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Membership application development-subscription based

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Abstract. It's no secret: Units wanting from small businesses, both public and private, to large businesses, are facing new challenges in hiring and managing members and payments. The membership application is an application that provides businesses, associations, clubs, and functional organizations looking to manage their members. A membership application is an online subscription-based business where people pay for regular access to exclusive content. Online memberships and courses have continued to grow as people are willing to pay for convenience, exclusivity, knowledge, and community. They are structured in such a way as to meet the special needs of the members at a price point that they are willing to pay. These applications are critical to simplifying member-related objectives and storing the desired data. The platform enables the registration of the membership or course plan, your student data allowed you to use them at any time, view the student profile, change or update their profile. There is also an email and SMS system to connect with their students. The key idea here is to ensure that the workflow is organized and to keep your human resources in good shape within the team. This paper presents in detail has an application, its importance, and its role in various businesses, associations, and organizations.

Keywords: Application, Membership, Data, Members

1 ENTRY

Every entity ¹whether a club, trade association, trade business, alumni group, or gym around you needs a straightforward system to manage all of its members, events, money, and related content. It can be tedious to fill out all the paperwork for each new member, as well as keep spreadsheets to list members and store their information. Online membership management application services make this task easy.

A membership application is an online subscription-based business, where people pay for regular access to exclusive content. Online memberships and courses have continued to grow as people are willing to pay for convenience, exclusivity, knowledge, and community. It includes membership and course pages. They are structured in such a way as to meet the special needs of the members at a price point that they are willing to pay. It is generally a mix of educational and informative content such as courses, white papers, webinars, and more. [1]

Usually, a membership application will include most or all of the following features:

- Access is temporarily granted for a fee: For example, you may pay a monthly or annual fee to be part of a membership application.
- No set endpoint: Your membership lasts forever until you decide to cancel it.
- Regular content: A membership application is usually not a static resource. It is constantly updated with the latest information on the topic, and new content is published regularly. This provides an incentive for people to pay an ongoing membership fee.

Most membership applications will allow you to join at any time and work through their material at your own pace. Mostly this is used to create a sense of urgency to sign up and give the site more exclusivity, but it can also be a way to work through a program with a certain group of students all at the same time.

¹ Entity - a thing with distinct and independent existence

What it offers clients is a summary of the work done by the employees. The key idea here is to ensure that the workflow is organized and to keep your human resources in good shape within the team. The membership management application is a one-stop solution for all such membership organization processes. Operational CRM is facilitated by the use of a membership management system. This will be beneficial for small and large companies, keeping the focus on team building and resource utilization. [1]

These SaaS cloud-based tools are designed to meet the management needs of members of clubs, associations, and other organizations. Depending on the product and the audience, these platforms combine a variety of functions including member database management, document management, email marketing, website creation, payment processing, event planning and management, and a host of other functions. Unlike most types of SaaS products that aim to offer a universal set of tools, the membership management application often specializes in addressing only the needs of specific types of organizations.

The analog days are over: You do not need to run the information and programs of all members of your organization across paper mountains in the file lockers or the same Microsoft Excel spreadsheet you have been using since the 1990s. Membership requires the ability to find basic membership information, communicate with members and prospects, and plan events. To collect donations, liabilities, and fees and to process payments, you also need some pieces of accounting software. [1]

Beyond the basics, and depending on the organization you run, your admin panel may have several other features. This platform can help you run your business, manage documents, and conduct member surveys and online surveys.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Membership applications are one of the many groups that need to adapt and evolve by listening to the needs of their audience. Membership applications also need to undergo digital transformation and create new ways to engage and interact with the next generation. In short, they must stay relevant to truly succeed in today's customer-centric climate.

Below we will discuss how important such an application is in Kosovo and what are the benefits of this application. We will look at similar apps around the world and compare them in terms of price and key features. Each application has its characteristics and features. We will see some of them below. Different technologies are used to develop these applications. From the basic concepts to the technologies I have personally used, email service providers and payment processing are some of the issues we will be discussing.

2.1 The importance of such an application in Kosovo

There are many good reasons to build a membership application - you may want to create a private area for your clients, demonstrate your knowledge of a particular topic, take a new course, or share your passion and interests. Or maybe you are just looking for a new way to work online.

