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Reflective Essay

Upon reaching the final stretch of the Creative Computation duology, now is a warranted time to reflect on my past, present, and future self, and relationship with coding as this chapter comes to a close. Learning to code has opened so many new opportunities for creative expression for me, as it has allowed for me to explore different mediums, ideas, and genres to bring my ideas to fruition. From only knowing how to code in Ren'py and a bit of Python, to now being able to use p5.js, JavaScript and HTML has been a huge evolution for me as a creative, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to learn said languages through my studies.

When starting Creative Computation 2, my knowledge on coding was pretty good, but I was not very confident in my abilities to code yet. Especially after not having coded over the winter break, my knowledge was not as strong as it was while taking Creative Computation 1, so going into the step-up course made me anxious. However, upon partaking in the Voices Jam, it made me realize that I am more knowledgeable than I thought I was, as I was able to maneuver the library pretty well independently. For example, to add some pressure to my Jeopardy-style game I decided to include a timer that was operated by following the frame count of the program, with the help of Mathilde. This small inclusion to my game made it much better than what it was originally. As a result of this, the characterization of my coding knowledge during the first half of the semester was very topsy-turvy as I had a lot of great ideas and concepts in mind, but only mildly knew how to execute them, therefore resulting in a lot of help from Pippin and Mathilde respectively.

From this, this is one of the aspects of programming that I do enjoy, which is coming up with an idea and finding ways to build on it and make it even better. Coding allows me to fully embrace my creative liberty and make anything I'd like to within a digital space. This can also be exhibited within the AI Jam, where upon reaching 5 seconds left of the timer to find the object directed on the screen, the screen will begin to turn a tint of red and the background music will speed up for suspense. Similarly to the Voices Jam, it adds some pressure to the player to succeed within an allotted time. Another way that coding inspires me is its endless possibilities of creation. Having coded in a variety of languages now, each language has its own unique specialty that excels in its craft. For example, in my CART211 class, we were primarily taught HTML and a bit of JavaScript to make websites little by little over the course of the semester, and in the end, I was extremely proud of my website. While some aspects of it did challenge me, such as uploading and aligning images and text correctly, the result was well worth the effort. Another example is from this class, CART263, by using JavaScript with Phaser 3 to create our own small games for the last jam and final projects. Learning and adapting to this coding library was the hardest coding feat I've experienced yet as the method of code was very detailed and complex and the possibilities were too endless, making it difficult for me to learn the basics to

then create something unique. However, upon watching the lecture videos, exploring the Phaser website and its various examples, and seeking out assistance from both Pippin and Mathilde I began to understand how to create a game using this unique library. Some aspects I found fun when creating my game were the implementation of the text portions and creating the mazes themselves. By following a Phaser tutorial and utilizing key strings such as callback events and delays, I was able to create eerie narrative text portions in between each completed map to situate the player in the game allowing for more interactivity. Lastly, for creating the mazes, with the help of Pippin and by using the tilemap application Tiled, they allowed me to create intricate mazes with collisions for the player to immerse themselves in and ultimately get lost within. Going forward in my coding career, I'd definitely like to challenge myself in regard to how I approach learning a coding language. Rather than looking at the material and being confused because it is new to me, I would like to try to remain confused and try to understand what doesn't make sense to me to then decode and learn it myself. Afterwards, if I am still struggling with understanding how to execute something or why something is not functional, then I will go and seek out assistance. I find that following this method allows me to be more independent and allow for a greater and better understanding of the concepts I've learned and am learning.

To conclude, upon reminiscing on all of the coding knowledge I have learned and acquired over the course of the semester and the previous one, going forward I would definitely love to expand my knowledge and horizons on coding as a whole. By learning new languages, like C#, C++, and more in-depth Python, it will allow me to try out new coding libraries and learn a variety of game engines to create even more games going forward. One specific genre of game I would eventually like to explore creating is an open world either 2D or 3D exploration game where the player's goal is to learn more about the environment they are placed in and its people in order to adapt to their new setting. Some examples of this genre include Genshin Impact and Marvel's Spider-Man for world-building inspiration and for mood and tone something similar to Stardew Valley or Spiritfarer.