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Managing students' grades and attendance records using google forms and google spreadsheets

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Abstract

Google Spreadsheet is a powerful tool to manage student record online. It is more than a Web 2.0 version of Microsoft Excel as it performs many functions that are not available in Excel. One of many uses of Google Spreadsheets that could be useful to lecturers is managing students' grades and attendance online. In this paper the author wishes to present his innovative ways of managing students' grades and attendance records using the wonder of Google Spreadsheet. In order to experiment with the Google way of doing things, the author embarked on a self-directed learning journey of discovering the functionality of the tools. By immersing himself with hundreds of syntax used to create functions in Google Spreadsheet, he managed to create a number of potential useful innovations, one of which is the management of students' grade and attendance record. In this paper, he wishes to share his recent experience of experimenting the innovation with a group of students in UKM. In conclusion, Google Forms and Spreadsheet not only offer the more innovative ways of managing students' grades and attendance records but also provide a useful platform for exploring and experimenting with Google Spreadsheets' functions.

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Keywords: Attendance records; google docs; online form; online spreadsheet; spreadsheet programming; student grades

1. Introduction

For an academician, Google Form can be used to conduct online quizzes, survey on teaching effectiveness, collecting answers of open-ended question and so on. Agarwel (2009), for instance views that Google Forms as the best tool for online survey. The form can be easily published on the Web through special url generated by Google and can be embedded in blogs and websites.

Google Spreadsheet is an online equivalence of Microsoft Excel and can be used to store data collected from Google Forms. When a file is created in Google Forms, it is automatically connected to a spreadsheet with the same filename. The recorded data can be published either through generated url or embedded in a blog or website. The more interesting thing is the advanced features of Google Spreadsheet. It has formulas, conditional formatting and

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some other useful applications. Fransen, Kocher, and Kempf (2011), for example, use script editor within Google Spreadsheets to automate e-mail message to users who have filled in the Google form.

One of the uses of Google Forms and Google Spreadsheets that I would like to explore is in managing student attendance and participation records. Using Google Forms for taking student attendance is also practiced by academicians such as Croxall (2011). My current initiative involves the use of two Google tools: Google Forms for collecting responses and Google Spreadsheets for hosting the students' records.

2. Methods

Google Forms and Google Spreadsheets tools are reviewed in the paper to explore how they can be used collaboratively by lecturers in managing students' grades and attendance records. To explore the use of tools, four methods were used, i.e. by: (1) reviewing guides provided by Google Forms and Spreadsheet, (2) reviewing YouTube tutorial videos on how to work with the tools, (3) reviewing literature of how the tools are used by lecturers and teachers, and (4) experimenting the use of the tools in managing Emotional Management and Decision Making Skills courses. In reviewing the application, two questions were put forward, (1) what are the steps needed to apply the tools, and (2) what are the possible limitations of the tools.

3. Steps in Managing Students' Grades and Attendance Records

The steps involved in managing students' grades and attendance records are detailed in the following section.

Step 1 Create an Online Form

To create an online form, you need to have a Gmail account. To create a Gmail account, just fill in the form available at <http://www.gmail.com>. You are ready to create a Google form when you have your username and password. To create a form, the first step you need to do is to sign in at <http://docs.google.com> as shown in the following figure:

Figure 1. Google Docs sign in page

Enter your username or Gmail ID and your password, and then click the blue 'Sign in' button. You are then directed to the 'Home' of Google Docs. To create a form, click the brown 'Create' button, and the drop-down menu appears as shown in the following figure:

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