iJRASET
International Journal For Research in Applied Science and Engineering Technology

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL FOR RESEARCH

IN APPLIED SCIENCE & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

Volume: 12 **Issue:** XI **Month of publication:** November 2024

DOI: https://doi.org/10.22214/ijraset.2024.65122

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International Journal for Research in Applied Science & Engineering Technology (IJRASET)
ISSN: 2321-9653; IC Value: 45.98; SJ Impact Factor: 7.538
Volume 12 Issue XI Nov 2024- Available at www.ijraset.com

Navify: Smart Shopping Application

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Abstract: ***The Smart Shopping Application project aims to enhance the shopping experience in large retail stores by integrating indoor navigation and personalized assistance. It employs an Indoor Positioning System (IPS) using Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacons/RFID for real-time shopper tracking and optimized pathfinding. This project bridges the gap between the convenience of e-commerce and traditional shopping, offering a seamless, efficient, and satisfying shopping experience for customers. The paper outlines the system's Architecture, implementation, and future scope.***

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world, shopping complexes and supermarkets have evolved into expansive spaces, offering a wide variety of products spread across numerous aisles. While these retail environments are designed to provide choice and convenience, they often present challenges for shoppers. Many customers struggle to locate specific products, resulting in wasted time and frustration. Traditional store layouts can be confusing, particularly for new visitors or during busy hours, leading to shoppers wandering aimlessly or retracing their steps. Efficiently managing a shopping list in such environments can also be difficult. Shoppers may struggle to organize their items optimally, leading to more time spent navigating the store. Additionally, crowded aisles during peak shopping hours further complicate the process, making it harder to move efficiently and complete the shopping experience within a reasonable timeframe. These inefficiencies can reduce customer satisfaction and even influence shoppers' decisions to shop at physical stores. The rise of e-commerce has set new standards for convenience, with features like easy product search, personalized recommendations, and streamlined checkouts becoming the norm. As a result, consumer expectations have risen, with shoppers now expecting a similarly seamless experience when shopping in person. Physical stores must now compete not only on product availability but also on the quality and efficiency of the shopping experience they provide. To remain competitive, brick-and-mortar retailers must innovate and incorporate technology into their operations. Our Smart Shopping App directly addresses these challenges by leveraging advanced technology to enhance the in-store experience. The app is designed to guide customers directly to the products they need, minimizing search time and increasing shopping efficiency. Using indoor navigation technology, the app optimizes shopping routes, helping customers move smoothly through the store while avoiding congested areas. This is achieved with a state-of-the-art Indoor Positioning System (IPS) that accurately tracks the user's location and provides real-time navigation assistance. Beyond navigation, the Smart Shopping App offers additional features to improve the overall shopping experience, transforming traditional shopping into a more efficient, enjoyable, and customer-centred activity.

Integrating digital tools into the physical shopping environment bridges the gap between online and in-store experiences. Our project not only benefits individual shoppers by saving time and reducing frustration but also provides valuable insights to store management. By collecting data on customer movements and shopping behaviours, retailers can optimize store layouts, improve product placement, and adjust offerings to meet consumer demand more effectively. The Smart Shopping App represents an innovative approach to modernizing the retail landscape. It aims to elevate customer satisfaction, streamline store operations, and support traditional retailers in remaining competitive in an increasingly digital market place.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Indoor Positioning Techniques for Retail

Traditional GPS technology is well-known for providing accurate outdoor navigation but falls short in indoor environments due to the lack of direct satellite visibility and interference from building structures. Consequently, research has focused on Indoor Positioning Systems (IPS) to address this challenge. Techniques such as Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) beacons, RFID-based tracking have gained prominence. Studies have shown that BLE beacons are particularly effective for real-time location tracking in retail settings, as they offer high precision with minimal infrastructure requirements. The placement of BLE beacons throughout a store can create a robust and responsive indoor navigation system, allowing for accurate customer tracking. Together, these IPS technologies provide a reliable solution for guiding shoppers efficiently through large retail spaces.

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B. Pathfinding Algorithms in Complex Environments

Efficient navigation within a store requires more than just accurate positioning; it also demands smart routing algorithms. The application of algorithms such as A* and Dijkstra is well-documented in robotics and computer science for solving shortest path problems.

