

URate

a positive, dynamic way to review class experiences

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Executive Summary

Students frequently lack the accessibility to reliable feedback on university professors. URate allows University of Rochester students to access a database of listed professors and view ratings that are derived from a predetermined set of tags available to users. URate avoids insensible submissions by requiring students to use their university ID as a form of identification which is never displayed on the website, resulting in anonymous submissions. In addition, URate prevents inaccurate and insulting reviews through the use of specific tags that describe a professor. We implement a set of algorithms that weighs all the tags submitted for a particular professor and outputs a rating ranging from 1-5.

This approach allows us to generate a reliable rating of a particular professor. The use of tags rather than text submission promises to yield constructive feedback for all the professors in the database because it avoids explicit comments. To allow users to more freely express themselves URate provides a mechanism to suggest a new tag, if the tag receives enough submissions it becomes available for use and a weight is assign to it. URate also provides statistical data on every professor on teaching ability, personality, difficulty, grading, accessibility, organization. Additionally, URate allows a partitioning of this data by past semesters, to more easily account for any changes a professor might have in teaching styles over time.

Use Case 1: Student

Jessica, a student at the University of Rochester has had negative experiences with the classes she took in previous semesters. Afraid of taking a class that might be detrimental to her learning experiences at the University of Rochester she decides to use URate my Professor. Using the professor rating service, Jessica is able to search for the classes she is interested in and see exactly how each of those classes were taught in the past. By reading comprehensive and constructive reviews on the professors Jessica was able to make informative decisions on what

her course schedule will be like in the upcoming school year. By using URate my Professor, Jessica is fully satisfied and happy with the classes she is taking at the University of Rochester.

Use Case 2: New Student

Ron, a new student to the University of Rochester, is unsure of which professors to choose for his introductory classes in his first semester. As there are quite a few choices, Ron wants to make sure he gets professors that are to his liking. The dynamic tag-rating system used by Urate will assist Ron in finding a professor that fits his learning style. URate's tag system ensures that, unlike other professor rating sites, that each word of criticism is constructive. The site will provide a service that can be used to learn about professor's teaching styles and methods without the unnecessary cluttering of user-inputted comments.

Use Case 3: New Professor

A newly hired professor is wondering how his teaching style and pace suits the students at the University of Rochester. To get reliable, constructive, and anonymous feedback on how effectively he is teaching the material to his students, he looks up his profile on URate to see what tags are most commonly used to describe his teaching style. Upon seeing the feedback, the professor could restructure the class accordingly for future semesters to better teach the material of the course.

Required Technology

1. Server Side Framework: PHP
2. Database: Database for professors, classes, and tags, possibly students registered for those classes
3. Ajax:
4. Web Service:
5. Multimedia: Animated icons
6. Make an API:
7. Design and Evaluate: Useful and simple user interface, regular surveys to question users about their experience
8. Accessibility: Different color schemes to support colorblindness, useable from multiple

platforms

9. Go Mobile: Access from phones and tablets

10. Server-Side Processing: