

RateMyCourse Requirements Document

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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview of Document

The purpose of this document is to give a brief overview of RateMyCourse. A description and vision will be given about RateMyCourse as well as possible risks. From there, the functional and non-functional requirements will be listed as well as how the requirements were conceived through interviews/talks with possible users. The final part will be a description of what is needed for the minimum viable product(MVP) and what can get left out for later version.

1.2 Product Description

RateMyCourse is a website where students can review their professors, faculty, university, etc. The goal is for other students to be able to view these reviews and then make a more informed decision on whether or not they want to take the course or enroll into the university in question.

1.3 Vision

Currently, the only way a prospective student can gain insights on a university is by ranking sites or word of mouth. The ranking sites do not give a complete picture because the rankings are usually heavily based on the university's research output and that does not give a prospective student a good idea on the quality of a education they would be receiving. Also, word of mouth gives merely anecdotal evidence and such evidence does not give a prospective student a comprehensive view. Thus, we come to the problem where many students have the potential to waste years of their lives, just to find an educational institution that suits their needs. Our vision is to create a service in which prospective students can select a class or university with more confidence. We aim to offer a platform where students can share/review their academic experiences and in exchange these experiences will help prospective students make a potentially crucial decision in their life.

1.4 Possible Risks

- **Development:** Development can be seen as a low risk given that the vision/idea only requires for an interactive website to be made. Given this fact, a small team of intermediate developers with some experience with web frameworks should be able to build the product.
- **Financial:** The financial aspect is possible a double edge sword. Given the low amount of development needed, a moderate amount of money would be needed to create the product. On the other hand, monetizing the idea could possibly yield to be difficult. Given that the product is a website where people read reviews, the ways of monetizing the idea is limited. Reviewers should not be charged, otherwise no one will write reviews. On the other hand people reading the reviews can only be exploited by way of ads or a possible subscription model. The latter might have a negative effect to the traffic of the website.
- **Legal:** Given that the platform is meant to more or less shine a brighter light on universities and the quality of their education, it is feasible that some institutions might not like that. Legally speaking, some educational intuition might decide to retaliate and a law suit might follow. Although this is a very small risk all things considered.

Overall, the risks vary depending on which perspective you take. An investor might not want to invest given that they might find their return on investment low. On the other hand, a small development team can execute on the idea with little to no investment. This means in the worst case they most likely will not lose anything but the time invested into the development process.

2 Users, Stakeholders

Because of the simple nature of the project, we can classify users of the service into two groups: Reviewers, and Readers. For both of these groups, the targeted demographic is students who are either already enrolled in a college or university, or will soon be making the choice to be.

2.1 Reviewers

The subsection of users of the service whose objective is to submit a review for a university, course, professor, etc. These *reviewers* want to be able to quickly and easily leave a review for one of the aforementioned entities.

2.2 Readers

Readers are users who read the reviews which were written by reviewers. It is anticipated that the service will have many more readers than reviewers.

2.3 Stakeholders

2.3.1 Positive Stakeholders

- It can be expected that the users of this service will benefit from its existence, and therefore, the target user demographic is the primary positive stakeholder for this endeavour.
- Additionally, any investors to the service should be considered as positive stakeholders.
- Those universities, courses, professors, etc. that have a positive public opinion can also be expected to be positive stakeholders, as the service will reinforce the positive public opinion of these entities.

2.3.2 Negative Stakeholders

- Naturally, competitor websites that rank universities based on student preference, with which this service will compete, can be expected to be negative stakeholders.
- In a similar fashion to the positive stakeholders, those entities (universities, courses, professors, etc.) that have a negative public opinion can be considered negative stakeholders, as this service will only serve to reinforce and spread their negative public opinion.

2.4 Information Acquisition

To determine what was important to those in our target demographic, we asked students at the University of Groningen if they would be motivated to leave reviews for their teaching staff and organizations. We also asked those students if it would be helpful to have a list of reviews for a class, before enrolling to it.

To get as many responses as possible, we guaranteed these students that their responses would be collected anonymously, and so it is not possible to cite individuals whom we have contacted here. However, their general sentiment can be described as follows.

Approximately 40% of respondents claimed that they would be motivated to write a review for their university, course, professor, etc. The majority of respondents claimed that they would not write a review. This is to be expected, as only a minority of users in this system are expected to write reviews.

However, a majority of students interviewed responded that viewing reviews for imminent classes or professors would be helpful. This response confirms our assumption that there will be many more readers than reviewers, and so our original design can continue as normal.

Many respondents also noted that they would like to be able to see how *helpful* a review is, just as it is possible with many other sites, where users can mark a review as either helpful or unhelpful.

3 Functional Requirements

- Since the users of the website will mainly be reading reviews, the site will have a search bar which allows the user to search for reviews of all types:
 - for a given university;
 - for a given course;
 - for a given professor;
 - et cetera.
- After searching, the website will list reviews matching the search query.
- The website will have a dedicated page per review subject (for example, a page for a given course on a certain university). This page will list reviews for this subject.
- The website will have a page to create a review, which consist of:
 - The reviewer’s name;
 - Review text;
 - Rating;
 - Review category: whether the review is for a university, a course, a professor, etc.;
 - A Captcha to confirm the reviewer is a human.
- Users will be able to rate reviews. In this case, the user is someone who has experience with the given review category, and wishes to validate the relevance of the review.
- Users who are interested in writing reviews will be able to create an account.
- These reviewers will be able to log in.
- When logged in, reviewers will be able to see a list of reviews they have written.
 - Reviewers will be able to edit their reviews;
 - Reviewers will be able to remove their reviews.

4 Non-functional Requirements

- All pages of the website need to be loaded up within 1 second.
- The website will be up 99.9% of the time.

- The website will have an SSL certificate. This is a certificate which indicates in the browser that the website is safe, so as to facilitate trust with users.
- The website will run on all the 5 major browsers (Firefox, Chrome, Safari, Edge, Opera) and their last couple of versions.
- The website will be capable of saving up to 10 million reviews.

5 Development Plan

For the MVP, only a minimal subset of the aforementioned requirements will be included. The most important use of the site will be reading reviews, so searching and listing relevant reviews will be the core of the user experience. The search bar will be present on every page in order to allow the review readers to search for reviews from anywhere. Reviews will be able to be created by reviewers without a user account, which means account creation and login are not high priority requirements. Having a dedicated page that lists reviews for a certain university is also not a high priority requirement, since reviews can be accessed through searching.

In our minimal viable product we will first leave out the SSL certificate. Also first we just target to support the 3 major browsers and their latest version and will not focus on the speed of which the page loads.

6 Reflection

Team work was smooth and we did not encounter any problems. There was a clear division of tasks:

- George worked on the introduction, product description vision and possible risks.
- Andrew wrote about users and stakeholders, as well as acquiring information from potential users.
- Ludger documented the non-functional requirements and listed the non-functional requirements that are to be part of the MVP.
- Koen composed a list of functional requirements and listed those functional requirements that will be included in the MVP.