A* is favored for its efficiency and ability to find an optimal path while accounting for various obstacles and constraints. It uses heuristics to prioritize routes that are likely to lead to the destination quickly, making it ideal for dynamic and changing environments like a busy supermarket.

Dijkstra's algorithm, although more exhaustive, is reliable for exploring all possible routes to find the shortest path. These algorithms are critical for providing shoppers with real-time navigation that saves time and avoids congested areas, enhancing the overall efficiency of the shopping experience.

C. RFID in Retail

Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) technology has revolutionized inventory management and the checkout process in retail environments.

Unlike traditional barcode systems that require line-of-sight scanning, RFID tags can be read automatically as they pass near an RFID reader. Literature highlights the advantages of RFID in reducing human errors. The use of RFID technology in our project allows for automatic product identification and facilitates a frictionless shopping experience for customers.

D. Case Study on Smart Retail Implementations

Case study have been conducted to analyze the impact of smart retail technologies in real-world settings. One study focused on the implementation of a BLE-based indoor navigation system in a large shopping mall, which resulted in a 20% reduction in the time shoppers spent searching for products.

This case study provides concrete evidence of the benefits of integrating technologies like IPS, RFID into retail operations, supporting the effectiveness of our proposed Smart Shopping Application System.

E. User Experience in Smart Retail

The significance of a seamless and intuitive user experience in smart retail environments cannot be overstated. Research emphasizes that user-friendly interfaces, efficient data flow, and real-time assistance play a crucial role in customer satisfaction. Effective UI/UX design minimizes cognitive load and ensures that digital tools are accessible to a broad audience, including non-tech-savvy users.

Studies have shown that integrating digital tools into physical shopping environments, such as interactive maps and real-time product information, leads to a more engaging and stress-free shopping experience. Additionally, features like responsive design, efficient state management, and client-side routing have been highlighted as essential for building robust and interactive applications.

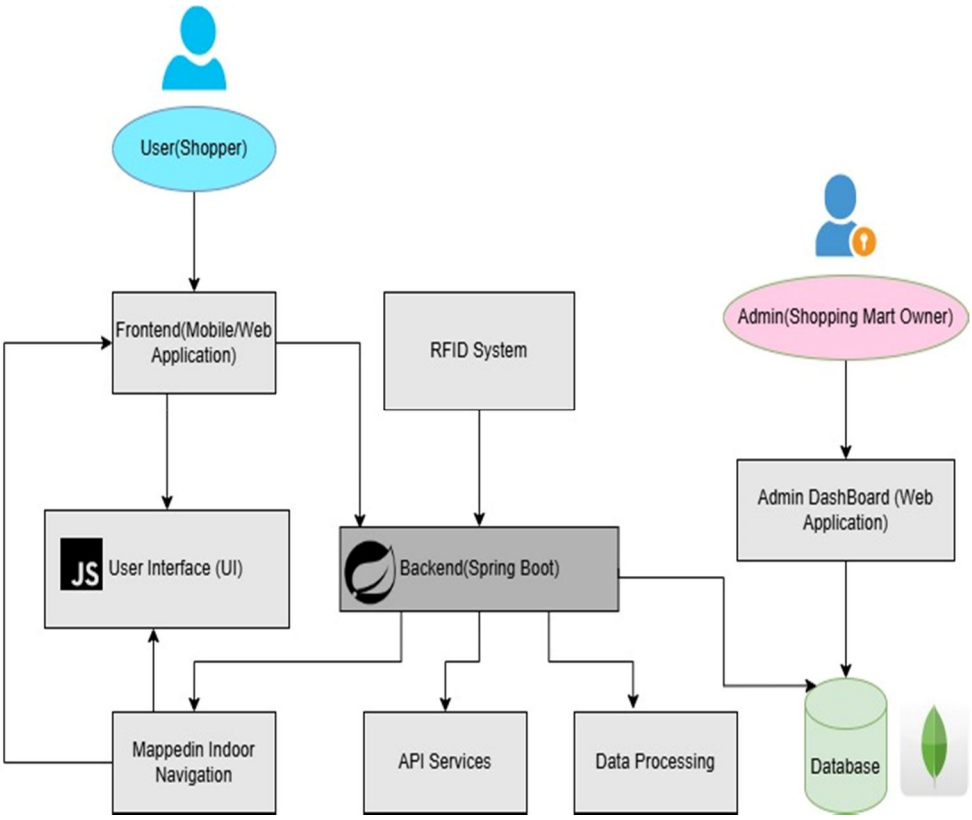
By incorporating these principles, our project aims to deliver a highly intuitive and responsive user interface that enhances the in-store experience for shoppers.

