**SNHU Travel Project: Sprint Review and Retrospective**  
 *By Madison Parker*

The completion of the SNHU Travel project stands as a defining milestone in my academic and professional journey through the Scrum-Agile methodology. Acting as Scrum Master, I had the opportunity to guide a dynamic, cross-functional team through iterative cycles of development, collaboration, and refinement. The purpose of this retrospective is to examine the team’s process, assess the success of our approach, and reflect on the ways in which the Scrum framework enabled us to deliver a functional and innovative travel application. The application centered around curating personalized travel experiences across five carefully chosen destinations Ihat I personally would like to visit Ireland, Vietnam, Maine (going in January from Texas I am very excited), Germany, and Japan each representing distinct cultural, environmental, and logistical features that tested the versatility of our development process. Through examining our roles, user stories, adaptability, communication, and tools, this paper aims to synthesize what made our project successful while identifying valuable lessons for future agile endeavors.

### **Applying Roles within the Scrum Team**

Throughout the SNHU Travel project, each team member embraced multiple Scrum roles which are Scrum Master, Product Owner, Developer, and Tester all ffering a holistic understanding of how every position contributes to collective success. My role as Scrum Master required balancing leadership, facilitation, and servant-leadership principles to maintain alignment, motivation, and accountability within the team. I found that the Scrum Master’s most powerful function lies not in authority, but in enabling others to thrive. By orchestrating daily stand-ups, sprint planning, and retrospectives, I ensured that our collaboration remained transparent and iterative.

As a Product Owner, my focus shifted toward value optimization and client satisfaction. The client’s initial request involved creating a travel platform for diverse destinations; however, their evolving needs demanded that we emphasize wellness and cultural immersion. To respond effectively, I prioritized user stories that reflected authentic experiences for instance, implementing itineraries highlighting Ireland’s scenic countryside tours, Vietnam’s street food excursions, Maine’s coastal retreats, Germany’s architectural landmarks, and Japan’s tranquil hot springs. Acting as a liaison between the development team and stakeholders, I ensured that each user’s story-maintained alignment with the client’s broader vision while delivering measurable value.

As a Developer, I became deeply engaged with translating user requirements into functional components. This hands-on experience underscored the value of incremental delivery and code review. Through Agile project management tools like JIRA, I could break down complex features such as dynamic destination sorting and personalized recommendation algorithms into smaller, testable segments. As a Tester, I learned the essential discipline of verification and validation, ensuring that the final product adhered to user expectations and functional criteria. The iterative testing cycles allowed our team to detect usability issues early and adapt efficiently, reinforcing the continuous improvement ethos central to Agile principles (Cobb, 2015).

By experiencing all four roles firsthand, I gained a comprehensive appreciation for the interdependence of the Scrum framework. The synergy among these roles fostered an environment where flexibility and accountability coexisted, leading to an outcome that reflected both precision and creativity.

### **Completing User Stories through the Scrum-Agile Approach**

The Scrum-Agile process proved instrumental in bringing our user stories to fruition. By structuring the development into iterative sprints, we could focus on producing deliverables that aligned with client expectations at each stage. For instance, in the first sprint, our team focused on creating a user-friendly homepage interface with responsive design and intuitive navigation. The subsequent sprint centered on implementing the “Top Five Destinations” feature, which required integrating detailed travel profiles for Ireland, Vietnam, Maine, Germany, and Japan.

Each user's story was written with clear acceptance criteria to ensure consistency in understanding across the team. For example, the user story *“As a traveler, I want to view destination highlights so I can compare cultural and pricing details”* required developing both the content architecture and backend filtering algorithms. The incremental structure of Agile enabled us to adjust continuously as feedback emerged. When internal testing revealed that the image carousel for Vietnam’s destinations slowed downloading times, we optimized performance parameters before moving forward.

What became evident through this process was the adaptability of Scrum in promoting frequent inspection and adaptation. Our sprint reviews offer an immediate opportunity for stakeholders to engage with the product, test functionality, and provide feedback. This approach not only increased transparency but also ensured that each iteration moved us closer to the client’s evolving vision (Highsmith, 2020).

### **Handling Interruptions and Adapting to Change**

The fluid nature of software development inevitably introduces unanticipated challenges. Midway through the project, the client revised their requirements, requesting a transition from general vacation planning to wellness-oriented travel experiences. This modification affected the project’s thematic direction and required significant re-prioritization. Instead of resisting this change, our team embraced it as an opportunity to demonstrate the agility of our framework.

We held an emergency Backlog Refinement meeting to assess the impact of the shift and to reallocate resources accordingly. The Product Owner and I worked together to reprioritize user stories introducing features such as “wellness retreat filters” and “cultural immersion highlights” for destinations like Japan’s hot springs and Germany’s Black Forest health spas. By iteratively adjusting our backlog and sprint goals, we ensured that development continued without major disruption.

This experience reinforced one of the fundamental truths of Agile: adaptability is not a setback but a strength. Unlike the rigidity of traditional waterfall models where scope changes would demand restarting entire phases, the Scrum approach allowed us to integrate client feedback in real time. Our capacity to pivot gracefully kept morale high and preserved the integrity of our timeline. The entire experience highlighted that agility in mindset is just as crucial as agility in process (Rigby, Sutherland, & Takeuchi, 2016).

