IMPROVEMENT OF THE INFORMATION SYSTEM OF THE UNIVERSITY DIRECTORATE FOR PROCESSING STUDENT APPLICATIONS ON THE GOOGLE WORKSPACE PLATFORM

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Abstract

This article analyzes and proposes an effective approach to optimizing the student application processing process at universities. In conditions where many Ukrainian students are studying remotely, traditional paper-based methods become ineffective. As an alternative, the use of a systematic information system based on Google Workspace is considered. This approach provides flexibility, cost-effectiveness, and convenience because it is based on publicly available tools such as Google Forms and Google Sheets. The proposed system allows for the automation of data collection, workflow management and approval, significantly reducing bureaucratic delays and simplifying communication between the administration and students.

The optimization of the student application process at the university can be achieved by utilizing a systematic information system built on the Google Workspace platform. This approach offers a flexible, cost-effective and convenient alternative to expensive traditional corporate software solutions and a completely paper-based approach, especially in the realities of a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, when a large number of students live abroad and study at Ukrainian higher education institutions. Known for its collaboration tools and pedagogical applications, such as Google Classroom, Google Workspace has proven itself as an effective administrative platform. High user familiarity with this service significantly lowers the barrier to implementing new information systems. [1] The successful implementation by the EDUA group in the Czech Republic, which united six different IT platforms using Google Workspace, serves as a convincing example of its administrative potential. [2]

A functional and robust information system for processing student applications can be created by integrating the core Google Workspace tools:

1. Data collection: Google Forms serves as a convenient interface for applicants, and additionally submitted documents automatically populate a structured Google Sheets database.

2. Workflow and approval management: Multi-level conditional approvals can be automated using no-code add-ons from the Marketplace, such as Form Workflow Plus, or special low-code Google Apps Script scripts. A custom script can send personalized emails to different employees, and then update the Google Sheets database with the approval status.

Although specific cases at Ukrainian universities have not yet become widespread and are not shown in scientific articles, a certain foundation already exists. Many institutions already use Google Forms for the initial submission of documents by students, for example, during the enrollment process. However, this use is often on a case-by-case basis, inconsistent and not integrated into a continuous workflow for subsequent administrative steps. This creates a clear opportunity to extend the existing process to improve efficiency, transforming the initial point of data collection into a comprehensive, automated system for the entire application process, from renewal applications to applications for obtaining original documents after expulsion.

The main advantages of this approach are its cost-effectiveness, flexibility and high potential for user adoption. However, limitations include the risk of creating new isolated data repositories and the need for strict governance to ensure data security. For university directorates, a phased approach can be recommended:

1. Analysis using the "as-is" methodology: mapping the current manual process to identify inefficiencies.

2. Designing the "to-be" state: developing a methodology for a new digital workflow using Google Forms, Google Sheets and other tools offered in Google Workspace, depending on the needs of the department.

3. Automation: Using no-code or low-code tools to automate document retrieval and communications.

An important factor in the Google Workspace approach is the inherent risk of vendor lock-in and over-reliance on a single company's infrastructure. Administrative processes will be subject to the availability of Google services, policy changes, and security. However, this risk is significantly reduced by Google's proven track record of service reliability and a reliable infrastructure. According to a formal service level agreement, Google guarantees 99.9% uptime for its core Workspace services, and historical data from the Google Workspace status bar confirms near-perfect availability, with technical issues being extremely rare and short-lived.[3][4]

In conclusion, a Google Workspace-based information system is a practical and strategic solution for streamlining student application processing, allowing universities to become more agile and reduce communication issues with students regarding their application processing. It can provide a compelling plan for administrative modernization.

References

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