# ITBUZZ.CO A collaborative Academic Portal

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*Abstract: --* **ITBUZZ.CO is an attempt to bridge the gap between academic and social life. ITBUZZ.CO thus is an academic social networking portal with an advanced and comprehensive feature list to compete some of the hit social networking websites of our age. ITBUZZ.CO is a secured online portal which grants access to only those personnel which are verified by the Department of IT, RCOEM. ITBUZZ.CO is a one stop communication channel for everyone in IT Department to share resources, knowledge have a healthy discussion for various topics, ,manage departmental activities, maintain personal profile and communicate freely through the website itself. ITBUZZ.CO is a portal which boasts a continuous, reliable and cross device network. ITBUZZ.CO has an extensive outreach to all the internet users through devices and platforms of their choice, may it be through desktops or laptops, mobile devices on Android, IOS or Windows phone/tablets.**

*Keywords:* **— ITBUZZ, Socio-Academic Portal, Xenforo, Academic and Social Networking, Discussion Forums, Department Management, Academic Modernization**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Collaborative learning is a buzz word in the education system today. Rapid developments in new technologies coupled with slow pace of reforms and updates in the university curriculum and increasing awareness levels of the students, it has become necessary for the teachers to fine tune their teaching skills so that relevant education is imparted to the students. It is necessary to go beyond the usual chalk-duster teaching to make teaching more effective. [1]

ITBUZZ.CO is a social and academic networking portal which bridges the gap between academic and social life of teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the students of Department of IT, RCOEM. ITBUZZ.CO is a platform in which academic resources as well as personal conversations find an excellent symphony to co-exist and provide the best of user experience at current technological as well as aesthetic sense colluding with the ominous delivery of the platform to user's disposal anytime, anywhere through its cross platform flexibility and cross gadget support throughout Windows, Linux, IOS, Android and other engines.

ITBUZZ.CO is needed in today's time in order to keep-in-touch with the daily happenings in the department. In the age of marvelous gadget coolness, referring to a notice board seems out of style. Thus ITBUZZ.CO is a modern day literally keep-in-touch platform. Ranging its expanse from hand held device support to anywhere-internet-deployed access to a cool digital notice board. ITBUZZ.CO is needed to bridge the tedious and traditional ways of information relay methods and modern day infrastructure. ITBUZZ.CO is scaled to behave as a self-dependent and comprehensive web portal. It provides inbuilt news relay, resource and file sharing, instant and reliable communication network as well as a social networking support to keep the users clung to the department and all the activities in and around it. ITBUZZ.CO can be scaled at an institute level and owing to its availability across the internet through various approaches. ITBUZZ.CO can easily grow up to be the campus connect-all portal. Just like Facebook started out.

## II. PLATFORM SPECIFICATIONS AND DEPENDENCIES

### A. *Platform*

ITBUZZ.co uses Xenforo version 1.3.2. Version 1.3.2 is a stable version and has many bug fixes

and performance improvements. MySQL remains to be the primary database tool and it uses PHP version 5.5.3+.
B.      Platform Features and Scale across various devices ITBUZZ.CO being developed using Xenforo community software, it inherits all of its inbuilt features. Some of the namely features being Discussion forums, User accounts, User profile pages, User preferences, Inbox, Alert and Notification system, Member directory, Recent activity and administrator module for each level. XENFORO has been supplemented with various add-ons to enhance the user experience. One of the add-ons being Tap talk forum integration in order to render support on mobile devices on Android, IOS and Windows phones and tablets engines.

### III.      FEATURES

Below is the list of features of ITBUZZ.CO which are provided so as to give the users a state-of-the-art experience.

