

University of Southampton Undergrad Partners with WhoisXML API to Improve Student Focus and Motivation

Posted on July 7, 2023

We recently partnered with JJ Snedden, a BSc Computer Science student at the University of Southampton. He heeded our continuous call for academic collaboration, making our data part of his research and development (R&D) project, “Improving Online Studying Routines to Assist or Develop Students’ Capabilities.”

“Projects like this resonate with our goal of making the Internet a safer and more transparent place. Mr. Snedden’s system can be crucial in providing a sound and safe external study environment to students and we supported it by providing accurate web categorization intelligence,” says our CEO and founder Jonathan Zhang.

The Challenge: Creating a Study Environment with Minimal Distraction

The Internet is a massive repository of information that students must tap to acquire knowledge. However, it can also be a source of distraction that can keep them away from doing required tasks.

Precise information filtering is required to improve student focus and motivation. Snedden aimed to address this issue by creating a reward-based distraction detection system to classify websites accurately. To achieve that, he sought to develop a Chrome extension to detect attention-diverting web pages using gamification. The goal is to provide students with an online environment conducive to studying with minimal diversion to keep them on track.

However, creating such a tool requires classifying websites accurately based on their content. That is a tedious process that Snedden needed help with. Otherwise, manual categorization would take a lot of time and effort.

The Solution: Easy-to-Implement Web Categorization API

Snedden integrated Web Categorization API into his distraction detection system, giving the Chrome extension the capability to return the classification of any website a student visits. The system rewards users if a website falls under a safe category. But if it has been predetermined as a distraction, the system disincentivizes them.

The gamification aspect of the tool encourages students to stay motivated and avoid time-wasters. The system also greatly relies on the accuracy and reliability of the integrated web categorization tool.

“Website Categorization API is easy to use and quite accurate. The documentation is easy to understand, and it was very useful in that the list of categories was provided. It enabled me to smoothly predefine what categories fall under distractions and which do not,” Snedden said.

By utilizing Web Categorization API and putting a gamification element into his solution, the tool effectively motivated users to continue studying.

We are constantly on the lookout for joint research projects and investigations. Please feel free to [contact us](#) for inquiries.