Chapter XII

E-School Administration Systems

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Abstract

This chapter argues that traditional school administration systems should change and adopt more sophisticated electronic school administration systems. The past decade has seen several attempts to develop such systems. Some of these systems have found their way to the marketplace. However, these systems need to be scientifically studied and critically evaluated to improve their role in the education process. We present a survey of the widely available systems and describe their features and limitations. Our own e-School Administration System is also discussed. The main goal of our system is to bridge the gap between home and school. It comprises several modules such as a messaging center to overcome communication barriers; course system to adapt students’ learning styles; tools to handle notes, tutorials, assignments and quizzes; personal
organizers to help users maximize their time planning; and a performance assessment system to help keep track of students’ grades. The implementation and evaluation of our system is presented and discussed, and some enhancements are proposed at the end of this chapter.

Introduction

The past two decades have witnessed dramatic change in many aspects of our lives. This change can be mainly attributed to the increasing use of Internet and the unlimited access to information on the World Wide Web. Take as an example the education system. A few years back, students were able get by with traditional tools; pencils, papers, and a typewriter at best. Education standards were mostly static and the flow of information was very slow. This is not the case anymore. Most people have computers at home and computer labs have become a standard in schools like any other labs such as chemistry and physics. Students have become more exposed to information than any time before. Parents are more involved in their children’s education in the midst of their busy schedules. Teachers are changing their teaching styles to encourage more interaction with their students. Therefore, it is extremely important to improve the face of the education process to accommodate these changes.

Today, more and more schools are either planning or expanding their school computer facilities. Some schools offer Internet access to enable educators and students to access online material. However, most of today’s schools are still short of smart solutions for their administration systems. By smart solutions we mean that information technology should not only be regarded as a means to deliver massive amount of information, but to also help users to fulfill their mission in the workplace (Han & Gilbert, 2000, p. 2). In order to achieve that, we have to consider the structure and organization of the school system. Teachers and students are among the major components that make up a school system. Other components would include the principals, assistants, administrative staff, and of course parents. These components perform different roles in the education system. By analogy, they are like the different parts of the human body; each part has a specific function. To make the body system work, we need to connect these parts and make them work as a whole. This is where the blood and vein system comes in. They work in parallel with the components of the body to achieve different tasks at different times. In the case of a school,
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