The benefits do not stop at the client; from increased internal communication and good organization to a streamlined process, membership sites offer significant benefits that can revolutionize your business, your lifestyle, and your value as a business owner. The main advantage of this application is that the application will be in the Albanian language. This will be a pretty good option for users who do not know English.

2.1.1 Increase internal communication

Some entrepreneurs are aware of the benefits offered by management software but are not very clear in choosing the best option and setting it up correctly. This is software that contains information from members within the organization which gives you an idea of how things work and which practices would work best. In this regard, a member management system strengthens operational CRM activity by maintaining correspondence and inter-team relationships. This is extremely responsible for building and strengthening relationships within the organization. Focusing on communication skills will increase the relationship between employees. Team members feel more comfortable and safe in such a work environment. [4]

2.1.2 Better organization

Next, we talk about how membership management systems can keep members stress-free. When work and process are better harmonized within the firm, a great deal of pressure is removed by team members. The presence of automated features helps employees work in a more organized way so that work does not become routine or monotonous for anyone and the team can work in a team. Also, using this software, team leaders would ensure that all members have access to the appropriate training and resources, as well as when required to complete tasks. [4]

2.1.3 Simplified process

Finding new and useful members of your team is one of the most important aspects of operational CRM. Just like the way customers shape the spirit of the company and employees form the backbone of the firm. Human resources are the most useful resources in the company. A membership management system can help build a good team and maintain its quality of work. The perfect team would require a group of skilled employees, resources to support them, and a work plan to see the process. To simplify these processes and make things more organized, you can use membership management software. [4]

2.2 Similar applications used in the world

Some of the most popular applications similar to membership management app are 360Alumni, aMember Pro, ChamberMaster, ClubExpress, MemberPlanet, NationBuilder, StarChapter, Sumac, Wild Apricot, and Zen Planner.

2.2.1 Comparison of several applications

There is a trade-off that you need to consider between the functionality of the software in its overall state and the costs of adapting it to the needs of your organization. Many smaller associations, especially new ones that have not yet established their processes, may be satisfied with simpler software. Larger organizations that have been around for years and that have specific ways of doing business may be better off investing extra funds in platform personalization.

Most of these systems offer additional features like payment processing, event tickets, and email marketing, some are available for free while others come at an additional cost. There are also e-commerce packages that allow you to sell your organization t-shirts online or accept donations online.

Zen Planner, for example, offers a much more expensive monthly package for its website package to build and maintain your website. ClubExpress charges a one-time start-up fee ranging from \$ 600 to almost \$ 2,000 depending on the level of coding and personalization of the website you need. The ChamberMaster start-up fee ranges from \$ 149 to \$ 7,000. Wild Apricot, on the other hand, includes free website building, web hosting, API access, and WordPress integration at all levels. Then there are tools such as MemberPlanet, which offer little or no personalization but come at a much lower overall cost. Sumac does not include website building or content management, but it still has a one-time fee of \$ 700 plus \$ 50 per month for integrating the website with its program

APPLICATION NAME	MONTHLY PAYMENT	YEARLY PAYMENT
Zen Planner	\$117.00	\$1404
ClubExpress	\$24.00 per feature	\$288 per feature
ChamberMaster	\$149.00	\$1788
Wild Apricot	\$48-\$720	\$576-\$8640
MemberPlanet	\$50.00	\$600
Sumac	\$35.00 per feature	\$420 per feature

Table 1. The difference between applications in the world in terms of payments

Wix is a website maker that offers a limited free plan and some premium plans. In either of these plans, you can create a member area and let visitors register and access exclusive content. If you upgrade to one of the premium plans, you can also sell paid subscriptions without installing any third-party integration. [2]

Wild Apricot is a website creator created specifically for membership sites. Using Wild Apricots, you can create multiple membership levels with benefits that increase at each price point. In addition to managing members, Wild Apricot offers features to help you manage your events, email marketing, and online payments. [2]

YourMembership is a membership website creator that provides everything you need to create and run a site. In addition to being able to manage members and events in one panel, you can view analytics about your site growth, create automated workflows, and publish blogs, polls, and polls. [2]

