**10.5 Exercises**

1. a) **Q: After 3 months, a new version of the mobile OS is released that contains new features other developers are likely to implement within competing games.**

**A: risk associated = [likelihood that the event will occur] \* [impact/cost of the event]**

risk associated = [0.9] \* [financial losses]

Appropriate action plan: Copyright the new features of the game so that nobody can take them.

b) **Q: The sole graphic artist on your team leaves the project after 2 months. They have about half of the artwork and animations completed.**

**A: risk associated = [likelihood that the event will occur] \* [impact/cost of the event]**

risk associated = [0.6] \* [potential overbudget]

Appropriate action plan: Hire another graphic artist as quickly as possible. If not completed in the shortest possible timeframe, delay the release date of the game.

c) **Q: Five months into the project, StarCraft III is released. None of the programmers have shown up to work for over a week.**

**A: risk associated = [likelihood that the event will occur] \* [impact/cost of the event]**

risk associated = [0.1] \* [

Appropriate action plan: Fire the entire group of programmers, but not before hiring a group of new programmers that will actually commit themselves to showing up for work. Delay the release date of the game.

2. **Q:** **As a group, create a sample post-mortem for a previous group discussion of your choice. This discussion doesn’t have to be related to this course or gaming in general – however, your post-mortem should answer the key questions available in any post – mortem (What went wrong? What went right? What can we learn from the experience?), as well as contain the key elements (Introduction, Summary of Individual Post-Mortems, Common Patterns, Notably Absent, What it all means).**

**A:** My sample Post-Mortem for the game *Sonic the Hedgehog 2006*:

**Introduction**

In 1991, SEGA released Sonic the Hedgehog, arguably one of the best platformer games of all time. Sonic became so popular that he received multiple media crossovers and was a rival to Nintendo’s Mario.

Fifteen years later, in 2006, we released a 15th anniversary Sonic game of the same title, except much, much worse. After sudden problems beginning with the resignation of Yuji Naka, things began to completely fall apart. We took a huge risk rushing the game to meet our mascot’s 15th anniversary, and the results show; some of the worst reviews by critics of any video game.

Here are the low and high points of our adventure.

**1 What went wrong?**

**1.1 Sudden Resignation**

At the end of development, our team’s leader, Yuji Naka, left to start his own video game company. Right from there, things started to go downhill at a disturbing pace. With lengthy time estimates to port this game to the Nintendo Wii, we decided to split the team in half. One half of the team was assigned to complete Sonic the Hedgehog, while the other was assigned to create a whole other game for the Wii.

Sonic the Hedgehog was planned to be released in 2006, in conjunction with Sonic’s 15th anniversary. Under pressure, we were forced to rush final stages of development and drop various planned features, including a day-and-night system and additional multiplayer components. Our lack of time and commitment to celebrate our mascot’s 15th anniversary left no room for polishing.

**1.2 Heavily Panned**

Despite well-received prerelease showings, the final product received terrible reviews from both the press and players. Almost every aspect of our game was criticized. Some key aspects that fell victim to criticism include the numerous glitches, the lengthy and frequent loading times, and the unstable camera. Because we did not have time to polish, we knew that it was inevitable that there would be glitches, but under pressure from the company, we had to stay committed to finish before the end of 2006.

**2 What went right?**

Despite overwhelmingly negative reviews, the game has still ended up being a considerable commercial success, selling upwards of two million copies. For that, we can give credit to the successful marketing campaign. Fans considered the product as possibly a return to the series’ roots, the showings and demos were praised and helped drive sales of the final product.

By cutting development time, we were also able to save some money that we can put to use in the future. However, at the same time, it is important to keep in mind that rushing a game to market will only destroy its quality, as we learned here.

**3 What can we learn from the experience?**

There are many lessons to be learned from this experience. Of utmost importance is to set better deadlines so that we do not feel rushed and the end product is of far higher quality.

Next, there should be better contingency plans in the event that one of our key team members resigns in the middle of the project. That way, we will be better prepared for unexpected obstacles that we may have to face further down the road of game development.

**4 Conclusion**

What are our final thoughts and feelings? Highly negative. We were disappointed by the outcome of this game and that we were faced with the decision to rush it to completion.

The next project will not have any schedules for the developers. This will allow for more time to complete the project and no incentive to rush it. We love our mascot and we want him to have a steady future. A much better next time depends on much better choices.