

# DAT076 Web Applications

Mid-course meeting 2021-03-02 15:00

**Present:** Robin Adams, Ömer Sahin Keskin, Tobias Mauritzon, Jacob Spilg

1. How is the course going from the teachers' point of view?

RA: The course was very disorganised to start with, but the problems seem to have been sorted out now. I had problems in my personal life which meant I had not had as much preparation time as I wanted, and which eventually meant I had to take leave from work. It is lucky that the department was able to hire Adam to cover for me, and the students have been understanding.

We had trouble finding a second TA for this course. Mattí was chosen one week before the course started, so he did not have much time to familiarize himself with the course. I know there was a misunderstanding where he did not realize the course required the use of Jakarta and advised some groups to use other backends, which I did not discover until after I had to leave.

2. How is the course going from the students' point of view?

**(RA Note:** One of the student reps asked to keep their comments anonymous. To avoid identifying that student rep by elimination, I will give all the comments from a student reps as "SR".)

SR: It's going relatively well. My group is working independently. We were one of the groups "fooled" by Mattí and at first tried to use Jakarta and Python at the same time.

There is a bigger problem. It seems some of the lab assignments had not been tested. We expected everything to work just by following the instructions.

RA: This is a general problem with Web App development, since an app has so many components. A new version of one component can conflict with another, and they are sensitive to the setup on each machine. I found one problem in assignment 3, and so recommended an earlier version of Payara. It's possible there are others I did not find, or were caused by updates after the course started.

SR: Arquillian is generating a lot of exceptions while it runs, but the tests still run successfully.

RA: Yes, Arquillian does that - I would say that is bad design, but it's common. Perhaps we should warn the students to expect this sort of problem earlier in the course.

SR: We had finished our project using Django early in the course (week 3 or 4), then had to start all over again in Jakarta.

SR: Searching for help on the web often turns up out-of-date information. Code from 5 years ago or more cannot be cut-and-pasted into an app being built now, and tutorials, blog posts etc. from 5 years ago are often irrelevant. We spent 5 hours trying to fix one bug!

SR: We are not sure if what we have built is enough to pass the course.

SR: Email fatigue - we have 40 emails a day, including lots of irrelevant notifications from Canvas. Change the settings on Canvas. Tame it!

SR: Several groups have experienced that one student who was familiar with one framework (e.g. Vue, React) would take over the group. Students should be given only one choice of frontend (e.g. JSF) and one choice of project (e.g. You will build a web shop). (A second SR agreed.)

RA: I would not want to go too far in that direction, because one of the things the course tests is if students can create their own design and make design choices.

SR: The TA meetings should be stricter - grill us! Especially in Corona mode. The other members of my group are just voices behind a black Zoom screen, I have never met them. The TA should tell us each week "You must do this, you must do this. Ask if you need help." and be stricter if a group member does not do their assigned task.

SR: Mattí gave us too much to do in week 2. He asked about iframes, which are not covered in the course, and he asked in a way that suggested we were expected to have included them already.

SR: Mattí recommended we use a large number of libraries.

SR: Mattí gave us the impression that we would fail the course if we did not encrypt passwords.

SR: I am not getting push notifications from Slack. Is anyone else having this problem. (Other SRs and RA: No.)

3. Are there any questions that should be added to the course survey?

SR: Do you think the course would be improved if the students were given fewer options?

4. Any other comments?

SR: The lab sessions are good. Adam's support has been very good.

SR: We are often guessing the fix to a problem and not understanding what we are doing.

SR: Our group started making one React frontend and one JSF front end like lab assignment 4 suggests. We gave up on React - the information given in the course was not enough.

SR: The course should include some common troubleshooting techniques.

SR: NetBeans automatically installed Kaspersky Security on my machine!

SR: Overall, the lectures have been good. Ben's security lecture was very good.

SR: I like the course, I like learning about this subject.

SR: The course is fun!

RA 2020-03-07