Dormbase

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Dormbase is an open-source dormitory database system that is flexible and expandable. It is written in Python with Django, making the project accessible for new developers. It is a community project that solves a community problem.

The current state of MIT's dormitory web systems is not representative of the Institute. These systems lack oversight, are fragmented, and use outdated technologies and web practices. Simmons Hall runs old customized software, Baker House operates proprietary software and will not allow for third party review, Burton-Conner is unable to update their system because past developers refuse to release source code, Maseeh is looking for a web system, and Random Hall uses a command-line service. Since each system is unique, each dorm must have an experienced administrator – this makes updates and maintenance difficult. These systems are also unfriendly. Information is obscured by poorly designed interfaces and fundamental use cases are time consuming. Inadequate attention was paid to the user's needs, dissuading residents from taking advantage of online resources.

Dormbase solves these problems by providing a single system for all dorms to deploy. It is open source, enabling current and future maintainers to update and customize the code. It is designed for developers to create dorm-specific extensions. This allows the project to evolve and address the different needs of the different living groups.

Dormbase leverages Web 2.0 techniques to ensure scalability and to take advantage of modern technologies, such as HTML 5, CSS3, and jQuery. Through its use of Python, the programing language of choice for both introductory and high-level MIT courses, it empowers students to extend, modify, and customize the software for their dormitory.

The project is led by the Simmons Hall technology group, but is open to all community members through its affiliation with the Student Information Processing Board (SIPB). Dormbase is an official SIPB project and was sanctioned as such to ensure its longevity.

The Dormbase project provides a dorm management system that will evolve overtime to suit the changing needs of the various dorms and their residents. Through a strong and clean framework Dormbase provides a forward thinking and easy-to-use solution for the entire MIT community.