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Database Development – Mod 12.3 - Lessons Learned

Overall, I feel very proud of the product our group came up with and submitted. After seeing other groups' presentations, I knew ours went above and beyond what was asked. I missed how our group decided on the case study we chose. I was checking all of the group tools we were given on blackboard for any group communication, but apparently most everyone in the group was already on the student Discord and I never saw any communication until after their first meeting. I was fine with the case study we chose, but it sure seems like we chose the most complicated of the three based on our ORD and reports compared to what other groups showed. Thankfully we had members in our group with database experience and we were well equipped to tackle this bigger challenge. I know at times we did more than was required, but personally, I felt that if we were going to do it, we should do it right. Though at moments, we spent more time planning than actually getting work done. Most of our communication was via voice chat meetings and really only used text to share files or decide on the next meeting time. This worked well, though a lot of the work could have been done separately outside of our meeting times, rather than trying to find a time that worked for all five of us. I think it would have worked better using the meetings to split up the work, and then meet again later with what we all came up with. We had members in three different time zones with four majorly different work schedules. Many times, meetings had to start with only three people, then as others became available, we would have to stop work for thirty plus minutes to catch them up with what we had done and what is still to be worked on. Our schedules would only line up a couple of times a week, as some people worked nights vs early mornings, some had off early in the week and others only had time on the weekends. This also meant when we would meet, it would be for a long time. The two of us in the group with experience often had to run with our ideas and work on the ORD, scripts, and reports from the get-go. At times we could stop and explain the work we were doing, such as why we were making tables, the purpose of the scripts we were creating, and how the reports of views we made worked, but for many other instances, we didn’t have time to stop and fully explain or in some cases teach the concepts and functionality of the code we were righting. I feel like the purpose of this project was to all come together and share our knowledge to teach and learn from each other, but there wasn’t the time available to do that. We had to decide what everyone's strengths were and have them work on that. Many group members spoke about how they barely had time to work through assignments let alone read through the book for each module. For most of the tasks this project required, members were unsure of how databases worked and were still learning the concepts and how to implement them with the code. If this were a real project at a company we all worked at, we should have requested more time in our proposal so that as a team, we could properly learn the concepts involved before diving into the project. Everything evened out in the end as two of us were skilled in databases worked on those tasks early in the project, we had one team member work on the word documents to keep everything organized and the team on task, and the last two team members really stepped up when it was time to work on the presentation. As a group, we worked on an outline of what the presentation should include and how it should be laid out. Those two then took their time between meetings to fill it out with information and images to create a great presentation. I feel like our presentation was quite large and dense, but we had a lot of information in the case study, our reports, and the assumptions we made along the way. We read the instructions for the assignment as having to fully explain the case study and the work completed on the database that solves their problem. Our case study document was quite large and had lots of information to include with many data points to track and several reports the employees needed to do their jobs. The fact that we had to make a presentation, that would only be a visual element and there would be no speech along with it, we had to put a lot of words on each page. Many of our reports were large and the images were large along with it. If this were an actual presentation we had to give to the company we were tasked with making this database project for, I think a video would have been a better solution to combine the visuals in a way that is not as cluttered, and would have a prerecorded audio portion that can convey more information than displayed on the screen. I really wish we would have had a better situation for keeping our databases in sync between team members. We had to keep creating new scripts that would clear the database and then recreate it whenever we made one simple change. This made it so only one person could really be working on the database at a time. If we had a centralized database, many people could be viewing and adjusting the database at the same time. I also feel like that would be a better experience to the advantages of databases and how it would most likely work in a job setting. This was a problem with creating the tables, filling them with data, and then when creating the views for the reports. We also ran into some issues filling the tables with data. We started just making up whatever data we wanted for each table. That was an issue as much of the information was not linked to information in other tables, and the relationships didn’t connect. We realized this late after much work was already done and had to make new data. This time we started with actual trips and added in the people and items that would be required and make sense. This process worked much better for creating meaningful data. While we still came across some issues, and in some cases had way too many rows in some tables, it worked better to actually create meaningful reports in the end. If I ever have to work with creating a new database, I would really prefer having actual data on hand to fill in the database rather than having to guess at what would be important. Even just test data would be very helpful and time saving versus having to create data along with the database.