

Asha Kanini Report (July - Sept 2021)

Asha Kanini project of Pravartak has been launched in April 2021 with funding from John Crane. While efforts for this was already underway internally in Asha, the project by Pravartak enables it to be scaled up to support all of Tamilnadu's government schools.

Staffing

The project continues with the same staff as during the previous quarter. We identified and selected 5 trainers from our existing staff. We also interviewed and hired two trainers from outside. They will be onboarded from Oct 1st. More has not been done in this area as the primary and middle schools continue to remain closed.

Software Development

The software development work was focussed on the development of the Windows and Android versions of Asha Kanini. We were working on a Windows version with the latest versions of React (17.0.1) and Electron (13.1.4). However the Windows development was taking too much time. Therefore we decided to add some more features to our previous Windows version of Asha Kanini based on React 0.14.7 - electron 10.4.3 combination. We added the following features,

1. Bookmarking favourite contents.
2. Integrated search/browse view - Previous version had separate views which made it impossible to search for phrases within say a class-term-subject selection.
3. Several bug fixes esp in the areas of login/registration and package/content download.

We also developed a new Android version with React-native. It has the following features.

1. Integrated Search and browse contents including QR scanning.
2. Bookmark contents.
3. Support most of the existing mapped contents for windows. In particular our own lesson plans should be supported completely.
4. Package and content download with caching. Cached configuration files as well as limiting the size of the downloaded contents.
5. Network independence.
6. Login and Registration.
7. Uploading usage data to the server.

We had earlier hoped to complete these versions by end of July. But these got completed only by end of July. The following major features are still pending in both these versions.

1. Display of views and likes in the client. This is a new feature for Android and needs to be fixed in Windows.
2. Efficiently computing the views and likes data in the server.

3. Bug reporting.
4. Auto-update of software in Windows.
5. Library view in Android.

We also hope to release code-signed version of the Windows version and a play store version of the Android client in the next quarter.

Along with these the following updates were also done in the server:

1. A broad redesign of the static contents of our kanini.ashanet.org website. This will also not include information about all the additional packages that we have mapped.
2. UI for managing packages.

Content Development

Mappings of more than 20 packages were updated during the last quarter. All the Maths, English and Science lesson plans have had updates during the quarter as well.

Training

As the schools have remained closed during the last quarter, we couldn't start the training. However we have started creating the training materials. Our two content developers in the project have put together training materials. We have also started training the teachers who have been shortlisted for the role of the trainer.

Plan for the Next Quarter

With the schools reopening on the 1st of November, we hope to launch the training program in the upcoming quarter. We have met the education department officials at the state level to get the necessary permissions. We are in the process of getting the formal permission and establish relations at every block.

We have already hired 2 new trainers and shortlisted 5 trainers within Asha. We will be bringing them up to speed on the training and create all the materials required for the training.

On the software side, the main focus will be on testing, bug fixing and improving the scalability of the server to be able to server 1000s of schools using the Asha Kanini platform.