What I learned – Build something from scratch Phase – Week 4

This was the last week to work on our assigned project before we handed in to our client. I am going to talk about how this last week went and what I learned and how can it help me in the future if I ever work on projects like this one.

At the start of this week we had almost all the functionalities in the application we agreed with the client, through the week we were supposed to finish the last features and debug any issues that could arise. We decided to deploy the project on Wednesday, to give us some time to resolve any issues that could come out before Friday final demo. Some members of the team said they had experience with deploying projects, for this reason we gave for granted that everything was going to result fine, although it ended up being the opposite. When we deployed, for authentication and security reasons in the user session part, the server we chose (Heroku), didn't let us to connect the API into the front end, which made the web page useless. After some time investigating, we came up with 3 solutions, using a library called Passport to have manage user sessions, change the hosting server and finally using local storage to save the user session (we were using cookies at first). We started to work on this on Thursday till Friday morning, first we chose to use the Passport library, but it didn't solve our problem, we kept getting the same errors. Then we changed to Vercel to host our application, but this didn't solve it either, which only left us with our last option, to use local storage (this is a JavaScript feature, where you save data in the local storage of the browser). This last solution solve our problem at the end, but we weren't able to finish it on time for our final demo, for this reason we were only able to show our client a part of the system, this was a hard hit to us as team, because we weren't able to deliver on time. It was also a lesson, because we didn't evaluate our risks and give for granted some things that at the end turn out to be setbacks in out project. Although the client understood and was very empathetic with the team, we were disappointed, but I think that what matters is that we were able to learn from this, and we put our 100% effort into it, which was very important for me, because we never gave up on solving something, even after the demo we kept coding until we finished everything around Friday afternoon. Although it wasn't perfect, we were able to deliver a working product, which showed our progress and effort of these past 4 weeks, which we all were proud of.

This week I also got to learn some agile practices, which now that we have finished our project, I can see now how these could have helped us a lot with it. For example, one practice is to go live as fast as you can, so you can start to get feedback as soon as possible. If we would have deployed earlier, we could have solved these issues we had earlier, as well the client could have seen our progress daily by himself, compared to weekly in the demos. Although we missed some practices we also applied some, like having showcases were we chose tickets and kept a record of the progress on them, we had our daily stand ups, pair programming, doing retrospective, defining priorities and having user stories.

I learned a ton these past weeks, from programming skills like using React, html, CSS, implementing libraries like Bootstrap, axios, React router, and more, to team work skills, like how to communicate with the team, ask for help, and share programming files. Although it feels like a learned a lot of things, it only made clear to me I need to learn more, for example I wasn't able to take advantage of everything some libraries had to offer, as well with the React language, I need to learn more JS, CSS and html, as a lot of code for web pages is done in these first, before React, I know now that deploying can bring problems that don't appear while local hosting a project. I found out there are a lot of tools we can use to our advantage, we just have to search for them, and whenever you have a problem, there was certainly some one else that already had it and solved it. The most

important thing I take from this phase was the experience I got on working in something real and that it could be used.