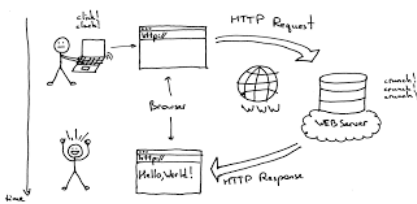


DISTRIBUTED SYSTEMS: COMPUTING ARTEFACT

Version 1.1
BSc(Hons) Computing for Games
COMP260

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"Essentially everyone, when they first build a distributed application, makes the following eight assumptions:

The network is reliable;

Latency is zero;

Bandwidth is infinite;

The network is secure;

Topology doesn't change;

There is one administrator;

Transport cost is zero;

The network is homogeneous.

All prove to be false in the long run and all cause big trouble and painful learning experiences."

— Peter Deutsch

Introduction

This assignment is in two parts (Parts I & Part II) and should provide material for the Technical Report assignment. Part I is concerned with building a turn-based game that can be remotely hosted on a Digital Ocean droplet whilst Part II is concerned with building a real-time game using appropriate middleware to handle object replication across nodes. For both parts of the assignment, you have a free choice of technology stacks, though the module will concentrate on Python, C# and Unity.

Part I Turn-based Service Provision

This part of the assignment is concerned with designing, implementing and hosting simple turn-based games and services on a remotely hosted server using Digital Ocean as a service provider. By *turn-based*, we are referring to a class of games where players take it in turns to play, like board games, card games and classical multi-user dungeons.

This assignment is formed of two worksheets:

- (A) Undertake technical **design** and **create** a client for a chat service that will allow users to communicate with an existing black-box server. Users will be able to chat, publicly and privately and set their own usernames. The server will support multiple clients
- (B) **Implement** a sever for a MUD service using pre-built clients and a defined data communications protocol. The form and function of the dungeon service is left to your discretion as long as it is room and text based.

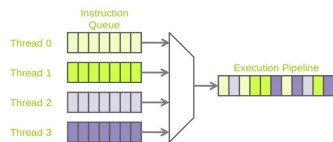
Part A

Use UML to Analyse existing turn-based client/server applications

To complete this part of the assignment, we will have in-class sessions that use UML to analyse the structure, function and data communications of several client/server applications.

You will receive **informal feedback** from your **tutor** during the tutorial sessions and you will receive **formal feedback** from your **tutor** three weeks after the final submission deadline.

cont...



Multi-threading is commonly used to improve performance in games.



A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any invention in human history - with the possible exceptions of handguns and tequila.

-Mitch Ratcliffe

Part B

Use UML to Design an architecture that will support your game service

To complete this part of the assignment, create an appropriate set of UML documentation that captures the structure, function and data communications aspects of the service that you wish to create.

You will receive **informal feedback** from your **tutor** during the tutorial sessions and you will receive **formal feedback** from your **tutor** three weeks after the final submission deadline.

Part C

Implement your application and host your server on a Digital Ocean droplet

To complete this part of the assignment, implement your client/server solution using an appropriate technology stack and host it on a provided Digital Ocean droplet.

Care should be taken to remember that the Digital Ocean droplet may not have exactly the same functionality as your development Windows machine, so some consideration should be given to how you will undertake development and testing.

You will receive **informal feedback** from your **tutor** during the tutorial sessions and you will receive **formal feedback** from your **tutor** three weeks after the final submission deadline.

Part II Real-time gaming provision

This part of the assignment focuses on tapping into existing service to develop analytics driven multiplayer games. This approach, known as Backend as a Service (BaaS) is fast becoming the most common and quickest way to build games that support communities of players.

To complete this part of the assignment:

- (A) Build a white-box prototype game that would suit multiplayer.
- (B) Integrate a multiplayer service including analytics.
- (C) Evidence the functionality by recording a video of 3 or more people play testing your game.

Part A

Build a white-box prototype game that would suit multiplayer.

