The various roles on the scrum agile team are the product owner, scrum master, tester, and developer. All roles are important in different ways. The product owner is responsible for communicating directly with the client and gaining an understanding of what needs to be made. They will also act as a leader in monitoring the team and providing suggestions and feedback to the team. The scrum master is the team member responsible for managing the scrum meetings, but also ensuring the team is working together efficiently and keeping everyone on track. They will collect updates and communicate with the team about any requirements or about any issues that may come up. The testers are responsible for testing the product possibly using user stories as a metric to ensure the product is working as intended. They are responsible for communicating with the team about findings and any ways to improve the software. The developers are the ones who will do the majority or all of the actual coding and creation of the software. They are expected to address and check in with the rest of the team to ensure that they are creating the best possible product and meeting all the needs of the client.

The scrum agile method allows for a more flexible plan when creating software. In this case it allowed the team to make on the fly changes to ux and design. Through user stories the team was able to discover what features may be missing and was able to quickly add them to the backlog which translated into those features being implemented. There was also flexibility in how the webpage was displayed changing from a scrollable list to a slide show like display.

By using the agile approach, the ability to pivot through these changes was a welcome challenge. As opposed to using the waterfall method where everything would have already been planned all the way to the end, not leaving room to change anything, which would have set everything back or caused a full restart all the way from planning. The agile method focuses on short iterative sprints which allows changes to be worked into the process.

The big key in agile is effective communication between different members so that everyone can be on the same page about what they are doing. If ever there was a question about the product reaching out was the best way of ensuring everyone was working towards the same goal. For example when a developer wasn’t sure how to specifically implement a feature they reached out to the product owner in this way:

“Hello I am writing to you with regards to the user stories we previously encountered. There is a lack of clarity on how some of the users may want their features implemented. I was hoping to obtain more information regarding this. I can use either extended user stories regarding their preference or input from yourself about how best to implement these features. Hope to hear from you soon.”

This is a clear concise statement describing what information the developer needs and possible ways for the product owner to address these needs. Including solutions to your problems is a potentially time saving step that can ensure everyone is aware of what needs to be done.

There are many tools to help with the process of agile development, such as scrum meetings. These meetings would be held daily as a check in for the team to talk about any issues coming up as well as to make sure everyone is working on their assigned areas. A scrum board can also help the team track what is already being done versus what still needs to be started. This can ensure there isn’t double work being done by having two people working on the same issue separately. Other tools can be working in pairs on difficult problems, so that it becomes more of a collaborative process. There are also digital tools and solutions to the boards or scrum meetings which can be useful depending on the circumstance of the specific team. For example in this class we “met” via online discussion board which was helpful since we couldn’t all be at the same place together.

There are times when maybe an agile approach would not be the way to go for a project, but I think that for this specific project it was definitely the correct choice. By using agile, the team was able to iterate through different possibilities and do shorter sprints. This allowed for the flexibility of implementing different design choices from iteration to iteration. This ultimately led to a better product guided by user stories and the product owner’s vision. Some cons of this method would be not having a definite structure for the developers and could possibly lead to a clash of ideas on how best to implement features. Although this can be addressed eventually by the product owner, it can still lead to poorer outcomes than if everything was pre-planned such as in the waterfall method. Although in this case with this “small” team it does appear that it was the best possible choice.