

Emmett Walthers

Pippin Barr

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Post-reflection Essay

Looking back at where I started, the changes to my coding knowledge have been extraordinary, with several major improvements. Prior to taking this course, I had a somewhat decent amount of coding experience. Since I was a kid, I loved coding games while following YouTube tutorials. This helped me learn languages like GDScript and C#, however, this didn't take me very far as I quickly forgot most of it. This is due to the nature of following tutorials and not actually learning. I also went to Carleton University in Ottawa, taking a term of their computer science course. This taught me the basics of Python, but again, it was quickly forgotten as it was online, and I wasn't really learning, just following. Now, although I don't remember these languages or their syntaxes, they did teach me some valuable information. This came through learning how control structures and fundamental programming concepts worked. I may not have been able to code a for-loop, but I understood how it worked. The same goes for most fundamental structures like if-statements, event handlers, variables, and so forth. While this prior knowledge gave me a starting point, this course both strengthened my skills and provided me with new ones. I found myself quickly picking up on JavaScript and truly learning instead of following. The syntax was easy to learn as it is quite similar to most languages, and having the P5.js reference website was a great tool. I found the course quite slow at the start, but it quickly picked up to the perfect speed. Each week I found myself learning how to code something new and genuinely understanding what I was doing. The art jam was the first real challenge, testing the extent of my knowledge. This project helped me understand the basics, like the setup and draw functions. Furthermore, I explored event handlers, such as the already integrated `mousePressed` function. However, all of this was just the start of my learning path. Through the weekly challenges and major projects like the Mod Jam, I really cemented an understanding of JavaScript in my head. Ultimately, this course brought me from basic understanding to being proficient in creating functions, making useful variables and constants, building control

structures, and of course, completely understanding how to use GitHub (which I knew nothing about before).

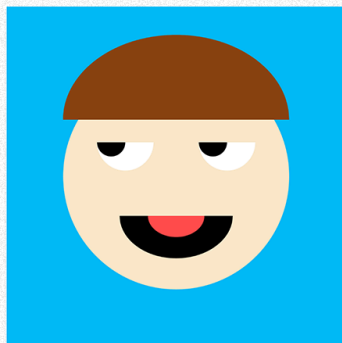
As my understanding of programming has grown, so has my ability to use code as a meaningful tool in my art. Learning this new tool has enabled me to create things I could only think of before. One specific example has come through my newfound knowledge in P5.js. I have learned to take different shapes and resources that are already built in and transform them to make expressive art. Using arcs to create birds, or many circles to create a frog, I feel as though I really expanded my creative process when it comes to thinking about creating art. Learning this new approach has allowed me to think in a more simplistic way, escaping that overcomplication roadblock that most creators run into. On top of that, learning control structures like loops has given me the ability to create huge projects I otherwise wouldn't have been able to. In the course's "Loop Challenge," I created a gradient by looping lines for the length and width of the canvas. This allowed me to create something I otherwise wouldn't have thought of, leading to some exciting ideas and inspiration. However, although much of this has been a positive experience, there are some challenges I'd like to overcome. The first comes with efficiency. Since I'm still a beginner when it comes to JavaScript, I can be quite slow sometimes, which tends to hurt my mentality on projects. Still, I believe this is something that will improve with time as I grow a stronger understanding of the language. The second challenge comes with limitations. Contradicting my statement on simplicity, although it's nice to have easy-to-understand shapes to work with, it can be restricting at times. However, I like to see coding almost like a sketchbook. I'm not creating finished art with it, but generating ideas and learning how to better use certain tools to my advantage. Overall, this new programming knowledge has become a fundamental part of my creative process and continues to change the way I approach making art.

Looking forward, I feel increasingly confident when it comes to using creative coding as a way to explore and create art. Prior to this course, I only saw coding as a skill for the functionality of programs, but this course has reshaped my perspective on it. Getting to use P5.js has shown me how much art can be a part of the coding experience. Learning this has allowed me to find myself in the creative coder role that I didn't think existed beforehand. One direction

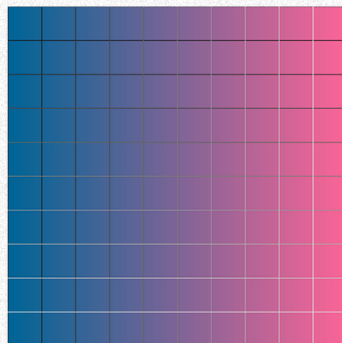
I'm keen to develop further is storytelling in games. Although my major doesn't necessarily focus on writing, I love telling stories. This new knowledge will let me create artistic storytelling games, websites, small programs, and much more. The ability to put thoughts to code will make a huge impact on my future in this role. Functionality like interactivity and motion is something that I'd love to explore more through JavaScript, and this course has helped me get started. On top of that, projects such as the "Variation Jam" opened my eyes to the world of parodies. I found that creating many versions of one thing can really enhance how you look at the base item. This is a fundamental tool in art, as creating multiple variations can truly bring out what matters most. In many ways, this course has shown me just how much creative coding can help me explore deeper artistic ideas and will certainly help shape my future in this creative coding role.

I have included a small collage of photos from my favourite projects, as a small post-reflection look at everything I did this year. I'd also like to thank you, Pippin, for a wonderful year and being one of the first professors to help me truly understand code and create some amazing works.

Art Jam



Loop Challenge



Mod Jam