### **Communication and Collaboration**

Effective communication served as the linchpin of our team’s success. The Scrum framework thrives on transparency and consistent dialogue, both of which we cultivated intentionally. As Scrum Master, I facilitated daily stand-ups designed not merely to report progress but to foster cohesion. Each team member articulated what they accomplished, what they planned to achieve next, and what obstacles stood in their way. These short but structured meetings promoted accountability and rapid problem-solving.

When serving as Tester, I often found it necessary to communicate directly with the Product Owner for clarification. For example, while testing the “Top Five Destinations” feature, I reached out to confirm whether the destination rankings should be user-driven or algorithmically generated. My written communication reflected professionalism and precision:

“Dear [Product Owner],  
 I am reviewing the implementation of the destination ranking module and require clarification on user preference weighting. Should rankings be determined by popularity of metrics or personalized filters based on previous user selections? Clarifying this will allow me to ensure test cases reflect intended functionality.”

This kind of communication not only accelerated the resolution process but also reinforced the collaborative culture intrinsic to Agile development. Moreover, asynchronous communication channels such as Slack and Trello provided efficient documentation of decisions, reducing redundancy and maintaining team alignment across time zones. These tools embodied the Agile principle of individuals and interactions over processes and tools, ensuring that the human element remained central to our workflow (Beck et al., 2001).

### **Organizational Tools and Scrum Events**

Our team’s success was amplified by the thoughtful integration of Agile tools and Scrum ceremonies. JIRA functioned as our primary task management system, allowing transparent tracking of story points, sprint progress, and backlog priorities. The visual clarity provided by the Kanban board minimized confusion, especially when overlapping tasks arose between development and testing.

During Sprint Planning, we collaboratively estimated workload capacity and established sprint goals, which prevented overcommitment and ensured steady velocity. Daily Scrums maintained momentum, while Sprint Reviews allowed for stakeholder engagement and continuous validation of our deliverables. Retrospectives, however, emerged as the most valuable ritual. By creating an open forum to discuss “what went well,” “what could improve,” and “what we will do differently next time,” our team transformed challenges into structured learning opportunities.

These organizational elements are not merely procedural but philosophical. The recurring nature of Scrum events reinforces a mindset of perpetual reflection and adaptation. I found that the consistent use of information radiators such as progress charts and burndown metrics strengthened transparency and provided both motivation and accountability. This alignment between tools and principles exemplifies what Cobb (2015) calls the “adaptive rhythm” of successful Agile teams.

### **Evaluating the Scrum-Agile Process**

In evaluating the Scrum-Agile approach for the SNHU Travel project, several advantages and limitations emerged. The foremost benefit was flexibility. The iterative model allowed us to incorporate evolving client expectations without compromising existing functionality. This adaptability fostered a sense of empowerment and ownership among team members. Additionally, Scrum’s emphasis on frequent feedback loops encouraged early detection of errors, leading to higher product quality and customer satisfaction.

Another advantage was enhanced communication and collaboration. Because roles were well-defined yet interconnected, team members felt valued and understood their contribution to the overall mission. This atmosphere of shared accountability led to a more cohesive, resilient team dynamic. The Scrum ceremonies, particularly the Retrospectives, served as catalysts for continuous improvement, transforming challenges into actionable insights.

However, Scrum also presents challenges. Its success depends heavily on the discipline, maturity, and engagement of all participants. During the SNHU Travel project, the need for constant collaboration sometimes introduced scheduling conflicts, particularly when aligning global destinations with team members’ diverse availability. Furthermore, the absence of clearly defined long-term documentation, compared to traditional waterfall models, occasionally caused ambiguity when revisiting earlier decisions. These challenges underscore the importance of maintaining rigorous communication and proper documentation practices even within flexible frameworks.

Despite these limitations, I am confident that the Scrum-Agile approach was the optimal methodology for this project. The nature of the SNHU Travel application requiring responsiveness to client input, evolving market preferences, and iterative testing aligned perfectly with Agile’s core principles. Had we used a waterfall model, adapting to the shift from traditional vacations to wellness-oriented travel would have delayed delivery and inflated costs. Agile’s incremental structure allowed us to adapt seamlessly, reflecting true responsiveness to client and user needs (Schwaber & Sutherland, 2020).

### **Retrospective Reflection**

Looking back, the SNHU Travel project not only enhanced my technical understanding of Agile but also deepened my appreciation for teamwork, adaptability, and user-centered design. Among the five destinations which where Ireland, Vietnam, Maine, Germany, and Japan.Japan resonated most deeply with me, particularly through the development of the hot spring experience module. The creative process of designing interactive visuals and wellness recommendations for Japanese onsens symbolized how cultural nuance and technology can coexist harmoniously within a digital framework. (I would love the opportunity to go to Japan after completing college next October! )

This project reaffirmed the value of empathy in software design. Our ability to listen, adjust, and innovate collaboratively transformed the project from a mere academic exercise into a living model of Agile excellence. I also discovered the importance of leadership through service facilitating collaboration, fostering trust, and enabling others to contribute to their best work.

Ultimately, this journey with Scrum-Agile has been transformative. It demonstrated that agility is not merely a methodology but a mindset one that embraces uncertainty, values iteration, and celebrates progress through collaboration. As we move forward, the lessons learned from SNHU Travel will inform every future project, ensuring that adaptability, communication, and shared purpose remain at the heart of all development efforts.

### **References**

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