Using Unity or Unreal, build a white-box level of any design you so wish. This activity is not about great level design and instead you should invest more time in the multiplayer networking tasks.

Part B

Integrate a multiplayer service including analytics

To complete this part of the assignment, you will be expected to investigate and choose one of the various BaaS products available (Photon and Game Sparks for example). You will be expected to justify your choice in the final artefact video.

Create the same design documents as you did for part 1 but updating the context to multiplayer and then Integrate the BaaS into your white-boxed level.

You will receive formative feedback during the workshops.

Part C

Evidence the functionality by recording a video of 3 or more people play testing your game

To complete this part of the assignment, coordinate a playtesting event where three or more testers explore your multiplayer environment. Record the playtesting, evidencing every aspect of your multiplayer game. Submit a video artefact that fully evidences the work carried out for this assignment.

Additional Guidance

Creating reliable client/server services sounds like a big task that is both hard and complex. In reality it is actually comprised of several hard and complex tasks that are fairly small, and we will discover that by breaking large tasks down into smaller tasks they become soluble.

A common pitfall is poor planning or time management. Often, students underestimate how much work is involved in first learning programming concepts and then actually applying them. Programming is quite unlike other subjects in that it cannot be crammed into a last-minute deluge just before a deadline. It is, therefore, very important that you begin work early and sustain a consistent pace: little and often. The live deployment in this assignment, is an added dimension. Aim to complete your client and server a week early so you have sufficient time to troubleshoot your Digital Ocean instance, your server stability, and the network protocols you are using.

Part I Turn-based Service Provision

The Digital Ocean droplet provides a *headerless* server which can only be accessed remotely. This can make development and debugging difficult. In addition, cross-platform languages (C# & Python) may not be as compatible across different operating systems as we would expect. A common solution to these issues is to develop in Linux, either on a standalone box or a virtual machine running on a Windows host.

Material on UNIX-based servers and commands will not be formally covered again. Here is a resource to remind yourself:

<http://mally.stanford.edu/~sr/computing/basic-unix.html>

FAQ

- **What is the deadline for this assignment?**

Falmouth University policy states that deadlines must only be specified on the MyFalmouth system.

- **What should I do to seek help?**

You can email your tutor for informal clarifications.

Marking Rubric – Part 2: Multiplayer - BaaS

Learning Outcome Name	Learning Outcome Description	Criteria	Weighting	Refer for Resubmission	Adequate	Competent	Very Good	Excellent	Outstanding
Architect & Research	Integrate appropriate data structures and interoperating components into computing systems, with reference to their merits and flaws.	Analysis	20%	No analysis presented	Some analysis of available BaaS	Competent analysis of available BaaS 2 services have been compared Justification provided is appropriate	Very good analysis of available BaaS 3 services have been compared Justification provided is very appropriate	Excellent analysis of available BaaS 4 services have been compared Justification is excellent	Outstanding analysis of available BaaS 5 services have been compared Justification is Outstanding.
		Design	30%	No design presented	Some design of planned client & server components Incomplete class hierarchy, state model and/or data communications models	Competent design of planned client & server components Fairly complete class hierarchy, state model and/or data communications models with only small aspects missing / wrong	Good design of planned client & server components Complete class hierarchy, state model and/or data communications models Implementation appears possible from design specs	Excellent design of planned client & server components Complete class hierarchy, state model and/or data communications models. Implementation appears straightforward from design specs	Outstanding design of planned client & server components Complete class hierarchy, state model and/or data communications models Implementation appears simple from design specs
		Final Design	50%	No working software presented	Multiplayer functional but with issues	Multiplayer Functional BaaS integrated but working sporadically	Multiplayer Functional BaaS integrated and working without issue Analytics integrated into the prototype but with issues	Multiplayer working faultlessly BaaS integrated and working without issue Analytics implemented into the prototype and working well	Multiplayer working faultlessly BaaS integrated and working without issue Analytics implemented into the prototype and working well. Data being generated is meaningful.