Development of Social Networking Website and Tamil E-learning Software
Using Unicode / ISCII standards

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1. Introduction: The project involves development two portals namely a Tamil Social Networking site and a Tamil E-learning Website. Since Tamil is spoken by Tamil Diaspora in various countries and spoken or used in Fiji (Republic of), Guyana, India, Malaysia, Mauritius, Singapore, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), Trinidad & Tobago, Zanzibar & Pemba (Tanganyika), the author proposes to develop such Tamil Website which can be used by all people. Before going to discuss the details of development, let us see introduction of the topics as below.

1.1 Social Networking : A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and/or activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services. Social networking has encouraged new ways to communicate and share information. Social networking websites are being used regularly by millions of people. Everyday, more and more people sign up for social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter. And it's not just individuals, some businesses and non profit organizations are using the site to their advantages. At one time Myspace, Twitter and Facebook were geared toward a specific group of people. Now those social networking sites are turning into another form of advertising for some non profit organizations. The United Way, The American Red Cross and the Mohawk Valley Chamber of Commerce, are just a few non profits using the social networking sites.

An increasing number of academic commentators are becoming interested in studying Facebook and other social networking tools. Social science researchers have begun to investigate what the impact of this might be on society. Typical articles have investigated issues such as Identity, Privacy, E-learning, Social capital and Teenage use. The application domains for social networking are government, business, marriage portals, educational and medical applications. A few sites do exist where you can talk to others in languages besides English. Our interest is designing Tamil social networking website so that people who know Tamil and basic usage of computer can use this site and communicate with others. The target audience for this portal is people who speak, read and write Tamil. The Unicode standard helps in facilitating the implementation of this website.

1.2 E-learning : E-learning (or sometimes electronic learning or eLearning) is a term which is commonly used, but does not have a common definition. Most frequently it seems to be used for web-based distance education, with no face-to-face interaction. However, also much broader definitions are common. For example, it may include all types of technology enhanced learning (TEL), where technology is used to support the learning process. Most of the Tamils living away from their homeland find it difficult to teach their children Tamil. Even if they teach themselves it is limited to teaching alphabets, numbers and few rhymes only and not more than that. Out aim is to provide E-learning through web portals by

including audio, video and other computer software tools to teach the language not only from the Alphabet but also teaching the language features like the grammar, Tamil literatures etc. Using Unicode standards the tool will be developed to teach Tamil.
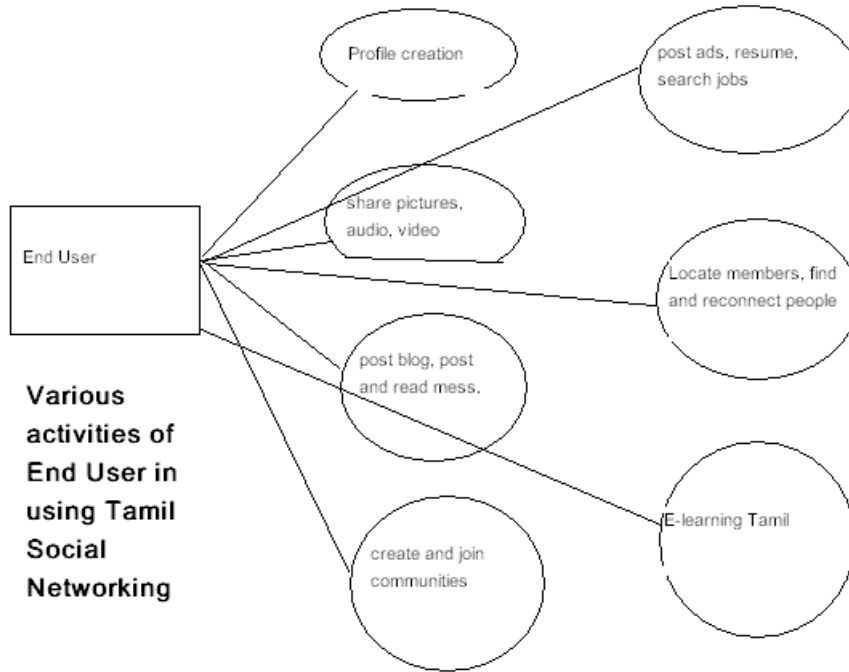
2. **The Technology:**

Like Windows XP or other software displaying Tamil fonts in menus, our aim is to develop websites displaying Unicode formatted texts (menu commands) displayed so that the user gets the feeling of using his language for communicating with others in his community of users. Even though it looks very simple, the development of social networking software and Tamil E-learning software requires complexity of design and implementation of the website. Hence it is well convinced that the work is worth doing and used by Tamil communities in future.

