Yu-Ching Ho’s Critical Appraisal

At the start of the semester, our group decided on using Unity for our project. The idea came slowly but as we nailed it down, tasks were split up accordingly and we felt we had a good timeline. I was to do the sprites and game environment, Nathanael was to do the player controls and attack and David was for the enemy AI and attack. The team couldn’t get started without some sort of game environment so I quickly put together something and uploaded it to Github, which then allowed the other members to start working on their part.

As the project developed, Github’s version control was working well but we hit a problem once Nathanael added in animation for the player’s casting power-up. Locally, his machine showed the animation appearing correctly but once pushing and fetching from Github, even testing on Google Drive, the animation appeared way off the map for the other computers tested elsewhere. Before then, we ignored the “opening project in non-matching editor installation” because it had worked previously; but now as the project was being messed up, we checked each of our Unity versions.

We couldn’t figure out what was wrong - each of us had the latest version installed. Over the next couple weeks, we were uninstalling, reinstalling, re-coding and uploading and kept on running into the same brick wall. The deadline was getting closer and as a last-ditch effort, I emailed to explain our group’s problem and see if we could use another game engine like GameMaker or Construct2.

The go-ahead was given and with two weeks left, tasks were split up again. Nathanael and I to do the prototype in the game and David to focus on the video, presentation and finish off the documentation. Over the two weeks, a new game engine had to be chosen for the prototype: GameMaker and Construct2 were the two options and as the majority of the group was familiar with GameMaker, that was the choice. The prototype was constructed essentially from scratch - the sprites were already there but the code had to be rewritten from C# to GameMakerScript.

There weren’t many problems when constructing the prototype - Nathanael had GameMaker Studio 1.4 whilst I was using GameMaker 8.1 Lite. I was very limited in what I was able to do with the actual engine, but Nathanael’s 1.4 proved useful in adding aspects I couldn’t have, like scripts, timelines and anchor points. It was actually very confusing because when downloading and running the project in 8.1, I could see the script working with the rest of the code I wrote, I just couldn’t see and access it.

For next semester, the main problem is finding out what game engine to develop the game. Unity may keep on having problems, and really it’s more optimized for 3D games. With GameMaker, the price of the engine may go down for Christmas so maybe we could all get the same version. Construct2 Free is very limiting and maybe we can get past the limitations with a student trial. But really, I am not entirely sure what we’re going to develop on as it was a rush with the prototype and the group agreed to work it out over Christmas.