#### A.      *Discussion Forums*

Users have a Forum Board available at link http://itbuzz.co/forums/ which has various categories, forums and sub forums. All the forums and sub forums are mapped against the various user groups and their access levels. Users have been mapped to accordingly view, comment and edit/access the threads. Moderator and Administrator level access have been given to specific user and user groups to monitor the forum board. Specific posts made by the management can be marked as Official posts and the users who have seen the thread are displayed in the bottom so that the administrators can know which users have read the thread. Also, certain threads can be marked sticky so that they appear first in listing always as well as locked so that further discussion or commenting on the same can be restricted. Similar or redundant threads can be merged, moved by the moderators and even deleted. The messages posted in threads can be specifically liked by other users or marked as spam via various post ratings. The user with more likes, earn more ratings. Thus trophies are awarded to users at specific milestones and earn points for the same which later results in distinguished recognition throughout the community. The threads can be specifically appended by premade thread prefixes which mark similarity of topics. This also provides a good search tag. Drafts of content are saved every 20 seconds in case the connection with the user fluctuates.
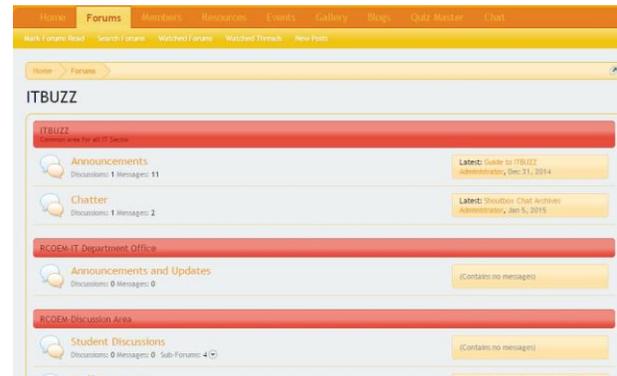


#### B.      *Resource Sharing*

Users can share resources with others through this link http://itbuzz.co/resources/ which can be in downloadable, link or textual format. The resource categories are mapped against user groups just like forum discussions to facilitate level wise access to resources. Also, the users can upload revisions to the same resource and rate and review the same. This creates a healthy discussion on the resources there itself. The upload resources cannot be more than 5MB in size, the size can be later customized and there are restrictions on which extension of file that can be uploaded based on security and threat protocols. The extensions which are not supported can be zipped and uploaded.



#### C.      *Gallery*

Users can share their pictures or videos or other media through this feature which can be located at http://itbuzz.co/media/. Gallery feature lets the users create their own albums and photo/video diaries to share with others and give a personal and social touch to their experience on ITBUZZ.

*D.*     *Events*

Events can be created and managed right from http://itbuzz.co/events/. This feature allows the users to create events as they need and share and invite others. The access to view events can be selected while creating them and RSVP feature is made available for all members to let the event host know if they are attending the event.
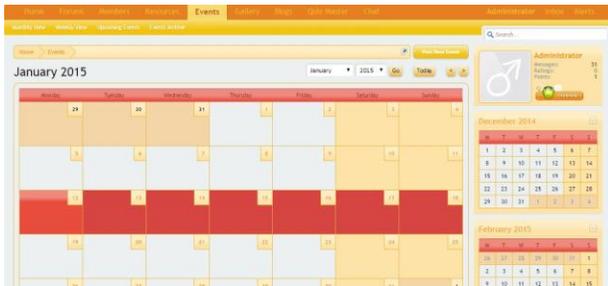


*E.*     *User Profiles and Member Directory*

All users have a personalized profile page which displays social information about them as specified. It shows personal information, recent activity information, medals, trophies, ribbons and other achievements information and status updates. The status updates work similar to that in Facebook where users can like and comment on the same. Users can follow or ignore each other depending on their choice and the feeds from the users followed can be seen at http://itbuzz.co/account/news-feed. The personal account settings can be set from http://itbuzz.co/account/personal-details which includes password, signature privacy and other settings. Users can display their mood and avatar when and as they like and also have their own personalized signatures.

The complete Member directory can be accessed from http://itbuzz.co/members/ and a sorted list can also be access using the various criteria listed. Members can be tagged into conversations or forum posts or media by user tagging features which works by appending '@' before the username.
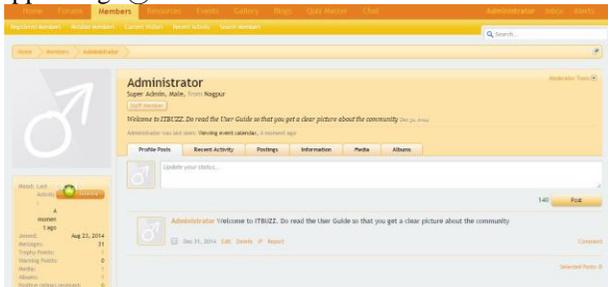


*F.*     *Inbox and Chat*

ITBUZZ.CO also diminishes the use of separate email accounts by providing an Inbox right in the portal. The users can communicate among themselves on a personal level or within a specific group of users using this feature. Attachments and other similar features are inherited from the Forums and Resource sharing facilities. The Administrators can also send newsletters or group emails to all/some users through the Admin Panel.