Pricing		
Starting from \$48/month	Starting from €4.50/month	Starting from No info
Free trial available ✓	Free trial available ✗	Free trial available ✓
No credit card required ✓	No credit card required ✓	No credit card required ✓
Free account ✓	Free account ✓	Free account ✗
Subscription based ✓	Subscription based ✓	Subscription based ✓

Figure 1- Comparison of Wild Apricot, Wix, YourMembership - prices

Figure 1 shows the comparison between the Wix, Wild Apricot, and YourMembership applications in the features included in the basic packages. Starting with Wild Apricot, which has a starting price of \$ 48 / month, offers the opportunity to test the application for free for a certain period, with a free account and without including credit card details. Wix on the other hand has a cheaper starting price starting at € 4.50 / month but does not include the free app testing part. YourMembership offers the aforementioned features, not including a free account.

Key features


Total features	62	Total features	 80	Total features	21
API	✓	API	✓	API	✗
Accounting	✓	Accounting	✓	Accounting	✗
Alerts/Notifications	✓	Alerts/Notifications	✓	Alerts/Notifications	✗
Chapter Management	✓	Chapter Management	✗	Chapter Management	✓
Committee Management	✓	Committee Management	✗	Committee Management	✓
Contact Management	✓	Contact Management	✓	Contact Management	✗
Credit Card Processing	✓	Credit Card Processing	✓	Credit Card Processing	✗
Customizable Fields	✓	Customizable Fields	✓	Customizable Fields	✗
Customizable Templates	✓	Customizable Templates	✓	Customizable Templates	✗
Drag & Drop	✓	Drag & Drop	✓	Drag & Drop	✗
Dues Management	✓	Dues Management	✗	Dues Management	✓
Email Marketing	✓	Email Marketing	✓	Email Marketing	✓
Event Management	✓	Event Management	✗	Event Management	✓
Financial Management	✓	Financial Management	✓	Financial Management	✓
Fundraising Management	✓	Fundraising Management	✗	Fundraising Management	✓
Member Accounts	✓	Member Accounts	✗	Member Accounts	✓
Member Communication	✓	Member Communication	✗	Member Communication	✓
Member Communities	✓	Member Communities	✗	Member Communities	✓
Member Database	✓	Member Database	✗	Member Database	✓
Member Directory	✓	Member Directory	✗	Member Directory	✓
Member Portal	✓	Member Portal	✗	Member Portal	✓
Member Types	✓	Member Types	✗	Member Types	✓
Membership Management	✓	Membership Management	✗	Membership Management	✓
Membership Renewals	✓	Membership Renewals	✗	Membership Renewals	✓
Payment Processing	✓	Payment Processing	✗	Payment Processing	✓
SSL Security	✓	SSL Security	✓	SSL Security	✗
Search/Filter	✓	Search/Filter	✓	Search/Filter	✗
Volunteer Management	✓	Volunteer Management	✗	Volunteer Management	✓
Website Management	✓	Website Management	✓	Website Management	✓

Figure 2. Comparison of Wild Apricot, Wix, YourMembership - key features

2.2.2 Membership application usage statistics

Subscription-based businesses are growing in number, especially around the global pandemic. It's the main way businesses and individuals can make money online.

Some of the statistics about these applications are:

- By 2022, 53% of all software revenue will be generated by subscription applications.
- By 2020, all new entrants and 80% of existing retailers use subscription applications.
- Key business challenges: 63% of media publishers say turning audiences into paid subscribers is a significant issue, while 42% of media businesses say developing products that people are willing to pay for is a barrier to great.
- The average small business spends more than \$ 15,500 each month on SaaS products
- Small businesses use an average of 20 SaaS paid prepayments.
- Of the 504 top business executives representing retail, finance, and other industries, 70% believe that membership applications hold the key to growth.
- Of the top financial executives surveyed, 53% say that 40% of their organization's revenue is sold through the subscription model.
- Of C-level executives and board members, 23% are including membership applications as part of their future strategies, while 17% of responding businesses will start new or additional revenue businesses shortly.
- Of businesses, 82% are approving membership applications because it enables them to become major distributors.
- A total of 76% of businesses claim that a membership application helps build customer retention and long-term customer relationships. [8]

According to Sensor Tower Store Intelligence data, worldwide consumer spending on the top 100 subscription-based applications increased 34 percent year-on-year from \$ 9.7 billion in 2019 to \$ 13 billion.

