Zotrun launches a new coin-system based educational platform for better user experience

A platform that students may reward for questions and earn by answering

Irvine, CA - Today marks a significant milestone in the educational technology landscape as Zotrun launches its eponymous state-of-the-art educational platform. Designed to rival established venues like Slack and Ed Discussion, Zotrun brought an enticing twist to the typical academic interface. The platform's standout feature, a virtual "Reward" system, invited students and instructors to engage in discussion threads dynamically and interactively.

Each user of the platform got a virtual "coin" account. The coins weren't just a novelty - they formed the backbone of the user experience, used to reward or earn rewards for insightful answers to questions. This innovative approach turned traditional student interactions on its head, fostering an environment encouraging academic curiosity and participation.

At first, Zotrun's team started with something other than the idea of an educational platform. It emerged during a group project assignment, evolving organically from a seed of a concept into the fully grown, transformative educational tool that it is today. Yixing Shen, a member of the Zotrun team, recalled, "Initially, the concept of a traditional educational platform didn't excite us much. We wanted to move beyond students just posting threads and waiting for answers. The 'reward' concept emerged after considerable discussions and research, setting the stage for a more engaging, motivating learning environment."

Then, Zotrun's educational platform employed a virtual market model where each student began a course with equal coins. Students could then post questions, spending their coins to reward those who provided valuable answers. Conversely, they could answer questions to earn coins from their peers. Once a reward question was answered, it became a freely viewable thread. This structure incentivized quality participation and encouraged a culture of helpfulness and collaboration among students.

Xufan Huang, one of the team members, elaborated, "Our model simulated real-world market transactions, creating a micro-market for students to exchange information. The coin count served as a metric to measure participation at the end of the term, encouraging students to answer more questions. Every question now had an explicit value, further incentivizing quality participation." In addition to the team's quotes, user feedback affirmed the platform's effectiveness. A student user, Lisa, said, "Zotrun has transformed my learning experience. The coin-based reward system encourages active participation, making studying more engaging and rewarding."

One of Zotrun's core principles was maintaining a non-interference policy with its coin market. However, to safeguard the quality of questions, it introduced a penalty for students posting irrelevant or low-quality queries. Haoyan Fu, a team member, explained, "While we aimed to keep the total coin amount constant, students posting frivolous questions were charged extra coins during their next reward posting. These coins were then used to reward meaningful questions, ensuring the continual circulation of coins for valuable academic interactions."

According to the Zotrun team, they believed their platform offered numerous advantages over competitors. By stimulating increased student engagement through the unique coin-based reward system, Zotrun aimed to transform the educational experience. Jinhui Ma, another team member, argued, "Platforms like Slack and Ed discussion lacked clear metrics to measure students' activities. Our platform encouraged posting valuable questions and rewarded insightful answers, leading to improved overall participation." The development and actualization of Zotrun have been a rewarding journey. Despite the challenge of implementing a feature-rich platform with just four team members, the team took pride in its accomplishments. They noted, "The joy of seeing our ideas come to life outweighed the effort. Our platform stands testament to our dedication and hard work." The project's director, Professor Masague, also commended the team for their innovative idea, expressing hope for its future refinement and success.

In conclusion, Zotrun demonstrated how innovation could transform the educational landscape. By focusing on a student-centric model that promotes engagement and active learning, Zotrun made significant strides in creating an impactful educational tool.

About Zotrun

Zotrun is a team of four formed in course 29SP in UC Irvine MCS program this january. Its team members are Yixing Shen, Xufan Huang, Haoyan Fu and Jinhui Ma. They have spent about four months working on this project to build an educational platform under Professor Masague's guidance.

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Fig. 1 Key Features of Zotrun

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