

WHCP 899 - Assignment 1

Michel Debolt

I seek to empower people to make a difference in the lives of students, broadening the horizons of these students while helping them avoid mistakes made by their predecessors. To achieve this goal, I am developing a web interface that facilitates the connection of students having interests in specific fields with graduates (of the same schools) working in that field.

Schools (high schools, universities, graduate programs) focus on moving students forward by teaching them specific skill sets while connecting them people at the next stage of their academic / occupational careers (e.g., admission officers at universities or HR departments at prospective employers). However, little effort is made to connect students with graduates who have trod the same path before them. That is, often there is no mechanism for institutionalizing knowledge gained by prior graduates as they progressed through their careers or for passing that knowledge to up-and-coming current graduates who could put it to use today.

While mentoring certainly exists in schools, it primarily revolves around the academic setting (what classes to take to get into a school / receive a job offer), ignoring the fact that this academic setting is merely the precursor to the rest of a student's life. On the other hand, graduates are accustomed to being asked to contribute money but less so their experience (e.g., how they made it to where they have / what would they have done differently).

Students' are left to rely on their parents (and their parents networking abilities) to sort out which path they should start down in their journey through life, though not all parents have benefited from the same opportunities in life. I am working to mitigate this inequity faced by children from unprivileged backgrounds and augment the possibilities that they perceived by facilitating the natural connection that already exists between them and those who have graduated from the same schools.