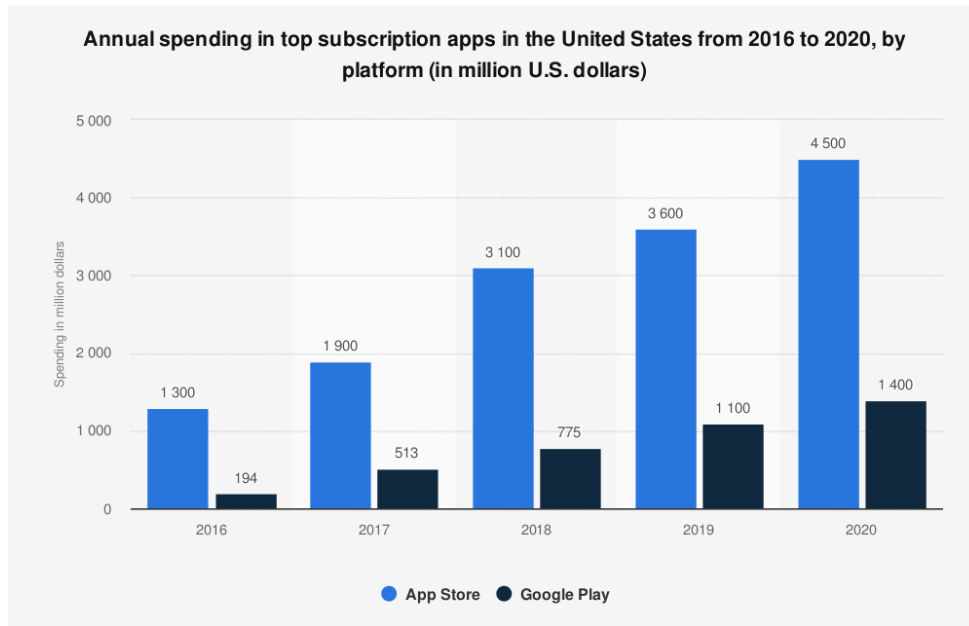


Figure 3. Annual spending on membership applications in the United States from 2016 to 2020

Revenue from the top 100 subscription apps accounted for about 11.7 percent of the \$ 111 billion consumers spent on in-app purchases last year, the same share as in 2019.

Growth of subscription application revenue in the United States followed the global trend but was still growing from last year. US consumers spent nearly \$ 5.9 billion on the top 100 gaming-free mobile apps offering subscriptions by 2020, up 26 percent year-over-year from \$ 4.6 billion in 2019. That's 5 percentage points higher than Y / Y growth experienced by leading companies. subscription applications in 2019.[7]

