

SINFO: Development Team

Duarte Mendes Paiva

Learning Report

Abstract—SINFO's Development Team was in need of a new member and so I applied to it. After joining the team I participated on several meetings where I was introduced to the team and got to know them and how they worked. Helped the team with the development of a tool for the SINFO members, so that the organization and preparation of everything SINFO related is easier and known to every member. And also participating on the several aspects of the preparations of a few workshops, logistics, helping choosing materials, producing them and conducting these workshops as well, sometimes being among the audience so I could provide support to those having difficulties at one time, and by presenting a workshop to a small audience.

Index Terms—SINFO, Development Team, Workshops, Presentations, Soft Skills, Teamwork.

1 INTRODUCTION

ONE of the activities proposed for the course of Independent Studies was to join SINFO's Development Team (devteam), to which I applied and got accepted into. This report will focus on the learning experiences that I went through after being accepted into this organization, to be more specific, improving teamwork by joining their devteam, and the improvement of my soft skills with the activities that we did. *- Really proper !!*

Since these activities have already been described on the proper report and this report's focus is on the learning experiences let's connect the dots, there were two main learning points on this activity, soft skills and teamwork, these learning points were present in every aspect of the activity, be it on team meetings, while developing work for the tool or while conducting a workshop there wasn't much we would do by ourselves.

So how can these activities be differentiated by learning experience? Simple, soft skills and teamwork are very generic names for a set of specific aspects which got improved with each

part of the activity.

And so we can say that, meetings are connected to a deeper understanding on how a team really works, and how to deal with each kind of individual sitting across the table.

Programming sessions are connected to teamwork itself, communication skills and the creation of bonds as a team as things went on.

And finally workshops can be connected to coordination between the team members on audience and the one conducting the workshop, improving communication with those learning from me, and with those cooperating with me in conducting the workshop.

2 MEETINGS

These meetings were a bit of a challenge at first, because first impressions count and getting the point across with people you just met is sometimes not the easiest thing to do. Not to say that if you are deciding on certain aspects of the development of a project, opinions may clash and start a discussion that can last too long, and the conclusion sometimes though obvious wasted time, precious time of a student's life. So following up I'll describe the first meeting and the subsequent ones.

2.1 First Meeting

Being a new member of the devteam implied getting to know new people that I had to work

- Duarte Mendes Paiva, nr. 70751,
E-mail: duarte.paiva@tecnico.ulisboa.pt,
Instituto Superior Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa.

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with, so the first obstacle was to create a bond and get across to them that it was my first time doing something like that, from methodologies to technologies it was a "new world" for me, and so I feared that it would take too long to get on their page and be of use to them, I was so wrong.

After getting my point across to the rest of the members present at the meeting we decided on a course of action for me, taking some tutorials and after getting those done working accompanied so that after ingraining the aspects of the platform we used I could adopt their methodologies and be able to work along them.

With this the first step had been taken, they started to know what I could and couldn't do at the time and my point got across.

2.2 Subsequent Meetings

The meetings we held after the initial served as a means to discuss the state of the project, which features we wanted ready on the next milestone and the design aspects of the architecture of the tool.

Discussing these aspects with other members wasn't hard, as long as there wasn't many people present on the meeting, with every member on the table these discussions could become kinda chaotic if the meeting wasn't minimally organized, because the more people discuss something, the more opinions will appear regarding that aspect, and since we wanted to keep the design consistent on its entirety on the bigger meetings it was a challenge at first to coordinate the views everyone had for the project, and focus them on clear objectives.

These meetings were also used as a means to assign the development of aspects and features of the project to the ones present, and the assignment of these proved to be important because the profile of a certain person makes it easier or harder to get the job done, or we can simply say that each aspect and feature matched a member in specific.

3 PROGRAMMING SESSIONS

So after the first meeting, and every meeting where structural changes were decided on the

development of the project took place in two stages, with group programming sessions, in my case paired with someone so I could get the gist of what and how it had to be done. But before getting my hands on the job I had to do some self learning following some tutorials and consulting guides when I ran across a wall on how to progress with a certain part of the tutorial, this was the most challenging part at the time since I couldn't go to any of the other members for help as it was too soon since we had only just met.

After getting the tutorials done, the time for the first programming sessions had come. Working as a pair this implied constant direct communication so that my faults were noticed and I could take care of them. This also implied a high level of communication with all members, so that the whole code could be consistent, be it on indentation, or on how objects were accessed and used. By starting with shared aspects a pair could decide on the best path of action to be taken and this path of action would spread to the individual issues.

These sessions did not only happen with physical presence, but by remote presence as well, this implied that communicating would be done by chat using gitter, with the use of screenshots and the gitter tools for code and the exposition of logs, and sometimes using voicechat using TeamSpeak or Skype, these remote sessions proved to be hard to coordinate at first since not seeing the person starting to speak in front of you, you may start speaking at the same time as that person, which causes confusion and results on delays, but as things progressed we found ways to deal with this and make these remote sessions as productive, if not more productive as being there in person with the rest of the team.

4 WORKSHOPS

Conducting a workshop can be either a trivial thing or a challenge, it just depends on several aspects, like the size of the event, the number of participants and the complexity of the theme, it also depends on the experience of those speaking to the audience.

So, being a newbie at conducting a workshop, and until then having only spoken to audiences during class presentations, let's face it, generally during these classes the audience isn't paying attention you just have to make it sound good for the teacher, contrary to that a workshop has to satisfy the whole audience, so you have to conduct it in a way that can reach several ranges of comfort with the theme. To achieve this you can't have a prepared speech and a rigidly practiced presentation, you have to be interactive with the audience, getting to kind of know them and the several backgrounds so that the presentation well adapted to the audience

Also there's the case where I wasn't conducting, but providing technical assistance to the conductor, this consists on helping set the materials for the presentation of the workshop and while sitting among the audience answering doubts people around me might have regarding what's being done, so that they don't stay behind and delay the execution and the flow of the workshop. This too required me to be familiar with the presentation and with the topics being taught, be it on the several aspects how to build a website, or on a workshop about JavaScript, thus helping to the dynamic works of the workshop being conducted.

5 CONCLUSION

Concluding this was an activity rich in both technical knowledge and on soft skills, where I had to improve my skills in dealing with people from several backgrounds, handling a team and getting my point across successfully, also dealing with an audience and being able to adapt and answer most doubts in a way that wouldn't leave questions answered proved to be a bit hard at first. So all in all I greatly benefited from this activity as a person and as a future professional, by learning from the unknown and making it a part of me, by learning a new methodology and how to deal with those using it, by speaking to an audience and interacting with them.

AGRADECIMENTOS

Why PT?

I would like to thank SINFO for taking me in, and the wonderful people from the devteam for making this a learning experience with lots of new knowledge while having lots of fun doing awesome stuff!!

In this type of document (technical), the conclusion should start with a summary of the subject addressed and then should highlight the results.