

Psychology & Ethics

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Analysis of our team: IoTracking

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1 Introduction

This paper aims to analyze our team, our decision-making process and group dynamics, and discuss about ethics in our project.

The project we worked on aimed to deploy an ad-hoc LoRa network from scratch and develop a user-friendly web application to allow people to follow the evolution of boat regattas in real time. We named it "IoTracking: GPS tracking for boat regattas".

2 Our team

2.1 Cultural diversity

We are a team with members of various cultures and social backgrounds. Cyril comes from Malaysia, Aminata from Senegal, Clovis from Burkina-Faso, Linn from Norway and Josué and I from France. We all have different ways of thinking and working and we needed to know each other to be able to work together.

2.2 Technical diversity

We also are a team with different technical backgrounds : Linn is specialized in Electrical and Automation engineering, Aminata, Cyril, Clovis and I in Network and Telecommunications, and Josue in Software Engineering. This makes us able to solve challenges involving a wide range of technical fields and also to share the knowledge so we can all learn from each other's technical field.

2.3 The beginning of our team

After having worked together for some time, not really having gotten to know each other, we participated in a workshop in an innovation/creativity class. One of the assignments we got was to introduce ourself to the group where we addressed specific topics such as our name and origin, our ambitions, how we like to work, and one thing that the group should know about us related to group work.

We used more time than most of the other groups to get through this list, but for us it was worth every second. Everyone got to talk and felt seen by the other members of the group. We did not only reply briefly to the questions, but took the time to elaborate. After this day we really went from being a group of strangers, to a tight group ready to conquer all the challenges we would face throughout the semester.

The topics we addressed were also crucial to create the framework for how we would work together. The members of the group could share whether or not they normally take a leading role, if they are shy when working in group with strangers, if they cannot function if they are forced to work during the weekends, and many other aspects around teamwork.

We organized our team depending on what each of us was specialized on, and what we wanted to work on. We divided our project into three subparts and hopefully each of us could work on the part they preferred. Thanks to that, we had no regrets or loss of motivation since we could work on what we like. Therefore, even if what we work on is what we chose, it does not mean that we all have the same competences on that subject and the imbalance between our respective skills may have lead to psychological discomfort for those who worked more than others and those who knew they were less efficient than others. Communication and good atmosphere were extremely important to face this potential discomfort and I think we managed to keep this good atmosphere I mentioned previously.

3 The decision-making process

A major aspect of our project organization is how we took decisions together. From the choice of the team and its project to the way we wanted to finally present it, every choice was made together, with the entire team or within the subgroups if it did not concern directly the other subgroups. This was very important not to exclude anyone, to take the best decision according to different points of views and to keep a good communication and team spirit.

Our decisions were always made with every single concerned member of the team. If the decision to make concerned the entire project, we discussed it together, during an informal meeting. If the decision only concerned one of the subgroups, the people working on the topic discussed together about the best decision to make and informed the other ones during the next global meeting.

I do not think we made really senseless decision. The only one I see that I regret (that we all regret actually) is the decision we made about which component we wanted to buy to design our device. Indeed, we realize after some time that the card we bought had an unidirectional antenna, whereas we should have a bidirectional one. The period we used to decide which component to order was quite stressful because we knew that time was running out and that the orders will arrive with an important delay. I think this fact made us expedite too fast our process of decision of which components to buy and resulted in a mistake. Fortunately, our project did not fail because of it, but could have been more interesting and more relevant if this decision had been made more carefully.

4 The group dynamics

I do think our team was really dynamic and that we managed to maintain an atmosphere conducive to work and enjoy our time together. It was motivating to think that I was working with nice and smart people, and it helped me to keep a good motivation, even when I thought about our very tight schedule or technical issues.

Of course, one of our main motivation for this project was the need to validate our year. But I know this had been overtaken by our desire to offer the association we were working for, a relevant prototype. During the meetings we had with the member of this associations, we proposed many things (at the beginning we heated it up a little bit by proposing many features...), and even if we quickly realized that it would be impossible to keep our promises, we did not want to disappoint our customers and offering them the best prototype as possible became our first motivation. We knew (at least we supposed) that our tutors would be quite satisfied even if everything were not fully implemented because they know we were really short in time, but we really wanted to make a good prototype for the association, and I know everyone in our team was thinking that way.

5 Ethics in our project

I do not know if our project could be a problem from an ethical point. It consists in a simple GPS tracking of boats during a regatta. No name or other personal data are retrieved (only GPS details and anonymous identifiers).

6 Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to summarize the “magic formula” of a team with one clue element : good atmosphere. Even if working may not be what we prefer in life, working with people you appreciate and you like being with is essential to feel good at work. And managers know that someone who feels good at work will be more efficient.

We chose and started this project because of its challenge and technical aspect. But when we started discovering each other, we also started appreciate this project for its team and we probably got more efficient or at least more motivated, which is crucial to run a project.