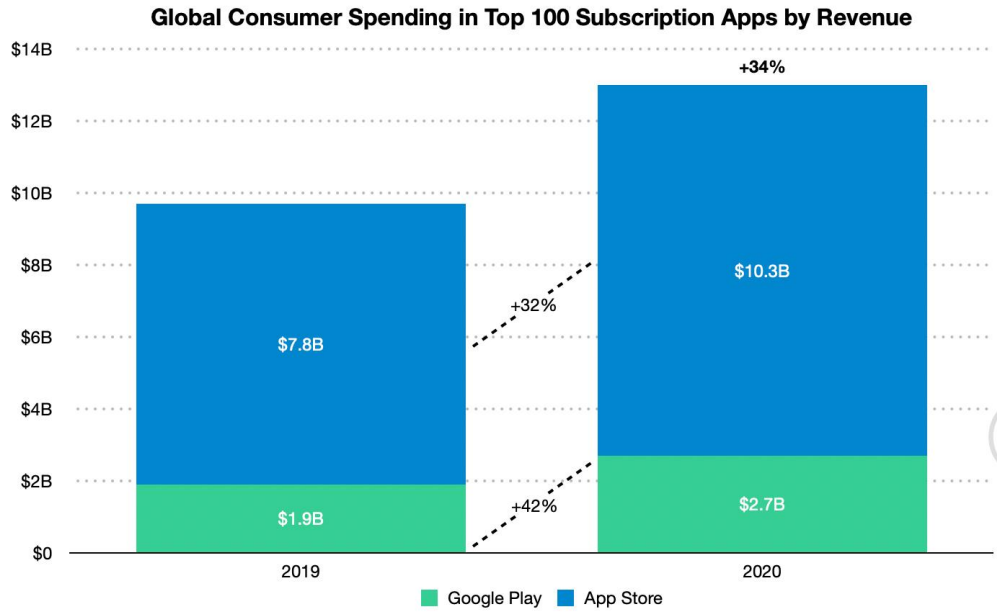


Figure 4. Costs from clients in the top 100 membership applications-globally

Expenditures on the top 100 subscription apps accounted for about 17.6 percent of the \$ 33 billion US consumers spent on in-app purchases in 2020, up 3.4 percentage points from the 21 percent revenue share they calculated in 2019. [9]

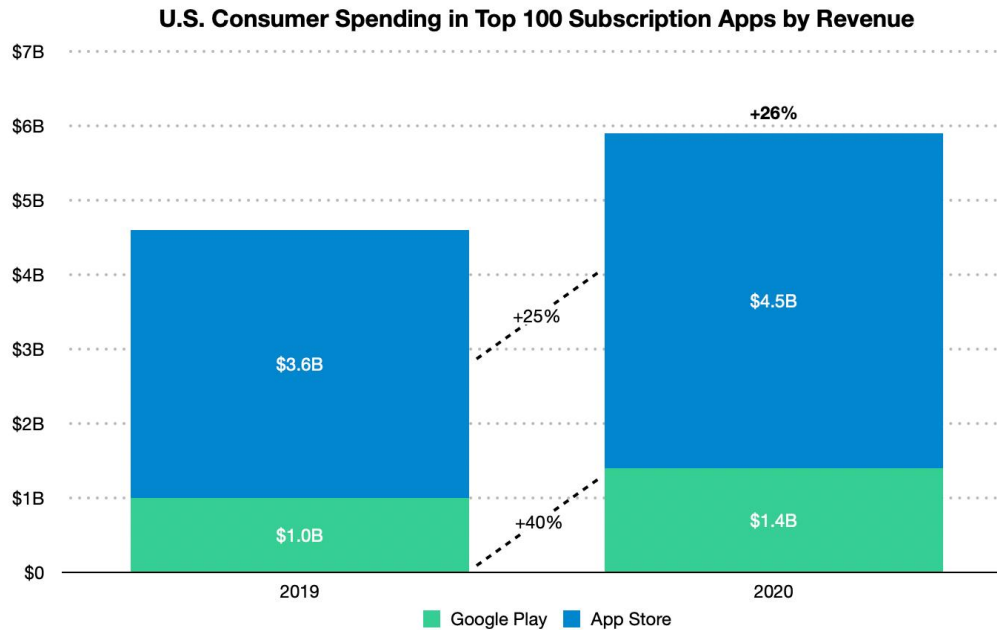


Figure 5. Expenses from US clients in the top 100 membership applications that show how much these applications have been used

2.3 Technologies used to create such applications

As you begin to build a technology group to support the membership application, there are two key concepts you need to understand before choosing tools: Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRM) and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). A CRM system keeps track of your identified readers and members. An API enables different software systems, such as your CRM, to talk to each other. [11]

2.3.1 What should this software do for you?

Everything published on your website is managed here: content, members, courses, emails, SMS, etc.

2.3.2 What are the essentials?

Create and manage individual pages and content for your website

Manage header / footer / navigation menus

Security measures for managing some users (2FA, administrator roles, etc.).

2.3.3 What are the factors to consider?

CMS maintenance is a completely separate part - but someone has to do it. CMS maintenance tends to focus on four areas:

1. Security side and updates
2. Time for which it is functional, performance, and backups
3. Adding new features
4. Updating the look and feel of the user (UI)

2.3.4 Email Service Provider?

Email is an essential ingredient for a successful membership program. Emails can help turn casual readers into returning visitors and support members. You need an email service provider, or ESP, that gives you the ability to compose and send emails to different segments and groups of lists.

