comparative reports, and improvement suggestions for students, enabling data-driven learning.

4. **Mobile App Development**

   A mobile application for Android and iOS can be developed to make the system more accessible and convenient for students to take exams on their smartphones and tablets.

5. **Multilingual Support**

   To reach a wider audience, especially in multilingual regions, the system can support multiple languages, allowing students to choose their preferred language during the exam.

6. **Question Bank Management with Difficulty Levels**

   A robust question bank system with tagging by difficulty level (easy, medium, hard), topics, and previous usage history can be added for better exam generation and randomization.

7. **Gamification and Feedback System**

   Incorporating gamified elements such as badges, leaderboards, and timed challenges can increase student engagement. Also, feedback mechanisms can help students learn from their mistakes.

8. **Role-Based Access Control (RBAC)**

   Adding more user roles (such as exam reviewers, moderators, invigilators) can make the system more adaptable for use in schools, colleges, and competitive exam platforms.

9. **Integration with Learning Management Systems (LMS)**

   The system can be integrated with popular LMS platforms like Moodle, Google Classroom, or Canvas for seamless course and assessment management.

10. **Cloud-Based Deployment**

Hosting the system on the cloud can allow for greater scalability, availability, and ease of maintenance, especially when used by a large number of institutions or students.

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