

About Schooladmin 0.1

History

Schools have an administration, at least, we assume each one has it. But with the progress of computers school directors more and more ask for automated systems. The makers of "Schooladmin" found several expensive solutions whereas their schools or organisations did not have the funds to buy these options. Furthermore, they found the existing programs do either not offer the flexibility needed or do not enable students and parents to profit from the information. All this should be solved by Schooladmin. Maybe you won't find all the function you need (yet), please let us know what you find useful to give priority in future development. The current version (1.0) is released for production use, after years of development we felt it was time to present something workable to the world.

About the makers

Since some of the makers would not like to be named we decided not to name anyone in this phase, although you can find the name of the person that made the final code assembly in the PHP files. However, we can assure you there is plenty of expertise put into this project from school directors, analysts, designers and programmers. We name the countries: Aruba, Australia, Belgium, Indonesia and The Netherlands.

If you need to contact us, send an e-mail to the webmaster of the site where you got this file. Nobody "owns" this program, it's a Open Source project compliant with the GPL2 licence system, where everyone who wishes can participate and use the code. Some restrictions: you may not sell the program, and if you decide to use some of all of the code and make another product with it, this product must also be an Open Source product under the same type of licence!

Functionality

Functionality is currently limited to the basic needs. The priority of needs will be reconsidered after the currently version has proven stable enough to continue.

Currently Schooladmin provides the following functions:

- ◆ Administration of student data
- ◆ Administration of teacher data
- ◆ Reports on groups and students
- ◆ Grade administration and calculation
- ◆ Absence administration
- ◆ Access through LAN or Internet, also for students
- ◆ Multiple language capability
- ◆ Database management tools
- ◆ Advertising

Administration of student data

To be as flexible as possible, all student data is configurable. Plain text fields, multiple text (records) fields and pictured can be configured, with own labelling and sequence settings. Furthermore, a security mechanism defines 5 categories of users where each can be allowed or refused to see or edit specific data items. The categories are: Everyone, all teachers, group mentors, counsellors and administrators.

Administration of teacher data

As similar system as for student data exists for teacher data. Only the administrator is able to change the data but each group of users can be given specific read access to the fields.

Reports on groups and students

A mechanism is implemented to be able to make reports on groups and students. The author can always access their own report but a security mechanism restricts access to others as defined by the author. The report consists of a summary and a text which may also be a file in your popular word processing format. Report files are easily uploaded and downloaded.

Grade administration and calculation

Grade administration is completely implemented. All grades can be stored, related to test definitions that can all be entered by teachers. Resulting grades are automatically calculated using rules defined by the administrator. The rules include weight factors, thresholds for pass/fail indication, accuracy of calculated results, validity parameters (like minimum grades required for a certain test type and grades that can be dropped if sufficient grades have been acquired). All this is fully configurable per subject and period, with an optimized system for rules definition (using a default subject so the administrator can set basic rules and then define the subjects that form an exception).

Grades are presented in periods (the number is configurable by the administrator), a final grade is calculated from the period results (to cater for the Dutch education system), calculated grades are stored separately over various years. A number of views, both apt for teachers and students are available starting at the lowest level of detail to full details for example for one subject / group / period / student.

Grades can be entered by teachers that are assigned to give the subject to a group and by the administrator.

Absence administration

Absence can be administered where predefined reasons are set, but each absence has a remark field so specific details can be stored as well. Another feature is the authorisation field, which has 3 states: authorised, not authorised and authorisation pending. Absence records can be seen per student. The administrator and teachers assigned to be absence managers can manage the absence records.

Access through LAN or Internet

Schooladmin is an Internet based application but can be run locally in school if so desired. The workstations only need a standard web browser and connection to the network work with the server. Both teachers and students / parents can access the system. Protection is ID and password based, hence students and teacher must be given IDs and password to be able to operate the system. The group mentors and the administrator can set and print the passwords for students, only the administrator can manage the teacher passwords. Students / parents can change their own passwords.

Multiple language capability

Schooladmin supports multiple language access. Currently language tables are implemented for English and Dutch. A feature is built in that enables the administrator to define another language

and translate from any of the current languages. The Dutch translation is reported to have been completed in 6 working hours. Please let us know if you made your own translation so we can make it available to others. Note that this feature can also be used to adapt to terminology used at your school (pupil instead of student, class instead of group, lesson instead of class etc.). The user can select the language at login time from the set of loaded languages.

Database management tools

Tools are provided to be able to back up and restore the database. Also an opportunity is given to make manual queries that allow special database manipulations by the administrator.

Advertising

Advertising is fully optional in this software and is included to be able to allow set-up where server costs, set-up expertise and some development can be funded from advertising. Considering the very targeted nature of viewers this might be a very powerful concept. Functionality is very limited, it will do perfectly in combination with more powerful advertising management tools like phpMyadds.

What to you need to run Schooladmin?

Well, that depends on the size of the school, what kind of infrastructure you desire and whether you want to run your own server or make use of an Internet provider to take care of that.

Schooladmin requires a server with PHP and MySQL installed (tested with PHP 4.3.2 and MySQL 3.23.58). As an estimated of required disk space, use 50 Mb plus 100Mb per 1000 students.

Additionally you need to reserve space for the pictures. For example if a picture of 50Kb is used for each student, an additional 50Mb per 1000 students is required.

To explain a bit more about the two scenarios (own and rented server):

Rented server

A rented server web server (hosting service) avoids many headaches and these services are generally cheap and reliable. You will need a hosting service that allows you at least one MySQL database. You can check this with your service provider.

Typically you want a number of PCs at school that are connected to the Internet to allow teachers (and maybe students) to access the system. For a 1000 student school you should be paying less than \$500 a year for this service, including your own domain name AND you can run the school website on it as well! If you lack the expertise to setup and maintain a system like this, Aim4me N.V. (Us@aim4me.com) currently provides a full service package (and is the main sponsor of the project at this time).

Owned server

If you don't need the students to be able to access the system and already have a local area network this might be a good solution. Dedicate one machine to be your Schooladmin server, give it a fixed address in your network and install Apache, PHP, MySQL and Schooladmin on it.

On the other PCs in the network you can access the server with a standard browser.

If you do need students to be able to connect to the system from home, look for a consultant because this is a specialised job, depending very much on the Internet connection possibilities in your region.

And finally....

More detailed information can be found in the installation manual, the administration manual and the teacher manual.