Some of the Email service providers: MailChimp, Constant Contact, Engaging Networks, Substack, Revue, Sailthru, Pardot, ConvertKit. [11]

2.3.4.1 What should this software do for you?

Manage email relationships with clients and distribute content through email publishing.

2.3.4.2 What are the essentials?

Manage email contact lists and segments (even better if it syncs with your CRM).

Send automated emails, such as credit card renewals and expiration notifications.

Connect via API or integrate with CMS and CRM. Integrate interactive email content, such as GIFs

2.3.5 Sales/ payment processor

Point-of-sale systems are those that allow you to accept payments from readers. There are many considerations for payment processors — especially depending on your location — but you will want something that is ultimately simple and easy for your prospective members to complete. Some of the sales/payment processors: Stripe, PayPal, Square, Braintree, Reveniu, PayU, Mercado Pago. [11]

2.3.5.1 What should this software do for you?

Allows you to receive and refund customer money for products (such as membership).

2.3.5.2 What are the essentials?

PCI compliance, ensuring the security of credit card transactions

Higher security standards, such as tokenization technology and P2PE (point-to-point encryption)

Ability to process (and refund) credit card payments.

Ability to manage recurring monthly and annual payments.

The ability for users to update their credit card information automatically.

2.3.6 Technologies used in creating my application

The application is mainly developed with Laravel 8. The Front-end part is developed with HTML, CSS, and Bootstrap as a framework, as well as Javascript and Vue.js as a framework. Payment processors are important to any business - and especially those of subscriptions and memberships. In this application, this part is taken care of by Stripe API.

Mailtrap is used as the Email Service Provider for sending Emails through the application manually or automatically.

This application also has integrated SMS sending through the application which was developed using the Vonage API.

PhpMyAdmin and migrations were used for the database for easy sharing of the database schema.

It is worth noting that all tests are done locally and the automated part of sending SMS and Email remains to be tested on the server.

2.3.6.1 HTML

HyperText Markup Language is a group of symbols or markup codes embedded in a file intended for display on the Internet. The note tells web browsers how to display the words and images of a web page. Each part marking code (which would fall between the "<" and ">" characters) is referred to as an element, although many people also refer to it as a label. Some elements come in pairs that indicate when it will start and when it will end.

Tags are what separate normal text from HTML code. Tags are the words between what are known as angle brackets, which allow graphics, images, and tables to appear on the web page. Different labels perform different functions. The most basic labels apply text formatting. As web interfaces need to be made more dynamic, Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) and JavaScript applications can be used. CSS makes websites more accessible and JavaScript adds power to HTML-based.

2.3.6.2 CSS

Cascading Style Sheets. It is the language to describe the layout of web pages, including colors, layout, and fonts, thus making our web pages presentable to users. It is HTML-dependent and can be used with any XML-based markup language. CSS can be used to style basic document text - for example, changing the color and size of titles and links. Can also be used for effects such as animation.

The rule for writing a CSS syntax opens with a selector. This selects the HTML element that we are going to style. We then have a set of curly holders `}}`. Within them, there will be one or more declarations, which take the form of pairs of property and value. Each pair specifies a property of the element (s) we are choosing, then a value that we would like to give to the property.

2.3.6.3 Bootstrap

It is a free and open-source CSS framework for responsive web development. It contains CSS and JavaScript-based design templates for typography, shapes, buttons, navigation, and other interface components. The main purpose of adding it to an online project is to apply the choice of color, size, font, and Bootstrap layout to that project. As such, the key factor is whether responsible developers find those choices to their liking. Once added to a project, Bootstrap provides basic style definitions for all HTML elements. The result is a consistent view of prose, tables, and form elements across web browsers. Additionally, developers can take advantage of the CSS classes defined in Bootstrap to further personalize the look of their content. For example, Bootstrap has provided light and dark color charts, page titles, catchy quotes, and text with an emphasis. Bootstrap also comes with some JavaScript components in the form of jQuery plugins. They provide additional elements of the user interface, such as dialog boxes, toolbars, and carousels. Each Bootstrap component consists of an HTML structure, CSS statements, and in some cases accompanying JavaScript code.

