Opportunity and Significance

- Higher education becoming more important in today’s world and job markets.
- Finding the right college to attend can be a difficult and intimidating process. College’s information isn’t always readily available or easily accessible.

State of Practice

- College information is usually obtained directly from the college’s website, or on campus.
- Few websites exist that collect this data, and are usually not easy to navigate.

About Smart School Scout

- A web application that collects and stores college information relevant to future students.
- College information includes: tuition costs, location, distance from user, accreditation status, cadence of courses and institution type.
- Provides an easy to use interface where users can search for colleges based on state, zip code and current location. Users can simultaneously compare the costs of up to four colleges.

Technical Objectives

- Build Smart School Scout web application to run on modern web browsers
- Utilize web scraping technologies to retrieve college information from the internet and store it within Smart School Scout's database.
- Optimize web application's user interface to make searching, looking up and comparing college information as easy as possible.

Technical Approach

- Utilize automated web browsing software to obtain college information from Department of Education website.
- Web scraping technologies utilize a list of college web domains obtained from the DoE in order to know where to scrape information.
- Tuition costs obtained from the DoE are used as a baseline comparison to verify that the numbers obtained from a college’s website are valid tuition costs.

Technologies

- Django web framework
- Python
- PostgreSQL
- HTML/Javascript

Next Steps for Development

- Optimize web scraping algorithm to achieve wider range and accuracy on college information.
- Restructure Smart School Scout in order to integrate with other Amesite projects.
- Deploy Smart School Scout on Amazon Web Services.

Commercialization Plan & Partners

Smart School Scout is one of several web applications being built for Amesite in order to make information on higher education more accessible.

The next steps are to restructure and combine Smart School Scout along with several other Amesite web applications to provide a robust and consistent experience for users.

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