Team Report

Mortgage Monitor

Easter Institute of Technology NZ Bachelor of Computing Systems

ITPR7.508 Business Application Programming

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Introduction

The purpose of this report is to summarize how we performed as a team in accomplishing our project. For our project, we are developing software for a mortgage monitor based on an Excel spreadsheet provided by our lecturer/client. This spreadsheet served as a guide for us to start, and we brainstormed ideas on how to transform it into software using programming languages and a database.

Our main goal was to collaborate as a team to complete tasks and meet deadlines. We aimed to maintain regular communication with team member and with the client to ensure we stayed aligned with our objectives and delivered a successful project.

In this report, I will cover various aspects of our team's performance, including our team structure, communication methods, task distribution, issue resolution strategies, and the professional standards we adhered to. We will also reflect on our team meetings and provide a summary of the overall experience and outcomes. This report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of our project journey, highlighting both our successes and the challenges we faced.

Team Structure

In our team, there were initially two of us, but due to a lack of communication, we ended up working on the project individually rather than collaboratively. Although we started without a formal structure, we attempted to utilize our strengths and weaknesses to organize our workflow effectively. Unfortunately, this approach did not work as intended.

My team member, Alex, is more comfortable with coding and focused on the technical aspects of the project. Alex was expected to take on the role of the developer, concentrating on writing the code and implementing the software functionalities.

On the other hand, I am more inclined towards system analysis and project management. I assumed the role of system analyst and project manager, responsible for design, structuring tasks, setting deadlines, and ensuring the project stayed on track.

However, due to the lack of effective communication between us, we found it challenging to work together as a cohesive unit. This communication breakdown led to us working on the project separately, focusing on our individual parts.

If communication had not been an issue, we could have worked well as a team, leveraging our complementary skills to achieve our project goals more successfully.

Ultimately, we were unable to function as a team and decided to complete the project independently. As a result, we are no longer a team.

Communication

Initially, I set up a workspace in Notion, a project management tool, where we could share documents, maintain a to-do Kanban board, and use a built in Gantt Chart on Notion to track our progress. Notion also offers integration with GitHub, which would have facilitated collaboration on code and project documentation. However, my team member preferred using GitHub itself for collaboration, which did not work well between us.

For our communication, we used Discord to brainstorm and discuss ideas online. We also met up a couple of times during the design phase to collaborate in person and had catch-up sessions on Mondays after one of our classes ended. These initial meetings were productive, and we were able to align our goals and discuss the project requirements.

Despite these efforts, our communication stopped unexpectedly, and collaboration broke down. There were no ongoing discussions about who would accomplish specific tasks, leading to a scenario where we worked on our own without clear coordination. This lack of good communication and teamwork ultimately hindered our ability to function as a cohesive unit, resulting in us working on the project individually.

Reflecting on our communication, it is clear that the initial setup had the potential for effective collaboration, but the lack of consistent and structured communication led to our downfall. The choice of tools played a significant role; while Notion provided a comprehensive platform for project management, the preference for GitHub alone did not cater to our need for a more integrated and visual management approach.

Regular and structured communication is vital for any project's success. In our case, setting up regular check-ins and more frequent in-person meetings could have helped bridge the communication gap. Establishing a clear protocol for task assignments and progress updates would have ensured that both of us were on the same page.

Moreover, using a unified platform like Notion, which integrates various tools, could have streamlined our workflow and prevented the fragmentation that occurred. This experience highlights the importance of agreeing on collaboration tools and maintaining consistent communication throughout the project lifecycle.

Overall, if communication had not been an issue, we could have worked well as a team, leveraging our complementary skills to achieve our project goals. This experience has underscored the critical role of communication in teamwork and project management.

Issue Resolution

Due to the communication breakdown, I raised concerns with our lecturer, which led to the decision to work on the project individually. Although this wasn't ideal, it allowed us to continue making progress on the project separately.

Professional Standard

Regular and organized communication is essential. Using one project management tool and having regular check-ins could have prevented our communication problems. Examples include using instant messaging, emails, video calls, and regular face-to-face meetings to ensure everyone is updated and issues are resolved quickly. Clearly defining and sticking to our roles ensures everyone knows their tasks and how they fit into the project. This helps keep everyone accountable and focused. When each team member understands their specific responsibilities, it reduces confusion and overlaps, allowing the team to work more efficiently.

Choosing and agreeing on the right collaboration tools for the team is vital. Agreeing on the use of Notion or GitHub could have improved our collaboration. Effective collaboration tools help team members work together seamlessly, share files, track progress, and communicate effectively. Examples include project management software, version control systems, and communication platforms. Tracking progress helps spot delays early so we can fix problems quickly. Using tools like Gantt Charts and to-do boards allows us to set milestones, regularly review progress, and make adjustments as needed to stay on track.

Having clear steps for raising and fixing issues ensures problems are dealt with quickly and don't slow down the project. Effective issue resolution involves identifying problems early, discussing them openly, and finding solutions promptly. This helps maintain the project's momentum and ensures any blockers are removed quickly. Proper documentation ensures all team members have access to the same information and can refer back to it when needed. Documenting the project's progress, decisions, and changes is crucial for onboarding new team members and ensuring continuity in case of team changes.

Regular testing and quality assurance practices ensure the software meets required standards and functions as expected. Conducting unit testing, integration testing, and user acceptance testing helps identify and fix bugs early in the development process, maintaining high-quality standards. Regular engagement with clients and stakeholders helps ensure the project meets their expectations and requirements. Providing regular updates, holding feedback sessions, and incorporating their inputs into the project development maintains open communication and ensures their needs are met throughout the project.

Conclusion

Reflecting on our experience, it's clear that effective communication and collaboration are key to a project's success. Our initial efforts to set up a collaborative workspace were good, but the lack of consistent and organized communication led to our problems. This experience shows how important clear communication channels, defined roles, effective collaboration tools, regular progress tracking, and clear issue resolution protocols are. By following these professional standards, future projects can benefit from better teamwork and successful outcomes.