III. PROPOSED APPROACH

The Smart Shopping App project focuses on enhancing the in-store shopping experience through Indoor Positioning System (IPS) Navigation and Mall Management features.

1) *Indoor Navigation:* Indoor Positioning System (IPS) Navigation: The Smart Shopping App uses advanced IPS technology to provide real-time navigation inside the mall. BLE (Bluetooth Low Energy) beacons are placed strategically throughout the shopping complex to track the user's location. The app calculates the shortest and least congested route to the desired stores or products, ensuring an efficient navigation experience and helping shoppers avoid crowded areas.
2) *Mall Management:* The app serves as a platform where mall operators can view users who have selected their mall. Mall administrators can manage indoor maps, allowing users to navigate the mall's layout, find stores, and easily locate products within the mall.

IV. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE



A. User (Shopper)

The shopper interacts with the system via a mobile or web application interface. They can view store maps, search for products.

B. Admin (Shopping Mart Owner)

The store owner or manager, who has control over the backend systems, can manage inventory, track customer activity, configure store layouts, and access analytics and reports to monitor shopping patterns and optimize store operations.

C. Frontend (Mobile/Web Application)

The customer-facing interface, either as a mobile app or web application. It provides various functionalities such as:
User Interface (UI) for the shopper, including:
Navigation Map: Shows the layout of the store and helps the shopper locate products.
Product Search: Allows shoppers to search for specific products.
Shortest Path: Provides directions to find items in the shortest route possible.

D. Mappedin Indoor Navigation

A third-party indoor navigation service integrated into the frontend to provide accurate, real-time location and pathfinding.
Mappedin handles:
API Integration: Connects the app with the Mappedin service.
Pathfinding Updates: Continuously updates pathfinding information based on shopper location and store layout.

E. RFID System

Manages to locate customer's position with RFID technology.
It includes:
RFID Readers & Tags: Each product section has an RFID tag, and RFID readers detect the items.

F. Backend (Spring Boot)

The core processing component of the system, developed using Spring Boot for handling application logic. It connects the frontend, database, and admin dashboard. It includes:

API Services:

Pathfinding API: Calculates optimal routes for product locations.

User Auth API: Handles user authentication for secure access.

G. Admin Dashboard (Web Application)

A dedicated interface for store administrators with functionalities for:

Layout Configuration: Adjusting the virtual layout for accurate navigation.

Admin will be able to manipulate respective malls and users.

H. Database Management

Stores and manages all users and malls.

Store Layout Database: Maintains the virtual layout and product locations.

RFID Logs: Keeps logs of RFID interactions for updates and tracking.

This system enables real-time indoor navigation, personalized recommendations, and efficient checkout, providing both shoppers and store administrators with a streamlined and enhanced shopping experience.

V. FUTURE SCOPE

1) *Scalability:* The system can be extended to different store layouts with minimal adjustments. New store maps can be uploaded, and product databases updated to adapt to various environments.
2) *Advanced Data Analytics:* Store owners can analyse customer movement patterns and popular product routes to optimize store layouts and improve product placement.
3) *Voice-Activated Search:* Incorporating voice recognition technology will allow shoppers to search for items and receive navigation instructions hands-free, enhancing accessibility.
4) *Integration with Smart Retail:* Features such as real-time stock updates, smart shelves, and digital price tags can be integrated for a more cohesive retail experience.
5) *Augmented Reality (AR):* Implementing AR technology could enable shoppers to view product information, promotions, and navigation overlays through their smartphones as they walk through the store.
6) *Integration with Mobile Payments:* Navify can be linked with mobile payment options, allowing customers to check out directly from their application without visiting a physical checkout counter.
7) *Dynamic Pricing and Promotions:* Based on purchase patterns and user profiles, the application could show personalized offers or recommend products as shoppers add items, potentially even providing real-time discounts.