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2.3.6.4 Javascript

It is a text-based programming language used by both the client and the server that allows you to make web pages interactive. Where HTML and CSS are languages that give websites structure and style, JavaScript gives websites interactive elements that engage them. is a user. JavaScript is primarily used for web-based applications and web browsers. But JavaScript is also used beyond the Web in software, servers, and embedded hardware controls. Here are some basic things to look for when selecting JavaScript:

1. Adding interactive behavior to websites
2. Creating web and mobile applications
3. Building Internet servers and developing server applications
4. Game development [20]

2.3.6.5 Vue.js

It is a framework of JavaScript model-view-view model front-source with open source for building user interfaces and one-page applications. Vue.js features a gradually adaptable architecture that focuses on declarative layout and component composition. The main library is focused only on the viewing layer. The advanced features required for complex applications such as running, state management, and building tools are provided through formally maintained libraries and support packages. Vue.js allows HTML extensions with HTML attributes called directives. Directives provide functionality for HTML applications and come as integrated or user-defined directives.

2.3.6.6 Laravel

It is a free, open-source PHP framework created by Taylor Otwell and intended for web application development following the model-view-controller and Symfony-based architectural model.

Laravel offers you the following benefits when designing an online application based on it:

1. The online application becomes more scalable, due to the Laravel framework.
2. Save considerable time in designing the online application, as Laravel reuses components from other frameworks in online application development.
3. It includes namespaces and interfaces, thus helping to organize and manage resources.

3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The main point of this topic will be the development of a web application for membership. The purpose of this application is to keep records of all members registered in the membership plan. It is thought to be with monthly payment, except for the first month which is free which helps the user to see the functionality.

1. How will it work?

Each user who will be registered in the application will have the opportunity to register the respective plans (courses) and to register the members who are part of those plans (courses). Each membership plan can have a fee depending on how the user sets it. Each member will have personal data that will serve the users to see if the members have participated or have made timely payments.

2. What can it be used for?

If you have a private course, kindergarten, private school, training and want to register groups with relevant members and keep track of attendance and payments. This idea stems from the need for such an application in the Albanian language as well as to have a more specific function. Also, be easier and clearer to use for users.

4 METHODOLOGY

The focus of this study will be the creation of a membership application. The methodology of this research will be analytical and practical. With the help of the analytical method, we will anticipate the importance of this application, its role, and details about application development.

The practical part will develop an application using Laravel. The application will be in accordance with the features presented in this paper.

The application includes the registration part and the connection to it. It also includes the choice of plans and the payment plan that the user chooses. Each user has a special panel (dashboard) with relevant features.

This application is tested locally and some of the features such as automated email / SMS should be tested after installation on the respective server.

Due to the nature of the study, I refer to secondary data sources, obtained from various sources to assist in the completion of this study. Secondary sources are considered data that already exist, so extensive research was conducted based on obtaining data from various sources, such as:

1. Data from the internet: a cost-effective way to utilize existing data available makes it the most convenient method. One downside is that they have these resources to reliably trust what they offer and users need to be careful not to risk the study.
2. Similar applications from different companies: during the development of technology for the promotion and marketing of the most appropriate product the company describes and provides information through personal websites which are updated and can be taken as sources for the collection of secondary data.

5 RESULTS

5.1 Case study - application for membership

What is a Membership Application? In its simplest form, a membership application is a closed application that includes member-only content. Provides users with access to protected content. Content protected in a membership application may be available for free or for a fee. It may also include the entire application or just some "closed" parts of the application. [16]

A membership business model has proven to be a powerful force for business growth. That is why:

-It is easy to engage your customers, and members can also create value for other members through the community. This ensures customer satisfaction, which translates into a steady source of revenue.

Predictable monthly or annual revenue is a great benefit and helps businesses manage cash flow and plan for the future.

-It is easy to target a wide range of markets with the same product or service. By creating membership levels, each with a different pricing plan, you effectively segment your target market and deliver value based on what customers want.

At the same time, you can create a space to focus on Content Marketing. [17]

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