What Can We Play Today?

BayTech - Warren Ngoun, Jennah Yasin, Luis Jimenez-Barrios, Yukio Rivera

Part I: Project Status Update

Changes to Initial Objectives

During the course of this project, we have worked towards our initial objectives and deliverables. However, some aspects of our approach and solution have changed due to our backend requiring more work.

Initially, our strategy was to distribute the workload equally among team members, with separate groups tackling different tasks simultaneously. However, we soon realized that the backend development required more attention than anticipated. We all worked collaboratively on the backend and took turns coding while the others helped work through the logic. For the most part we worked together while we met but if there was a smaller task that did not require the group we would add it to the Pivotal Tracker site and someone would pick it up.

Our solution underwent several changes throughout the process. As the codebase grew more complex, we identified the need to rewrite functions and refactor our code multiple times to help debug and maintain code cleanliness. We remain on track to deliver a fully functional website with a video presentation.

Current State of Project

As of now, the project stands near completion. We have successfully implemented the primary functionality of the site, leaving the frontend to be refined and polished. Our focus has shifted towards QA testing to uncover potential bugs and further optimize performance.

Individual Contributions

Regarding individual contributions, we have employed a balanced and collaborative

approach, which we believe has significantly contributed to the quality of the final product. Every team member has contributed to both front-end and back-end development. We utilized Pivotal Tracker for task management but chose a more collaborative coding approach, engaging in paired programming and group problem-solving sessions. Each member took turns coding while the rest of the team participated in the thought process and defining logic. Specifically speaking, Jennah worked mainly on the database structure and writing queries within the code which involved the displaying and filtering of Steam user's games. Yukio worked on integrating the Steam API and the backend logic to pass data to the frontend. Luis worked on the backend logic to process and filter the data gathered from the steam api which was passed to the database and Warren worked on the front-end design and visuals of the site.

In the final phase of the project, we plan to apply the same collaborative approach to the remaining tasks. Each team member will be actively involved in refining the frontend, conducting quality assurance tests, and preparing the final presentation.

Part II: Project Testing

Introduction

1. **Target Audience**: The target audience for this project is users of the Steam platform also known as PC gamers. Users are of varying ages, anyone that has access to the platform as it contains games for kids up to mature adult games. As the application involves logging in via Steam, joining rooms, and navigating through different pages to view game recommendations, users would need to have a moderate level of experience with technology as we use some previously established usage patterns. There is not a specific occupation targeted as our site only relies on them playing games on a PC using Steam.

2. **Who Should Be Testing the Project**: The project should ideally be tested by Steam users who regularly play games and are comfortable with using external web applications. Additionally, the testing group should ideally include a diverse range of users in terms of age and gaming preferences to ensure the application caters to a wide audience. To ensure this wide range of users is represented we gathered three users of different ages and occupations: Sun Jian (19 year old Cabrillo student who uses Steam), Paul (25 years old full time Restaurant Chef who uses Steam), and Colin (30 year old working full time as Quality Assurance and who uses Steam).

3. **Main Tasks for Testing**:

- Task 1: Can users sign up and log in via Steam? Testers should try to authenticate using their Steam accounts (whether they use the standard login or the alternate).
- Task 2: Can users navigate to the room choice page after logging in? Testers should try to access this page and observe if the navigation is intuitive.
- Task 3: Can users create a room and view it? Testers should try creating a room and check if they can view the room details (like room code and members).
- Task 4: Can users join an existing room using a room code? Testers should try joining a room using a valid room code or sharing it with others to join via “Copy Room Code.”
- Task 5: Can users view game recommendations in a room? Testers should check if the application correctly displays game recommendations based on the games that the room's members do not own.
- Task 6: Can users select/purchase a recommended game from the list page? Testers should try clicking a game link that pops up in their recommended list.
- Task 7: Can a user leave a room and be redirected to the home page while the rest of the members in that room are shown the updated list?

4. **Observation and Note-Taking**

The general user feedback on the overall experience was described as pleasant and enjoyable. While there were some blockades and points of friction, the general takeaway they all shared was that the core usability loop of the site was easy to use and that they were looking forward to using the site once it exits the “beta” stage that it’s at now.

The first major point of note was that two out of three of the testers upon being asked to test the website asked if Mobile was fine as they wanted to test on their personal devices instead of using the laptop/browser provided to which we had to decline as we haven’t yet finished a mobile friendly layout.

The home page itself was generally fine, one user questioned if there was supposed to be any other text other than our privacy policy sentence.

In our privacy policy page some users felt that sections could’ve been updated like the lack of an email address on who to contact over the site. Another made a note that they liked the capitalized titles as it made it explicitly clear what we need users to know without reading the entire page.

Back to the home page, upon trying to continue through the website with the Steam login, the users were presented with pop-ups stating that they need to have certain privacy settings enabled in order for the site to work, but due to the styling users were having difficulty understanding the pop up and also trying to navigate further as it was unclear that the “I Understand” button they needed to press was indeed a button, only one tester who was very experienced with sites suspected that it was a button. Users also asked what “Alt Login” meant and had to be explained what their IDs were and how to find it if they wanted to use that method.

After signing in through Steam and landing at the “Room Choice” page users were

questioning some of the styling choices again like text alignment or image sizing, but did not have any major complaints about the functionality of the page.

Users then either created a room or joined one depending on their preference (as they had to follow up after with the other). In the transition to either page, users were presented with a loading animation where in the backend we would scan and add games from their library to our database for later processing; at this step few asked if it was possible to add a “expected time” so that they’d know just how generally long they’d have to wait instead of having the animation perpetually spin.

In the Create Room page, most users were unsure that they had to click “Generate List” immediately but got to that conclusion after reading all of the other buttons.

In the Join Room page, users were generally satisfied with the experience. After later tasks, all users asked why Pasting a copied room code (with Ctrl/Command + V) did not work.

Upon actually joining a room and generating, users liked the layout of the final list page. Some users were curious about the criteria of “Recommended Games” (games that some users owned but others didn’t). One user also noticed games that they didn’t own had showed up in the “Shared Games” page signaling a potential bug in our backend. Another was successfully able to break the site multiple times by using the back button instead of the “Leave Room” button and navigating back and forth. That same user also ended up breaking the site using the custom price filtering option by inputting invalid values or leaving one empty. Users also asked why clicking on a game navigated the current tab they were on instead of opening the game in a new tab. Finally, users were able to be in rooms with each other and see dynamic page reloading functionality and were impressed with it (upon joining/leaving rooms the other users in the page will have their lists reloaded and so they’ll all see a new updated list).

To loop back around and conclude, while the experience was rough at some parts and smooth at others, the site did in fact fulfill its design purpose, the users were all able to see the games that they shared with each other (and also with us the developers) and were happily surprised to see that they had some games in common with each other. The general sentiment was that they were looking forward to being able to use the site later on in the future.

Short & Long-Term Improvements

In the short term, we are going to attempt to fully bugfix our site as is instead of trying to add in additional features at the moment and leave that for the long-term instead.

To be fully descriptive, our long-term goals are mobile support, more tag filtering in our list generation, a redesigned room system (with Local APIs) to support sending fully working “Join Links” to friends, and the option for more information to be gathered for a game once a user clicks on it in list (like additional tags and the game’s description).