Adding to it, ITBUZZ.CO provides a real-time char shout box or one may call it an IRC at http://itbuzz.co/chat/



*G.*     *Blogs*

[1] The definition says that a blog is an online journal where users post thoughts, comments or news in a chronological format. Updates are often frequent and done on a regular basis. Users who love to write and share their views, ITBUZZ.CO acts as a ready platform for them. Users can create their Blogs and manage them more efficiently which is much better and easier than maintaining personal blog website. It gives the author a ready fan base and encourages writing and sharing views and data among a trusted community.



*H.*     *Quizmaster and Subjective Tests*

Quizmaster is another feature on ITBUZZ.CO which provides a rapid fire objective as well as subjective test to be conducted for the users. This becomes instrumental while preparing for competitive exams or interviews. Apart from this, a subjective exam can also be converted on the portal which is one of its kind transforming the way exams are conducted all over.
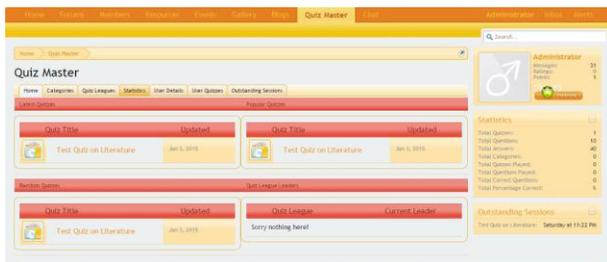
### I. Media Embedding

The messages posted in the community can hold attachments as well as embed of various types like images, videos, documents etc. These embeds can be live videos, video lectures, live streaming of lectures from the classes, presentations, documents etc.



### J. User Discipline and Web Traffic Monitoring

Users can be disciplined by moderators or administrators by regularly issuing warnings, handing out community bans or user discouragement if needed. Various usage restrictions and discouraged service by website is thus managed so as to keep the discipline and integrity of the website inline. Recent website activity can be seen by all users. The sidebar shows users online list and also specifically shows recent status updates, total website statistics and other important alerts from the website. Recent activity of specific users can be seen from their profile pages. Also the website traffic, diagnosis and other logs and statistics can be viewed from the admin panel by the administrators. Also the users' IP address can be traced and IP based settings and specifications can be set accordingly.

### K. Mobile Support

ITBUZZ.CO has a personalized mobile application for Android, IOS and Windows phones and Windows 8 tablets. This has been achieved by integrating ITBUZZ.CO with Tapatalk mobile app. The Tapatalk mobile app should be installed on the device, search for ITBUZZ in the forums and login using the appropriate credentials. A comprehensive UI and excellent UX can be obtained while using ITBUZZ.CO from anywhere, anytime. Tapatalk control panel can be used to send push notifications to all users using the app for ITBUZZ.CO to give important and urgent updates.

This can only be done by the administrators as many times required.

### L. Medals, Trophies, Ribbons and Titles

ITBUZZ.CO has an extensive range of Medals, Trophies and other Honorary Titles which can be awarded to users based on their achievements and performances. Medals are manually awarded to the members on their specific achievements. Trophies are automatically awarded to the users when they achieve particular number of ratings collected via likes or other up-votes on their content from the community. The Titles can be automated or user generated. These titles are thus displayed on the profiles. Ribbons and Moods are other decorative aspect which reflect on the user account which adds to the charm of socializing on ITBUZZ.CO

## III CONCLUSION

ITBUZZ.CO has tremendous potential to be the ERP lay for the entire Information Technology community right at the academic level. ITBUZZ.CO is extremely flexible and easily configurable portal for any and all interested organizations since the back end of the software makes it useful in a wide range of applications and purposes. ITBUZZ.CO has a successful and stable performance on Laptops, Desktops, Tablets, Mobile devices and all other hand-held devices on a real time scale.

## REFERENCES

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