

Reflective Notes - Semester 1 - 2013

COMP10120

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1 Course-unit evaluation

1.1 What were the best things about this course-unit so far?

This course unit first showed and introduced me to UNIX. It has provoked me to go and delve deeper into learning how a unified system works, the different parts of the system and how they interact with the programs that run on them.

I also enjoyed getting into the practice of using source control for all my work. I have had previous experience using SVN but using GIT has opened my mind to a different slant on what is essentially the same concept. The ability to see the modifications made to a file over its history and see what changes were made for what reasons and by whom.

This course unit has also forced us into working as a team. Whilst this is not an easy thing to do it is a required part of working in industry and is a valuable part of the course. The team dynamic has evolved from the first few tasks and we are organised with posting our work online for peer assessment to give opinions and improvements.

1.2 What were the worst things about this course-unit so far?

My weak point in education has always been my writing skills; I found the reading week report I found tricky to write. I split the task into smaller

parts and in doing this made the document difficult to put together as it often lacked flow. I need to learn to proof read my work and take the time to do several versions.

With possessing some knowledge about the different parts of the web before coming to university I sometimes found some of the work tedious and I also found myself helping others as often as I was completing my own work.

1.3 What were the most surprising things about this course-unit so far?

This course is focused on independent learning and soft skills. This was surprising because I hadn't before expected that the school would think these important. However, I now see that these are what sets us apart from the other potential candidates in the field and could be the reason we get employed over others.

The vast collection of different ideas for the different projects for this course have been surprising. Some will definitely be interesting and their implementation tricky. There are also some projects that have similar ideas and it will be interesting to see how the groups will distinguish theirs from the others by adding different implementations and interactions.

2 Knowledge

2.1 What are the most important things that you have learnt during this course-unit (not including simple factual information)?

The team-working skills I have learned, organising meetings, writing minutes and organising work have been invaluable. This experience will allow me to better work in groups with subsequent projects. My leadership skills working to peoples advantages and splitting work equally to best suit peoples skills will allow better work efficiency within the group. I have also been able to work as a team member with helping others with peer assessment of work and also listening to constructive criticism.

The other teamwork related knowledge I have / will learn is working with a team on one code-base and the problems and techniques that can make this possible. This will be useful when working in business on large projects as

these often employ different work strategies like pair programming and also different project time-scales.

2.2 What have you learnt about how you learn, and how you work as a member of a team?

I learn a new topic or programming technique best when I have a projector end goal to work towards. I find if I have an end goal it is often easier to go and find what is next to do and the next hurdle to complete / research to reach the end product. I also like to set myself easily achievable goals and work to add bits at a time to slowly increase my skill as it is more difficult and daunting to have one large end goal and no foreseeable way to get there.

When I work in a team I usually struggle with allowing others to be given tasks and ensuring they are done. This usually affects the work that was assigned to me. However, with practice and experience the benefits of being a team member will allow me to help the productivity of the group.

3 Personal development

3.1 How have you developed since the start of the year?

I have developed many different skills in teamwork and learning whilst also learning their importance to the industry. After the settling down period I got more used to the new style of learning with lectures introducing new topics and then examples classes and labs to test this knowledge this development will hopefully continue and finish with a good end result.

3.2 What changes do you need to make next semester and how do you plan to achieve these changes?

Next semester I will have more work and more things to learn. I am finding that revision would be easier if I had noted down concepts for the different courses and could now refer to these to ensure I do not miss out any part of a course.

Next semester, I will try to dedicate some time each week to write down a summary for each course and what I found difficult, in the hope that it will

reduce stress come exam time. I would also benefit from starting my revision earlier and doing it in stages first starting a few weeks after the lectures and then a month after or so. That way when it comes to the final pass-through the revision is not new.

Next semester, I would like to be involved in many more extra-curricular activities: some of these computing related and some of them not. I try and keep up with new technologies and take an interest in trying to learn them and finding practical applications, the most recent of these included NodeJS and Graph databases.