VI. CONCLUSION

The Smart Shopping Application project aims to revolutionize the in-store shopping experience by combining cutting-edge technologies like indoor navigation, RFID automation. By bridging the gap between traditional and digital shopping experiences, the system enhances customer convenience and provides valuable insights for store management. Future enhancements will focus on further improving efficiency, personalization, and integration with smart retail ecosystems.

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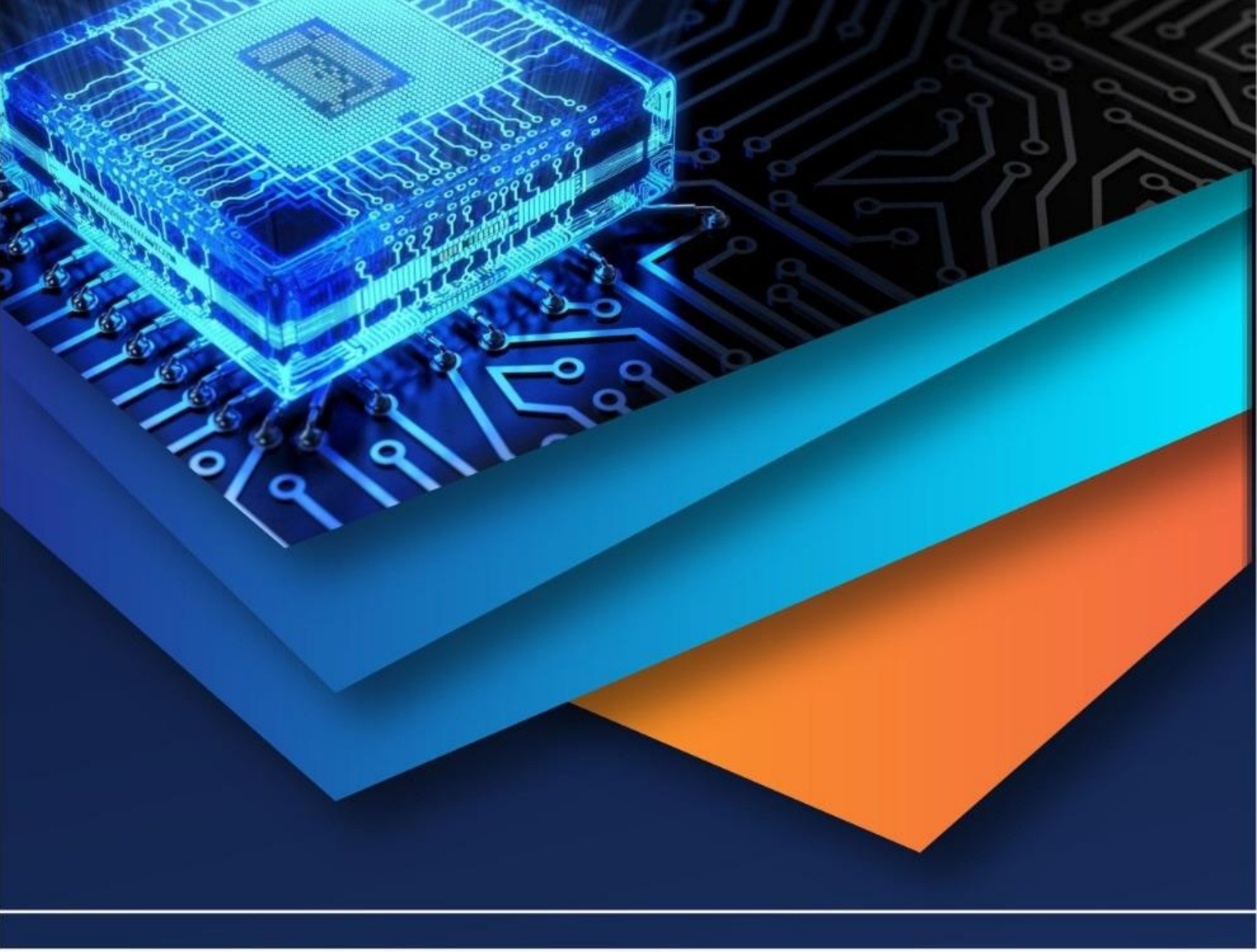

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