The author through the feedback given currently restricts to use Unicode and after comparing both Unicode and Iscii, he will use the right one for the implementation. Let the conference may input more on these lines.

Various Social Networking sites are compared for the features that they support. The advantages and disadvantages are compared. The ones that suit the multilingual interface are selected. The various social networking sites compared are as below.

Twitter	MyYearbook
Orkut	Facebook
IMBEE	Classmates.com
Sconex	Myspace
43 Things	Yorz
TagWorld	Ecademy
Friendster	Ryze
Bebo	Xing
Hi5	Linkedln
Reddit	Xanga
Digg	YouTube
Del.icio.us	Beware Microlenders
LiveJournal	Zopa
Yahoo 360	Campaigns Wikia
Flickr	Essembly.com and Many more….

Even though the social networking design and implementation is matured for the time, but the usages and number of new users are increasing day by day. Also applications in which the social networking sites are increasing and the table above shows only the important sites and there are many more. The advantages of comparing them would enable us to develop a world class website with many important features that are proved among other communities already. Again, only the important features that can be applied to our website is given below in the following figure.

Profile creation

post ads, resume, search jobs

End User

Share pictures, audio, video

Locate members, find and reconnect people

Various activities of End User in using Tamil Social Networking

post blog, post and read mess.

E-learning Tamil

create and join communities

If we notice, the features are Profile creation, sharing pictures, audio, video, post blog, post and read messages, create and join communities, post ads, resume, search jobs, locate members, find and reconnect people and using of Tamil E-learning software.

The social networking websites can be classified as communication websites, Business and professional networking sites, social content sites, Social Lending sites: Microlenders/Microfinance, Political social networkings, Mobile social software and Social networking blogs. Social networking research like "Imagined communities", analyzes privacy conerns of members and impact of those concerns of their behavior. Hence our intention is to develop a social networking website with privacy preserving concept. For this the author will use the research knowledge of privacy preserving data mining which is already there and matured.

Tamil E-learning software is being developed as web-based software and hence there is no need to buy the software and install in his computer. He can just login to the internet and the site and use the Tamil learning software. It is proposed to design e-learning software with all educational technology gadgets like audio, video, animation and other technologies.
First, it is proposed the develop Tamil Alphabet teaching using audio, video and animation. There is a separate studio used to shoot the video of Tamil teachers teaching the language and it will be put in the website. Hence the student wherever he is in the world, learns the language with the same pedagogy of class room environment and ease at his home learning. Next, the project aims in taking the Tamil text books of students from first standard till plus two level in Tamil Nadu and trying to capture the video lectures and audio lectures and other software animation tool based teaching. Even though it seems a big project, the author aims to do this job with the help of Tamil scholars and Tamil interest groups including governmental agencies and Tamil University.

When enough funding is obtained, the author proposes to host this website using a technology called cloud computing. Cloud computing is a technology in which one need not pay for the

hardware and software fully, and it is enough the company pays for the time and usage of the software. Hence it is practical to host such a big ambitious plan by us.

3. Conclusion

Tamil language usage is reducing day by day because of relocation of people, and education in English medium etc. Hence it is the right time to enable the users to maximize his language usage during the leisure time through tools such as Social networking sites and E-learning software. Also these two technologies are inevitable for us and hence the advantages are to be given to those people who do not know languages other than Tamil. Hence, the author is developing these two technology based website. As already mentioned in the previous chapter, the first technology, namely Tamil Social Networking Website enables one to create and share profile, share photos, videos, audios, post blog, post and read messages, create and join communities, post advertisements, post resume and search jobs, locate and reconnect with people around the world. Also the second part the project namely; Tamil E-learning software is added as a feature in the first project. This enables to learning the language from Alphabet to the standard of plus-two. This is a very big project and it is ambitious to us. E-learning software is being developed with the Tamil Scholars or Teachers lectures being video tapped and used in it. Tamil dictionary and keyboard interface to search and type respectively are used in the site.

4. Acknowledgement