*\_Swift Programming (ITEC 3010)*

*Final Project Proposal: Pick-a-Path Adventure*

*Introduction*:

The original series of *Choose Your Own Adventure* books originally came out in the late 1970s and were published for nearly twenty years. Other companies quickly followed suit with similar books and the “gamebook” genre was born. In this type of book/game, the reader is presented with a scenario and given choices to make regarding the hero’s actions and is then directed to page through the book to numbered paragraphs based on those choices. Thus, the narrative branches along different paths based on the choices the reader makes. “Hypertext fiction” is electronic literature based on a similar concept, except that the reader need only click the appropriate link to move from one node to the next. Though these genres have declined in popularity, there are still books/games of this sort being released and played today. *Pick-a-Path Adventure* is an iPhone app of this nature which will allow the reader to participate in a story by influencing the outcome based on the actions they choose for the hero.

*Target Population*:

The target population for this app is anyone who likes to read fiction. Obviously, older fans of the original *Choose Your Own Adventure* books and of hypertext adventure stories will find this app nostalgically appealing. The rise in popularity of books with young readers of fiction such as *Harry Potter* and *Percy Jackson* means that there is potential market with them, as well. In fact, anyone has ever said to him- or herself, “Don’t do that, you idiot!” when reading a story (and who hasn’t done that?) is a candidate to enjoy this app. This form of “roleplaying-light” fiction has a loyal following even today.

The iPhone app makes the gamebook even easier to use and more accessible. Setting up new stories is also a breeze with Xcode and Swift. The initial prototype will be a simple branching story with choices for the reader to make on each page. However, just as random elements and game mechanics were added to gamebooks, so, too, can this app evolve. Although it likely falls outside the scope of this 15-hour project, adding random factors and tracking various “stats” and inventory for the characters in the stories would be fairly simple and is definitely something I would like to add in the future.

*Purpose to the Consumer*:

The unique thing about this app is the fiction being presented. I am a lifelong reader of all sorts of fiction (books, movies, and television programs), an amateur writer of my own fiction, and player and moderator of tabletop roleplaying games. I will draw on that knowledge to craft stories that feel familiar and comfortable to the reader while still putting my own unique style and spin into them. Stories in the vein of *Harry Potter*,  *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, *Doctor Who*, and *The Avengers* are all possibilities to entice the consumer. “Adventure is just a tap away…”

While there are similar apps being published today, the selection is limited. There is, therefore, plenty of room for fresh blood. As a small, independent publisher my costs would be extremely low, allowing for a low price point. Multiple storylines with different settings (fantasy, science fiction, super heroes, etc.) and releasing new chapters regularly would give users more choices. If random and game mechanics are added then it could even be possible to allow characters from previous chapters to be imported.

This app is useful because the market is underserved. It is a low-cost form of entertainment that can be played multiple times as users attempt to complete the story by different methods. Adding random factors and game mechanics greatly expands that replayability. Adding the ability to import and reuse characters from previous chapters allows users to become even more invested in the story. Upon completion of the story, a story based on a compilation of the user’s choices could be created in PDF form allowing the user to re-read and share the story with others.

*Constraints:*

For the initial prototype app, there are very few possible errors to watch out for. Text placement, sizing, color, spacing, etc. must be considered and consistent. Proper spelling and grammar also need to be carefully observed as the entire experience will be conveyed through the text. The most obvious errors to watch out for, however, are properly linked pages. These will be crucial for the story/game to work.

1. Text placement, sizing, spacing, color, etc.
2. Typos
3. Properly linked pages

These factors will not be overly difficult to control. Text fields can be copied and pasted before editing to ensure that they maintain a consistent style. Typos and grammar errors can be eliminated with the use of automated spelling and grammar checks and careful re-reading. Every link must be tested to ensure that it is correct. Doing this should ensure the integrity of the app.

*Conclusion*:

I am moving forward with this project because it appeals to me. I grew up reading *Choose Your Own Adventure* books. My wife has already requested a *Harry Potter*-style game. The initial prototype will be simple enough and extending the storylines and incorporating custom characters, game mechanics, inventory, randomized outcomes, the ability to import characters from previous chapters, and story summations based on the user’s choices leave plenty of room for additional development. In short, this project has a great deal of potential.